



The Center for Student
Leadership & Involvement

New Member Orientation

After recruiting new members, it's important to give some time to considering how to effectively connect and involve them in the activities of the group or you risk losing them. One consideration is a new member orientation in which you can welcome new members and provide them with a foundation of understanding about the group. The following are some topics that might be good to cover in a new member orientation.

Training: Review organizational materials including your constitution and bylaws, budget, history of the organization, and organizational structure.

Methods: Have veteran members train new members, do icebreakers for all members, host a meet the new members meeting, list names in newsletter, meeting minutes or a new roster of members.

Recognition: Go over special benefits to being in the group, talk about recognizing others and personal satisfaction.

Growth: Explain the benefits of learning skills in student leadership, management, programming and inter-personal relations.

Achievement: Talk about developing personally, how to add to a resume, and the satisfaction of impacting one's environment.

Participation: Demonstrate how to apply skills, manage groups and be involved in group progress.

Enjoyment: Share the benefits of new friends, fun, a job well done and the satisfaction of serving others.

AIM to Have a Great New Member Orientation

Acquaint-A weekend retreat is one of the best ways to acquaint new members. This is a good time to do icebreakers, get to know each other and put everyone in the group at ease. Make sure to include officers in this time to avoid creating a hierarchy. Make sure the officers explain in detail what their duties are and who they are. If you are not able to have a weekend retreat, set aside some available time designated just for new member orientation instead of just trying to "catch everyone up" during meetings.

Inform-Make sure to cover the history, mission and by-laws of the organization in this section. Give everyone a member list with phone numbers, officer job descriptions, any attendance policies, and any organizational charts necessary. It is important to have a written history. If there isn't one, take some time at this orientation to create one, letting new members add their input as to where they would like to see the group go.

Motivate-Get everyone excited about the group. Let everyone share ideas and visions for the group. A great way to do this is to form smaller groups made of both experienced members and new members and give them some discussion topics that will include both types of members. Make sure that the new members get a chance to add their input.

New member orientation

Once you have recruited new members, a solid orientation is the first step in keeping them!

Training Topics

- Constitution and bylaws
- Organizational structure
- Budget
- Organization files and office space
- Past successes of the organization

Methods

- Training from veteran members
- Icebreakers/socials for all members
- A “meet the new members” meeting
- A list of their names in a newsletter or minutes
- Invitation to a board/executive council meeting

Growth

- Learning new skills in leadership management, programming, and inter-personal relations
- Accepting responsibility

Recognition

- Special benefits and privileges
- Recognition from others
- Personal satisfaction

Achievement

- Seeing the achievement of a goal
- Developing personally
- Building a strong resume
- Satisfaction of having impact on the environment

Participation

- Applying new skills
- Managing groups
- Being involved in program production

Enjoyment

- New friends
- Fun
- For a job well done
- Having satisfaction in serving others

All Group members need:

- To have a sense of belonging – the feeling that they are sincerely welcome and needed.
- To share in planning the group’s goals.
- To know that the goals are obtainable and make sense.
- To feel that what they are doing has real purpose and contributes to a greater good.
- To feel that the organization is making a difference.
- To feel that the value of their contributions extends beyond personal gain and the group itself.
- To see that progress is being made toward its goals.
- To know what is expected of them and to be kept informed.
- To have some responsibilities that challenge and contribute toward reaching the goals.
- To have confidence in the organization leaders to lead the organization well, treat members consistently and fairly, recognize member accomplishments and trust the members.

Knowing what group members need will help you to provide for them and therefore will help you retain them for the future.

Additional Retention Tips

- Hold a welcoming meeting/ceremony;
- Assign new members tasks that they can successfully accomplish;
- Allow new members to get involved;
- Have fun together-socialize and celebrate;
- Get to know new members names;
- Get new members involved on committees or planning an event;
- Begin meetings on time and end on time;
- Provide agendas to keep everyone in the loop;
- Designate a time for socializing so it won't interfere with the meeting.