

How to Run a Student Organization

SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

As a leader of a campus organization, you should be asking yourself, “What direction do you want your group to move in this year?” To establish direction for your organization, it is useful to develop a set of guidelines for the year’s activities. Having an established set of goals will benefit your organization in several ways. A sense of purpose provides greater direction for your group which lessens frustration and improves effectiveness. Not only will you be better able to justify your group’s existence, but you will also enable others to recognize the special contribution you make to the college. New recruits will better understand their role and responsibilities within the club.

When developing goals, you may want to keep these standards in mind:

- A goal can be defined as a general target or aim.
- An effective goal should be stated clearly.
- A goal is broad in focus.
- The goal should be realistic with the Columbia College environment and the organization’s abilities.
- The goal should be stated in positive terms.

In order to ascertain whether a particular goal has been achieved, you must also establish **objectives** or **strategies**. An objective is specific and describes an activity or behavior which can be demonstrated or evaluated. When establishing objectives, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- An objective is the means by which we accomplish our goal.
- An objective is narrower in focus than a goal.
- An objective is expressed in quantitative terms.

Two other components of goal setting are the **time frame** and the **evaluation**. Plan specific steps needed to accomplish the task. Place each step in the appropriate order and set specific deadlines for each task. Delegate tasks and clearly define what successful accomplishment of the task would be.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

An active, viable organization must pay constant attention to the processes of attracting new members and keeping the total membership interested in the organization. Recruitment should not be a one-time operation designed to convince unsuspecting freshmen that participation in your group's activities will be the high point of their college career.

Today's Columbia College student faces numerous demands on their time. These demands often include the emphasis to excel academically which requires more hours devoted to study; financial obligations which often forces students to work full/part time jobs; and/or family obligations which allow students very little free time. If campus organizations are to recruit and retain enough student members, then students must be made aware of and actually experience the advantages of participation. Before attempting to recruit new members, your organization should address the following questions:

1. Is this organization functioning properly? An influx of members will not solve organizational internal problems. You may be able to attract new people, but you will not be able to retain them.
2. What image does your organization project to those students who are potential members? If your image is poor, then take steps to improve it before attempting to recruit.
3. Are all the present members familiar with the organization, as well as the special attributes, people, and experiences which the organization presently provides? Can they relate it to potential members?
4. Whom is your organization trying to recruit? You should make a special effort to attract those students whose interests and skills are complimentary to your organization's purpose and goals.

If you are not satisfied with your answers to any of these questions, you may find it helpful to consult with your advisor. They can assist you in improving the operation and image of your organization. When you are ready to start your recruitment campaign, you might find some of the methods listed below helpful.

- Talk to friends or people who you believe are interested in your group.
- Send out general notices/brochures advertising your group and requesting students to join.
- Participate in Inter Club Council
- Have each current member bring a new member to the next meeting.
- If you need students with special talents, contact the faculty and ask for their recommendations to recruit potential members.
- Ask students who always attend your events if they are interested in joining your organization.
- Set up recruiting tables in heavily traveled areas of the campus.

After members have joined your organization how do you keep them actively involved in the group's program? Leadership has been defined as the art of getting others to do willingly those things mutually agreed upon as necessary to achieve a common goal.

One of the keys in this process is your ability to keep your group motivated through the skillful delegation of responsibility. Motivation to actively participate and follow through with a commitment comes from a combination of factors including achievement recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and opportunity for personal and professional growth. The contented worker must feel a sense of achievement with the assignment and must receive proper recognition. The job must not be too menial. The work itself must be important and meaningful and give the student a sense of responsibility. Most importantly, the student must be given an opportunity to develop and grow personally and professionally. It is also important that workers have input into setting up assignments and their related goals. Of course, there are menial jobs to be completed in every organization. The successful leader must take care to balance the member's work to include both routine and more challenging assignments. The following list summarizes considerations which should be made in the retention process:

- Provide proper placement (the right person for the right job).
- Develop clear expectations of assignments.
- Allow for personal growth.
- Offer feedback from advisors and peers.
- Develop meaningful work assignments.
- Organize an effective training program.
- Provide a sense of unity.
- Recognize achievement and reward good work.
- Help workers set achievable goals.
- Allow for promotion and upward mobility.
- Allow volunteer participation in decisions.
- Encourage your workers to have fun.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership can be defined as the art of getting others to do willingly those things mutually agreed upon as necessary to achieve a common goal. It is the process of influencing others in making decisions, setting and achieving goals. Concurrently, it is the process of keeping the group voluntarily together. Leadership in groups is actually a function of a combination of three dynamic elements the individual, the group, and the situation. With these principles in mind, one can describe three types of leadership behavior patterns which occur in human groups in action.

LAISSEZFAIR LEADER

(“Hands off” Position)

- Allows complete freedom to the group to formulate its own policies. Maintains a “hands off” position in relation to group action.
- Offers advice and materials only when asked. Takes no part in discussions or decision making.
- Takes no part in delegating responsibilities. Maintains no pressure toward achievement and enters into the resulting disorder only when there is personal threat involved.
- Makes no judgements of praise or criticism except when asked. Maintains a passive attitude.
- Often used with professional people who desire and have shown capacity for independent work.

AUTOCRATIC LEADER

(“Hands on” position)

- Determines policy because he/she is the chosen leader.
- Appoints the committees and determines the task/time/place.
- Gives criticism/praise because he/she is the leader and as such has status as judge/parent.
- Restricts communication from the group other than needed to get the job done.
- Encourages little involvement from group members. Leads to a limited program of learning; members accomplish tasks out of obligation.
- Used frequently among unskilled subordinates who are not prepared to participate in decision making.

DEMOCRATIC LEADER

(“Hand in Hand” position)

- Encourages participation and assists group to discuss and determine all policies.
- Helps group to formulate its own goals and to point out alternatives. Supplies technical advice. Transmits expertise to members so they learn what the leader knows.
- Permits members to work with whom they please and to divide tasks as they see fit. Allows members to take on as much responsibility as they can handle. Maintains pressure toward achievement and against disorder. Acts as member of the group.
- Tries to be objective and fair in praise/criticism.
- Encourages greater individual participation in decision making and free flow of communication to establish trust/confidence.
- Maintains a program of learning for members. May result initially in efficiency but members eventually accomplish tasks out of personal commitment and efficiency increases as does learning and commitment.
- Used frequently with skilled/educated people and leads to greater leader acceptance and better results.

A leader may utilize any of the three styles in his/her position. Which one is used at a particular time depends upon a combination of the individual, the group, and the situation. As the leader of your organization, you should attempt to analyze your style of leadership and determine if it is effective and conducive to the composition of your group and the nature of the group's activities. Leadership is a very involved process by which people guide others in a way which facilitates progress in a particular activity.

Leadership traits:

1. Must be a broad person.
2. Have a balance of humor and intellectualism.
3. Able to speak.
4. Have a defined set of values and attitudes.
5. Be able to relate.
6. Pro-active.
7. Guide without dictating; lead in a non-directive manner.
8. Be able to make a commitment and investment of time.
9. Must be patient.
10. Be able to accept rewards indirectly.
11. Dedicated to continual self-development.
12. Accept positions as challenges, not stepping-stones.
13. Must be pleasant, open and friendly.
14. Must be organized, relaxed, and efficient.
15. Above all, a leader must be **ENTHUSIASTIC AND LOYAL!**

Leadership qualities will help you become a better person, and you can use these skills every day of your life. Leadership is used when raising children, in marriages and among friends. Always remember, a candle loses nothing by lighting another; share your knowledge in a humble way.

If you must, “lead” a discussion...

1. Do not require members to get permission to speak or require any other formalities.
2. Do not have people stand or address the chair.
3. Do not encourage members to talk to the chairperson. Discourage speaking to the chair by letting other members respond or by asking other members their opinions on the matter.
4. Do not preach or teach.
5. Do not moralize or make value statements.
6. Do not show your own opinion of members' remarks. Try to set aside your own evaluation of ideas offered by the members.
7. Do not form any private opinions of what the group should be discussing or what it should take up next so that you may avoid judging any comment as irrelevant or off the subject.
8. Do not take sides, argue on any issue, or identify with any sub-group or clique.
9. Do not make a speech. Do not talk much. Leaders typically talk too much and too often. When in doubt, don't say it.
10. Do not encourage people to participate before they feel like it. Let them be quiet if they wish.
11. Do not hold any member up to ridicule or embarrass any member.
12. Do not appoint the suggester as committee head when a committee is suggested, or idea given.
13. Do not make appointments to committees – let the group do it.
14. Do not hog the spotlight.
15. Do not be tempted to show off your verbal ability or your skill. You should not be particularly noticed or remembered; you are the catalyst.
16. Do not be defensive. Do not defend your behavior or position. Accept all criticism.
17. When in doubt of intervening at some point, control the impulse...do not intervene. Do not intervene unless you are sure the group will be helped move toward its goal.

CONDUCTING A PRODUCTIVE MEETING

Holding a meeting involves more than just setting a time/place and “teaching.” Meetings are shared responsibilities and involve three distinct stages: planning, implementation and evaluation.

- I. Planning – participants need to understand the purpose of the meeting.
 - a. Set time/place for meeting.
 - b. Meet with other officers or group members to establish an agenda. When members have input into an agenda, they feel more involved with the meeting. Agendas are of value to your organization because:
 1. An agenda lets group members know what to expect at the meeting, so they will start thinking along those lines.
 2. An agenda that is announced in advance allows group members to prepare for the meeting.
 3. An agenda provides an order for dealing with issues at a meeting.
 4. An agenda can be used to teach group members how to prepare reports for a meeting.
 5. An agenda also spreads the responsibility for accomplishing tasks to all the people attending the meeting.
 - c. Have agenda typed and distributed or verbally go over the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.
- II. Implementation
 - a. Start the meeting on time with a definite statement to the effect that the meeting is commencing.
 - b. Follow the well planned agenda.
 - c. Observe the participants in the meeting – if they begin to get off track politely bring them back as quickly as possible.
- III. Evaluating
 - a. Immediately reflect on the meeting.
 - b. Write down the positive and negative parts of the meeting.
 - c. Write down who participated and who didn't, and who expressed especially strong agreement with or disagreement to the topic.
 - d. Involve an unbiased objective observer in the evaluation of the meeting.

This process of evaluation will help you with your goal in running a better organized meeting.

TIME MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions have been gleaned from several sources and are intended to be helpful guides regarding time management:

1. First, to save time, you must know where you are losing it. It is often helpful to do some charting about how you are actually spending your time.
2. Value your time. It is precious! Ask yourself:
 - a. Is what I'm doing helping me reach my objective?
 - b. Must I do it now?
 - c. Is something else more important?
 - d. Should someone else do it?
3. Delegate tasks. Always ask "should I be doing this, or could a member of my club be doing it?" Develop procedures for routine matters. It will save time in the long run.
4. Many officers are robbed of effective time because they endeavor to make too many decisions that others could make better.
5. Everybody is for delegation and no one is against it, yet many clubs fail to delegate effectively if at all. Delegate effectively. Delegate results, not processes.
6. Procrastination can be a tremendous deterrent to effective time management. Give yourself the following procrastination test:
 - a. Do I invent excuses for not acting?
 - b. Am I derelict in not getting one ahead on repetitive assignments?
 - c. Do I tend to avoid forthright answers when pressed for a decision?
 - d. Have I been guilty of neglecting the follow up aspect of an action plan?
 - e. Has fatigue or other physical factors been causing me to put off action? Has this been increasing in frequency lately?
7. There is supporting evidence that leaders and officers operate at approximately one-half of their effectiveness because of tension.
 - a. Too much tension means wasted time as it disrupts the train of thought by which decisions are normally reached so that decisions not only take longer, but are less reliable.
 - b. It tends to trap you into preoccupation with matters that are not worthy of your attention.
 - c. It sets up a vicious cycle which, if not broken at a fairly early stage, makes it more difficult to get back into your normal stride.
8. There is a difference between delegating and assigning work.
9. Probably the greatest cause of wasted time is attempting to apply meeting techniques where they should not be used in the first place. The meeting cannot do anything; it can only analyze, formulate and recommend. It is no substitute for executive action. Calling numerous meetings to rehash the same old thing violates both the fundamental purpose of the meeting method and your basic obligation to arrive at a decision.
10. Ineffective communication can be a tremendous time robber. The following are some brief guides to better and effective communication:
 - a. Speak in sufficient detail

- b. Gear message to the audience
 - c. Use precise words
 - d. Appeal to audience self interest
 - e. Communicate to all involved
 - f. Be brief and concise
 - g. Prepare and organize
11. The ability to listen can be an extremely valuable time saver.
 12. Take notes. Few possess enough memory to remember things without jotting them down.
 13. Develop a daily “to do” list.
 14. Effective reading can be a tremendous time saver.
 15. Be a first-timer. Make decisions the first time around.
 - a. Make 80% of your decisions the first time, 15% will need more information; 5% you can delegate.
 - b. 20% of facts are enough for 80% of the decisions.
 - c. 80% of in-box material can be done right away.
 - d. Do one thing at a time and finish it.
 - e. Block out time to accomplish tasks.
 16. Don’t procrastinate on tough items. Start them immediately.
 17. Train your club officers and members.
 - a. Write down information that they will have to know.
 - b. Develop training checklists.
 - c. Have them write down things they wish they had known.
 18. Allow people to participate in the creation of your plans and ideas, and they will learn to value and care for them.

GENERAL PROGRAMMING PROCEDURES FOR CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- I. Determine and identify interest: This can be done through informal discussion, surveys, interest sign-up sheets, suggestion boxes, interest inventories, etc. Remember, programs are successful if they appeal to a cross section of people.
- II. Needs assessment: To assess needs, combine the information that is available on interest with the expectations of a learning experience, and make a judgmental decision as to what needs you plan to meet through the program.
- III. Planning: Plan ahead! Involve both students and staff in the planning of a program – that is students who are representative of the group you are trying to reach, and staff who can act as resource people. Programming is a learning experience. Therefore, students, faculty, staff and the community should be invited to participate.
 - a. Determine the program – compiling all the interest input does this.
 - b. Financial support – use all available sources of funds if funding is required (program budgets, club funds, ASCC, etc.) Also, the option of an admission charge can be explored.
 - c. Reserve the facility as soon as possible. Advisors should check deadlines.
 - d. Avoid conflicting dates – check existing calendars in the Student Senate office to make sure your program is not competing with an ASCC event or another event on campus.
 - e. Remain within the law – check to be sure that all campus regulations are being followed.
 - f. Organize planning sessions – plan meetings to establish committees and persons who will be responsible for different aspects of the program or plan a working calendar with appropriate deadlines.
- IV. Publicity: Publicity is used both to inform and motivate. The basis of a program begins with bringing an audience to it. Advisors should know of all publicity sources on campus (Peek at the Week, Weekly Bulletin, Marquee, event boards, etc.)
- V. Provide leadership and supervision: At the event, make sure that someone, either yourself or another responsible person, is in charge and familiar with the objectives, and know what is supposed to happen and how to run the program.
- VI. Evaluation: As soon after the event as possible, sit down with everyone involved with planning the program and go over an evaluation of the event. This should be a standard procedure and records should be kept to assist in future programs of a similar nature.
- VII. Follow-up: Tie down all loose ends. Write letters of appreciation to people outside the group who assisted. Return borrowed equipment. Taking care of after the program loose ends is critical, due to the fact that club programs are dependent on good relations with other departments at the college, especially student activities and custodial staff.

GUIDELINES FOR A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

Checklist for an Effective Publicity Campaign

1. Know whom you are trying to reach. Some events will be geared to certain audiences.
2. Know how much money you have to spend on publicity.
3. Decide when your publicity campaign should begin. It is often more effective to plan your publicity in stages. This way you can gradually publicize your entire event while increasing the curiosity level of your audience. They will be looking for more information if you get them interested during the stages of your publicity campaign.
4. Decide where your publicity will be displayed.
5. Decide what types of publicity you will use.
6. Check on those involved in the publicity campaign to ensure that they have followed through with their responsibilities and all deadlines are met.
7. Have follow-up materials ready for a second wave of promotion.
8. Keep a close watch as to whether interest in the program is developing, and whether tickets, if used, are selling.
9. Prepare for a last-minute publicity blitz if expectations are not being met.
10. Evaluate your campaign and keep records that can be used in planning future campaigns.

PUBLICITY GIMMICK

1. Bookmarks
2. Bumper stickers
3. Table tents
4. Classroom blackboards (write information about your event in the corners)
5. Weekly bulletin
6. Marquee
7. Pass out information in costume
8. Posters
9. Flyers
10. Staple free tickets to bags of potato chips in cafeteria
11. Have a ticket drawing at a major event
12. Sandwich boards
13. Fortune cookies with info inside
14. Phone-a-thon call your friends and ask them to call their friends to publicize an event
15. Odd shaped posters

TIPS ON DESIGNING POSTERS

1. Make the right choice of type to set the feeling for the event.
2. Do not use hand lettering unless the style is so unique and well organized that it still reads and looks professional. Generally, hand-lettered communication is harder to read, less memorable, and gives the illusion of an unorganized program. Pressure-sensitive letters are inexpensive and are available at local art stores.

3. Choose varieties of paper color, texture, and size. If you have your poster reproduced on standard size paper, you can still trim it into an odd shape-triangle or circle.
4. If you can't afford two or more colors on your poster, use a magic marker to highlight some areas – add red on the eyes of the illustration for your late-night film festival. It's quick and gives you a two-color look which might set your publicity apart from the others.
5. When using colors be sure to avoid making the poster cluttered or confusing. To ensure accessibility to those with vision difficulties make the important information large and contrasting and verify that all information can be easily seen when put in greyscale.
6. An organization should develop a look or format that is easily identified by the campus community. The format allows you to communicate your message quickly without the reader having to look for the sponsoring group. With a border format you could have many printed in one color and as events come up during the year, you could print the inside information each time within that preprinted format.
7. Use upscale to promote your message. Scale is the placing of two or more objects together so certain pieces of information appear large or small. For example, when we see a picture of a man we assume he is normal height. Place a hand next to him that goes from his head to his feet and suddenly he appears six inches tall. Place a picture of the Empire State Building next to him at his full height and he becomes a giant. Type is used in the same manner. Large type can be used to attract attention while smaller type conveys additional information.
8. Use these techniques carefully. The information must be simple if it is going to catch a reader's eye.
9. Develop a club logo and use it on everything to make your posters easily recognizable.

STUDENT SENATE OFFICE

The Student Senate Office is dedicated to helping student clubs, individuals and ASCC achieve their objectives. Advisors of clubs to student activities are especially invited to make use of the Student Senate Office and to consult with the Program Coordinator on any student program or event. People come to the Student Senate Office to:

1. Get a copy of their official club Constitution & Bylaws.
2. Receive advice and assistance in planning a myriad of activities on campus.
3. Receive information on workshops and plan retreats for people or clubs who wish to increase their skills in leadership and human relations.
4. Receive information about existing clubs, organizations and planned activities.
5. Talk to the Program Coordinator about getting involved in a club or ASCC event or committee.
6. Look at the master calendar on major campus student activities and programs.
7. Obtain assistance in planning a publicity campaign for a student sponsored event.
8. Get the names and phone numbers of club officers.
9. Any mail Student Organizations have can be picked up through the ASCC.

The Student Senate Office is located in the Student Center, Ponderosa Building. Or can be reached at 209-588-5270 or 209-588-5236