

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Recruitment: There are at least four major reasons people join student organizations – if your organization can satisfy these reasons, then you are more likely to recruit and maintain strong membership.

Desire to get involved – this is the most common reason people join student organizations. When recruiting someone that simply wants to get involved, you need to be able to explain what involvement opportunities your organization provides. Have an easy way to explain the many programs, events, service activities, and social activities your organization hosts. The list of activities will show prospective members that your organization will help them get connected, learn new skills and make new friends.

Desire to meet people – many people join student organizations to make new friends and to feel a sense of belonging. During the recruitment process make them feel comfortable and valued – assure them that your student organization wants them to join. Again, it is helpful to have a list of activities that your organization participates in to assure these prospective members that they will have the opportunity to take part in social activities. Be sure to address new members by name, this makes them feel valued. Every time a new member joins (especially if many new members arrive at one time), it is important to have everyone introduce him or herself. Have a short icebreaker at the beginning or end of every meeting – this keeps the student organization fun and interesting for those who are seeking social contact.

Desire to develop leadership skills – some join student organizations because they know they want to be a student leader, or because they think it will look good on their resumes. They need to be assured that there are opportunities to develop useful skills or hold leadership positions within the student organization. Once recruited, these members need to feel that the student organization is accomplishing something. For these members it is important to have well-organized meetings with agendas so they can see what is being accomplished and decided. Make them feel valued by the organization – give them feedback that you are glad they joined your student organization.

Belief in a cause – some people join because they feel strongly about the purpose of the student organization. For these prospective members it is important to clearly explain the mission and goals of your organization. It is helpful to have the purpose of the student organization and the activities that you engage in to support the purpose clearly outlined on your website or social media. Once recruited, these members need to feel the student organization is achieving its goals. Having new member orientations where both new and old members review the mission and goals of the student organization is helpful. Throughout the semester, the organization should review this document to make sure that everyone is still on track. To increase the investment of new members in the student organization, it is important to include them in the goal setting process.

Retention: Maintaining your membership is as important as recruiting.

- Be sure you are taking steps to keep your new members involved and invested in your student organization. All kinds of people are needed to have a strong organization.
- Having an agenda will help your student organization find this balance. Agendas indicate to all members what needs to be discussed at what time and when it is appropriate to have fun.
- Remember that your student organization is only as strong as its weakest link. If you have members that seem to be doing nothing but taking up space, ask them why they joined and what they want out of the student organization. Help them to feel needed by helping them find their role within the student organization.
- Offer incentives. Schedule trainings and workshops that will help your members build skills and invest in their own success.

Ideas for Recruiting Members

- Talk to your friends or people you believe would be interested in the activities of your student organization.
- Invite your friends to like the organization's social media. Include some of the benefits of involvement.
- Have each existing member responsible for bringing one new member to the next meeting.
- Ask RA's and other student employees if they know of students who may be interested in joining your student organization.
- Participate in Student Organizations Fairs in the fall and spring. Fairs are an excellent way to promote your student organization each semester.
- If you need students with special talents (i.e. artists, public relations) or if your student organization's purpose attracts certain majors, ask faculty in that department for their advice on potential members. Faculty may even be willing to announce or post your meetings.
- If your student organization relates directly to a specific major, talk with people in your core classes and invite them to your meetings and events.
- Utilize the perk of free booth space in the Wood Center during the busy lunchtime hours to promote your student organization.