



STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Quick Guide to Student Organization Leadership Transition

Transitioning Leadership in a Student Organization

There are many ways to transition an executive board. The question is, what strategy will you take? Based on your skill set and type of student organization, here are a few suggested methods to successfully pass the torch.

Learning Contracts

Developed individually between incoming and outgoing officers, learning contracts establish a list of skills and tasks that incoming officers must satisfy in order to be eligible to run for/hold a specific office in the organization. Once the list is complete, incoming officers meet with outgoing officers to identify their skill for each condition. Next, the outgoing officer provides the necessary training so that incoming officer is able to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and tasks to be successful.

- EX: skill development (budget tracking) (fundraising)

Pros:

- Specific
- Collaborative
- Hands-on

Cons:

- What if outgoing officer didn't have the skills?
- Risk of "doing it the way it has always been done"
- Different styles

Shadowing/Mentoring

Incoming officers are paired with outgoing officers for a specific period of time to learn position basics and to observe the outgoing officers. Through discussion and interaction, outgoing officers share expertise, insight and advice for the incoming officers. Through a "shadowing" process, new officers are elected and serve for an "elect" term with the current officer to learn processes, meet people (advisor, community partners, etc.) and transition materials.

Pros:

- Strong bonding opportunity
- Experiential
- Overlap provides partnership

Cons:

- Collaboration is hard
- Requires "letting go"
- Confusion for members

Retreats/Workshops

Although they can take different formats, retreats and workshops provide an opportunity for incoming and outgoing officers to transition materials and discuss pertinent issues. All retreats and workshops should be planned in advance and should seek to address specific goals and objectives.

Pros:

- Strong bonding opportunity
- Deeper than single meeting
- Collaborative

Cons:

- Time commitment
- Money/resources
- Making sure everyone has bought in

Regardless of what transition method you use, the most important thing is to start early! Many times transition is undervalued and skipped over because student organizations run of time during the semester or academic year. During one of your first few meetings of the year, take time to make a timeline for what an ideal leadership transition would look like.

Creating A Transition Binder

Transition binders are a useful way to pass on information to new executive board members. In the binder you can include a variety of items to help the new executive board member fill his/her new role. Included in the binder should be tips for success, important dates for your organization, and many other things. Below is a suggested list of items to include:

1. Organization constitution and by-laws
3. Executive Board job descriptions
4. Contact information of on and off-campus partners you have worked with in the past year/semester
5. Last year's budget
6. Past event information (day, time, location/reservations)
7. Important forms (event registration form, event sign-up form, contracts, activity waiver)
8. Goals for your position last year
9. Tips you wish you were given
10. Meeting/event agendas from past year
11. Executive board/committee responsibilities
12. Advisor information

These are all suggested items but should not limit what you include. Include anything and everything that the incoming executive board member will need.

Student Development Programs can facilitate a workshop for officer transition. Workshops can be an hour or a couple hours depending on the needs of the student. Please contact getinvolved@usi.edu for more information.