



STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Quick Guide to Student Organization Recruitment & Retention

Recruitment Strategy

New members bring new ideas, increase the organization's person power, foster organizational growth, prevent member burn out, and take over leadership roles when leadership leaves or graduates. People join organizations for many reasons. They want to get involved, meet people and make new friends; they want to develop skills and have fun.

Know and understand your student organization

It is important that both the leadership and the membership know what the organization goals and objectives are.

- Have an organizational meeting to discuss goals and objectives. Are your goals still accurate? Is it time to update them? Where do you plan for the organization to be in six months? A year?
- Decide on a direction to take. During this "organizational housekeeping" process, a certain theme or direction should become clear. What is this?

Set Recruitment Goals

- Remember what made you get involved. Probably the most important step in designing a recruitment strategy is for you to think back to when you first became involved. What attracted you? How were you recruited? If you weren't, how did you hear about the organization? Why have you stayed involved?

Get Everyone Involved

- Have your current members identify people they know who might want to get involved. Personally, invite them to attend a meeting. Word-of-mouth is the best and least expensive type of publicity you can use.
- Talk about your organization. Tell people what you have to offer them. Ask them about themselves –and really listen.
- Sell your organization and the benefits of membership. Tell them how the organization can benefit someone like them. Personalize the message to each potential member. Let them know how their talents, skills and interests would help the organization.

Design an Advertising Campaign Using Visual Elements

- Recruitment campaigns need to have a visual element as well. Have those members with artistic talents work on your posters, flyers, banners, bulletin boards, etc. Be creative. Get the publicity up early enough. Your publicity can be effective only if it's noticed.

Plan a Special Welcoming Meeting/Call-Out Meeting

Many organizations find it beneficial to have a meeting or ceremony to welcome new members.

People Join PEOPLE

Remember that a personal contact is always better than 1,000 flyers and newspaper advertisements. People join organizations because they like the people they find there. Nothing can replace the simple act of getting to know someone and asking them to join the organization.

Other Recruitment Tips

- ✓ Make a brief introduction of your organization at each meeting.
- ✓ Co-sponsor campus events so that the organization name gets out there more. Be sure to have information about your organization at each event.
- ✓ Ask key people to give recommendations of possible members and leaders.
- ✓ Don't expect a person to come to a meeting in a room full of people he/she doesn't know. Offer to meet the student somewhere and go to the meeting together. Then make sure you personally introduce that person to others in the organization.
- ✓ Feed potential members. College students are attracted to free food.
- ✓ Recruit people by the issue that interests them. There are people very interested in one issue; you can recruit them to head up a program on that issue.
- ✓ When someone has expressed an interest in getting involved to any degree, get them involved and give them a meaningful task to do.
- ✓ Get exclusive rights to a really cool "members only" job for the organization.
- ✓ Hold meetings and events in comfortable, visible, easy-to-come-to places.
- ✓ Always take photos at meetings and events and then put them on Facebook or EagleSync.
- ✓ When working to recruit members, always try to think in terms of "what's in it for them."
- ✓ Print up cards for your members to carry. The card should also say, "Open meetings! Please come!"

Retention Strategy

When retaining members, it is important to remember that recruiting and training takes a lot of time and effort. Setting new members up for continued involvement is the best strategy in hopes of retaining membership. Providing new members with a good working understanding of your organization and providing them with an active role can help make them feel wanted and needed by the organization.

You can choose to provide new members with New Member Packets. These give new members information about the organization and current member's information about the new members, and should include:

- ✓ Member Interest Form: Contact information, areas of interest, referred by
- ✓ Committee and Position Description: Should be specific without limiting creativity and individuality.
- ✓ Organizational Flow Chart: Shows leadership positions. Helps people understand how the organization functions.

You can also hold an orientation for New Members. All too frequently, organizations skip any form of orientation and just place their new recruits directly on committees or organizational projects.

- ✓ Teach them about your organization. Although involvement is crucial to the longevity of the group, understanding the organization and its goals and objectives, structure, norms, and taboos is equally as important.
- ✓ Elements of a successful orientation program include:
 - The rights and responsibilities of members
 - Organizational governance, operating policies and procedures
 - Organizational history, traditions and programs
 - Assimilation of new members into the organization
 - An overview of campus services, activities and programs for USI Student Organizations
 - Information about any support groups or affiliations an organization may have