



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

→ RECRUITING AND RETAINING NEW MEMBERS ←

“What we need is some new blood!” Organizations wither and die without effective use of the recruitment process. New members are needed to bring in new ideas yet carry on the tradition of the group.

There are many reasons people join groups. Among these reasons are:

- ◆ Acceptance
- ◆ Friendships
- ◆ Responsibility and authority
- ◆ Personal interests
- ◆ Vocational interests
- ◆ Social gathering
- ◆ Development of skills
- ◆ Recognition
- ◆ To “make a difference”
- ◆ Prestige

Some things that groups tend to look for in new members include:

- ◆ Qualifications (skills and abilities)
- ◆ Enthusiasm
- ◆ Capacity for development
- ◆ Capacity to work within groups
- ◆ Motivation and ability to get things done (initiative)
- ◆ Interest in group’s mission and goals

Once the kind of person needed in the group is determined by your organization, you’re ready to recruit new members.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING...

A member is the most important person in any organization.

Our members are not dependent upon us. We are dependent upon them.

Our members are a part of our organization, not outsiders.

Our members are not just money in our bank account. They are human beings with feelings, with needs, like our own.

Our members are people who share with us their needs and wants. It is our job to fulfill them.

Our members deserve the most courteous attention we can give them. They are the lifeblood of this and every association.

-Unknown Source

→ APPROACHING NEW MEMBERS ←

How do you get new members involved? It is important for you to have a clear idea of what your organization stands for. With a clear objective, it will be easier to delineate the benefits and opportunities of membership. What would a member receive from his or her involvement in your organization? Make a list.

Once you know what you’re offering, there are several ways to make your objectives known:

- ◆ Talk about your group with friends. Tell people what you have to offer. Ask them about themselves. Listen.
- ◆ Talk to housing units, classes, etc.
- ◆ Advertise in the media
- ◆ Program successfully
- ◆ Avoid a bad public image
- ◆ Be creative and artistic in your public relations; your publicity can only be effective when noticed.
- ◆ Really seek out new members
- ◆ Approach people honestly
- ◆ Keep organization structure stable (define where you are now, and where you would like to be going)

Some basic information should be given to all group members to assist with smooth functioning and cohesiveness. Information you should share and explain includes:

- ◆ Philosophy or purpose of your organization
- ◆ Your organizational structure (i.e., President, Vice President, Secretary...)
- ◆ Your expectations of members
- ◆ Members' time requirements
- ◆ Activities and programs you will be doing
- ◆ The benefits for being an active member (potential for moving up in the organization, looks good on a resume, etc.)
- ◆ Organization goals; ask if they have any personal goals or goals for the group
- ◆ Get to know the potential members individually

Encourage them to get to know each other; it will help your organization become more cohesive

Many groups have initiation

- ◆ processes involving personal participation of new members.
- ◆ Some tangible initiations include:
 - ◆ Workshops
 - ◆ Ceremonies
 - ◆ Teaming old members with new members
 - ◆ Programs

Responsibilities

Opportunities for input

- ◆
- ◆ To make your members feel like they are a part of your group, you must involve them in your organization. To do this:
 - ◆ Have meetings on a weekly basis or as often as possible
 - ◆ If some members can't make it to the meetings, send them letters and minutes, call and invite them to see you and let them know what's going on with your group
 - ◆ Involve them in decision making
 - ◆ Listen to their ideas
 - ◆ Give them responsibility, jobs to do, other members to call

Encourage cohesion! Provide opportunities for the group to get together outside of the work setting to do things (dinners, social events, etc.)

- ◆ Facilitate a group goal setting session

◆ Your ability to keep membership also depends on your ability to:

- ◆ Meet successfully at least one of the reasons the person had in joining the group
- ◆ Be consistent and directed, yet provide for the periodic examination and re-evaluation of structure, goal statements, and procedure
- ◆ Provide legitimate procedures for change

Delegate to new members

Make an effort to find out what motivates each person

- ◆ Have fun!

- ◆
- ◆ The organization's ability to supplant other reasons for the person to be a part of the group further strengthens a commitment to the group as a whole. This can be done by:

Successful program activities

Delegation of responsibility and decision-making powers

Planned social gatherings

Consecutive challenges (building opportunities for increased responsibility and growth)

REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*