



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

## **BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE TEAM**

An effective team is an energetic group of diverse individuals who are committed to achieving common objectives, who work well together, enjoying doing so, and who produce high quality results.

Does this description sound like your organization? Or does your organization face many of the following problems?

- ◆ Lack of real commitment
- ◆ Avoidance of responsibility
- ◆ Avoidance of risk taking by members
- ◆ Lack of clear goals and objectives describing what your organization is about and what you want to accomplish
- ◆ Destructive competition
- ◆ Poor communication

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TEAM**

The solution to these organizational problems lies in team building. Building your organizational team helps to lay the foundation for a more effective organization and a more committed and satisfied membership. Before you begin to build your organizational team, it may be helpful to know the characteristics of an effective team:

- ◆ Common vision
- ◆ Clear, cooperative goals to which every member is committed
- ◆ Energy and enthusiasm
- ◆ Distributed participation and leadership
- ◆ Appropriate and effective decision making procedures
- ◆ Productive controversy
- ◆ High levels of trust, acceptance, and support among its members
- ◆ Members feel significant and motivated
- ◆ High level of cohesion

### **TEAM BUILDING**

Set aside a two to three hour block of time as early as possible in the year when you won't be distracted by other organizational needs. Find a comfortable place to have the meeting, some place where your members can feel relaxed.

Your goal will be to share with each other thoughts about the organization, who you are, and your expectations for the year. The strategy you use may differ depending on the size and type of your organization, but your agenda will be the same:

**to get all the members of your organization talking and listening to one another.**

## HELPFUL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following are some questions that can help you get started with your group discussions.

- ◆ When did you become interested in this organization and why did you join?
- ◆ What do you want to gain from this experience?
- ◆ What special characteristic, skill, etc. do you bring to this organization?
- ◆ What is your greatest apprehension regarding the year?
- ◆ What do you want to see this organization accomplish this year?
- ◆ What expectations do the members have of officers, officers have of members, members have of members, and officers have of officers?
- ◆ What do you expect of yourself?
- ◆ What do you need from each other?
- ◆ For what do you want this organization to be remembered?

Getting to know yourself in relation to the group, getting to know other members, and encouraging open communication are the building blocks of an effective team.

## RELATED SAO RESOURCES

- ◆ Experiential Learning
- ◆ Goal Setting Worksheet
- ◆ Group Dynamics
- ◆ Motivating Members
- ◆ Setting Goals

## 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.*