

## ***Recruiting New Members***

*New members are the “spark” that keeps your group alive and insures its continuity and vitality in the coming years. Whether your organization is new or has been active for a few years, you will always need to find new members.*

But recruiting new members can be difficult. Your current members may seem to be too busy to go out and recruit new members. At other times it may seem that people just aren't interested in joining your organization. And finally, people who come to one meeting often won't return. This handout offers some ideas for making your next recruitment drive a successful one.

### **BEFORE RECRUITING BEGINS**

Before beginning a recruitment drive, your organization should be able to answer the following three questions:

1. *WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE WANT?*
2. *HOW WILL WE FIND NEW MEMBERS?*
3. *WHAT WILL WE DO WHEN WE FIND NEW MEMBERS?*

Let's look at these questions one at a time:

### **WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE WANT?**

1. Take an honest look at your group to see that it is well organized and functioning smoothly. No one wants to join a group that is disorganized.
2. Be sure you know the purpose of your organization and can tell others why you exist. Be clear about specific goals and projects for the coming year. After all, if *you* don't know where you are going, who's going to want to go with you?
3. Make a list of the group's accomplishments for the past year. Be able to show prospective members that the organization is active and interesting.
4. Draw up a profile of your “average” member. This will tell you the kind of person who joins your organization and might give you clues about where to find new members.
5. List areas of improvement for your group. This will give you an idea of the type of member you will want to recruit who can help the group to improve in the future. Also, be clear about how many new members you can accommodate.
6. Be able to tell prospective members about the benefits of joining your organization (e.g. make new friends, establish professional contacts). What convinced you to join? People will want to know what they can gain from membership.

## HOW WILL WE FIND NEW MEMBERS?

As you begin your recruitment drive, keep in mind that attracting new members is a very difficult task. You will need a clear plan and the cooperation of all of your members. You may also want someone to act as Recruitment Director.

1. Although recruitment can take place anytime, you might want to designate a specific time for putting forth your strongest efforts. The beginning of the semester seems to be an ideal time: potential members are not yet busy with school work and will have more time to consider joining your group.
2. Put up flyers and posters around the campus. (Contact the Student Life & Leadership Office for authorization.)
3. Display a banner in one of the banner locations on campus. (Contact the Student Life & Leadership Office for authorization.)
4. Place an ad in the Pride Newspaper.
5. Get coverage about the group from the Pride Radio or other local radio stations.
6. Word-of mouth is the best type of advertising. Encourage current members to talk to others about the benefits of joining the group and to bring a friend to the next meeting.
7. If you are affiliated with an academic department, ask to make presentations to classes in the department.
8. Reserve a table in Founder's Plaza and invite people to come and talk with you. Have flyers and other brochures available. While someone stays at the table, another member can walk through the crowds directing people to the table. Remember to smile!
9. Several campus offices (Student Life & Leadership, EOP) sponsor orientation programs during the year. They often make information tables available to student groups. Keep alert for these opportunities.
10. Better yet, put on a demonstration. Reserve a location in one of the Plazas and display something the organization has built, demonstrate skills in a report or other activity, offer a service related to your group, hold a meeting, etc.

## WHAT WILL WE DO WHEN WE FIND NEW MEMBERS?

1. Once you have people interested in your group, bring them together for an opportunity to meet current members and other new members. The atmosphere should be relaxed and allow people to socialize and have fun.
2. Supply them with additional information about your group. This may include future projects, areas where help is needed, organizational structure, upcoming conferences, etc.
3. Have a ceremony to induct new members into the organization. This needn't be a long, formal affair, but a "ritual" of some sort helps to establish a bond with the group.

4. Get new members involved in a project that makes use of their talents. This is the MOST CRITICAL TIME in your recruitment efforts. It is crucial that new members feel included and see that their contributions are important. Otherwise, you will lose the member. Having a new member work for the group also helps to increase commitment.
5. Despite your best efforts, some people will decide not to join your group. Allow them to leave gracefully with an invitation to consider joining sometime in the future.

*That's it! Of course, you don't need to follow all of these suggestions. But it is important to examine your recruitment efforts and see where they might be improved. Then, select from the ideas listed above to create a successful recruitment drive.*

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