Recruiting, Involving, and Empowering First-Year Students

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Freshmen Recruitment

Does your group:

• Participate in student organization fairs at orientation?
• Assist with new student move-in?
• Market in dining facilities and residence halls?
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- **Physiological**
  - breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

- **Safety**
  - security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property

- **Love/belonging**
  - friendship, family, sexual intimacy

- **Esteem**
  - self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

- **Self-actualization**
  - morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
The First 6 Weeks

• This is when a lot of member recruitment occurs
• One of the low points of student satisfaction and comfort
• 40% of adults suffer from sort of social anxiety
• 75% say they feel nervous facing a group of strangers
What strategies are your groups using for recruitment during this time?

- Organization fairs
- E-mail students that expressed interest during orientation
- What else?
How do we do things differently?

• During those initial weeks, recruitment should be focused on the topics that new students are concerned with the most
  – Familiarity with campus
  – Homesickness
  – Finances
  – Values/social expectations
  – New cultures
  – Identity
New Ways to Recruit

• Get involved with move-in
• Help students find their way
• Personal contact is better than flyers and emails
• Identify potential members, offer to walk them to meetings
• Offer programs to help with adjustment
• Make sure your information is current
Reasons First-Year Student Do Not Join Organizations

• They sense disorganization
• Lack of clear direction from the group
• They don’t know you exist
• Nobody asked
• Concerned about image
You’ve Recruited Them…But Can You Keep Them?

• Retention is just as important as recruitment – otherwise you’ll be in the same mess next year, but you’ll be gone

• The best way to keep members is to make sure they feel valued

• What makes people happy at work?
Job Satisfaction

• Freedom from office politics • 44%
• Making the right amount of money • 50%
• Work they find challenging • 55%
• Believing in what they do • 72%
The Key to Retention: Am I Important?

- Are you involving new students/members in the work of the organization?
- Do new members know the history of your organization?
- Are you giving new members a chance to give ideas, feedback, suggestions?
Involving New Members

• LET THEM BE INVOLVED!
• LET GO OF SOME CONTROL!
What Keeps Us From Giving Up Control?

• “It’s Mine!”
• Lack of trust
• Comfort – we get into the routine of doing it ourselves
What Can Be Done?

• Despite what people tell you, trust is not something we can just give

• How do new members earn it?
  – Interview (group or individual)
  – Work buddies
  – Give them simple tasks, then work up to more important items
  – These should still be things that need to be done, not “busy work”
How To Engage New Students

• To truly be engaged, not just a member, members need to see that they have a future in the group.
• Many of these students are coming from high schools where they were extremely involved; how do you keep that going?
Engagement

• There is a lot of talent in our colleges and universities
• How can we get these students into leadership roles from the beginning?
  – Committee chairs
  – Class representatives
  – Represent the organization at college-level committees
Your Suggestions?

• What are other ways you think organizations can recruit first-year students?
• How can you involve new members in your organization?
• What opportunities can your organization offer to new students to be engaged, both in your group and on campus?