

Officer Transition

When your year as an officer has come to an end and the new officers are selected, how can you leave your position gracefully? How can you insure that the new officers are as ready as they can be to continue to provide your organization with strong leadership? A thorough leadership transition plan has several benefits.

- The most obvious is the welcome opportunity it provides for a transfer significant organizational knowledge.
- It helps minimize the confusion that occurs with officer transition. Often precious time to the organization is lost while new officers try to figure out what's going on! This time lag affects the whole membership and demonstrates the group's ability to accomplish its goals and tasks.
- The process of transition can give the outgoing leaders a sense of closure. It can help them let go—which is often a difficult task for committed members to do.
- Leadership transition ensures that the valuable contributions of the experience leaders will be utilized. They are often the most neglected members in your group.
- Finally, shared information results in the new leadership having more knowledge and gather confidence in their ability to be more effective in their roles.

A smoother transition can occur if you

- Begin early in the year to identify emerging leaders in your organization.
- Encourage potential leaders through personal contact, skill development, delegation of responsibilities, shared benefits of leadership, clarification of job responsibilities.
- When new officers have been elected, orient them together as a group with all the outgoing officers. This allows the new officers an opportunity to understand each other's roles and to start team building. It is also recommended for the new and old officers to meet together for detailed information about the business of the organization.
- Transfer the knowledge, information, resources and materials for them to function well.

More specifically, what is important to transfer? Reflect on your first few weeks; what did you wish someone had told you?

- Personal expertise, knowledge and experience:
 - Effective leadership, qualities and skills
 - Share problems and helpful idea, procedures and recommendation
 - Write and share reports containing traditions, ideas for completed projects, continuing projects and concerns, or ideas never carried out
 - Review personal and organizational files together
 - Acquaint new officers with physical environment, supplies and equipment
 - Introduce related personnel (advisor, contact, etc.)

- Knowledge of the organization's structure, goals and accomplishment (through complete and organized files):
 - Constitution and bylaws
 - Job description and role clarifications
 - Organizational goals and objectives
 - Status reports on current projects
 - Evaluations of previous projects and programs
 - Previous minutes and reports
 - Resources – contact e-mails and phone numbers, account numbers, etc.
 - Financial books and records
 - Historical records, equipment, scrapbooks

Getting Started: The Transition Period

One of the most crucial points in the life of an organization occurs when old officers leave and a new set begins. Some schools have installation ceremonies to recognize this event, but the formal installation is secondary to the actual process of growth and change in an organization.

All old and new officers should exchange records and equipment as soon as the transition period begins. This exchange may be informal, but in ideal circumstances the old and new members meet to transfer materials and ideas. This is an especially valuable experience for new officers, as it gives them a chance to get to know one another, as well as develop an understanding of the group's philosophy and goals.

Workshop

A one-day workshop provides an important step in the team-building process. There are five phases to a complete transition workshop:

1. Review of past year

All outgoing and new officers should be present. Examine, evaluate, and gather helpful suggestions for the coming year.

2. Team building

This next phase is for new officers only. A sponsor or advisor can lead the group through various exercises designed to break the ice.

3. Review of bylaws and past issues

Too often, new officers are inclined to start without any consideration for the history of the organization. A period of discussion and consideration of prior commitments will give the new officers a sense of direction.

4. Goal setting

What does the organization hope to achieve in the year to come? Keep the goals general and practice good group relations skills.

5. Gather help

Bring others who may be helpful to the organization. This may include teachers, alumni, and officers from other organizations.

KNOW:

- The purpose of the organization, why it exists, what it should accomplish
- How to evaluate the success of activities
- Parliamentary procedure and other meeting techniques
- Relevant policies of the institution
- The constitution of the organization
- The limits of the executive group
- Performance expectations and responsibilities
- The function of the advisor in the organization
- The individual talents and abilities of fellow students- and how to use them to the best advantage of the organization

HAVE:

- Good attitudes about yourself and your own worth as well as the worth of others, of groups, of authority, and of what can be accomplished through your leadership
- The ability to listen to the contributions of others plus acceptable ways of eliciting action from them
- Experience in leadership for yourself, for others and willingness to use those skills
- Direction for personal growth
- Ability to stimulate group spirit- with awareness of consequences

- Self- discipline, self- knowledge, self determination
- Enthusiasm and dedication and a lot more!

ORGANIZE:

The organization and yourself

- by developing goals in cooperation with the advisor, members, and organization
- by implementing established goals through projects designed to achieve them
- by producing positive direction toward achieving objectives
- by periodically reevaluating goals and redefining them for relevance.

LEAD:

- yourself
- other officers
- the organization

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS!!