

Student Leadership Handbook



**Office of Student Life &
Leadership**

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
A Successful Student Leader	4
Why Leadership?	5
What is Leadership?	6
Becoming a Leader	7
Leading a Successful Meeting	10
Organizational Leadership	16
Group Goal Setting	17
Group Communication	18
Conflict Resolution	19
Motivation	21
Delegation	22
Officer Transition	24
Final Thoughts on Leadership	34

Student Leadership

The Student Leadership Handbook is designed for students in various stages of leadership development. Whether you are new to campus and just starting to get involved or if you are the president of an organization, you will find an abundance of useful information, resources, forms, and worksheets to meet your needs.



A Successful Student Leader...

- Accepts his/her popularity as a responsibility, not a free ticket to sit back and do nothing

- Thinks of his/her office or position of responsibility as a tool for personal learning and improvement of his/her own abilities

- Is unselfish in his/her desire to help others learn –delegates, for involvement gives others the opportunity to learn as well

- Is an example of what he/she wants others to be, is cooperative and organized, and gets things done

- Listens and is sensitive to what his/her fellow students want, not just what his/her group of friends want

- Knows the facts, procedures, schedules and policies before she/he begins working whether alone or with others

- Doesn't take the glory for someone else's work and gives sincere praise when praise is due.



Adapted from: Binghamton University, CEL



Why Leadership?

Being a student leader is quite a responsibility – one that can be both bewildering and exhilarating. The skills you use and develop now will stay with you long after you graduate from Davidson County Community College. Leadership skills are highly sought after by graduate schools and the business world –college graduates who have had a well-rounded undergraduate experience, including both academic and co-curricular involvement and leadership are very marketable. Leadership skills such as facilitating, communicating, listening, planning, organizing, supporting, initiating, managing, confronting, presenting, and many more are commonly used by student leaders and are useful tools to take with you. These transferable skills will serve you well as you move into the next phase in your life after Davidson County Community College, so make the most of it!

What is Leadership?



Leadership is made up of two philosophical components:

1. Leadership is FOR GIVING.
2. Leadership is FORGIVING.

Many young people see a leadership position as the chance to be in charge, to tell others what to do, to delegate work, and to put them in a posture of authority. Nothing could be further from the truth. The essence of an effective leader lies in the student's ability to serve others, to create success for the people in the organization. It is the opportunity to give, to contribute, to roll-up one's sleeves and begin moving in a positive forward direction. Whether it is straightening the chairs, putting the stands away, creating a colorful bulletin board, or working with someone on a musical passage, the leader is the person who does: "What needs to be done, when it needs to be done, whether he/she wants to do it or not, without anybody asking."

The second aspect of leadership centers on the concept of forgiving. When something goes awry (and it will), many young leaders want to react to the situation by reprimanding the followers for their inability to fulfill the leader's suggestion/s. However, the true leader will forgive the people involved and proactively refocus the energies to correct the problem and quickly get back on-course. Psychologically (and intellectually) we know, "People do not get better by making them feel worse." All-too-often, there is a tendency for young leaders to chastise those who fall short of the given assignment; nothing could be more detrimental to the trust-relationship necessary for future success in any leader/follower relationship. The solution is simple: forgive, correct, and proceed

forward. When selecting those chosen students who will be working with their peers in a leadership capacity, look beyond their group popularity, their musical gifts, and even their academic standing; begin to observe how they interact with others, and pay special attention to those who always are considerate of their fellow students and willing to serve those by going above and beyond the call of duty. These are the candidates who are most likely to succeed as leaders; they “live” the values required of every contributing leader by giving and forgiving.

Adapted from: *The Selection and Development of Effective Student Leaders* by Tim Lautzenheiser

Becoming a Leader

I Went on a Search to Become a Leader

I went on a search to become a leader. I searched high and low. I spoke with authority and people listened. But alas, there was one who was wiser than I, and they followed that individual. I sought to inspire confidence, but the crowd responded, "Why should I trust you?" I postured, and I assumed that look of leadership with a countenance that flowed with confidence and pride, but many passed me by and never noticed my air of elegance. I ran ahead of the others, pointing new ways to new heights. I demonstrated that I knew the route to greatness. And then I looked back, and I was alone. "What shall I do?" I queried. "I've tried hard and used all that I know." And I sat down and pondered long. And then, I listened to the voices around me. And I heard what the group was trying to accomplish. I rolled up my sleeves and joined in the work. As we worked, I asked, "Are we all together in what we want to do and how to get the job done?" And we thought together, and we fought together, and we struggled towards our goal. I found myself encouraging the fainthearted. I sought ideas of those too shy to speak out. I taught those who had little skill. I praised those who worked hard. When our task was completed, one of the group members turned to me and said, "This would not have been done but for your leadership." At first, I

said, "I didn't lead. I just worked like the rest." And then I understood, leadership is not a goal. It's a way to reaching a goal. I lead best when I help others to go where we've decided to go. I lead best when I help others to use themselves creatively. I lead best when I forget about myself as leader and focus on my group...their needs and their goals. To lead is to serve...to give...to achieve together.

Resource: Schoel, J., Stratton, M. (Eds.) (1990). *Gold nuggets: Readings for experiential education*. Hamilton, MA: Project Adventure, Inc.

Leading a Successful Meeting



Careful planning is the secret to running an effective meeting. Poorly planned or unplanned meetings are typically viewed as boring, unproductive, and a waste of time. However, with proper planning any meeting can be productive and fun. The following steps will guide you in planning a meeting that is informative and enjoyable to all members.

Before the Meeting

- ❖ Define the purpose of the meeting. A meeting without a purpose is like a class without an instructor. The purpose is the reason why people come to the meetings. Without a purpose, members may feel that their time was wasted and it could discourage their return to the organization.
- ❖ Develop an agenda. *(For more information on developing an agenda see below).
- ❖ Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it.
- ❖ Distribute the agenda and any other materials before the meeting so that members can be prepared.
- ❖ The location of the meeting is very important. Choose a location that is easy for members to find on campus. Take time to check out the room prior to your meeting to ensure that the space is appropriate.
- ❖ Be sure that everyone knows where and when the meeting will be held. If possible, hold meetings at the same time and location every week.

During the Meeting

- ❖ Greet members to make them feel welcome and be sure to introduce any new members.

- ❖ If possible, serve light refreshments.

- ❖ Start on time. End on time.

- ❖ Follow the agenda.

- ❖ Encourage discussion so that you get different ideas and viewpoints.

- ❖ Remember that the organization belongs to all of the members. When members see that their ideas have an impact on the decision-making process, their commitment to the organization is increased.

- ❖ Keep the discussion on topic and moving toward an eventual decision.

- ❖ Keep minutes of the meeting for future reference in case a question or problem arises. * (For more information on meeting minutes see below)

- ❖ The meeting minutes should include people who attended, important discussions, and decisions the group made

- ❖ The leader or facilitator should model leadership skills such as staying on task, listening, valuing members, and appreciating diverse points of view.

- ❖ Set a date and time for the next meeting.

Developing Meeting Agendas for Student Organizations



The heart of every club or organization is found during its meetings. Meetings range from a lighthearted, informational gathering of general members to a heated decision making session of executive board members. Good meetings are always a result of careful preparation and planning. There are different ways to run a meeting. Whether you use parliamentary procedure or a more relaxed format, it is important to know what your purpose and goals are, how you hope to accomplish your goals, and how you communicate.

Preparing an agenda not only communicates to your group what the meeting is about, but also makes you think in advance about what information you would like to cover during the meeting. An agenda is an outline of the issues that a group will discuss during a meeting.

The agenda is prepared by the officers of the organization, with assistance from the organization's advisor. Once prepared, the agenda is distributed to members at least one day prior to the meeting either by email or in printed form. This allows members to come to the meeting prepared to discuss the agenda items, exchange information and make decisions.

THE AGENDA

The following agenda items are standard in most groups. You can adapt them to meet the needs of your organization. You may want to use "Robert's Rules of Order."

- **Call to Order** - The Chair calls the meeting to order. The call order may be followed by any opening ceremony the organization may have instituted.
- **Roll Call** - If attendance is taken, it should be done from a prepared list of members' names. The list can include spaces for recording whether a member is present, absent or tardy. Or, pass around a sign-in sheet during the meeting.
- **Reading and Approval of Minutes** - After the minutes are read, any corrections are made and minutes are approved.
- **Reports of the Officers** - The Chair recognizes each officer in turn. Reports are usually for informational purposes. If a report involves a recommendation for action, the group may discuss the recommendation when the report is finished.
- **Reports of the Committees** - The Chair calls for reports from standing committees first, followed by reports of special committees. Again, if a recommendation is made in the report, it may be discussed when the report is finished.
- **Unfinished Business** - Includes all business left over from previous meetings, working from a list of unfinished business topics, each one in turn for discussion and action.
- **New Business** - Members can introduce any new topics at this time.
- **Announcements** - The Chair may make, or call upon other members to make, any announcements of interest to the organization.

- **Program** - Some organizations have a speaker, film, or other educational or cultural program. This is usually presented before the meeting is adjourned, because the program may require action to be taken by the organization.
- **Adjournment** - When the agenda is completed.

USING THE AGENDA

Simply putting topics on a list will not make your meetings more productive. Consider these points as you construct and use an agenda:

- Be realistic about the amount of time each topic will take. Avoid an over-crowded agenda. If choices must be made, leave more time for important issues.
- Take up the less complicated topics first, leaving time at the end for more complex issues.
- Stick to the agenda. During the meeting, the agenda is followed unless two-thirds of those present wish to make a change.
- It is the President's job to make sure the members follow the agenda so that meetings run efficiently. You may have to bring people back on track by stating something like, "I THINK WE NEED TO GET BACK TO THE ISSUE WE WERE DISCUSSING."
- Introduce each agenda topic with a comment about why it's on the agenda.
- Allow full discussion of each topic. People can continue to debate an issue until they are finished, or until two-thirds of those present agree to end the discussion.
- Close discussion of each topic with plans for future action.

Using an agenda at your meetings may not solve all of your problems, but an agenda does give a meeting direction and purpose. You may choose to be less structured than the format presented here, but some structure is necessary to ensure that your organization "takes care of business." Then, members are able to leave the meeting feeling that they accomplished their work and have contributed to the organization.

Organizational Leadership

One of the biggest challenges student organizations have is simply working together as a group. The following suggestions are nowhere near an exhaustive list, but rather serve as a starting off point. Whether or not an individual holds an office in the organization, each person belonging to a group is a member of that organization, and thus has made a commitment to the group. That commitment also comes with a set of needs:

1. Members need to know what is going to happen to them as people, what will be expected of them, how their contributions will fit into the group, and what, if any, are the limitations on their actions.
2. Members need a sense of belonging in the organization – a feeling that no one objects to their individual presence; a feeling that they are sincerely welcomed; a feeling that they are honestly needed for who they are, not just for their hands, their money, etc., a feeling that they are expected to carry purposes forward as reflected by the group's goals.
3. Members need to have a share in planning the group goals in a general climate of freedom. (Their individual needs will be satisfied only when they feel that their ideas have had a fair hearing).
4. Members need to feel that the group's goals are within reach, and that they make sense.
5. Members need to feel what they are doing contributes to the welfare of others – that it extends in purpose beyond the group itself.
6. Members need to share in making the rules of the group – the rules by which, together, the group shall live and work toward their goals.
7. Members need to know in some clear detail just what is expected of them so that they can work confidently.
8. Members need to have responsibilities delegated to them that challenge, that are within range of their abilities, and that contribute toward reaching their group goals.
9. Members need to see that progress is being made toward the goal the group has set.
10. Members need to have confidence in the leadership of the group. This confidence will be based ultimately upon their assurance of consistent, fair treatment from the person in charge of the group.



Group Goal Setting

To have a successful year, your organization should start by thinking about the following questions:

1. What does this organization contribute to campus life?
2. What is it that makes this organization unique?
3. What kind of atmosphere is needed to move this organization forward?
4. What kind of leadership is needed to move the organization?
5. What expectations do we have of each other as members of this organization?
6. What do we want to achieve this year?

The answers to these questions should help your group have a better understanding of which direction to take this year. Now as an entire organization or just within your executive board (this may depend on the size of your organization), develop a clear list of prioritized goals.

Organization goals should include short term action items, who will be involved with the goal, a timeline for achievement, and a plan on how to assess how well the goal was met.

Be sure to re-visit your goals throughout the year as an organization, and evaluate how close you are to reaching your goal, and what changes (if any) do you need to make to succeed.

Don't forget to celebrate after a goal has been achieved. Acknowledge the hard work and support of all the members involved. Take time to reflect what made the goal successful, and what could have gone better.

In addition to having organizational goals, it may be helpful to have members of the organization do personal goal setting related to their role within the organization.

Group Communication

Good communication among organization members is necessary for a successful and productive team. To keep communication open within your organization, consider the following:

- ❖ Involve organization members in decision-making, goal-setting, and problem –solving.
- ❖ Define goals clearly. Successful organizations know their common goals and can work together to achieve them.
- ❖ Encourage an organization vision and talk regularly about what it means.
- ❖ Clearly define performance expectations for members.
- ❖ Maintain trust and integrity. Successful organization members feel safe expressing opinions and receiving feedback from other members because they know the information will only be used for the good of the group.
- ❖ Use meetings effectively. Organization members need to meet regularly to keep information flowing and communication open.
- ❖ Use multiple mediums for getting information out. Tell people at meetings; print it in meeting notes, use email, Black board, etc.
- ❖ Create a Black board group that all members can join and post documents, participate in discussion boards, and easily access information.
- ❖ Use email effectively. Most people do not want to read really long emails, so keep the information brief and easy to read as often as possible. When there is a lot of information that needs to go out, consider using bullet points, bold typeface, italics, and other ways to make it easier to read.
- ❖ Focus on cooperation, not competition, to achieve common goals.
- ❖ Build interpersonal relationships. Team members work together better when they have ties that go beyond the scope of the organization; social activities, recreational meetings, and strong interpersonal relationships all contribute to bonding.
- ❖ Build cohesion within the organization by fostering each member's role as dependent on all the others.
- ❖ Recognize a job well done by individuals and the group. Praise is one of your most important communication tools.

Conflict Resolution

At times, you as a leader will be called upon (in some way) to help resolve conflict. If, during a group discussion, consensus is not reached and dissent rather than decision occurs, you may need to meet to resolve these conflicts.

Listed below are those skills and behaviors that may give you some insight into how to deal with these types of situations.

- ~ Meet with those people involved in the conflict.
- ~ Ask yourself if this is a personal problem between members or a split within the organization.
- ~ Don't try to resolve personal problems in an open meeting.
- ~ Draw people into discussion, encouraging them to give their point of view.
- ~ Discuss the problem, not each other.
- ~ Discuss its effect on members and the organization.
- ~ Do not allow smart remarks, slurs, etc.
- ~ State facts and observable behavior. **EX:** "I never heard from you regarding the cost of the invitations." **NOT** "You are irresponsible. You can't be trusted."
- ~ Don't talk about irrelevant issues. Discuss the present. Stay on the subject.
- ~ Suggest alternatives.
- ~ Leave the meeting with everyone understanding what was accomplished.
- ~ Bring closure to the meeting. State any actions which will be taken. **EX:** "It seems there was miscommunication. We agreed that from now on each committee chairperson will call the president once a week to give a status report."

Getting Groups to Resolve their Own Conflicts

It's always better when the people involved in a conflict resolve it with a minimum of outside help. Here's how a mediator can nudge the process along:

- Intervene only when asked
- Encourage each side to explore the other's view point, state the other's case, or assume the other's role. Ask each to describe what the other is saying
- Allow plenty of time for conflict resolution
- Listen actively to both sides
- Take a win-win approach
- Restate common goals - repeatedly
- Ask for suggested resolutions from the participants
- Redirect the focus to the issues, not personalities
- Point out misunderstandings

If you're a Participant in the Conflict

In addition to the above strategies, keep the following points in mind:

- Give up graciously if the evidence shows you're wrong. The ability to say "I was wrong" sends a powerful message that can improve future conflict-resolution efforts
- Even when you're "right" it's helpful to admit blame in some of the circumstances that led to the conflict.
- Avoid getting angry. Count to 10, take a cooling-off break, whatever it takes. If emotions are high, consider bringing in a neutral third party

Motivation

One of the most common complaints we hear from student leaders is that their members aren't motivated and that only a few exert any effort on behalf of the organization. Some things for you to consider are that most people:



- ~ Need opportunities for growth and self-development.
- ~ Will respond to opportunities for challenge, responsibility, and interesting work.
- ~ Need their efforts recognized.
- ~ Want to belong and to develop relationships within the organization.
- ~ Want to be informed about the group and feel involved.

Some Tips for Motivating Members:

- ~ Be enthusiastic.
- ~ Delegate authority. This helps to get your members involved and limits burn out.
- ~ Tell people what you expect of them.
- ~ Give constructive criticism privately.
- ~ Be honest.
- ~ Encourage opinions and suggestions at meetings.
- ~ Respect others' opinions.
- ~ Don't monopolize (or let anyone else monopolize) the meeting.
- ~ Encourage discussion about controversial issues in order for the organization to reach an informed decision.
- ~ Make use of members with special talents, skills, etc. Have a party or social event to generate interest.
- ~ Reward and recognize member's work.

REMEMBER: If the members are motivated and involved your job as a leader will be easier.

Adapted from: *The University of Cincinnati Resource Book 1998-1999.*

Delegation

Do any of the following phrases sound familiar to you?

“It’s easier for me to do it myself because it would just take too long to explain how to do it to someone else”

“If I do it myself, I know it will get done right!”

“I was elected/appointed as the group leader – that means there is an expectation that I should be the person who puts in the most time or the long hours – I shouldn’t expect or ask others to do the same”

“I’m just paying my dues as the leader of this group.”

One of the more difficult tasks for a leader to do is to delegate. However, ineffective delegation can lead to leader burnout, and can also contribute to group members feeling as though they don’t really matter, which can ultimately lead to attrition. Remember, your members are your greatest resource. Let them create; let them put their creativity into action!

Effective delegation is important because it:

- ❖ Allows more people to be actively involved
- ❖ Distributes the work load
- ❖ Motivates members by giving them value and importance
- ❖ Helps organizations run more smoothly

What and when to delegate:

- ❖ Matters that keep repeating themselves
- ❖ Minor decisions made most frequently
- ❖ Details that take up large chunks of time
- ❖ When you feel someone else has particular qualifications which would suit the task
- ❖ When someone expresses interest in the task

What and when NOT to delegate:

- ❖ Situations where you have to change someone’s behavior
- ❖ A decision that involves someone else’s morale
- ❖ Something that you yourself would not be willing to do

Methods for effective delegation:

- ❖ Ask for volunteers – interest and belief in something is one of the greatest motivators for success
- ❖ Suggest someone you feel would be good for the task; silence in response to a request for volunteers does NOT necessarily mean lack of interest; often, a person won't volunteer due to lack of self confidence
- ❖ Assign the task to someone; the person can always decline
- ❖ Spread the “good” tasks around – good jobs give people status and value; make sure the same people don't always get the good tasks – spread the wealth!

Guidelines for effective delegation:

- ❖ Choose the appropriate person for the job carefully; specific responsibilities must be appropriate for the growth and/or developmental needs of that person at that time
- ❖ Explain why the person(s) was/were selected for the job
- ❖ Delegate segments that make sense, not bits and pieces of a task
- ❖ Discuss the task at hand; whenever possible, give the person(s) being delegated to a voice in the decision-making
- ❖ Define clearly the responsibilities being delegated to each person; explain what is expected and the bounds of authority; be sure agreement is reached as to areas where the person can function freely
- ❖ Give accurate and honest feedback; people want and deserve to know how they're doing; allow for risk taking and mistakes
- ❖ Support your officers and chairpersons by sharing information and plans with them
- ❖ Really delegate! Most responsible people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder or taking back parts of their assignment before they have a chance to do it – let them do the job!
- ❖ Delegating does not eliminate work, it simply changes it; the time spent doing a job can be spent enabling several people to do numerous jobs

Resource: University of Michigan SODC

Passing the Baton: Student Organization Officer Transition

Before the newly-elected officers of your organization officially assume their responsibilities, it is wise for the old and new officers to get together for a “transition meeting.” Through such a transition meeting, the new officers will be able to learn from the experience of the outgoing officers and offer continuity and continued growth for the organization. A casual, open atmosphere should be encouraged so that the organization can benefit from an honest evaluation of the accomplishments and problems of the previous year. The following outline can help you make your transition meeting flow as smoothly as possible.

I. *Welcome and Introductions*

(Help participants get acquainted and explain the purpose of the meeting)

II. *The Year in Review*

A. **Goals:** Review the group’s goals for the previous year.

What did we hope to accomplish?

How well did we do on each goal?

Which goals should be carried on this year?

Which goals need to be changed?

Which goals are no longer feasible?

B. **Programs and Activities:** Evaluate what your group did.

How effective were the programs / activities we sponsored?

Did we have a good balance in our schedule of programs and activities?

Were our programs and activities consistent with our goals?

Which activities and programs do we want to repeat?

C. **Membership:** Evaluate number of members and their commitment

Do we have too many, too few, or just the right amount of members?

Were our recruitment efforts successful?

Are our members as actively involved as we want them to be?

Were the chances for members to get involved in a meaningful way?

D. **Officers and Organizational Structure:** Evaluate officers and structure.

Are officer roles and responsibilities clearly described?

Did officers work as a team, or is there more teamwork needed?

Is the time and effort required in each office comparable?

Is there two-way communication between officers and members?

How do the members feel about the officers?

E. Organizational Operations: Evaluate finances, communication, etc.

Were the finances adequate for our group, and managed properly?

Were meetings run effectively? Was their frequency adequate?

Did the committee structure work?

Did we have scheduling conflicts with other groups or activities?

F. Faculty Involvement: Evaluate both quality and quantity.

Did our advisor provide the support we needed?

Did we give our advisors and other faculty a chance to get involved?

How could we improve faculty involvement?

G. Public Image: Evaluate how other groups perceive you.

How do we see ourselves? Is this how “outsiders” see us?

How can we enhance our image?

III. *Your Legacy to the New Officer Team*

A. What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the group?

B. What is the best advice you can give your successor?

C. What were the major challenges and accomplishments in your term?

IV. *Officer Transition*

Have the new and outgoing officers meet individually to discuss:

A. Responsibilities of the position, with a job description if possible.

B. A timetable for completion of annual duties.

C. Unfinished projects.

D. Important contacts and resource persons.

E. Mistakes that could have been avoided.

F. Advice for the new officer.

G. Any questions the new officer may have.

H. Where the outgoing officer can be reached with future questions.

V. *Wrap-Up*

“Pass the gavel” in a semi-official ceremony and wish everyone luck! Provide an opportunity for informal socializing.

Checklist of Suggested Tasks for Outgoing Officers

- Create and update a Transition Binder throughout the entire year.
- Organize your office, materials, thoughts, etc.
- Finish all correspondence that you can.
- Prepare an end-of-the-year report incorporating the organization's goals, activities, and accomplishments.
- Using the invaluable hindsight that you now have, identify the areas of responsibility, people, details, phone numbers, etc. that you wish someone had told you when you took office.
- Review the Organization's constitution, by-laws, written material, and goals and outline any areas needing attention or revision.
- Incorporate a formal transition into your Constitution and bylaws to ensure the continuity and effective functioning of the organization.
- When new officers have been elected, orient them together as a group with all of the outgoing officers. Include the organization's advisor in this process as well. Try going on a retreat together. This process provides the new leaders with an opportunity to understand each other's roles and to start building their leadership team. Outgoing officers should openly share what they believe went well and what they would change if they had it to do over again.
- Make introductions to resources. Schedule time to walk around campus with the new officers and introduce them to important people who can serve as key resources (Student Life and Leadership, Student Organizations, Aztec Center Meeting Services, etc.). In addition, make sure new officers meet with the organization's faculty/staff advisor.

Guidelines for Preparing a Transition Binder

A binder can be a beneficial tool in orienting the new officers with all the functions and responsibilities of their positions. It should cover all aspects of officer responsibilities and how those tasks fit into the organization's big picture. Recommend that the new officers file "historical" documents in the binder (e.g., meeting minutes) when he/she has become comfortable with the information. Then, the binder can be used as a working tool rather than something to be completed at the end of the year (usually during finals). The new officers will thank you throughout the year.

What to Keep in the Transition Binder:

▪ **Introduction**

- Table of contents
- Contact sheet for new leadership/membership
- Resources (faculty/staff advisor contact information, National HQ information, Chapter login for National Website, other campus groups contact information)
- Calendar of events and deadlines
- Mission statement
- Goals and objectives
- History of organization and committee/program
- Job/position descriptions
- Organizational chart for organization
- Officer selection process information and timeline
- Membership recruitment information and timeline

▪ **Officer Position**

- Responsibilities - the "big picture"
- Procedures - the small details or the "how to's", including a list of things that need to be done immediately (e.g., register organization for on-campus status, etc.)
- Detailed position description



- Letter from former to new officer, including advice, experiences, what was improved upon this year, things to know when getting started, priorities. Letter is usually written informally.
- Blank "Bright Ideas" sheet to be used throughout the year; ideas that can help move the organization
- Current Goals
- For President and all other positions - A Chapter/Organization Resource Manual
- **Agendas and Minutes**
- **Membership Information**
 - List of members (students, paying (if required), others) and their contact information (e-mail, phone number)
 - List of people expressing an interest but not joining/paying and their contact information
 - Committee roster
 - Membership application
- **Correspondence**
 - Monthly mailings and e-mails for President
 - Pertinent Listserv messages
 - E-mails to the chapter/organization - pertinent to the positions
 - E-mails from the advisor with important information
- **Progress Reports-Use for projects/committees to keep track of progress**
 - Blank Progress Reports (to be completed throughout the year) with guidelines.
 - A progress report provides the "working draft" for most of the transition binder. It provides for the officer/member to write down what is new or different, what has been improved upon, what is in progress, accomplishments, etc.
 - Completed Progress Reports
- **By-Laws and Budget**
 - Copy of the yearly budget sheet and any financial statements



- Copies of receipts
- Fundraising ideas/projects
- Copy of By-Laws and constitution of the Chapter/Organization
- **National Conference, National Assembly and Regional Activities (if appropriate)**
 - Any materials pertinent to these events like brochures, fact sheets, agendas, information collected at the last event, etc.
 - Regional Activity Handbook
- **Special Events**
 - Sample posters/flyers from past projects, old press releases, Event Approval process instructions, Event Planning Guide, Campus events contact list
 - Copies of all Chapter/Organization event materials (e.g., invitations, posters, awards, informative quarter sheets, etc.)
 - Student/Organization specific run events (each semester or annual, etc.)
 - Create a Master Calendar for the semester or year and plan out special events in advance.
- **Publications and Newsletters**
- **Contacts**
 - Information for Student Life and Leadership
 - Have a binder insert for business cards
 - Professional contacts in the area
 - Chapter/Organization specific contacts
- **Miscellaneous Information**
 - Set up a separate section of the binder for Miscellaneous Information
 - Use this section for information that needs to be filed away and for keeping extra forms
- **Transition**
 - Agendas and handouts from past training workshops or meetings
 - Information on the “nuts and bolts of the organization



Outgoing Officer Worksheet

Please complete before transition meetings and training sessions. Think through and respond to the following questions regarding your responsibilities. This information will be helpful to your successor.

1. What I liked best about my job...
2. What I liked least about my job...
3. The most difficult decision I made was...
4. What I could have done to make the experience better was...
5. Obstacles to performing my job effectively were...
6. Aids which assisted me in handling my job were...
7. Things I wish I'd known before I took the job were...

Maintaining Continuity: Transition Questions

Directions: Many of these questions are geared toward former or out-going officers. They should be considered carefully and communicated to the newly elected officer. New officers can use these questions to brainstorm ideas or goals for the upcoming term of office.

1. What do you perceive to be your organization's objectives or goals?
2. What do you consider to be the responsibility of your office?
3. What do you wish you had done, but did not?
4. What did you try that did not work? Why did it not work?
5. What problems or areas will require attention within the next year?
6. Who was the most helpful in getting things done? (Who were good resources?)
7. What should be done immediately in the fall?

One-on-One Meeting Handout

This handout will assist in officer transition by focusing upon past accomplishments and providing a critique of the year in office. This report should serve as a supplementary resource in planning for the new officer's term.

Office: _____ Name: _____

1. List other officers with whom you worked and the projects involved.
2. List specific accomplishments realized during your term in office and the reasons for their success.
3. List any problems or disappointments you encountered as a part of your office and suggest ways of avoiding or correcting them.
4. List supplemental materials and sources of information you found most helpful. .
5. Comment on the timetable applicable to your office. Give suggestions for increasing efficiency and effectiveness.
6. List any other suggestions you feel would be helpful to your successor in carrying out the responsibilities of this office.

Source: NIC Retreat Workbook (verbatim, p. 47)

Incoming Officer's Transition Worksheet

[Questions to ask during transition]

Please think through and respond to the following questions regarding your responsibilities. This information will be helpful to your successor when your term is complete.

1. Things specific to the position I want to know about (forms, duties, etc...)

2. Things I should do over the summer...

3. People (positions) that I should get to know...

4. Services that I need to know about...

5. Things I need to know about working with my advisor...

6. Other questions I want answered...

The Student Organization Officer Transition section is adapted from:
*The Wichita State University Student Organizations' Handbook (1992-1993) and
The San Diego State University Student Organization Handbook*

Some Final Thoughts on Leadership



People May Not Remember Everything You Said, but They Will Remember How You Made Them Feel.

Make people feel special in the first minute you talk to them. It could be a compliment. It might be a question about something that is going on in their life; anything that lets people know that you consider them to be important and significant. You have the ability to encourage or discourage in the first 60 seconds of your conversation. You have a chance to create something memorable or ordinary. People may not remember everything you said, but they will remember how you made them feel.

Don't Carry Emotional Baggage

As a student leader, you only have a year in your position. You don't have time to carry emotional baggage around and avoid people because of tension from conflict. If something comes up between you and someone else, get it taken care of and move on. Letting things fester or go unresolved only makes matters worse. It will tend to spread to others as they begin to take sides and form camps around the conflict. Conflict doesn't tend to go away on its own. Be the leader and be intentional in resolving issues as quickly as possible.

Don't Hog the Spotlight

Since you're in a student leadership position, people may naturally want to praise you when something goes well. One of the best ways to motivate others is to deflect the praise you receive on to the people you lead. Don't hog the spotlight. Pass the credit on to those who helped make things happen. Your followers will appreciate the attention and be more motivated to work with excellence on the next project that comes along. As the leader, you don't "need" the credit; you "need" your people to be the best they can be. You'll be amazed how much more they'll respect your leadership when you focus on them during those moments when you might have the right to focus on yourself. Give credit to others.

Get Involved in Making the World a Better Place.

Ultimately, you were given gifts, strengths, talents, abilities, smarts, skills...you get the idea...not to make yourself better - but so you can be actively engaged in bettering the world. The best student leaders find ways to get involved in their community, fight for social justice, and right the wrongs caused by poverty and inequality. And those experiences are then incorporated into the fabric of your leadership. And you know what they give you? Perspective. Compassion. Heart. People like to see that in their leaders.

See Situations From a Variety of Perspectives.

For all of the knowledge and wisdom and experience you have - yours is only ONE perspective. Two people can see the same thing and come away with two different stories. That's because you don't see the world as it is - you see the world as YOU are. Change the way you are look at something. Your world will expand and you'll increase the odds of making a good decision. Don't surround yourself with people who think like you...you already know how you think. Find people that can offer you a whole new way of looking at the world. And your world will get a whole lot bigger.

Show Respect to Adults, Mentors, Advisors, Administrators, and Teachers.

You are in your position for one year. But the adults that you work with probably stay in their same position year in and year out. They've seen a lot of student leaders come and go. One of the ways that you can distinguish yourself above the others is by being respectful. This doesn't mean you have to agree with everything. But you understand that this is their job. More often they are in this position because they want to invest in the lives of students. They probably have a lot of experience. Don't be frustrated by their cynicism of your new idea. They've seen it before in one form or another. Listen to their hesitancy and show them why your version will work. If you come at it with an "us against them" mindset, you'll only make it difficult on yourself.

Adapted from: *Student Leader: 35 Ways to Put the Leader in Student Leader* by Tim Milburn.