RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF MEMBERS

Students stay with organized, dynamic groups that meet their personal goals for membership. Prospective members want to know that the organization is moving forward and will be successful in achieving its goals. Identifying the needs of the individual members is the key to having a strong organization with enthusiastic members. Motivation may be one of the most difficult tasks a leader faces. Some days it seems hard enough to feel enthusiastic and excited about the group's meeting or activity, so how will you motivate the rest of the group?

Important questions to consider when recruiting and retaining members.

**Growth.** Does your organization provide growth opportunities for all interested members? Are there opportunities for members to move into positions of leadership or are leadership opportunities usually "saved" for the senior members?

**Recognition.** Do you recognize members when great things occur in your organization? Don't wait until the end of the year. People need and appreciate being recognized in a timely manner for their hard work and accomplishments. Recognition or awards that are presented may also serve as a motivating factor for other members who would like to achieve a certain level of success.

**Achievement.** A sense of "team" achievement is important. Healthy organizations make sure that everyone feels as if they contributed to the success of the organization. When the organization is honored, it is important to realize that everyone has contributed and should have a feeling of accomplishment, from a member who may have done a simple task to the president of the organization.

**Participation.** Can everyone participate in programs and events? Make sure your organization is open and willing to accept all student members' contributions regardless of how long they have been with the organization.

**Enjoyment.** Volunteering and working hard in an organization has to be fun! If being part of a group isn't fun, why be a member? A student's time is valuable and there are many opportunities for involvement. Make sure one of the best options on campus is being involved with your organization!
Some Tips on Motivation

Start with Yourself
- Be a motivated and enthusiastic role model
- Be a good listener
- Be consistent
- Be organized
- Admit when you are wrong or make a mistake
- Be careful of what you say and how you say it (Be considerate)
- Do not be upset by little hassles
- Never forget that the leader sets an example

Take it to the Individual
- Criticize and approve constructively
- Criticize in private
- Praise in public
- Play up the positive
- Give weight to the fact that people carry out their own best ideas
- Use every opportunity to build a member’s sense of importance in his/her work
- Give honest credit where credit is due
- Avoid domination or forcefulness
- Let members know where they stand and why
- Make personal contact before and after meetings to encourage participation
- Help others think better of themselves throughout the activity
- Encourage shy members to participate and speak up

Express It To The Group
- Make the members want to do things-inspiration, incentive, recognition
- Study members and determine what makes each of them tick
- Show interest in and appreciation for others
- Let members know your plan, even at the early stages
- Delegate responsibility for details to members
- Make your wishes known by suggestion or request
- When you make a request or suggestion, be sure to explain your reasons for it
- Show members you have confidence in them and expect them to do their best
- Ask members for their counsel and help
- If an idea is adopted or rejected, tell the originator why
- Share your goals, sense of direction, and provide something to strive for and achieve
- Keep members informed on matters affecting them
- Utilize small groups and place members on committees that interest them
- Avoid assigning unnecessary tasks
- Encourage sharing without criticism or judgment
- Brainstorm new goals, programs and projects
- Establish a genuine feeling for belonging to a group
- Provide a valuable learning experience as a result of the activity
- Remember to express your appreciation to your members

Adapted from LeaderBits, the University of Kansas, and Dr. Sara Boatman’s GRAPE theory of motivation