

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF MEMBERS

Recruitment and retention are essential elements to your organization's ability to sustain itself on campus. New members are the lifeblood of every organization. They bring new ideas, increase the organization's person power, foster organizational growth, and prevent member burn out. When retained, they take over leadership roles, recruit new members and mentor them when they join. Every member should be involved in the planning and implementation of recruitment and retention initiatives. Below are tips for establishing good strategies for recruiting and retaining membership. For more information on membership recruitment and retention, contact Student Activities at studentactivities@austin.utexas.edu.

Member Recruitment

Recruitment is the initial processes or strategies an organization uses to get students to agree to join the organization. Students join organizations for many reasons. They want to get involved, meet people and make new friends; they want to develop skills and have fun. Groups need new members because they bring new ideas and talents, in addition to replacing old members. It is vital that an organization has a well-conceived and executed recruitment plan with goals. Prospective members want to know that the organization is moving forward and will be successful in achieving its goals.

Virtual Recruiting Tips

1. Advertise on campus monitors in the [Texas Unions](#).
2. Attend a virtual [Student Organization Fair](#).
3. List recruiting events and meetings on [HornsLink events board](#).
4. Schedule a virtual follow up with anyone who visited a recent meeting.
5. Use the [News Tool](#) on HornsLink to highlight achievements and outstanding members.
6. Utilize QR codes for potential members to scan and learn more about the organization.
7. Always take photos at meetings and events. Create a [virtual gallery](#) in the organizations HornsLink profile prospective members to see.
8. Host a virtual informational meeting.
9. Make your own recruitment video. Its ok if it's amateur, just make it fun! There are several ways to [embed videos on HornsLink](#) but you can always post it on your social media like Tik-Tok or Instagram, or embed it on your website!
10. Design a social media campaign using visual elements to promote the organization.

General Recruiting Tips

1. Remember that a personal (in-person or virtual) contact is always better than a flyer. Nothing can replace the simple act of getting to know someone and asking them to join the organization.
2. Speak with excitement and pride when describing your group. Enthusiasm is contagious!
3. Ask key people to give recommendations of possible members and leaders.
4. Co-sponsor campus events to help get its name out there more.
5. Reserve an A-Frame to promote the organization.
6. Participate in [Tabling on Campus](#).
7. Host a special "bring a friend" meeting where each member must bring a friend with them to the meeting. Then make sure they personally introduce their friend to the group.
8. Hold meetings and events in comfortable, visible, and accessible locations.
9. When working to recruit members, always try to think in terms of "what's in it for them."
10. Follow up with visitors after they have attended a meeting. Thank them for visiting and invite them to your next event.

Member Retention

Once you have recruited members to your organization, it is critical to retain them. Retention is essentially keeping the good people you already have invested in your organization. Students stay with organized, dynamic groups that meet their personal goals for membership. Identifying the needs of the individual members is the key to having a strong organization with enthusiastic members who stay involved. Motivation may be one of the most difficult tasks a leader may face. 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?

Reasons Members Leave an Organization

- Lack of communication
- No delegation
- No longer fun
- Organization is not a priority
- Stagnant
- Have spent a lot of time in it already
- No longer connected
- Not appreciated
- Not a worthwhile experience
- Lack of organization

How to Keep Members

- Have fun and enjoy the experience.
- Provide incentives for sticking around.
- Delegate - Give your members opportunities to invest in your group.
- Create a mentoring program to help current members stick around and recruit newer members to stay.
- Talk to your members and get their feedback about the group.
- Think outside the box! - Be creative. Stand out from other organizations.

G.R.A.P.E. Motivation Theory

Important questions to consider when recruiting and retaining members.

G - 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?

R - 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.

A - 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.

P - 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.

E - Enjoyment. Volunteering and working hard in an organization should 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
- Show interest in and appreciation for others
- Let members know your plan, even at the early stages
- 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