

Invitation and Preparation

Planning

- What is the purpose of them meeting? Who will conduct the meeting? Who will prepare the agenda?
- Have members been informed about the meeting? Be sure members know about the meeting well in advance - providing a semester, or even a year long calendar at the first meeting will be helpful to everyone, don't forget to include time, day and location!
- Be sure all officers know what is going on. What are the expectations for each of them?
- Have the leaders discussed ways to make the meeting interesting and fun?
- Will you be ready to start and stop on time?

Physical Setting

- Think of the ambiance - the setting and mood of the room. What message do you want to send? Is this a regular business meeting? A work meeting? How will it be set up? (for example - classroom style or conference square)
- Did you reserve the room? Did you make arrangement for special equipment?
- Comfort of the room - is it well lit? Is there a head table? Can everyone see everything they need to see?
- Have arrangements been made to put the room back in order when you are done?
- Will the room be set up at least 15 minutes prior to the start of your meeting?

Agenda

- Trying to have a meeting without an agenda is like trying to cook without all the ingredients or driving through a foreign country without a roadmap! An agenda contains the order of items that will need to be covered during the meeting. The agenda is a "taste" of what members can expect during the meeting.
- Has the agenda been written and copied for all members?
- Is the agenda easy to read and follow?

The Meeting

An effective meeting is one in which everyone gets to express an opinion, all business is brought to a conclusion and all parties leave happy and invigorated!

The Beginning

You've prepared the room, arrived early and distributed the agendas. Be sure to...

- There is one person responsible for keeping the minutes and attendance?
- Begin on time. Set a time limit and make every effort to end on time. Don't be careless with other people's time (or your own!) **NO ONE LIKES TO WASTE TIME!**
- Get people excited for the meeting - show your enthusiasm! There is nothing worse than being at a meeting that even the leaders don't enjoy!
- Begin with a motivational poem, a reading of an interesting letter to the organization, or other "appetizer" that people can feel good about (if it is appropriate!).

The "Meat" of the Meeting

- Keep the meeting "individual" oriented - pay attention to all parts of the meeting and **VALUE** them!
- Have a plan to respectfully control "time wasters" - excessively long announcements or inappropriate discussion.
- Make it fun and enjoyable!
- The average person has an attention span of 23 minutes! The challenge? Get done what you need to get done in as little time as possible - but don't rush

Motivation

Yum! The best part of a meal can be the dessert! Include some feel good 'desserts' in your meetings...

- Recognize, recognize, recognize! Give rewards to members "just because!" Announce the names of members who have worked on recent projects or tasks - thank them! Be creative! Congratulate those who have done something great in the organization, on campus or elsewhere!
- Celebrate significant holidays!
- Be creative!
- Allow members a way to send messages to each other when appropriate.
- Be sure people know when the next meeting will be, collect any sign-up sheets, and then close the meeting.

The Minutes and Evaluation

Meeting Minutes

Taking minutes is a necessity of many organizational gatherings. Minutes are a record of what happened, what was decided and what actions will be taken as a result of the meeting. They should be written for every meeting and presented at the next meeting beforehand. The body of each topic should include the important points of the discussion and what action will be taken along with who will take the actions and when it will be done. One important note: someone who has never been to the meeting should be able to understand the minutes. Listed below are some general minute taking tips:

- The minutes should start with the name of the club, the date and location of where the meeting was held.
- Everyone who is at the meeting must be mentioned in attendance (Name, Position, Phone number)
- State who opened the meeting (usually the Chair or President), at what time, and any other details, such as the explanation for the absence of people.
- The minutes have to be approved by the convened group.
- Every executive member and chair of a subcommittee should have the opportunity to report on what they or their committee has been up to.
- Any topic of discussion which has been discussed before is done as part of Old Business.
- Any topic of discussion that has not been discussed before should be discussed under New Business.
- Under the adjournment section of the meetings should be who closed the meeting, at what time and the time and details of the next meeting.

Meeting Evaluation

- Meeting evaluation can be just as important as the meeting itself. Evaluations provide the opportunity to reflect upon what occurred and what needs to happen next. Below are some questions to help process an evaluation of the meeting:
- Were all of the participants notified of this meeting in sufficient time to prepare for it?
- Did the participants understand why this meeting was being held (e.g. information sharing, planning, problem solving, decision-making, etc) and what specific outcomes were expected?
- Did the participants understand what was expected of them and what was expected of the other participants?
- Did the participants understand how the meeting was intended to flow (e.g. agenda, schedule, design, etc) and when it would terminate?
- Were the participants listening carefully to each other?
- Did the participants express themselves openly, honestly and directly?
- Were all agreements explicit and clear and were conflicts openly explored and constructively managed?
- Did the meeting generally proceed as intended (e.g. the agenda was followed, it started and ended on time) and achieve its intended purpose?
- Was the time at the meeting well spent?

Bright Ideas

- Make each meeting count - don't meet for the sake of meeting!
- Every group member must be involved in making meeting plans and committed to his/her responsibility in the group. He/she must know what this responsibility is and be encouraged to fulfill it.
- Set up your goals and objectives. Plan the year's programs in advance but maintain some flexibility for change.
- Look into the needs of members in your group and try to arrange a program or speaker at a meeting to meet these needs. Use campus resources!
- Enthusiasm is contagious - if you come prepared and enthusiastic as a chairperson the group will pick up on this - same goes for the flipside!
- Work with your advisor and use him/her as a resource person. Spend sometime with him/her before the more important meetings. Try to have the meeting when he/she can attend and always notify him/her of group gatherings.
- Use the "status quo" and what happened last year as a point of departure, not as a scared objective. Students have four years of experience at the end of their college career, not one year repeated four times!
- Sending a replacement to a committee meeting is not the same as having the member there him/herself and should be discouraged.
- Your meeting isn't effective if members do not want to come to the next one! Only settle for 100% attendance!!!
- Always thank your members for coming.

"Can-Do" Winning Attitudes

(Changing the way you view things)

We've never done it before...We can be the first!!!
It's too complicated...Let's look at it from a different angle.
It will never work...We'll give it a try.
We already tried it...We learned from the experience.
There's no way it'll work...We can make it work.
It's a waste of time...Think of the possibilities.
It's good enough...There is always room for improvement.
We're understaffed...We're a lean, mean machine!
It will never fly...We'll never know until we try.
It can't be done...It'll be a challenge.
No one communicates...Let's get talking.
It's too radical a change...Let's take a chance.
It's not my job...I'll be glad to take the responsibility.
I can't...I can!!!