

SKIDMORE

C O L L E G E

Office of Leadership Activities

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Skill Building – Effective Meetings

Introduction

Most student clubs have meetings, but rarely do all of the members attend. One of the largest reasons for this is the lack effectiveness. Meetings have several functions. They give members a chance to discuss and evaluate goals and objectives, keep updated on current events, provide a chance to communicate and keep the group cohesive. But most of all, meetings allow groups to pull resources together for decision-making. If the student leading the meeting starts with a careful plan and finishes with a thorough follow-up, the meeting will "run smooth". The following are some tips to help you make your next meeting successful, productive and even fun.

Before The Meeting

- Define the purpose of the meeting
- Develop an agenda with the officers and advisor
- Distribute the agenda and circulate background material ahead of time
- Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it, if possible. Remember, members have other commitments.
- If possible, arrange the room so that members face each other, i.e., a circle or semi-circle. For large groups, try U-shaped rows
- Choose a location suitable to your group's size. Small rooms with too many people get stuffy and create tension
- Vary meeting places if possible to accommodate different members. Be sure everyone knows where and when the next meeting will be held
- Think about accessibility and any special needs a group member might have

During The Meeting

1. Greet members and make them feel welcome, even late members when appropriate
2. Start on time. End on time
3. Review the agenda and set priorities for the meeting
4. Stick to the agenda
5. Encourage group discussion to get all points of view and ideas. You will have better quality decisions as well as highly motivated members; they will feel that attending meetings is worth their while
6. Ask for feedback. Ideas, activities and commitment to the club improve when members see their impact on the decision making process

7. Keep conversation focused on the topic. Feel free to ask for only constructive and non-repetitive comments
8. Keep minutes of the meeting for future reference in case a question or problem arises
9. Admit mistakes
10. Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting on a unifying or positive note
11. Set a date, time and place for the next meeting

After The Meeting

- Write up and distribute minutes within 3 or 4 days. Quick action reinforces importance of meeting and reduces errors of memory
- Discuss any problems during the meeting with other officers; come up with ways improvements can be made
- Follow-up and see that all members understand and carry-out their responsibilities
- Give recognition and appreciation to excellent and timely progress
- Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting
- Conduct a periodic evaluation of the meetings. Make sure that everyone is happy with the way meetings are being run