Being a Student Leader

Program Planning
More often than not, when people hear the word “planning,” images of long hours around a table, shuffling papers and wishing that someone would say that it is time to go home comes to mind. However, planning does not have to be like that...it can, in fact, be the most exciting activity that in which an organization is involved.

Planning means: 1) seeing where you are, 2) deciding where you want to go, 3) choosing a specific way to get there, and 4) moving a step at a time, to reach your destination.

There are seven steps to effective program planning:
- Determine NEEDS
- Choose GOALS based on those needs.
- Develop PLANS to achieve goals.
- Choose and use RESOURCES to put plans into action.
- Assign RESPONSIBILITIES.
- Experience THE EVENT.
- Participate in EVALUATION.

Planning is asking:

When Planning
- Think creatively
- Focus on diversity, variety and balance
- Vary the topics and activities
- Vary the program methods
- Involve everyone as much as possible

Goal Setting
The concept of functional leadership relates directly to group goals. Goal setting and group maintenance are generally considered to be the two basic objectives of a group.

A goal is a future state of affairs desired by the majority of the group members. The setting of group goals is important in that goals provide direction for an organization.
When setting goals, it is important to ask the following questions:

1) Is the goal realistic?
2) Is it attainable?
3) Is it measurable?
4) How are members expected to participate in attaining the goal?
5) What are the projected end results?
6) Is it a group (overall membership) goal or an individual (particular person) goal?
7) What kind of goal is it...short term or long term?
8) What are available resources?

In goal setting, it is important that goals be written down and that they are prioritized in terms of importance.

Three personal goals for myself as a leader:

1) 
2) 
3) 

Three possible goals for my organization:

1) 
2) 
3) 

**Evaluation**

*Evaluation* is a term that is used when attempting to measure the success of a particular program or event. Evaluating a group that you are a part of can be extremely difficult. It means that you must step outside of yourself as a participant and take on the role of an observer and critic. The effective evaluator will emphasize the *description* of what s/he saw and heard, and will allow the group members to participate in the *interpretation* or *meaning* of the event or program.

Effective evaluation provides:

- Information about the general feelings and reactions to the program or event.
- May target some persons as future resources.
- Information on methods to improve the program if it is to be repeated.
- Ideas for future programming
Keys to successful evaluation:
• Focus on individual and/or group behavior, not on a person or personality.
• Establish ground rules on how and when evaluation will occur.

Evaluation subjects:
• Structure
• Leadership
• Climate and Cohesiveness
• Communication and Interaction
• Product and Outcome

Evaluation Questions:

Volunteers and Membership Recruitment
Why do people get involved with organizations?

For a variety of reasons:
• A desire to help others
• A desire for a sense of security
• A desire to be a part of activities that have importance
• A desire to feel useful and needed
• A desire to utilize knowledge and skills
• A desire to gain visibility and recognition
• A desire to learn and develop new skills
• A desire to reduce loneliness

Three reasons I am involved in my organization:
1)

2)

3)
Since each member of an organization is an individual, it is important to remember the following:

Volunteers need...

To feel supported
To feel appreciated and rewarded
To feel that their tasks challenge their abilities
To know that resources are available
To know that it is ok to make mistakes or fail

Three ways in which I can support my membership:
1) 
2) 
3) 

Ideas for Recruitment

I. General Guidelines
A. Always use a personal approach:
   1. Best not to recruit to “...help me out.”
   2. Take your time.
   3. Recruit in comfortable surroundings.
   4. Time of year is important; remember schedules!
B. Recruit members as though they are hand-picked:
   1. Don’t ask anybody out of desperation.
   2. Recruit individuals - not bodies.
C. Be aware of the difference between the “excuse” and a “reason”. (Lack of time may be more of an excuse than a reason; real reason may be fear; fear of not knowing enough, lack of ability, etc.)
D. Let people know how important they are to the organization.
   1. Build them up; encourage and affirm.
   2. Remember: they will want to know what is in it for them!

II. Recruiting Guidelines
A. Before you recruit:
   1. Get to know the person first before asking them to work; allow them the opportunity to be “just a member” for a while.
2. Be realistic about skills/abilities/time commitment.

3. Know what you want/expect people to do.

B. After you recruit:

1. Continuing participation depends upon reward!

2. Members must see the relationship between what they do, however small, and the total environment (i.e., The School).

3. The first tasks should be simple enough to ensure success.

4. Members must have opportunities to grow and learn.

5. Members must be encouraged to make as many decisions as possible.

6. Members who do things MUST NOT be taken for granted.

7. Care enough about your members to learn their strengths and limitations.

8. Keep members informed of activities and developments even if they are not directly involved.

9. Provide instructions and training about tasks.

III. Seven Simple Steps in Recruiting

A. Gather data and interview

B. Match talent with opportunity

C. Recruit and train

D. Support

E. Provide for leader development

F. Evaluate

G. Appreciate and reward

**Working with Volunteers**

I. General Attitudes

A. Openness - to persons and ideas.

B. Honesty - in speech, actions, and relationships.

C. Flexibility

D. Realistic Expectations - of self and others.

E. Sense of Humor

F. Ability to Risk - both in relationships and in program activities.
II. Skills

A. Personal

1. Listening - not only what is said, but how it is said.
2. Accepting - people as they really are, not as you would like them to be.
3. Supporting - being there for others as you would like them to be there for you.
4. Sensitivity - being aware of what is going on the group’s shared life.
5. Enabling - through group process personal growth.

B. Relational

1. Share - open and giving of self to another.
2. Affirm - appreciate self and others for who they are and what they can do.
3. Encourage - help others to try things they never have tried before.
4. Trust - letting others know they are trusted and respected as individuals.
5. Approachability - creating an atmosphere where others are comfortable talking to you and bring you their ideas.
6. Patience - with self and others.

C. Functional

1. Planning/Organization - see the “big picture.”
2. Gate-keeping - make sure that everyone who wants to be involved or included has the opportunity to do so.
3. Resourcing - know what is available and how to get it.
4. Advising - provide knowledge, skills and advise as appropriate.

D. Programmatic

1. Communication - develop ways to communicate possibilities and ideas to the planning groups and group as a whole.
2. Develop - possible ways to move from ideas to specific plans of action.
3. Adaptation - learn to adapt resources to needs of group.
4. Evaluate.

Planning and Conducting Meetings

Three tasks of an organization's leader are: 1) to prepare for regular meetings of the group, 2) to preside over those meetings and 3) to follow up on decisions made during those meetings.
I. Getting Ready
A. If meeting dates are not already established, then in consultation with other key leaders decide on the date, time and location of the meeting and notify members.

B. Talk with members of the group to decide what items need to go on the agenda of the meeting.

C. Build an agenda for the meeting: List the items in the order that they are to be considered. If possible, indicate the amount of time that the group will spend on each item. *At the first meeting, include on the agenda time to get acquainted and an orientation to the organization’s task and goals.

II. The Meeting
A. If possible, arrive at least one-half hour before the meeting starts. Make sure that the room is arranged and any needed equipment is present and working. By arriving early, those members who wish to visit with the leader may do so.

B. Call the meeting to order at the stated starting time. Don’t wait for latecomers. Starting late is a disservice to those who arrive on time, and people’s time is valuable.

C. Add to the agenda as needed. Add emergency or last-minute matters to the agenda if the organization has enough information to consider them. Add them at the end of the agenda. If there is not enough needed information place the items on the agenda of the next meeting.

D. Preside over the meeting. Lead the group through the meeting item by item. Help the group to stay on the topic at hand and not wander to unimportant side issues. Discuss as needed and move on...be aware of time.

E. Be sure that the organization comes to some decision or conclusion on each agenda item. See that the decision is recorded by the secretary in the minutes. If items are deferred, this should also be noted in the minutes. (The president should not be responsible for taking minutes...designate someone if there is no secretary.)

F. Summarize what has happened in the meeting and take note of items to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. By doing a summary the leader can check and make sure that everyone has understood what has happened. If any assignments have been made or tasks delegated the leader can also be sure that members understand their responsibilities. (Who will do what by when).

G. Adjourn the meeting at the stated time. People have the right to expect that a meeting will begin and end on time. Better participation will occur in future meetings and activities will result.

III. After the Meeting
A. Be sure to keep members informed. Send them minutes if possible.

B. Inform ESL of the activities of the group. Always be sure to include the next meeting time, date and location.

C. Stay in touch with members and other leaders between meetings. This will let the membership know that the leader is concerned about the group.
Leading Discussions

As the leader of an organization you will be required to lead discussions and meetings. The general responsibilities of a discussion leader are: 1) to promote discussion without dominating it, 2) to help people interact with each other in positive ways, 3) to keep the group task-oriented, 4) promote a climate of acceptance and openness, and 5) to know when to provide a sense of closure.

Before leading a discussion, an effective leader must be aware of the following:

- Shared understanding of terms and concepts.
- Established discussion goals.
- Allocation of time.
- Major subjects and sub-topics.
- Application of information.
- Clarification and Summary.
- Evaluation.

Here are some guidelines for leading effective and productive discussions:

- Ask questions that are more open than closed.
- Ask only one question at a time.
- Present questions to the whole group.
- Provide feedback as appropriate after a member responds.
- After initial question and response, follow up with probing questions.
- After a question be silent. Allow people time to answer.
- Use an inquiry style rather than an interrogation style.
- Encourage members to ask their own questions.
- Avoid echoing.
- Remain neutral during discussion.
- Prepare key questions ahead of time.
- Don’t force people to talk.
- Don’t try to make everyone agree.
- Begin with “non-threatening” agenda items.
- Keep things moving along...stay on the current topic.
Conflict Management

Conflict can be defined as a struggle between opposing forces, such as a clash between opinions, values, interests, or goals.

Without exception, every group or organization experiences conflict. Conflict is a fact of life. And, so are the feelings that go along with conflict: anger, frustration, resentment, disappointment. Because conflict and the feelings associated with it are unpleasant, people try to avoid them or pretend that they don’t exist. Most people are conditioned to believe that conflict is bad, that it is wrong to argue or disagree.

*However, conflict in and of itself isn't “bad”, what is “bad” is how most people handle it.*

I. Where/Why Conflict Occurs

A. Where?

1. Within the individual: internal conflict; personal choices
2. Within the group: interpersonal conflict; inevitable and invaluable
3. Between groups: most visible and most difficult to resolve

B. Why?

1. Values
2. Goals
3. Perceptions
4. Status
5. Roles

II. Attributes that Help Resolve Conflict

A. Clear goals and purposes: articulated, understood and accepted by all.

B. Openness in communications: to secure understanding, not necessarily agreement, between those involved.

C. Fair and clear procedures: organization; structure.

D. Acceptance: accept not only other people and ideas, but their right to be different.

III. Techniques to Resolve Conflict

A. Look for and stress common ground. Emphasize points of agreement rather than points of differences.

B. Treat contributions as group property. Forsake pride of ownership and handle ideas as if they belong to the entire group.

C. Treat contributions as hypotheses. Develop a “spirit of inquiry” that fosters and encourages creativity.
D. Restrict communication until points in conflict are thoroughly understood by all participants.

E. Compartmentalize the issue in the conflict. If the problem is too complex, break it up into subparts and deal with them one at a time or in small groups.

F. Try role playing. Can create understanding and empathy with the other person’s position.

G. Don’t let ideas just “lie there”. Some response is necessary for the group’s well-being.

H. Ask questions. Clarifies issues and exposes real nature of the conflict.

I. Postpone the item until later. Taking some time to “cool off” can be useful.

**IV. General Tips**

A. Stay calm.

B. See the “big picture”.

C. Discuss the “head”, not “heart”.

D. Enter conflict with the idea that it will be resolved to the satisfaction of most participants.

E. Be willing to compromise.

F. Show respect for other’s opinions.

G. If you are wrong, admit it graciously.

H. Be an “active” listener.