Student Government
ACTION KIT

STUDENT GOVERNMENT RESOURCE CENTER

CSSA
CALIFORNIA STATE STUDENT

The Tools for Effective Student Leadership

As long as college students face problems – skyrocketing tuition costs, massive cuts to federal financial aid programs, shrinking state higher education appropriations, and low voter turnout among 18-24 year olds - student governments and state student associations will continue to advocate on students' behalf.

Student governments provide a unique vehicle for student empowerment. As the recognized voice of the student body, student government leaders have unparalleled access, resources, and authority to advocate in the student interest. In some states, state student associations magnify this power by networking campuses and sharing resources. Student governments and state student associations have helped win many victories for students, such as the establishment of student trustees, the principle of shared governance in university affairs, the right of 18 year olds to vote, and countless efforts to maintain an affordable, accessible and quality higher education for everyone.

Also, student governments provide student leaders with skills and experiences that stay with them in their future professional, personal and civic endeavors. While so much is learned in the classroom, some things can only be learned by doing: managing a multi-million dollar budget, training volunteers, holding a press conference, and working with elected officials. These skills need to be learned and developed.

The Student Government Action Kit is designed to teach student leaders the basic tools necessary to be an effective student leader. The Student Government Action Kit was written and produced by the Student Government Resource Center and the California State Student Association with assistance from other state student associations and student government leaders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Student Government

Action Kit

1. CAMPAIGNS

THERE ARE THOSE WHO LOOK AT THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE, AND ASK WHY... I DREAM OF THINGS THAT NEVER WERE, AND ASK WHY NOT?

– Robert Francis Kennedy, 1968 presidential campaign

A number of student governments run issue campaigns, focusing their energy and efforts on one issue. Issue campaigns coordinated through the student government provide a clear strategy, tangible goals, and more immediate results. Investing time planning a campaign will save significant time down the road, make work more effective, and make success more likely.

WHY RUN A CAMPAIGN?

• **Campaigns focus students' time and energy.** There are so many issues student governments can address –prioritizing and planning is critical to making a difference. By running campaigns, students concentrate efforts, focus on goals, and reach definitive results.

• **Campaigns build power for students.** For students to have power, students need to win on the issues they care about. Students don't have the money to influence elections and get their voices heard in the capitol. Instead students' power lies in their ability to mobilize votes and people. Students speaking together on a campus or across the state will make a huge difference.

• **Campaigns make it easier to be strategic.** Campaigns provide a format to think through what is needed in order to reach goals.

PRINCIPLES FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAMPAIGN AND ISSUE

In order to decide on an issue to work on, identify a set of criteria to guide the choice. Below is a sample list (criteria may differ, and all issues do not have to meet every criteria). Use criteria like these to guide decisions and build consensus in the decision making process.

• **Win concrete victories that improve students' lives.** The issue should have a tangible solution that students can point to. After running a campaign, students should be able to understand how their life is better because of it.

• **Consistent with your values and vision.** The issue should fall within the mission and goals of your student government or state student association.

• **Winnable.** Is the issue too big for your organization? Do you have the necessary resources? Have you won on an issue like this before?

Widely felt. The issue must affect a lot of people.

Deeply felt. Students must care deeply about the issue in order to be compelled to work hard on it.

Easy to understand. Can the campaign be explained in a paragraph? Can it be reduced to a sound-bite?

Have a clear target. The target is the decision-maker. Is there a person or group of people that can give you what you want?

Have a clear time frame. Will you be able to win in a semester? In a year?

Recruit. Will the issue attract new volunteers?

Build leadership. A campaign is only as good as the leaders that are built through it.

Choose issues and campaigns that allow you to develop new leaders through campaign actions. Often, this can be done on every issue if there is strong campaign planning.

Build your student government. The campaign should help build the organization – by recruiting new volunteers, strengthening relationships with decision makers and coalition partners, building visibility for the organization, etc.

HOW TO OUTLINE A CAMPAIGN

1. Problem. There are countless problems for students to work on. Define the problem as specifically as possible.

2. Solution. The solution should directly address the specific problem as defined, and be something people can unite around.

3. Goal. The goal is what you specifically want to accomplish. The best goals are tangible and measurable.

4. Target. The target is the decision-maker who has the power to implement the solution.

5. Strategy. The strategy is the methods used to achieve the goal. It is the "game-plan."

6. Tactics. Tactics are the specific actions taken to implement the strategies.

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

• ***Problem.*** *Textbooks are too expensive because textbook publishers inflate prices by putting out unnecessary new editions and bundling workbooks and CD-ROMS with textbooks.*

• ***Solution.*** *Textbook publishers should reform their practices. They should only publish new textbooks when new information merits them and should offer "a la carte" versions of textbooks so that people can buy additional workbooks only if they intend to use them.*

• ***Goal.*** *Convince one textbook publisher to agree to change its new edition policy and stop bundling textbooks.*

• ***Target.*** *Thompson Learning*

• ***Strategy.*** *Public pressure through media attention.*

• ***Tactics.*** *Press conference. Invite local TV stations to highly visible on campus action. Publish letters to the editor in campus and statewide newspapers. Hold visible events that will garner media attention and involve students.*

MOBILIZE THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

One of the most important elements of campaigns is working with other groups, administrators, and campus networks. The strength and power of a coalition is the diverse membership, resources and interests different organizations bring together, the sum of which is greater than the individual parts. By working with other influential organizations and constituencies, you become more influential yourself.

Student governments have a great ability to mobilize the campus community: their leaders are often leaders in other campus groups and, as the recognized voice of the student body, it has unequalled access to student groups, faculty, and administrators.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET CAMPUS PLAYERS INVOLVED

• **Endorsement model.** This is the "paper tiger" model – a list of endorsers is built to lend credibility and breadth to the effort. The members of the coalition may do little beyond adding their names to the list of supporters.

• **Associate model.** With this model, the groups and their leadership are encouraged to play an active role in the campaign (collect signatures, get letters, etc.), but decision-making still rests with you. This coalition is more active. There may be occasional meetings to share information and cultivate a sense of ownership.

• **Partner model.** The partner model assumes power sharing as well as active participation. Groups work closely together on a regular basis. Decisions and feedback into the coalition are generally based on resources brought to the table.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST COALITION MODEL FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

• **Decide if the coalition will be worth creating.** Will the decision-makers be influenced by the formation of a coalition? Will the coalition's resources make an impact on the issue? Will help be needed from more groups in order to win?

• **Identify the amount of interest in the issue**. How much do groups care about the issue? Which groups care about the issue? Does the issue have support a mile wide and an inch deep, or are a few organizations heavily invested in the success of the effort? In other words, which of the coalition models listed above is feasible?

• **Decide the level of urgency in the campaign.** This will often influence the level of resources and the timeline needed to develop the coalition.

• **Identify what resources would be available.** What resources can various groups dedicate to the effort (and are willing to)? Looking at the range of groups to work with, consider your resources vs. those of other groups. If you are the only group with resources to get the work done, you probably wouldn't use the partner model.

• **Consider how well the groups work together.** Is there a history of close cooperation or differences in strategy and personalities? Decide how long the coalition should exist. Does the goal require long-term structures or will working on an issue-by-issue basis suffice?

• **Look at who the key players on the issue are.** Who has ownership over the issue? Who deserves credit? Is this something that you created or are you adding your clout to a campaign that's already underway?

STEPS TO BUILDING A COALITION AND KEEPING TRACK OF IT

1. Determine which model to use and set goals. Which model will best suit the plans? Once this is decided, consider how the coalition can be most helpful.

2. Make a list of organizations to approach. Some organizations will come quickly to mind, but others will require serious thought. Make sure that your list is as broad-based as possible. Be creative! Work backwards from who needs to be influenced. Also think about which groups you want to work with. Analyze all the advantages and disadvantages of potential coalition partners. In general, the better you know who's out there, the easier this list will come together. If you are new to an area or the issue, it might be helpful to get some tips from other groups or issue experts.

3. Prioritize the list. Your strategy might be to get easy groups first to get the ball rolling, or to spend time with only the major players.

4. Track the work. Make sure you have a clear tracking form where you keep everyone's contact information and roles and responsibilities in the coalition.

5. Create a coalition packet. Having a packet of materials that describe the campaign is helpful, especially if you are reaching out to a number of groups. If the coalition is to be smaller and focused on key leadership in the community, the materials can be personalized for each target.

6. Contact the target groups. Once they receive the packet, call them within a few days to get their response and pin-down the decision-making process. Do you need to attend any meetings? Do you need to contact another division of the organization? Be prepared to answer questions and provide convincing reasons why the group should endorse the issue or get involved with the campaign. In addition to identifying what you want from each group, consider how they will benefit from their involvement in your coalition.

7. Get a commitment. This process can be time consuming since many groups have more than one step before endorsing or getting involved. Persistence and attention to their schedule pays off. Pay the most attention to priority groups – once a core of support has been established, it becomes easier to get other groups on board. When seeking endorsements, get specific letters of endorsement from each group. In addition, get permission to use their name on your endorser list. A strong letter includes a brief description of the organization, explicit support for your group's campaign, and a call for others to support the campaign. Get clear permission to use the organization's name on letterhead, in news releases, and to otherwise "speak with its voice." As much as possible, anticipate other opportunities for the group to participate in the coalition and get these approved up front.

8. Maintain structure and communication. How formal will the coalition be? How will decisions be made? How will the members stay informed on developments in the campaign? Will the coalition meet weekly, monthly or never? Even in the case of a "paper tiger" coalition, conduct mailings every couple of months and invite groups to relevant hearings and meetings.

9. Use the coalition. Hold a news conference to announce its formation. Circulate petitions within the ranks of the organizations. Send targeted decision-makers updated endorser lists and individual letters of support. It's important to encourage the needed involvement as well as accountability within the coalition.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR COALITION PARTNERS TO DO

Generate media attention. *Write or co-sign letters to the editor, co-sign opinion editorials, attend an editorial board meeting, attend press events, help organize a news conference, or put an article about the campaign in their newsletter.*

Generate grassroots pressure. *Collect signatures, write letters to the target, make phone calls to the target, or turn out members to a district meeting or other events.*

Expand the coalition. *Identify other groups and help get them involved, mail packets out and make follow up calls, or do presentations to potential coalition partners.*

Do direct advocacy. *Set up or attend a district meeting, attend a "lobby day," or allocate lobbyist time to an issue.*

Help identify VIPs. *Set up or attend meetings with power players.*

Fundraise. *Participate in joint fundraising activities, or donate phones, paper, staff-time, etc.*

Research. *Co-author a report, provide data, or collect surveys.*

ORGANIZE A GRASSROOTS EVENT

Students are one of our best resources – by mobilizing them they will make an impact on issues they collectively care about. Usually the easiest and most effective method to mobilize students is by asking them to take a simple grassroots action such as signing a petition to a decision maker. One of the best ways to generate grassroots product is organizing a grassroots event (see the section on tabling). With a grassroots event, you can generate a large amount of grassroots product at one time, educate hundreds of people, get media attention, recruit new volunteers, build leadership within your group and engage VIPs.

BASIC GRASSROOTS TACTICS

• **Petitions and Postcards.** These actions are used for many programmatic purposes such as stating grievances, organizing a union and initiating a law. They can be one of the best ways of showing broad support for a campaign and influencing decision-makers. If you ask people to volunteer as you petition, this can also be a recruitment mechanism. Petitioning is the most effective way to reach a large number of people through one-on-one contact.

• **Letter-writing.** Letters are a more personal form of communication to decision-makers and require more time and effort on behalf of the participants. A hand-written letter has a bigger impact on decision-makers than a postcard or petition. Letters are also a good forum for telling personal stories and expanding the message.

• **Call-in days.** Generating a large number of phone calls in a short amount of time is a good way to ensure that the campaign gets noticed by the target. Phone calls are relatively easy to generate (you can organize a tabling event where people stop by and make short calls on their cell phones), and are an effective way to get many people to deliver one message quickly.

• **E-actions.** Increasingly, the internet is becoming an effective tool for generating grassroots product. Generating e-actions, of course, requires some web-design expertise and something to draw people to your website. Make sure that your e-action tracks how many people participate in order to track its effectiveness.

LOBBYING

State and federal legislators are common targets for student campaigns because they make many decisions that directly affect students. Students often meet with legislators during statehouse or Washington DC lobby visits, but there are many ways to meet with legislators. Often, students will get the best audience if they visit legislators while legislators are in-district or even invite legislators to campus for an event. Legislators are often willing and happy to come to campus and meet with students. There are a few simple steps to make sure that you get to meet with legislators often and that each meeting is effective.

HOW TO SET UP A LOBBY MEETING

Setting up a meeting with a legislator is simple, requiring only some time and planning. Below are the basic steps.

1. Send in a request, by letter or fax. Your request should introduce who you are, when you would like to meet with the legislator, and the purpose of you visit.

2. Make a follow up call. Many legislators will have staff that can assist you in scheduling.

3. Confirm the details. You may need to call back several times to settle all of the details. You should always make a confirmation call the day before the meeting is scheduled, as legislators' schedules change often.

TIPS ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY ADVOCATE FOR YOUR POSITION

• **Be prepared.** Be on time. Have materials ready. Be presentable. Have a pen and paper.

• **Have a constituent in the meeting, if possible.** Legislators are far more likely to listen to people they actually represent. Personal stories make a visit more effective.

• **Be conversational.** It's better not to read facts and arguments straight from fact sheets or notes. If you need to, take time to memorize your points beforehand.

• **Be confident!** Legislators are regular people and they are there to listen. They represent you; you have a right to tell them what you want.

• **Listen.** These legislators have important feedback for you and your issue. Give them time to respond – don't just talk to them.

• **Stay on message.** Have a basic message and stick to it.

SAMPLE CALLING RAPS FOR SETTING UP A MEETING

Initial phone call
Hello, may I speak with your scheduler?

Hi, my name is Jennifer; I am with the Associated Student Government board of directors at CSU, Fresno and the California State Student Association. I wanted to follow-up on a meeting request I faxed to your office yesterday. A group of us are coming to the Capitol on March 6th, and I would like to know if the Assemblyman Villines will be available. We would like to talk about issues that affect the students in his district.

Okay, I'll follow up once you have a chance to speak with the member. Thanks!

Follow-up call
Hi, may I speak with Sammy Scheduler?

Hi Sammy, this is Jennifer from the Associated Student Government at CSU, Fresno following-up with my scheduling request for March 6th. Did you get a chance to speak with your Chief of Staff or member? Can we confirm the meeting details today?

Great, so we'll be meeting with Assemblyman Villines at 11 A.M on Monday, March 6th. Thanks for your help.

Confirmation call
Hi, may I speak with Sammy Scheduler?

Hi Sammy, this is Jennifer from the Associated Student Government at CSU, Fresno calling to confirm my appointment with Assemblyman Villines this Monday at 11 A.M.

Great, I look forward to it, and appreciate your help.

SAMPLE LOBBY MEETING AGENDA

1. Introduce yourself and your organization.

2. Thank them for meeting with you. Thank them if they have been supportive of your issues in the past.

3. Introduce the issue you wish to discuss.

4. Present your position.

5. Get their feedback.
• If they are supportive – ask them to make a specific commitment.
• If they are opposed or undecided, ask what would convince them.

6. Ask for their support.

7. Create a plan to follow up.

8. Thank them.

• **Make a strong ask.** Ask them for their support clearly and directly.

• **Stay calm and polite.** Some legislators may be strongly opposed to your position and you should respect their perspective just as they should respect yours. Always be polite to legislators and their staff.

• **Be honest.** Never lie or make up information. If a legislator asks you a question you don't know the answer to, simply say, "I don't know the answer to your question, but I will get back to you with the answer." Then, be sure to follow up and answer their question.

• **Keep it short.** Legislators and their staff have full schedules. Take enough time to make your case and ask for support, but don't take too long. Always thank them for their time.

• **Thank them.** Always send a thank you note when you meet with a legislator, have everyone that attended the meeting sign it.

• **Keep track of the results of the meeting.** Write down the details of what happened at the meeting to share with others from you student government, coalition, or state student association.

HOLDING A DISTRICT MEETING

By organizing district meetings, where legislators are invited to meet with their constituents in their constituents' home town or district, you can demonstrate strong student support for your position.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A DISTRICT MEETING

1. Decide what type of meeting to have. You may be organizing the meeting to introduce your organization and its program, to educate the legislator on a particular problem, or to present constituent support for an issue. Depending on the campaign, the legislator and your resources, you may decide to meet at his or her local office, or you may want to organize a large event that includes your members, other groups and the media.

2. Schedule the meeting. You may need anywhere from two weeks to two months to schedule the meeting. Figure out which of the legislator's staff people does the scheduling. The scheduler may be in the district office or in the capitol office. Over the phone, describe the purpose and type of meeting you want to have and, if necessary, write a formal request for a meeting with the legislator.

3. Choose the best meeting time. Your best bet is during a legislative recess, but not during prime vacation weeks. While the Legislature is in session, the legislator may still be in the district either on Mondays or Fridays as well as during some weekends. Depending on who will be attending, breakfast or evening meetings may be more convenient than daytime meetings.

4. Choose a good location. Whenever possible, bring the legislator to your campus. If that is not possible, the legislator's district office may be a mutually convenient spot. Other options might include the town hall or the local library.

5. Follow up after the scheduled meeting. As soon as a meeting with your legislator is scheduled, confirm it by sending a letter along with a set of preparatory materials. Depending on the purpose of the meeting, these may include: directions to the meeting, an agenda, fact sheets, related articles, an endorser list, a copy or summary of the reform itself, and a copy of an endorsement form (if that is the goal).

6. Organize turnout for the meeting. If turnout will include just group leaders, then all you have to do is confirm everyone and make sure they attend. If the meeting is going to be a larger gathering, you will need to do more extensive outreach to ensure a crowd shows up. Contact the groups that have endorsed your campaign. You may want them to announce the meeting in their newsletters, call their membership lists, and/or send them an invitation. Also make sure you reach out to all the members of your own group and invite them to attend.

7. Have a visibility plan. If it is a part of your plan, generate attention around the event with media and posters.

8. Day of the meeting. There are a number of simple things to remember:

• Get to the location early enough to set it up.

• Bring along copies of an agenda, press clips, fact sheets, endorsement materials, other campaign materials, membership brochures and petitions to deliver.

• Have a sign-up sheet at the door as well as packets for the media.

• Have visibility. Banner and campaign posters will add a campaign atmosphere to a meeting room.

• Have at least one person at the door to greet people as they arrive and to make sure they are signing in and collecting materials.

• Have a legislative point person. Keep one person on the lookout for the arriving legislator.

• Set up the room. Like any meeting, it is preferable for the room to be crowded rather than empty. Set up a few chairs less than you think you will need. In general, the legislator and the meeting organizers/presenters should sit at the front of the room if it is a large meeting. In a smaller meeting, a small circle is best. Everyone in attendance should be able to see and should feel included in the event.

9. Follow up after the meeting. The legislator should receive a thank you note whether or not she or he agrees to do what you ask. Representatives from other organizations and other VIPs who attend should also receive a thank you note.

10. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, you may want to follow up in the media. You could issue a news release announcing the legislator's endorsement or submit a letter to the editor letting the community know that the meeting happened.

DISTRICT MEETING TIMELINE

• At least one month in advance

__Decide the on purpose and size of meeting.

__Call legislator's office to schedule meeting.

__Send written request for meeting to be scheduled, if necessary.

__Once scheduled, send letter confirming meeting along with relevant materials.

__Secure location for meeting.

• Two weeks in advance

__Distribute posters and flyers to advertise the meeting.

__Call local groups to attend, publicize the meeting.

__Develop meeting agenda.

__Decide on speakers, prepare their presentations.

• One week in advance

__Send out news advisory.

__Call to reconfirm legislator.

__Write news release.

__Role-play meeting presentations.

__Develop materials to distribute and create visuals for meeting.

__Make confirmation calls to attendees, groups.

• The day of the meeting

__Get to meeting room 45 minutes in advance.

__Assign greeters and minglers.

__Have the meeting.

__Clean up the room.

• After the meeting

__Do media follow-up.

__Send thank you letters to legislator and other relevant people.

__Follow up with people who attended to get them further involved in campaign.

MEETING WITH ADMINISTRATORS

Campaigns will often be campus-based and an administrator will be the decision maker. In other circumstances, you will want to meet with administrators to ask for their support on a statewide or city-level campaign. Whatever the campaign or circumstance, student government leaders interact with administrators frequently.

In many ways, meeting with administrators is similar to meeting with legislators. Just like with a legislative meeting, take time to prepare, stick to the message, advocate for students, make a strong, direct ask and always act with courtesy and respect.

With rare exceptions, never let disagreement over a single issue damage your relationship with an administrator. You and future student leaders will most likely need to work with them again on other issues. Building and maintaining strong relationships with administrators will allow you to work together when you agree on issues as well as when you don't.

2. RECRUITMENT

"YOU ARE NEVER STRONG ENOUGH THAT YOU DON'T NEED HELP"

— Cesar Chavez

Recruitment is the basic building block of any citizen or student organization. It takes people power to win campaigns, and people don't just materialize, they have to be recruited. This is particularly true for student groups, as volunteers and leaders turn over rather frequently as students graduate and move on.

WHY SHOULD YOU RECRUIT?

• **Achieve goals.** You need a certain number of people to accomplish campaign goals. Recruitment provides the raw number of people needed to get the job done.

• **Develop leaders.** The best way to make sure that you have leaders in your student government next year is to recruit people this year to get involved.

• **Visibility.** Recruitment campaigns create visibility for your organization as they build your numbers. In order to compel people to join a campaign, you will have to get out there and tell people about who you are and what you are doing.

• **Education.** Recruitment campaigns are intrinsically valuable because they get the word out about important issues and make people think. Throughout a campaign, you will articulate the campaign vision to large numbers of people on a regular basis.

• **Develop skills.** Recruitment campaigns are a good way to sharpen skills and messages and keep in touch with the students you are representing.

• **Build community.** Recruitment campaigns bring different types of people together around something that they care about, and high goals push people to work together as a team.

PRINCIPLES OF RECRUITMENT

• **Reach out to everyone.** Don't rely on people who are predisposed to getting involved. Speak to a wide range of classes and organizations. Do not assume that people will not be interested because of the class they are in or the group that they belong to.

• **Multiple methods of recruitment are important.** To effectively reach a broad constituency, recruit through posters, tables, classrooms, leaflets, list serves, media outlets, etc. Consider the different things people do on campus, and how to reach all of them in different ways.

• **Have a simple message.** Establish a basic, simple message for recruitment and stick to it. A message should reflect the principles of the organization – its issues, goals, and the kind of people you want to have involved.

• **Follow up with new recruits immediately.** Remind people of their commitments. Once someone has taken the first step, create new opportunities for involvement and growth. Take the time to get to know new people, and spend the most time with people with the most potential. Take the time to find out what motivates them and what experiences they hope to have with the organization.

RECRUITMENT GOALS WORKSHEET

When you start a recruitment drive, begin by setting volunteer goals. These goals should be based on the number of people needed to run effective campaigns. It's a good idea to have a kick-off meeting each term where new people who are interested in getting involved can come learn more about the campaigns.

Set the goal for the number of people you need for your campaign work. This will be the same number of people that you want at your kick off.

Attendance Goal: ____________

In order to get people to that meeting, you'll need to call and invite a lot of people. Not everyone who wants to go will be able to make it.

_______________ x 2 = ___________________________
Attendance Goal# who commit to coming

About half of the people the people who you speak to will agree to come to the meeting.

____________________ x 2 = ____________________
who commit to coming # you will need to contact

About half the people you call to invite will actually pick up the phone when you call.

____________________ x 2 = ____________________
you will need to contact # you will need to call

That number equals the number of interested student names and phone numbers that you will need to collect during your recruitment drive.

Usually, about 3/4 of the people who fill out interest cards will include their phone number.

____________________ / 3/4 = __________________
you need to call # total cards

Students interested goal:__________

You will collect these student interest cards through tabling and class announcements. A good basic rule is that you can get one-third of your interest cards from tabling and two-thirds from class announcements.

______________ x 1/3 ______________________
Interest card goal Interest cards from tabling

______________ x 2/3 ______________________
Interest card goal Interest cards from class announcements

Keep good track of your goals for each activity and at each step to make sure that you stay on track to get the number of people involved that you need for your campaign work.

• **Ask everyone to do something.** Ask everyone to get involved, and followed up to deepen their involvement. For example, once someone has volunteered at a grassroots petitioning event, asked that person to train new volunteers to petition.

• **Have materials ready.** Posters, leaflets, newsletters, and interest cards are all important and useful recruitment tools. Make sure they are available for both informational purposes and to do visibility blitzes.

• **Always be recruiting.** Recruitment should be the top priority during the first few weeks of the term, but is important throughout the term. Look for opportunities to get new people involved during every stage of the campaign.

TABLING

Tabling is one of the most tried and true organizing methods – it's the simple action of setting up a table and talking to people about your issues and your student government. Table to recruit interns and volunteers, build visibility for a campaign, get signatures on a petition, and distribute information to educate people about an issue. Tabling is also a great way to train and develop new leaders. Tabling is the best forum for interactive, one-on-one recruitment.

WHERE AND WHEN TO TABLE

• Choose high foot-traffic areas like quads, dining halls, and student unions.

• Make sure that it's not too crowded or too fast-paced. You want the table to get noticed and you want people to have the time to stop and talk.

• Table in a variety of places and times so that you reach a diverse mix of people.

• Table where you are allowed to table – know the steps to take to get proper permission.

WHAT GOES ON A TABLE?

When a table is set up well, it can build the reputation of an organization as being credible and active.

- Banners
- Posters
- Fact sheets
- Books
- Buttons
- Newsletters
- Internship information
- Calendar of events
- Sign-in sheets
- Interest cards
- The bigger the better!

Be creative and your table will get noticed.

TIPS ON TABLING

• *Make sure the table is highly visible and makes a good impression. Professional materials on the table and a large poster or sign help make the table stand out and get people's attention.*

• *Use the table as a base, not a barrier to hide behind. Have more confident tablers "float" out into the flow of traffic to reach more people. Approach people, or you won't reach many people.*

• *Tabling is a great activity for a first-time volunteer. The best way to train them is to have them learn by doing. Have the person watch an experienced volunteer for a few minutes, then alternate and give simple feedback. Set them up with a partner or table near them so you can continue to give feedback.*

• *Make the table fun and high-energy and it will attract more people to the campaign.*

SAMPLE TABLE RAP

Hi! Are you registered to vote yet?

Great. You can register right here! My name is ____________ and I'm with the Student Vote Coalition here at Fullerton. I'm out here today because you can usually catch a politician talking about issues like social security and retirement pensions, but they almost never talk about issues that affect us – like the cost of higher education. So we're working to get politicians to pay attention to our issues by registering 30,000 18-24 year olds to vote in California.

Thanks! Additionally, we are always looking for people to volunteer or do an internship with us. If you would like more information on how to get involved, please just fill out this interest card, and we'll give you a call and let you know what we're doing this week.

Thanks so much! Have a great day.

SET GOALS FOR YOUR TABLE

The average first-time volunteer will collect 20 petition signatures per hour. If the table is part of a recruitment campaign, volunteers will collect an average of 6 interest cards per hour.

TABLING RAPS

Write a tabling script, or "rap," to use to quickly train people to table effectively. A basic tabling rap includes an intro question to grab passersbys' attention, a quick introduction of the organization, a description of the problem the campaign addresses and what you're doing about it, and information on how the person can help. It should always end with a request for a specific commitment, like signing a petition or filling out an interest card — or both!

CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The most effective way to reach a large amount of students at once on a college campus is to speak in their classes. Many professors will allow a short 3-5 minute presentation at the beginning of their class by a representative from your student government. Class announcements allow you to educate students about your organization and campaigns, recruit students for internship and volunteer positions, and build support among the faculty.

HOW TO SET UP CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS

• **Get a list of faculty contact information.** The list should include their office locations, phone numbers, and email addresses. There is often a faculty directory online.

• **Get a course schedule.** This will help you figure out which professors teach the largest classes, as well as the classes where students will be most interested in your campaigns. It's important to remember to schedule a wide variety of classes to reach a broad audience.

• **Prepare a short rap.** Be sure to include who you are, what you want, and how long your announcement will take.

• **Prioritize classes.** Target classes by size, previous support, the presence of seniors, the relationship with the professor, and the issue areas taught in the class. Remember that it is critical to reach a broad cross-section of students.

• **Use a tracking system.** Keep records of which professors have been contacted and how they responded. It is important to keep good notes of which professors you have talked to and which presentations you have scheduled. Have a binder with the faculty-calling rap, faculty-calling list, list of prioritized classes, and a class announcement scheduling forms so that it's easy for volunteers to be trained and start calling.

SAMPLE INTEREST CARD

CSSA
CALIFORNIA STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

STUDENT VOTE INTEREST CARD

Name: ______________________________

Cell or Primary Phone #: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

Year Fr So Jr Sr Gr

YES, I'd like to volunteer

Check all that interest you:

❑ Voter Registration
❑ Voter Education
❑ Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

www.csustudents.org

• **Use email in addition to calling.** Emailing professors to set up class announcements also works. However, very few professors will respond to an email, so it is still important to make sure that you are calling professors as well.

• **Visit during office hours.** If you're having trouble contacting a faculty member, sometimes the quickest solution is to visit their office during office hours.

HOW TO MAKE A CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT

Have the presentation memorized so you can concentrate on delivery. Practice the presentation ahead of time so you feel comfortable with it and can remember it without notes. Most people need to practice saying the presentation out loud at least 10 times before getting it down.

• **Keep in mind that your organization will be judged based on you and your presentation.** Your delivery should be dynamic and engaging. Speak slowly so that people can fully digest what you're saying. Speak clearly so that everyone can hear you. Vary your tone and pace for emphasis.

• **Make eye contact as much as possible.** This builds trust between you and your audience.

• **Be yourself.** You should allow your own personality to come across in your presentation.

• **Arrive at the class a few minutes early.** Introduce yourself to the professor and remind him or her that you're there to make an announcement about getting involved with student government. Write your organization's name and contact information in the corner of the chalkboard.

• **Bring a new volunteer with you so that he or she can pass out the interest cards while you're speaking.** Make sure at the end of your announcement to ask people to fill out the cards and then pass them to the aisles so that you can pick them up as the professor begins class.

CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT GOALS WORKSHEET

About 15% of the people in a class will fill out an interest card, on average.

________________ / .15 ________________
# of cards needed # of people to talk to

Figure out the average class size to determine the estimated number of class announcements that you must do.

________________ / ________________
# of people to talk to average class size

= ____________ # of class announcements

Plan on scheduling four presentations for each hour of calling faculty members.

____________________ / 4 = ________________
# of class announcements Hours of faculty-calling

SAMPLE FACULTY CALLING RAP

Hi. Is Professor____________ there? This is ____________ with the Associated Students at San Marcos. How are you?

Great. I'm calling to tell you briefly about some of our campaign work this semester and see if we could make a short presentation in a class of yours. Do you have a minute?

Through student government, students gain valuable hands-on experience working on campaigns through our volunteer and internship programs. This semester we are offering internships doing work on education, research, service and advocacy projects on issues such as student debt, access to higher education, and youth voting.

One of the best ways that we've found to let students know about internship and volunteer opportunities with us is by making a brief announcement in classes. Can we do a brief 3-5 minute announcement at the start of your class next week?

(Confirm time, place, and number of students.)

OUTLINE FOR CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT

Introduction. *Thank professor, introduce yourself and what you are going to cover. (20 sec)*

Organization. *Describe your organization, describe most recent accomplishment. (30 sec)*

Problem. *Describe the problem, why you are working on it. (30 sec)*

Solution. *What you are going to do about it, what your campaign goal is. (30 sec)*

Other Issues. *Other issues your group is working on. (20 sec)*

Involvement. *Ask people to get involved, describe volunteer opportunities. (30 sec)*

Personal Appeal. *Why you are involved, why they should get involved. (30 sec)*

Wrap. *Thank people for their time, collect interest cards. (20 sec)*

3 min. 30 sec

PHONEBANKING

A phone call is often the first personal contact you will have with a potential intern or volunteer. Good recruitment includes calling people right away after they indicate they are interested. The best way to call a large number of people is to do the calling as a group, in a "phonebank." By making calls all in one place, you ensure you reach out to everyone, have quality conversations, and have some fun.

To run a successful phonebank, you need to have great individual calls. For that, you need an organized presentation that includes the person in the conversation.

OUTLINE OF A PHONE CALL

- **Have a plan.** Have a list of upcoming tasks or events to plug volunteers into.
- **Call people right away.** People will be most responsive when their interest is still fresh.
- **Don't leave messages.** You can only connect with the person and context the importance of their involvement if you're actually speaking to them.
- **Remind the person how you got his or her name.**
- **Ask whether or not it's a good time to talk.**
- **Ask what people are specifically interested in and why.** Involve the person in the conversation and make a personal connection.
- **Describe your immediate goals and lay out a range of tasks.** Try to recommend options that will match the person's interest.
- **Get a commitment.** Confirm where and when they will volunteer.
- **Keep records of the contacts you make.** Note the date and what he or she volunteered to do on the recruitment card or tracking form.
- **Note the most excited people.** People who seem especially skilled should be noted so that you can prioritize them later.

PHONEBANK GOALS WORKSHEET

Figure out how many people you want to show up at the event that you are phonebanking for. Then double it, because only half of the people who commit will show.

________________ x 2 ________________
Attendance goal   Goal for "yes"

On average, you can expect five people per hour of calling to say yes.

________________ / 5 = ________________
Goal for "yes"   Phonebanking hours

Just like any other event, it is best to schedule double the number of volunteer hours you'll need to hit your goals.

________________ x 2 ________________
Phonebanking Hours   Scheduled Hours

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PHONEBANK

• **Use your plan.** From your goals, figure out the number of volunteer hours you will need on the phone.

• **Line up the phones.** Sometimes you will need to borrow phones from other campus organizations, the administration, faculty offices, or residence halls.

• **Sign up phonebankers and phonebank coordinators.** Usually volunteers sign up for two-hour shifts. There should be coordinators for each shift and/or the night overall.

• **Make the phonebank fun.** Order pizza or invite other people to come make banners at the same time, for example.

• **Prioritize and organize the names that are being called by volunteers.** Call the most recent and most interested contacts first.

• **Coordinators should check in on phonebankers periodically.** Listen in and give them feedback and encouragement.

• **Ask people to do more.** As volunteers finish their shifts, quickly speak with them about their experience and performance, and ask them to sign up again, and to coordinate a shift next time.

SAMPLE PHONE BANKING RAP

Hi, is _______________ there?

Hi, this is ___________ from ___________ the Associated Students here at Long Beach. How are you?

Great! I'm calling because you filled out an interest card [in your class/at our event] and I wanted to tell you a little bit more about what we're working on. Do you have a minute?

I see that you checked you are interested in voter registration – what interests you in that?

The Associated Students and California State Student Association are part of the Student Vote Coalition, a statewide non-partisan coalition working to turn out students to vote to have an impact in California.

• You know that tuition is increasing again next fall?

• Yeah by______ %. Tuition is increasing, financial aid is not keeping pace, and as I am sure that you know we are accumulating more debt then ever just to go to school, but politicians continue to ignore us.

• They make decisions about tuition and financial aid, civil rights, the environment, health care, and other issues affecting out lives, but they do not talk to us about it.

• But students cannot be ignored any longer, there is too much at stake, so the Student Vote Coalition is going to register and turn out more students in California then ever before.

• We want to register and turn out 30,000 students statewide and turn out ______ here at Long Beach.

• Politicians will take notice.

Is this a campaign that you would be interested in being involved in?

IF YES:
Great. We are going to be registering people to vote tomorrow in the Union. Do you have an hour to come and volunteer with us between 10-2 tomorrow?

If yes: Great! Our table is going to be at _______ (location). When can you come by? Okay so I will see you at 11 AM, you should ask for______ and they will get you set up.

If no: No problem. Would you have time some other day this week to help out? Great! We're doing an event on ____________from_________to ________ . Do you have an hour to volunteer for that?

• If yes: Great! Our table is going to be at ________(location). When can you come by? Okay so I will see you at 11 AM, you should ask for ______ and they will get you set up.

• If no: Totally understandable, I'll give you a call next week to see if you have any more free time.

IF NO:
Well thanks for your time. Can we keep your contact information on our contact list and update you about upcoming events? Thanks and have a great evening.

VISIBILITY

Visibility helps build campaigns and organizations – it educates people about the work you're doing and the issues you work on, increases name recognition, and builds momentum. When you're visible all over campus, people take notice, and it encourages them to get involved.

Visibility activates the campus community. It sets the stage for students to get involved in campaigns, events, and mobilizes your constituency.

VISIBILITY PRINCIPLES

Know your audience. Figure out what positive message appeals to the widest range of people in your audience. Keep the message simple and clear.

Promote what you are doing. Use visibility to promote meetings, events, reports, accomplishments, service, and your campaigns. Campus-wide events like Earth Day and voter registration drives are great visibility opportunities.

Know the rules. Some campuses have restrictions on where you can hang posters, where you can set up tables, etc. Make sure you know the rules and follow them.

TYPES OF VISIBILITY

A good visibility plan includes both active and passive visibility.

Active visibility
- class announcements
- groups presentations
- tabling
- media coverage

Passive visibility
- banners
- leaflets
- table tents
- posters
- chalking
- emails

3. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

"LEADERS AREN'T BORN, THEY ARE MADE. AND THEY ARE MADE JUST LIKE ANYTHING ELSE, THROUGH HARD WORK."

-Vince Lombardi

Student governments and state student associations rely on students to volunteer their time and energy on campaigns. In order to work effectively on a large campaign and coordinate all the volunteers, student leader need to develop more leaders from within the ranks. In order to build viable student institutions over time, leadership development is critical – as student leaders graduate, new leaders need to be ready to take their place.

PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

• **Everyone has leadership potential.** Anybody who supports the campaigns might be interested in getting involved. Anybody who gets involved once has the potential to take on more.

• **You need to create opportunities for people to take on more responsibility.** It is hard for a new volunteer to know what next step to take. You need to develop a leadership plan for each person, giving him or her opportunities to continue to advance in a campaign and to continue to learn.

• **People stay involved because they are challenged and know they are making a difference.** Give people responsibility quickly. Once somebody masters a basic task, he or she should be given something more difficult to tackle – either training other people to do that basic task, or dealing with a more challenging situation themselves.

• **People will take on more responsibility if you ask. If you need people to do more, you need to let them know that.** If they are the person to do the job, they need to know that you're counting on them. After each activity or event, you should be discussing with volunteers their next activity.

• **People develop as leaders because somebody takes the time to train them.** Once a task has been completed, don't just assign another one – stop and talk about how it went, what pieces went well, what could have gone better, how the volunteer felt about the experience, etc.

• **People stay for the long term because they feel like part of a community.** Develop a group culture that is fun and that encourages people to get to know each other.

HOW TO DEVELOP LEADERS

• **Ask everyone to be a leader.** You'll always want to have more volunteers, but unless you have a lot of leaders, your organization won't be as effective. Leaders will accomplish goals by working with other people. Not everyone will choose to be a leader, but by recruiting a large number of volunteers and giving everyone the opportunity to take on leadership, you'll find the leaders necessary to be effective.

• **Break down leadership opportunities so that a relatively new volunteer can take on more responsibility.** This will make being a leader more accessible to everybody. For instance, during a petition drive, you might ask a volunteer who has just done petitioning for the first time to come back and help train new petitioners next time. If the volunteer is willing to take on more responsibility, the volunteer could help recruit some additional volunteers for the next petition event, or even take responsibility for creating the visuals for the table. As they get more experience, continue to challenge them.

• **Get people involved in various types of leadership.** Over the course of the first few activities, a new volunteer should learn a range of skills, coordinate and lead other students, get individual attention from the organization's leaders, and be invited to participate in group decision-making.

• **Spend your time with the best new leaders.** You should be spending your time with the strongest interns and volunteers. Use your organizing opportunities to plug them into positions that enable you to help them develop.

HOW TO CREATE GOALS AND A TRACKING SYSTEM FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In the midst of a campaign, it can be difficult to keep track of volunteers. In order to not miss opportunities to develop leaders and to ensure that the group will have enough leaders to meet its organizational and programmatic goals, set leadership development goals and track your progress.

• **Set goals for how many leaders your group will need.** A good rule is that for every four students active in your group, you need at least one student in a leadership position.

• **Create a system for keeping track of everyone who volunteers.** If you're running a large recruitment drive and inviting many new people to volunteer, it can be difficult to keep track of all the new volunteers. Create a volunteer activity log that lists volunteers, their contact information, and what activities they have done so far. Update it after each event or activity. Refer to it to make sure volunteers are being invited back, that they are being asked to do a diverse range of activities, and that they are being invited to take on more responsibility.

SKILLS TRAINING

Large campaigns need as many volunteers involved as possible, volunteers with the skills to be effective. The more people who understand the overall objectives of the campaign and have skills to carry out the campaign plan, the more likely it is that the plan will succeed. Training sessions help accomplish these objectives.

Participants learn skills they need to carry out campaign responsibilities effectively, and get a sense of the larger vision of what is being accomplished by the campaign and organization.

PRINCIPLES OF RUNNING A GOOD TRAINING

•**Keep skill sessions simple.** Present a skill as simply as possible. You may have ten good tips on how to table well, for example, but if you tell them to someone all at once, they will be overwhelmed. Keeping it simple builds new volunteers' confidence and makes them feel comfortable jumping into the activity right away. Feedback should be simple too – only comment on one thing at a time.

• **Give a strong sample.** Always demonstrate the skill so people can see the tips in action. People learn just as much, if not more, by observing a trainer perform a skill well than by describing it to them for ten minutes.

• **Practice.** People learn best by doing. Role-plays are a great way to give people experience with the skill before they start actually doing it.

WHEN TO HOLD TRAININGS

• **Hold trainings on a regular basis.** There will constantly be new volunteers coming into the organization in need of training. When executing a recruitment drive, hold trainings sessions multiple times a day.

• **Formal training sessions should be organized like events, including advance planning and publicity.** In a typical recruitment drive, hold at least one formal training session per week. More lengthy sessions should be held on the weekend when people have the time to spend an entire morning or afternoon in training.

• **Informal trainings happen all the time.** They happen at a tabling event, when people arrive for a phonebank, etc. Always give someone a training before they tackle a new task.

• **Don't hesitate to have more specific training sessions for individuals like project coordinators.** This may be a smaller group, but by training them on more advanced skills, you will rapidly increase the depth of expertise within your group.

HOW TO PREPARE A GOOD TRAINING

Trainings are only effective if you put time into preparing them. A good rule is to spend just as long preparing a training as it takes to actually execute the training. You should consider the answers to the following questions.

• **Who is your audience?** What is their skill and experience level? The training will need to be different if it's for campaign coordinators rather than new volunteers.

• **How much time do you have?** Sometimes you may only have time to do a 20 minute training, while other times you may set up a training that will last an entire day.

• **What are the goals?** Decide what skills people should take away from the training.

• **Where will this training take place?** Ideally, you should make sure you have enough space and privacy to hold the training, extra room to spread out and do role-plays, and a chalkboard or paper for writing up key points.

• **Who will help you with this training?** Recruit other group leaders who are skilled in the activity to come help run the training, particularly the role-plays. Ideally, for roleplays, you will have 1 trainer for every 4 trainees.

SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA

1. Introductions

2. Describe the campaign and context why this skill is important within the campaign

3. Explain the skill – a good way is with "How-to's" and "Tips" – ***Keep it simple!***

4. ***Give a sample*** *of the skill – make sure your example highlights the tips you just gave.*

5. ***Practice the skill*** *- role-plays should take up more than half of the training.*

6. Wrap up - reiterate your tips to drive them home.

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL MEETING OUTLINE

***1. Chit - Chat**. If they are new, get to know the person, why they got involved, and what they're most interested in. If they're a regular volunteer, catch up with them.*

***2. Context.** Once you have an idea for where this person should go next, provide some context for that campaign / activity, explain why it's important, and be clear about why they would be good at it.*

***3. Commitment.** Ask the person if they would be willing to take that next step.*

***4. Catapult.** Work together to come up with a clear follow up plan.*

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Though much organizing is done through working with groups – public speaking, tabling – the best leadership development happens on an individual and personal basis. Individual meetings are a great way to transform new volunteers into committed leaders.

In an individual meeting, the goal is to invest volunteers in a plan and goal for the campaign. In addition, the meeting should answer a volunteer's questions, further his or her interest in the campaign, and deepen their commitment.

TIPS ON HOW TO HOLD A GOOD INDIVIDUAL MEETING

• **Be prepared.** Spend time beforehand thinking through the goals of the meeting and the steps needed to reach them.

• **Listen.** Ask open-ended and follow-up questions. Spend more time listening than talking.

• **Get to know their motivations.** Understanding why someone is motivated to volunteer with the group helps in determining what type of role is best for them, and what it will take to keep them involved.

• **Encourage them to take on more leadership.** Pitch larger leadership roles and coordinator positions.

• **Always finish with a follow up plan.** And stick to it.

DEBRIEFS

Each time you finish an activity, it's always important to evaluate your success, look for areas for improvement, and simply check in to see if everyone had a good time. Always build in the time to "debrief" with volunteers and coordinators when they finish an activity.

A debrief usually consists of a quick evaluation of the success of an activity, immediately upon completion of the activity. A debrief is done one-on-one. It might be done with someone who just completed his or her first hour of tabling, or it might be with the tabling coordinator who just ran a table for the first time.

TIPS ON HOW TO HOLD A GOOD DEBRIEF

• **Debriefs should be built in at the end of every activity (tabling, class announcement, lobby meetings).** They should become so routine that not one of your volunteers would think about leaving before participating in a quick debrief on how things went.

• **Debriefs should be brief**. They should last from one to five minutes.

• **Debriefs should be clear and specific.** Let the volunteer give his or her explanation for what happened before you give yours. Compare the actual results to the goals. Feedback should focus on one or two things that went well and one or two problems, no more. This allows for the individual to retain the feedback and to have the confidence that they can do the task again.

• **Use debriefs as an opportunity to reinforce goals.** The emphasis should be on how the volunteer performed in comparison to the goals set, rather than just how they felt about the experience.

• **Debriefs should always end on a positive note** Ask the person to participate in a future activity.

• **Debriefs are not the time to get into deeper issues.** They should be quick assessments of how things went. Use the debrief meeting to schedule a time to meet later to discuss weightier matters.

• **Everyone should get a debrief.** In a big campaign, coordinators of activities should debrief their volunteers; then the organization leaders should debrief the coordinators.

SAMPLE DEBRIEF OUTLINE

1. Icebreaker: *general question about the activity. "Did you have fun?"*

2. Review: *specific question about how they did. "How many voter registrations did you get?"*

3. Evaluation: *why did they do well or not do well? "Great! What worked for you?" or "That's less than the goal. What do you think went wrong?"*

4. Next Step: *what they are going to do coming out of their experience. "You did really well. What I would like to do is have you coordinate the voter registration table at the union tomorrow. Would you like to do that?" or "You'll find it gets easier the more that you do it. What I would suggest is that you come in for the training session on getting voter registrations tomorrow at 4 pm. We are going to do a lot of role-plays to give people practice. Can you make it?"*

5. Wrap Up: *final note of encouragement and thank-you. "Thanks for all your help – we're really going to win this campaign with all of these voter registrations."*

RUNNING A MEETING

There is an almost endless stream of meetings to attend on campus – they can be productive, but they also can be a waste of time if the facilitator does not prepare well.

TIPS FOR PREPARING TO RUN A MEETING

The following tips can apply to student government meetings as well as committee meetings, project group meetings, etc.

• **Know your goals.** The agenda should serve two basic functions: enable your group to achieve identified goals and create an atmosphere that makes attendees feel comfortable and motivated.

• **Before the meeting, figure out what follow-up will be required after the meeting.** No matter who is at a meeting or what decisions are made, every meaningful meeting requires follow up – everything from thanking VIPs who attended, to making sure delegated tasks are actually happening. Before the meeting, make sure that there is a workable plan and timeline for following up on decisions that have been made and tasks that have been delegated.

• **Prepare the people who will be attending the meetings.** Everyone coming to the meeting should have a basic sense of the goals of the meeting, how everyone will participate, and who else will be in attendance. Facilitators should also have a sense of all the possible outcomes, what needs to be done coming out of the meeting, and who at the meeting is best suited to do each task.

• **Anticipate pitfalls.** The only way to insure a smooth, well-run meeting is by anticipating problems and developing solutions before the meeting occurs. The most difficult part of running a successful meeting is dealing with group dynamics. Facilitators need to feel comfortable in the role. They may need to encourage some people to speak while discouraging others. They may need to lay out an opinion or solicit input from the group. They are responsible for making all participants feel comfortable, as well as making sure the meeting accomplishes its goals within the time frame allotted.

The other common problem with meetings is the tension between giving people at the meeting the opportunity to participate while following through on plans developed prior to the meeting. The solution to this problem is twofold. First, do not create a false sense of power. Participants in a meeting should only brainstorm or offer input into decisions which they truly can influence. It is preferable to lay out a decision that has already been made and ask for appropriate feedback than to pretend that a decision is about to be made and ask for input which will be disregarded. The second piece of solving this problem is to provide adequate context to any decision or discussion taking place in the meeting. If people know how and why and by whom a decision has been made, they will be able to understand where they fit into the process and what real input they can have.

• **Debrief after the meeting.** Everyone who helped organize the meeting should be part of critiquing it; however, feedback to an individual or small group should be done in an appropriate forum.

Most Common Motions Made

Name of Motion	Is it in order when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	What vote is required for adoption?	May it be reconsidered?
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn*	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	Yes
Adjourn**	No	Yes	No	No	M	No
Recess*	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	No
Raise a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	(1)	No
Call for the Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	(2)	No
Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	M	No
Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	(3)
Postpone to a Certain Time (Definitely	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M(4)	Yes
Committ (Refer to a Committee)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	(5)
Amend	No	Yes	(6)	Yes	M	Yes
Postpone Indefintely	No	Yes	Yes	No	M	(7)
Main Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	Yes

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)
* A main motion if made when no business pending
** Check RONR for specific rules
(1) Chair grants
(2) No vote: demand
(3) Yes, the unexecuted part may be reconsidered
(4) 2/3 vote required if made a special order
(5) Yes, if the committee has not started work
(6) Yes, if applied to a debateable motion
(7) Only an affirmative vote may be reconsidered

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Student governments have more meetings than any other group. Most student government meetings are run using parliamentary procedure. Parliamentary procedure refers to the rules of democracy—that is, the commonly accepted way in which a group of people come together, present and discuss possible courses of action, and make decisions. Fundamentally, parliamentary procedure defines how groups of people, no matter how formal or informal, can most effectively meet and make decisions in a fair, consistent manner—and make good use of everyone's time. Even a basic background in parliamentary principles can help you and your organization hold more efficient meetings.

PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.

2. The majority has the right to decide.

3. The minority has the right to be heard.

4. Full and free discussion of every motion is a basic right

5. Only one question can be considered at any given time.

Four basic types of motions

1. Main Motions. The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.

2. Subsidiary Motions. Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.

3. Privileged Motions. Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.

4. Incidental Motions. Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

4. MEDIA

Good media coverage educates and influences thousands of people, helping win campaigns. Good media coverage doesn't just happen; it takes time, effort, strategy and, most importantly, building relationships with reporters and editors.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA TO YOUR CAMPAIGN AND ORGANIZATION

• Advances the goals of the organization. Effective use of the media in a campaign is one of the most important tools you can use to achieve campaign victories.

• Educates and influences opinion leaders and the public.

• Builds your group by deepening name recognition and credibility.

PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

• **Build strong relationships with media.** Getting consistently good media coverage depends on building a good relationship with reporters. Personal contact is important. Media outlets receive thousands of releases weekly. A good relationship will make your story stand out. It is one thing to know the names of top newspaper reporters in your area who cover your issues, and something very different to talk with them, get your calls returned frequently and happily, get called by them with tips on happening events, and relied on for the key quote that shows up in their articles.

• **Become a media junkie.** Read the campus and local papers whenever they come out, listen to the radio news shows, and watch the TV news when possible. This will provide a sense of what types of news each outlet tends to cover and which reporters cover each type of issue.

• **"Pitch" the story well.** An effective pitch – a one to two sentence description of the news item – is critical to getting good coverage. The pitch should quickly deliver the message and stress the elements of the story that the reporter will find newsworthy.

NEWS CONFERENCES

News conferences are one of the best ways to generate media. In order to decide if it's appropriate to hold a news conference, consider the following factors: Is your event newsworthy? Are you releasing new information? Are there good visuals (this is especially important if you want TV coverage)? Is there a local angle? If you cannot answer "yes" to one of these questions, you might want to think again about having a news conference.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A NEWS CONFERENCE

1. Figure out the logistics. Timing is critical to a successful event. Know the news deadlines in your city. In general, media events should take place between 9:30 and 11:00am. For most locations, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and in some places Saturdays, tend to be best. Picking a location is a critical decision. The number one criterion is accessibility to the media. Ideally, the location should provide good opportunities for photographs or be relevant to the press conference. Before choosing a location, check it out in person at the time/day of the planned press conference to check for crowds, noise, parking, availability, etc.

2. Get speakers. It usually takes a few weeks to line up big name speakers. Leave yourself at least two weeks preparation time. Anybody who agrees to speak at the conference needs to know in advance who the other speakers are, what each speaker is going to say, and what questions to expect. Each presentation should be 2-5 minutes, each speaker should have at least one "quotable quote," and each speaker should be prepared to make his or her presentation without reading notes.

3. Prepare materials. Prepare and send out a news advisory three days before the event. The advisory should briefly state the who, why, where and when of the event. Prepare a news release for distribution to members of the media who attend and to send to outlets that don't attend.

4. Make sure the media turn out. Even the best planned event is a flop if no media show. The only way to ensure good attendance is to follow up with reporters individually. Everyone who receives a news advisory should receive a personal phone call three days ahead, one day before the event, and the morning of the event. Keep good records on whom you call and what they say so you know with whom to follow up.

5. Be prepared at the event. Make sure you arrive early. A greeter should be stationed at the door with a sign-in sheet and a packet for media folks. No matter how many or how few people have arrived, do not start the event more than five minutes after the scheduled time. Introduce yourself and the speakers to be sure to keep things moving along. Leave up to 15 minutes for questions and answers. You may need to stick around to do interviews with various reporters.

6. Follow up with reporters. Head back to the office to do radio feeds, answer reporters' questions, and fax releases to key people who did not show up. Call through to the reporters who did attend and find out if they will use the story. Call reporters who did not attend to interest them in the story and give interviews. Thank you notes with clips should go to all speakers. Record TV appearances and clip print stories.

ELEMENTS OF A MEDIA PACKET

When you hold a media event, you always want to have a packet of information for the press. Media packets should always include:

- Press release
- Fact sheet on campaign
- Brochures
- A copy of the report, if you are releasing one.

SAMPLE MEDIA PITCH CALL

Hi, is ___________ there?
Hi _______________ this is Latoya with the Student Vote Coalition at San Diego State. How are you doing today? Great! Do you have a minute or are you on deadline? (if so, Okay, what's a better time to give you a call back?).

I wanted to give you a heads up that next Tuesday we will be having a huge eventat on campus with the residence halls. The Student Vote Coalition is hosting a forum of the San Diego mayoral candidates. It's obviously right before the primaries here and students in San Diego are paying attention to local races, so this will be a great opportunity to build some momentum going into the election.

The event will be on Tuesday at 10:00 am at room 101 of the Student Union. I can send you over more information about the event for you to see before then. Does this sound like something you'd be interested in covering?

(They will likely be non-committal and ask you to send the advisory/release over.)

Great. I'll send you that—let me make sure I have the right email address/fax number... Feel free to give me a call if you have any questions or want any more information. Look forward to seeing you there.

SAMPLE PRESS ADVISORY

A press advisory is designed to inform a reporter or editor about an upcoming news conference or media event. The advisory should include the date, time, place and purpose of the event. If there are important speakers or exemplary visuals, the advisory should mention those. The advisory, however, should not tell the whole story. If it does, nobody will bother to come to the event itself.

CSSA
CALIFORNIA STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2004

CONTACT: Alexis Mayer: (707) 888-3333

PRESS ADVISORY

STUDENT VOTE COALITION DORM STORM
AND RESIDENCE HALL VOTER FRENZY

WHAT: The Student Vote Coalition and Residence Hall Association hosts a forum of state senate candidates addressing student issues and local concerns, preceded by an all-halls voter registration drive. The event will be followed by a student vote rally and barbecue, with booths and presentations by various local political groups and student clubs.

WHEN:
Tuesday, April 27, Noon – 3 p.m.

WHERE:
Humboldt State University, Kate Buchanan Room

WHO:
Alexis Mayer, Associated Students of HSU
Dr. Rollin Richmond, HSU President
Wes Chesbro, Candidate for Senate
John Jordan, Candidate for Senate
Craig Swaim, College Republicans
Anne McMonigle, College Democrats

###

It is the mission of the California State Student Association (CSSA) to maintain and enhance accessibility to quality education for the people of California at the California State University- the People's University. As the single recognized voice for the 400,000-plus students of the CSU system, CSSA is the acknowledged statewide student organization representing, serving, and protecting the collective interests of students in the CSU system.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

A press release is a way to get a clear, concise, standard message across to any and all interested reporters. It is designed to answer their questions before they are asked and to frame the issue as you want it to appear. Prepare a news release in conjunction with your news event. The release will give reporters who do and who don't attend a consistent story about what you're doing. You can also write and distribute a news release when something happens that is not visual enough for a news conference.

CSSA
CALIFORNIA STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2005

CONTACT: Laura Kerr: 916-441-4514

PRESS RELEASE

California State Student Association Releases Sample Press Release

The California State Student Association (CSSA) today released a sample press release calling it "an invaluable guide for student leaders interested in getting good media coverage." The lead paragraph in the sample press release, just like that in a real release, is two or three sentences containing the who, what, when, where and why of the story.

"An important quote from a CSSA spokesperson using active verbs usually is in the second paragraph of the release," said Laura Kerr, CSSA's Director of Governmental Affairs. "Reporters like informative, snappy quotes, and also, within the confines of quotation marks you can editorialize and advocate your side of the issue."

The sample press release, which is intended for use as a model, imitates the form and style of an authentic release but lacks real news content. It is two or three pages in length, comprised of short, double-spaced paragraphs. "The news release is a cornerstone of any publicity effort," according to Kerr. "Student leaders can write a good press release simply by imitating the inverted pyramid style of articles found in newspapers," she said.

The inverted pyramid style places the most important features of the news story at the beginning of the release with each subsequent paragraph containing less important information. Within the press release, parenthetical paragraphs give readers background information that they may not have otherwise known. It is common practice for student governments to issue press releases on a wide range of subjects including on campus events and pending legislation. However, few news releases are actually published or broadcast by the news media because "literally hundreds cross a reporters desk each week," according to Kerr.

"Since the competition for news coverage is intense, releases must be stylistically correct and contain a hard news hook if they are going to receive coverage," Kerr said. "Releases about breaking news, especially if it has a local angle, are more likely to get coverage."

###

It is the mission of the California State Student Association (CSSA) to maintain and enhance accessibility to quality education for the people of California at the California State University- the People's University. As the single recognized voice for the 400,000-plus students of the CSU system, CSSA is the acknowledged statewide student organization representing, serving, and protecting the collective interests of students in the CSU system.

TIPS ON WRITING A GOOD OP-ED

• ***Have a hook.*** *You've got to hook the reader – and the editor – in the first couple of paragraphs. Use an interesting anecdote, question, a provocative statement or a colorful quote. Editors often look for creative angles on a topic.*

• ***Get a co-signer.*** *Getting a coalition partner, VIP or legislator to co-sign can definitely help get coverage.*

• ***Use examples.*** *Make ample use of anecdotes and quotes; they keep the reader going.*

• ***Don't overstate anything.*** *Overstatement creates distrust in the readers' minds.*

• ***Show, don't tell.*** *Wherever possible, give facts or examples rather than using rhetoric. It's more convincing.*

• ***Back up assertions with facts.*** *And double check them. Make sure quotations are accurate – both the actual words and the context in which they are used.*

OPINION EDITORIALS

Op-Eds are editorials that newspapers run on the opinion pages. Closely monitor the opinion pages to get a sense of the articles run by the editor. Pay attention to any pieces on your issues.

HOW TO GET YOUR OPINION-EDITORIAL PRINTED

The normal process is to submit a typed article (with an average length of 500-800 words) with a cover letter to the Editorial Page Editor. Then, follow up aggressively: Did they get it? Will they print it? Can you adjust it to their specifications?

Keep in mind the usual protocol for submitting to sets of papers. If the New York Times runs a piece, other papers will run it. On the other hand, if it is run by a lesser known paper first, the New York Times won't cover it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are a great way to get easy media coverage for a campaign. LTEs are easy to write and have a good chance of being printed and since the letters page is one of the most widely read pages in the newspaper, LTEs gets the message out to many people.

Sample LTE Outline

1. State the problem/topic (why you are personally concerned).

2. Describe the problem in a way that makes it more real for the reader.

3. State the solution, both generally and specifically.

4. Wrap it up with a final "why" – again, the more personal the better. A single, well-written sentence wins your audience.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN LTE

Most newspapers state their policies for submitting LTEs in the paper (usually on the opinion page). Make sure to follow their procedures exactly.

Follow up with the editor of the letters page to be sure he or she received the letter, that it meets their requirements and to ask when they are planning to print it. Make sure to have a strategy for who signs – whether it be a group, group leader, local official or an average student. It is also frequently effective to send in letters from several people on the same issue increasing the chance that the paper will print one of them.

TIPS ON WRITING A GOOD LTE

• ***Respond.*** *Respond to stories. Letters in response to stories that ran recently are more likely to be printed. Read the paper and watch for stories that relate to the campaign.*

• ***Find a hook.*** *As with op-eds, you've got to hook the reader – and the editor – right away. Use an interesting anecdote or question, a provocative statement or a colorful quote.*

• ***Use personal experience.*** *A good personal angle will make your LTE stand out from others.*

• ***Show emotion.*** *With LTEs it is fine to express feelings of anger or of frustration – but make sure you avoid overstatement.*

• ***Keep it short.*** *Short letters are more likely to be printed.*

5. PLANNING

"THE SECRET OF GETTING AHEAD IS GETTING STARTED. THE SECRET OF GETTING STARTED IS BREAKING YOUR COMPLEX, OVERWHELMING TASKS INTO SMALL MANAGEABLE TASKS, AND THEN STARTING ON THE FIRST ONE."

— Mark Twain

WHY PLANNING IS IMPORTANT

• **Planning allows you to get more done.** If you are the coordinator of a student organization, event, campaign, or project of any sort, you are probably responsible for juggling a lot of people and tasks. Planning helps you stay organized, and is the only way to stay on top of everything that you have to do. If you don't plan, inevitably things will fall through the cracks.

• **Planning creates a sense of a shared vision and goals.** A shared plan is the only way to ensure that everyone in the organization is on the same page and understands what you are working to accomplish. It also provides a benchmark to know when you've succeeded, and can help you analyze why things occurred the way they did.

• **Planning facilitates your ability to recruit new volunteers, delegate tasks, and develop leaders.** Having a good plan facilitates plugging new volunteers into specific tasks right away and handing over responsibilities to developing leaders.

HOW TO PLAN

1. Set goals. The best goals are tangible and measurable.

2. Figure out what needs to happen to hit the goals. For example, what decision needs to be made and who makes it? What support do you need to gather?

3. Determine strategies. What are you going to do to make that happen?

4. Determine tactics and tactical goals. Overall goals are things like "Stopping the 8% fee increase." Focus on overall goals, but set tactical goals as well. To do this, first determine strategies and tactics (news media coverage, hand written letters, etc.) that will actually help meet the overall goal. Finally, specifically quantify tactical goals (10 articles in statewide and regional news papers, 30 in campus papers, 700 handwritten letters, etc).

5. Work backwards. For each goal, work backwards to figure out what needs to be done and when it needs to be done. To do this, consider all the steps required to meet the goal, and then figure out when these things need to happen to stay on schedule. For example. If you need to put up 500 posters during the third week of a recruitment drive, then you need to design the poster, get the design approved, produce the posters, and recruit ten volunteers by the end of the second week.

6. Put your plan in a timeline. Create a week by week or day by day plan, outlining the key benchmarks of what needs to get done and when.

7. Use the plan to choose priorities. Pick the three things that absolutely must get done and isolate those things as priorities. Spend the bulk of your time working on priorities.

8. Use the plan. Don't throw it away in the desk drawer and ignore it. Consult it regularly.

9. Adjust the plan. The plan will change, they always do. If you're off track, figure out what you have to do to still hit your goals. If necessary, adjust your goals up or down. Be opportunistic – add new projects as they come along.

EXAMPLE: PLANNING A LOBBY DAY

Student governments and state student associations often organize lobby days, giving large numbers of students the opportunity to speak directly with decision makers at one time. When organized well they become a large event and can make a big impact. The key to organizing a lobby day well is having a good plan.

Step 1. Set goals
>> Overall Goal: Protect the funding in the governor's budget that will allow for a fee freeze as it moves through the state legislature.

Step 2. What needs to happen to hit goals
>> Win a favorable vote in the House as a whole and Senate Higher Education Committee
- Strengthen the support of the Speaker of the House
- Gain the support of two more Senators on the Higher Education Committee

Step 3. Determine strategies
>> Lobby key legislators to ensure their support
>> Media to garner public support and provide 'hero opportunity' for Speaker of the House.
>> Build a Campus Coalition to show broad support and recruit for lobby day

Step 4. Determine tactics and set tactical goals
>> Host Lobby Day on March 23rd
>> Have Lobby Meetings with House and Senate Leadership, Senate Higher Education Committee Leadership and Membership, Legislators from the school's district, and at least 10 other legislators from students' home districts
>> 100 Students at the Lobby Day
>> 7 Coalition Groups endorse and turn out members
>> Press Conference at lobby day
- Speakers
  - > Chair of Senate Higher Education Committee
  - > Speaker of the House
  - > Student Government President
- 3 Print Media Stories, 2 TV Stories

>> Visibility
- 200 Posters hung on campus
- Chalking on campus
- 1 letter to the editor published in campus paper announcing event
- Mass email to student groups

Step 5. Plan backwards
>> Host Lobby Day march 23rd
- Reserve meeting space at the capitol 1 month out
- Scout space at the Capitol before scheduling it
- Set date 1 month out
- Discuss best date to hold lobby day with Higher Education Committee Staff 1 month out

>> Lobby Meetings
- Confirm meetings one day before event
- Schedule meetings with legislative staff 1-2 weeks out
- Make initial contact with legislative staff 2-3 weeks out
- Fax Meeting Request 2-3 weeks out

>> 100 Students at Lobby Day
- 40 from coalition groups
- 50 from recruitment
  - > Confirmation calls to attendees night before
  - > 100 people say yes to attend 1-2 weeks out
  - > 200 people contacted 1-2 weeks out
    - 20 hours of phone banking
  - > 300 people sign up as interested 2-3 weeks out
    - 100 from tabling event 3 weeks out
      - – Reserve Table 4 weeks out
      - – Recruit 5 student government leaders to work at the table
    - 20 from class raps 2 weeks out
      - – 5 hours faculty calling to set up class raps 4 weeks out
    - 10 core volunteers from Student Government
      - – Recruit 5 volunteers 5 weeks out
      - – Recruit the other 5 by 2 weeks out

>> 7 Coalition groups
- Coalition groups turn out 40 people to lobby day
- Confirm groups and their turnout 3 days before and night before
- Set recruitment goals with groups 1 week out
- Sign 7 groups on 2 weeks out
- Attend 15 group meetings 2-3 weeks out
- Draw up target list of 30 groups and email their leadership 4 weeks out
- Press Conference
  - > Media
    - Hand out media packet, including press release, to media at the event
    - Confirm media the morning of the event
    - Follow up with media day before the event
    - Pitch the event 3 days out
    - Send out press advisory 3 days out
    - Draft advisory and release 1 week out
  - > Speakers
    - Confirm speakers day before event
    - Send speakers direction 3 days out
    - Send speakers campaign information and answer questions 1 week out
    - Confirm speakers 2 weeks out at latest
    - If necessary invite 2nd choice 2 weeks out
    - Invite speakers 3 weeks out
    - Decide on choices for speakers and draft invitations 4 weeks out
- Visibility
  - > Chalk campus 1 week out
  - > Have 1 letter to the editor published 2 weeks out
  - > Submit 4 letters to the editor 2 weeks out
  - > Hang 200 posters 2-3 weeks out
  - > Email out to student groups 3 weeks out
  - > Design posters 4 weeks out

STEP 6. CREATE WEEK BY WEEK PLAN

					3/23 - Lobby Day	
	17-Feb	24-Feb	10-Mar	17-Mar	24-Mar	GOALS
Logistics and Meetings	Speak with staff person for Higher Education Committee, Set Date	Scout location and reserve space	Fax Meeting Requests, Make first calls with schedulers	Follow up with schedulers	Confirm meetings	**Location and date set one month out, lobby meetings with all Higher Education Committee members**
Recruitment	Identify 5 lead Volunteers in Student Government, reserve table	Table on campus, 20 hours, 100 people sign up as interested, 5 hours faculty calling to set up class raps	20 Class Raps , 200 sign up, 7 hours phonebanking, 30 say yes to attend	Phone Bank 20 hours, 70 say Yes, Identify 5 more volunteers	5 hours Confirm Calls	**100 Students attend lobby day - 40 coalition, 50 from recruitment, 10 core volunteers**
Coalition	Draw up target list of 30 Groups, Email Leadership	Attend 10 group Meetings	Attend 5 more meetings - 7 groups sign on	Set turnout goals with groups	Confirm groups and turnout	**7 Groups sign on, turn out 40 people to lobby day**
Press Conference	Draft target list of speakers and invitation	Once date and location is set, send written invitation to first choice for speakers	Confirm first choice or invite second choice. Confirm speakers	Send speakers campaign information, , Draft press advisory and release	Send directions to and confirm speakers. Send in advisories, pitch reporters, confirm media, prep media kits	**Speaker of the House and Senate Education Committee Chair speak at press conference. 3 Print Media Hits, 2 TV**
Visibility	Design Posters	Hang 100 posters, Mass emails out to student groups	Hang 100 more posters, submit 4 LTES	Chalking on Campus		**200 posters hung, mass email out to student groups, 1 LTE printed, chalk campus**
2 Priorities for Week	Logistics, Identifying lead volunteers	Coalition building, Inviting Speakers	Class Raps, Visibility	Phone Banking Atendees, Scheduling Meetings	Confirming Attendees and Media	

Step 7. Use your plan to choose your priorities

- Recruitment
- Legislative leadership at press conference
- Lobby Meetings with all Higher Education Committee members

Use and adjust your plan!

TIPS ON PLANNING

- **Have an overall plan for the campaign.** Never work on a campaign that hasn't been thought through from beginning to end. This plan will focus on the big picture.

- **Have a week by week plan, covering the entire term.** Create the term plan by placing the goals and tactics from campaign plans into a week by week timeline.

- **Spend time each week planning for the next week.** On a weekly basis, plan for the upcoming week, referring back to the semester plan and making adjustments as needed. Do this on Thursday or Friday for the following week. Monday is too late!

- **Share your plan.** If people don't know what you have thought of and how you're going to make it happen, then you're plan isn't useful. Use your plane as a tool to get everyone on the same page and invested in the same goals.

6. STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

"WE CAN DO ANYTHING WE WANT. WE'RE COLLEGE STUDENTS!"

— Eric "Otter" Stratton, Animal House

Over the past half century, state student associations (SSAs) have emerged as powerful student institutions. State student associations pool the resources, experience and skills of students across the state to collectively advocate for students. There are many different types of SSAs, but all share the mission of keeping higher education affordable, accessible and high quality.

TYPES OF SSAs

• **Independent SSAs.** These SSAs tend to have an institutionalized student fee, employ full time staff, have a full time presence in the statehouse and run multiple statewide campaigns.

• **System Organized SSAs.** These SSAs tend to be created by a state statute or university governing board, be funded by the university system or by dues and have part time university advisors.

• **Informal SSAs.** These SSAs tend to be coalitions of student governments that vary in size and activity from year to year, have no staff or advisors, and be funded by dues if at all.

Not all SSAs fit neatly into these categories but this is a helpful way to think about them.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG SSA

• **Full time professional staff provide a stable foundation for SSAs.** Staff provide continuity over the years, recruit and train new leaders, and can have a full-time presence in the state-house.

• **A strong funding system provides SSAs with the resources it takes to make a big impact.** Strong funding allows SSAs to hire staff, produce materials, and rent office space, among other things. The strongest funding system is a mandatory student fee

• **SSAs that network and organize member campuses are able to accomplish more.** Networking and field organizing involves more students and deepens their impact.

These elements are found most commonly in independent SSAs.

IF YOUR STATE DOES NOT HAVE A STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION...

...Work to start one! Starting a state student association takes time and a lot of hard work. Starting with no statewide organization, it may even take years. Thankfully, established SSAs and the SET Project are excited and invested in helping establish new and stronger SSAs. If you are serious about establishing an SSA in your state, get in touch with the experts!

STEPS TO CREATING A SSA

1. Define the goals. Ask: if we had a SSA, what would it do? Define the key programmatic and institutional goals your SSA would accomplish.

2. Build support in your student government. Support has to start on one campus. Work to build support amongst key student leaders on your campus, and identify people to assist you.

3. Reach out to other campuses. Make phone calls, write emails and visit campuses. Build support one person at a time, and one student government at a time.

4. Run a campaign/hold a conference. Often, you will need to do more than describe an SSA to build support. You may need to run a coordinated campaign to show the potential, or host a conference to go more in depth with other student leaders.

5. Make a formal decision. After you have built support for your SSA with decision makers, make a formal decision to create the organization, elect leadership, and draft a constitution and bylaws.

6. Institutionalize funding. Establishing a funding system is the best way to invest member schools and build the organization. The best funding system is a mandatory student fee, which most student governments have the power to allocate themselves. Whenever possible, use existing student government money to get your SSA started – after you've begun your organization, you can add to your funding with a new SSA fee. New fees often take years and need administrative and regent approval. So don't get too caught up in creating one if you have resources at your disposal.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR ESTABLISHED STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Even for some of the oldest and most effective state student associations, student leaders must work hard to make their association as effective as possible. SSAs perform best when leaders on the state and campus level work closely together, beginning with a shared and clear campaign plan that includes identifiable goals and strategies and a consistent message.

TIPS FOR CAMPUS LEADERS

- **Bring good ideas from campus to the state level.** Most good ideas start on the local level – but they shouldn't stay there! If you have a campaign proposal or idea for a new strategy, bring it before the statewide decision making body.

- **Use the decision making process.** Decision making processes vary amongst different organizations. Whatever yours is, your campaign or proposal will go much farther with the formal support of the statewide organization.

- **Build support.** Before a decision is made, build support for your proposal with statewide and campus leaders.

TIPS FOR STATEWIDE LEADERS

- **Make yourself a resource for member campuses.** Take the time to communicate regularly with and offer assistance to campus leaders. An important part of your responsibility as a statewide leader is helping leaders in their on-campus efforts.

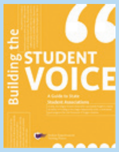
- **Build relationships with campus leaders.** Campus leaders are your greatest asset. Building strong relationships is instrumental to being an effective leader. Take whatever opportunity you can to build relationships with fellow student leaders.

- **Involve campus leaders in the decision making process.** Meetings are important, but most important work occurs elsewhere. Especially when making formal decisions, seek out input and build support for proposals well before the decision is made. Not only will this result in better decisions but also in a more committed and invested community of leaders.

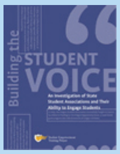
NOTES

List of Resources

Reports on State Student Associations
Available for download at **studentgovresources.org**



A Guide to State Student Associations



An Investigation of State Student Associations and Their Ability to Engage Students

STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION WEBSITES

www.csustudents.org
www.ucsa.org
www.orstudents.org
www.azstudents.org
www.unitedcouncil.net
www.msusa.net
www.mscsa.org
www.wastudents.org
www.usstudents.org

Student Government Resource Center, 328 S. Jefferson, Suite 620, Chicago, IL 60661, 312-600-7951, info@studentgovresources.org

www.studentgovresources.org

California State Student Association, 401 Golden Shore, Suite 135, Long Beach, CA 90802, 562-951-4025

www.csustudents.org