Resource Depot: Membership

As a club leader, you face two challenges with regards to the membership of your club. First, how to Recruit new members through outreach efforts, and second, how to Retain your existing members through engagement. Overall, groups need to continually evaluate their organization, develop their identity and recognize the group’s strengths and weaknesses.

Recruitment of New Members
Recruitment is one of the most important functions of officers within a group. Without new members, an organization will not last and the purpose will not be fulfilled. You need new members in order to:

- Create new and better ideas within the group
- Share common interests with others
- Develop a team of people to help with the work (one person or a small group of people can’t do everything)
- Expand the growth of the organization
- Diversify the organization and its members
- Replace members who leave the organization

Organizations must consider what benefits they offer to their membership. This can vary depending on the type of organization. People join groups for a variety of reasons, including:

- Meeting new people
- Making change at Brandeis
- Supporting friends
- Creating enthusiasm
- Improving the campus community
- Exploring new interests
- Physical or mental challenge
  - Building a resume
- Having a sense of belonging to a particular group
- Gaining a new skill

One of the most important accomplishments is to create an identity for the organization. This includes a common vision and mission. This will increase individual ownership in the organization and ensure that new members aren’t disappointed with their membership.

Student Activities Fair
At the beginning of each semester, an Activities Fair is held for students by the Department of Student Activities to discover what programs and activities organizations are planning and implementing at Brandeis. This is a great opportunity for your group to recruit new members! Be sure to come with information about your activities and how students can become involved! For more information about involvement and participation, please contact the Department of Student Activities.

Retaining Existing Members
When discussing retention within an organization, the top issue to observe is why people leave. Some of the common reasons are: not fitting in with the group, having no responsibility, being “burned out,” having the membership become more of a job than an activity, becoming frustrated with leaders, receiving no recognition for work done, time commitment becomes too overwhelming, and need to try something new.
The following are some tips to retain your members:

- Communicate your expectations
- Pass on all relevant information
  - Hold well-organized meetings and events
  - Recognize that people have individual strengths and weaknesses. Accentuate the positive!
  - Create good relationships with committee members and volunteers in order to allow for ease in critiquing, encouraging, rewarding, and challenging
- Recognize that some members of your group might have some fear and apprehension
- Share your values, goals and vision as well as work with others to create them
- Encourage input from everyone
- Prepare people for what you are asking of them
- Find balance between rewards and recognition. They are different!
- Get to know what motivates the members of your group

Taken from the Leadership Resource Center at Grand Valley State University.