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Volunteer Program Sustainability

Volunteer Retention

When volunteers' needs are being met, they are likely to have incentive to stay with the program.

WHAT Volunteers Need

- ✓ *Recognition* – need to be held in esteem by others
- ✓ *Achievement* – need to feel like they are accomplishing something
- ✓ *Control* – need to feel independent
- ✓ *Variety* – need to be doing different things to keep their interests
- ✓ *Growth* – need to feel like they are developing, increasing their skills, knowledge, or status
- ✓ *Affiliation* – need to belong, share, cooperate, be accepted, be loved, and be connected to groups
- ✓ *Power* – need to influence the actions of others
- ✓ *Fun* – need to be engaged in activities they find exciting or enjoyable
- ✓ *Uniqueness* – need to feel special

HOW to Meet Volunteers' Needs

- Open communication with agency staff and student leadership
- Information, tools and resources
- Supervision and support
- Clear policies and position descriptions
- Orientation and training

Transitioning Your Program

What happens to organizations when leadership leaves? To ensure continued good work and organizational growth, information needs to be transferred in a timely and efficient way.

Program knowledge must stay within the organization.

Effective Transitional Leadership Steps

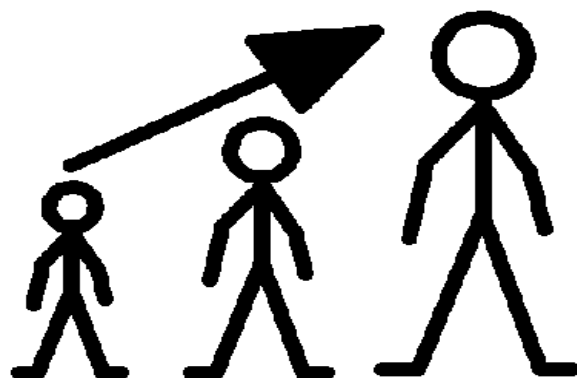
STEP 1: Current Leaders' Role

STEP 2: Attract Emerging Leaders

STEP 3: Setting your timeline

STEP 4: Position Recruitment

(flip over...)



Effective Transitional Leadership STEPS

STEP 1: Current Leaders' Role

Pave the way for successful transition with your passion, organizational skills and interpersonal skills.

- **Enthusiasm**- show passion for the position and write reflections on your experience as a leader
- **Job descriptions**- with clearly defined expectations, duties, and responsibilities.
- **Trainings**- for future leaders. New coordinators should feel confident about the training they receive. An experiential training session can be very helpful. Instead of simply telling coordinators what to do, show them and then let them try it for themselves!
- **Archival binder**- Include essential information and responsibilities for successful implementation of your project's goals and activities. It will serve as a check-off list for the coordinator and organization so that they do not have to "reinvent the wheel" each time an activity is organized.
- **Contact Information** – Provide a list of important contacts that the new coordinator can use as a resource. Contacts play an ongoing role in providing assistance and feedback when coordinators are planning activities. If possible, introduce incoming leader to key contacts.
- **Welcome/Exit Meeting**- with incoming officer and allow time for mentorship and appreciation

Examples of Archival Binder Contents:

- History of your group/organization/project, with a Strategic Plan**
- Re-visit your current timeline and include recommendations.**
- Faculty/Staff Sponsor Information, Community Contacts**
- Funding Sources, Statistics**
- Calendar of Events, Assessment of your events**
- What could have gone better and how?**
- Make a digital copy of the archival binder**

STEP 2: Attracting Emerging Leaders

Offering opportunities to emerging leaders already in your organization may lead you to the best candidate.

- Include them in committees
- Delegate duties to show/share your trust
- Highlight their strengths
- Provide them with feedback-constructive
- Challenge your members
- Share your own experiences and provide candid honest responses
- Encourage them to shadow some of the current leaders

STEP 3: Setting your timeline for transition

Why is planning ahead extremely important?

- More feasible and less stressful on you
- To allow opportunities to shadow current leaders
- To compete with other priorities: academics, jobs, volunteer and research opportunities

STEP 4: Position Recruitment

- Ensure the most qualified, enthusiastic hopefuls considered for the positions
- Remember: This it is not a popularity contest, but rather who can carry one the work etc.
- Ask who will have the dedication and energy to ensure that your group is thriving
- The most important thing you can do is making their experience one where potential leaders will want to stay involved