

Making a Smooth Officer Transition

Your last task as an officer can be your most important one. Gracefully transferring your knowledge and authority can have several benefits:

1. Your group will not "reinvent the wheel" each year because it can build on your previous knowledge.
2. Successful transitions will prevent the "lame duck" period when group effectiveness can be limited.
3. The transition process will help outgoing leaders bring closure to their experience. It can help them "let go," which is often a difficult thing for committed leaders to do.
4. Experienced leaders will feel needed as you use their expertise for transition programs.
5. New leaders will start their jobs with increased confidence and knowledge of available resources.

Transition Should Occur All Year

1. Identify emerging leaders early in the year to give them experience and exposure to resources.
2. Maintain organized files including contact people, facilities, financial information, and minutes on all events your group was involved in.
3. Elect officers one month before installation to provide an "overlap" period for new and old officers to work together.
4. Encourage individual meetings between new and old officers to provide a smooth transition.
5. Establish a calendar for the year to provide a general time line for new officers.

A Smooth Transition Includes

1. A meeting or retreat to share ideas and plans for the future;
2. Filling in the gaps for new officers by asking yourself what you wished someone had told you a year ago;
3. Sharing traditions, ideas, completed projects, continuing projects, concerns, or ideas never carried out;
4. Acquainting new officers with physical environment and supplies;
5. Introducing new officers to key people such as advisors, administrators, and faculty who have helped your group in the past;
6. Updating your constitution and by-laws to reflect changes made during your administration;
7. Reviewing job descriptions to make sure they accurately describe the offices that your organization uses;

8. Reviewing your financial records to list outstanding bills and payments. New officers should usually start new records to start their "fiscal year";
9. Reviewing your mailing list or membership records to bring them up-to-date; and
10. Reviewing the Student Organization Manual available in Office of Student Activities.

"Experience is not what happens to you; it's what you do with what happens to you."

-- Aldous Huxley