

Yesterday  
I dared to  
struggle.  
Today I dare  
to win.

*Bernadette  
Devlin*

## OFFICER TRANSITION

**Smooth, thorough** officer transition from one year's leadership to The next is vital to the **continued development and success** of your group.

### Preparing for Transition

#### What You Need to Do as an Out-going Officer

- Organize your materials (notebooks, files, calendars). Tie up any loose ends, including bills and correspondence.
- Using the invaluable hindsight you now have, identify the areas of responsibility, people, details, resources, phone numbers, etc., that you wish someone had told you when you took office. Be thorough and specific. Realize that identifying only key people and resources is not enough. You should introduce them to help them begin building rapport.
- If possible, create a log. Write down the aspects of each project you worked or assisted, what went right and why, what went wrong and why. It would also be especially helpful if you had evaluations from members and other officers regarding your performance and events/projects.
- Event though you will be tired and burned out, schedule a specific time for exchange of information with the new leadership. This should be mandatory for all officers and chairpersons. You may require more than one meeting. Ask questions of the new officers. Make sure they understand the role of your office and how it fits in with the overall group.
- After this meeting, the biggest favor you can do is to be available to provide follow-up information.

#### What You Need to Do as a New Officer

- Determine what you need to learn. Realize you have a responsibility to the overall success and functioning of the group. You'll need to know the little details and the big picture, and how your work will affect others and the organization itself.
- Determine which former officers can give you the best training and guidance.
- Do not assume you know everything. Seek as much information as possible. Talk to your advisors. Talk to people in other groups who hold similar positions.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask.

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## **The Transition Meeting/Workshop**

### The Special Meeting

- All old and new officers need to get together. The officers can pair up to transfer materials, notebooks, files, etc. It gives an opportunity to get to know each other and develop an understanding of each other and the roles each play in the success/development of the group. It provides a first step in team building. Schedule the meeting in a comfortable, functional place with few interruptions.

### **The Workshop**

- Outgoing officers should review the past year in their areas. Past goals should be discussed (strengths, areas of improvement, shortcomings, problems that arose, etc.) All old and new officers should be present. After all old officers hand off their materials to their successor, they should then leave the workshop.
- The second phase is for new officers and focuses on team building. An advisor or Student Activities staff member can be very helpful in this phase. Use this as an opportunity to learn names and to get to know each other better.
- Review the group constitution (each group should have one), by-laws, university regulations, and the key issues of the year just passed. You can't start with a clean slate, unfortunately; your group has a history, prior commitments, obligations, expectations, and perhaps even an image or reputation which needs to change or be improved.
- Goal-setting phase: Identify general areas for improvement for the year ahead, but don't do actual goal setting yet. That should include all members, not just the leadership. Goals have a better chance of being achieved if everyone has a part in the decision-making process, and it builds group cohesion. Besides group goals, each officer should write down tentative goals for their position (to be reviewed at a later date). A master copy of these goals should be compiled and copied for all officers.
- The last phase brings the officers together with others who can be helpful in conducting the next year's business and achieving goals. Always invite university personnel, key administrators, advisors, alumni, etc. But always let them know of the date and time in advance so they can make a point to join you at the end.