

# INCOMING OFFICER GUIDE

## Your Role as a Student Leader

1. **Work on the morale of your group members.** Unless they feel good about their roles, your group members will not be as cooperative and productive as they could be.
2. **Expect any changes to be accepted gradually.** Sometimes we expect people to accept changes overnight that we have been thinking about for months. Remember that it is almost impossible to change people... they usually must change themselves.
3. **Be available to help those who want your help.** When we attempt to force our ideas of assistance when it hasn't been solicited, we risk building resistance among our group.
4. **Let your group members determine the group's purpose.** Unless group members have a say in what is to happen, their participation will be half-hearted at best.
5. **Emphasize the process for working through problems rather than the final result.** Your desired results may change as your group changes. An open channel of communication which involves all group members will help you incorporate these changes.
6. **Approach change through cooperative appraisal.** When change is based on evidence, it reduces the chances for a win-lose situation. The decision will be based on what is right, rather than who is right.
7. **Encourage brainstorming and creativity.** Provide feedback and support for new ideas and avoid penalizing for mistakes made for the sake of experimentation.
8. **Share decision regarding policies and procedures.** By emphasizing how to solve problems, and involving your members in these decisions, you will have created deeper commitment in your members.
9. **Recognize criticism as the first step individuals take in assuming responsibility.** Use criticism as a chance to solicit suggestions for improvement.
10. **Share the glory.** You cannot expect enthusiastic participation if you take all the credit.
11. **Have faith and confidence in the ability of your group.** People tend to live up to our expectations, be they high or low.
12. **Be sure your group has a common purpose.** Structure meetings so that issues of common interest are discussed with the whole group, and individual concerns are addressed at other times.
13. **Trust the motives of all group members.** Attend to every suggestion as a sincere one which deserves a sincere response.
14. **Don't set yourself up as infallible.** Be honest and admit when you lack an answer. Don't be afraid to be human.
15. **Be specific.** Communicate exactly what you expect and think.
16. **Be socially sensitive.** Avoid being witty or funny at the expense of group members.
17. **Use the inquiry method.** Use questions to get information and define issues.
18. **Be impartial.** Play no favorites and give all group members equal chance to participate.
19. **Promote group cohesiveness.** Make all group members feel as if they belong.
20. **Manage conflict, don't ignore it.** Bring conflict into the open, and concentrate on issues, behaviors and facts rather than personalities.

*Adapted from: Student Organizations' Handbook - The Wichita State University*

Incoming Officer's Transition Worksheet  
[Questions to ask during transition]

Please think through and respond to the following questions regarding your responsibilities. This information will be helpful to your successor.

1. Things specific to the position I want to know about (forms, duties, etc.)

2. Things I should do over the summer...

3. People (positions) that I should get to know...

4. Services that I need to know about...

5. Things I need to know about working with my advisor...

6. Other questions I want answered...

## Maintaining Continuity: Transition Questions

**Directions:** Many of these questions are geared toward former, or out-going officers. New officers can use these questions to brainstorm ideas or goals for the upcoming term of office.

1. What do you perceive to be your organization's objectives or goals?
2. What do you consider to be the responsibilities of your office?
3. What are your expectations of yourself in the office?
4. What expectations do you have of the executive council?
5. What expectations do you believe your members have of you?
6. What problems or areas will require attention within the next year?
7. What should be done immediately in the fall?
8. Who do you anticipate will be most helpful in getting things done? (People outside your organization such as advisors, professors, administrative staff, etc.)
9. Write down one specific problem you anticipate you will encounter during your term.

## Incoming Officers - "Goals, Dreams, & Priorities"

Things We Would Like  
To Accomplish

Barriers / Limitations

Resources

Unknown Questions

Why We Want This


## Incoming Officer's Keys to the Future

Before you begin goal setting with the members of your organization, you may benefit personally by developing your own goals. The goals may vary in terms of being long or short in range. Some things you may want to think about for yourself might be: the tone you would like to create in your organization, programming ideas, personal growth, the people you will be working with, budgeting, leadership training, etc.

Begin your own goal setting now by brainstorming for possibilities of what you would like to be about during the upcoming year.

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Now list things you can do right away:

Things I want to do starting right now!!! (Be specific - how, when, where...) 1.

2.

3.

Things I want to get started on soon: (when?) 1.

2.

3.

How do I get started? Is there anything I can do before tomorrow? What specifically?

What can I realistically have accomplished one-week from today? One-month?