

# MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

## WHY IS RETENTION IMPORTANT?

Retaining your members is essential to the longevity and function of your organization. There are many different strategies and resources available to you to prevent a loss in membership and ways to keep the members you have. Always reach out to your advisor or to Student Involvement for help before you begin to struggle.

## FOLLOW THE 5 R'S OF RETENTION

### RESPONSIBILITY

- Members who are given responsibilities are more likely to feel connected and invested in their organization. This is also a great way to identify and develop emerging leaders. No matter how small the responsibility may seem, it could mean the world to your members to be trusted with a responsibility.

### REQUIREMENTS

- Giving new members an idea of the commitment requirements of joining your organization is the first step to building trust. Following up with those requirements and making sure that everyone is being held to the same standard is how you can keep that trust.
- Enforcing Requirements can seem difficult, but it is a part of being a functional and effective leader

### REWARDS

- Reward your members who are responsible and fulfill their requirements
- Rewards could be \$10 gift cards to Starbucks, a dean's list brunch/dinner, stickers, candy/snacks, or anything quick and small that would make someone feel seen and appreciated
- Nominate your outstanding members for a Boko award!

### ROLE MODEL

- Having a role model or buddy system is a great accountability tool! Senior members who are paired with a new member have a reason to keep coming and behaving, and new members have someone who has been in their shoes who looks out for them and makes them feel welcomed.
- These pairings should be intentional and well-planned, you want a pair who can build trust and a relationship with one another.

### RELATIONSHIPS

- Student Organizations are in the business of relationships at the end of the day. Regardless of what your orgs focus is (river rafting, sports, healthy lifestyles, etc.) the relationships that are built are what keeps your organization afloat.

## COMMON TRENDS IN MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

### POINT OF DISILLUSIONMENT

This is characterized by the novelty or “newness” effect wearing off and coming to the realization that this product/service/organization is not what the consumer originally had in mind.

#### Think about it like this

Imagine you saw an advertisement for a new pair of sneakers and you have been interested in purchasing a new pair for months. You've been looking for the perfect fit, you did your research and the sneakers from the ad sound exactly like what you have been looking for. They are a little pricey, but you decide that they seem like they are worth it. When they finally come in the mail you are so excited that you put them on immediately and go for a run. You start to notice that they are too big, they are not made of correct material as advertised online, and after looking a little bit closer you notice that the color is not what you ordered. Would you return the shoes and get your money back? The answer is probably yes. That is the point of disillusionment. You did not get what you paid for. You did not get a return of investment in the way you had hoped for.

For new members, this realization is often a few days or weeks after joining an organization and new members realize that this is either not what they had in mind or were promised something totally different. Either way, they no longer want to be in your organization. But how can we work against this point of disillusionment?

1. Recruit honestly and be clear in your messaging
2. Offer clear insight into what it is like being in your organization
3. Follow the 5 R's

### SENIORITIS

Senior burnout is commonly known as “senioritis”. As they get ready for graduation or their time in the org is coming to an end it is very easy for these members to decline in participation and can start to develop complacent attitudes toward the org. Now that you are aware of senioritis, you can help work against it.

1. Make the seniors feel special! Have a senior night or senior sendoff that celebrates each individual and their accomplishments.
2. Have incentives in place to keep their participation.
3. Hold them accountable and maintain relationships with them