



## **RETREATS**

### **WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A RETREAT/WORKSHOP?**

Organization retreats and workshops enable student organizations to briefly get away from the distractions of school and work and to focus on the needs of the organization and the needs of the individual members of the organization. Planning for the future will enable an organization to operate more efficiently. By setting goals and planning together, members of an organization can operate more effectively as a team.

### **ESTABLISH THE PURPOSE FOR YOUR RETREAT**

Team Building, Skills Training, Communications, Goal Setting, Problem Solving, Planning, Learning, Orientation, Socializing, Transition, Revitalization, Conflict Resolution.

### **DETERMINING WHO THE RETREAT IS FOR**

New Officers, Executive Board, All Organization Members, etc.

### **SELECTING A FACILITY**

On Campus or Off Campus; convenience vs. isolation; Urban or Rural Getaway. When looking for an off campus retreat location consider nearby summer camps. They often charge cheap rates in the off season. Be sure to check availability, accessibility, and accommodations. Don't forget about costs and contracts. The Office of Student Life has contact names and numbers for retreat locations.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

If your event is off campus, members should be provided with adequate and safe transportation.

### **FOOD AND DRINK**

Before deciding on a menu considers cost, cooking facilities, preparation and clean up. Try cooking together it makes a great team building activity. On a tight budget? Consider potluck.

### **SELECTING THE BEST FORMAT**

-Workshops presented by an "expert" -advertising, program planning, public speaking, fund-raising, etc. -Experiential Exercises- team building, brainstorming, communications skills, ropes course, etc. Recreational Exercises, skiing, hiking, canoeing, biking, etc.

### **SELECTING THE FACILITATORS AND PRESENTERS**

Organization Officers, Organization Members, Faculty Advisor, Other Faculty Members.

### **PLANNING THE RETREAT**

Have members sign up to participate on committees. Remember people support what they help to create. Suggested committees: Transportation, Food/Drink, Lodging, Recreation, Programming, Clean-Up.

## RESOURCES IN DEVELOPING YOUR WORKSHOPS AND EXERCISES

Structured experiences books, reference books, videotapes; Faculty Advisor; Faculty Members

## EVALUATING YOUR RETREAT

Evaluation Forms. Ask members what they thought of the experience. What would they change? What would they keep the same? Ask the presenters what they thought of the experience. What could have made it better?

## SAMPLE RETREAT SCHEDULE—TEAM EFFORT

Icebreakers and team-builders

### 1. Officer meetings

- ◆ New/old officers pair off (president with president, treasurer with treasurer)
- ◆ Update each section of notebooks, or talk about what should go in a new one. If officers do not have a notebook, take the time to create one!  
Each pair of officers should discuss the following:
  - Who did the outgoing officer interact with most in the administration, in the community, and other student organizations?
  - With the departments/areas listed above, what capacity did the outgoing officer work with them on?
  - What University paperwork is this position responsible for completing?
  - What did the outgoing officer have to do with the organization's funding requests (assuming this question applies to your group)?
  - What University procedures did the outgoing officer have the most trouble with and how can the incoming officer avoid those troubles?
  - What were the biggest challenges the outgoing officer faced and how did they overcome them?
  - What goals did the outgoing officer have, and which were achieved and which were not.

### 2. Joint officer meeting

- Gather as a group; write everyone's notes on a board or flip chart. Note similarities.
- Generate a discussion on similarities, challenges and how challenges can be overcome.
- Review policies.

### 3. New officer meeting (This could be a separate meeting, or the next phase of the retreat.)

- Goal review. What did the past officers accomplish?
- What is left to do from the past goal list? Revise list or eliminate it if the officers choose.
- Provide new officers time to list goals for their position on their own.
- Reassemble and share updated goals.
- Brainstorm new goals for the organization and ideas for programs, fundraisers, and social events. Make an exhaustive list of everything the group could possibly accomplish. Narrow down that list to what they can reasonably accomplish. Assign tasks to specific officers. If no one wants to do it, take it off the goals list.