

Leadership

Leadership is influence. —John C. Maxwell

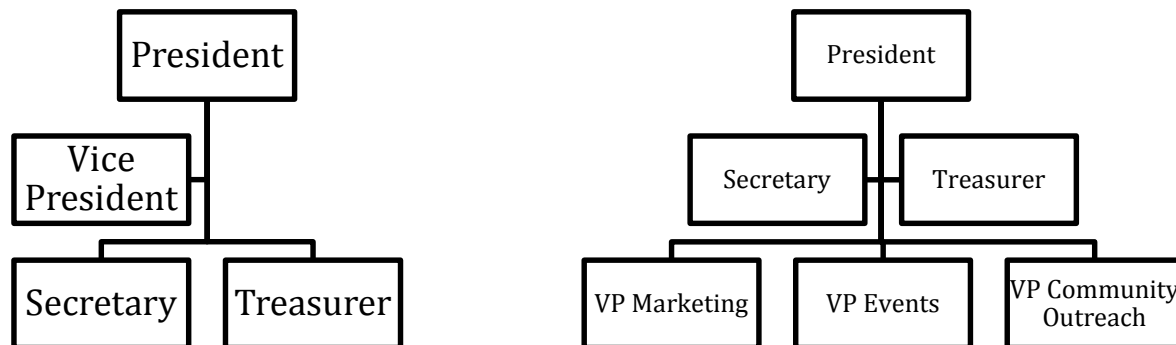
Put simply, an officer of a student organization is a leader. In addition to Maxwell's simple definition, a student organization LEADER...

- Conveys a passion and devoted interest in his or her organization.
- Uses his or her voice in establishing the organization's mission and goals.
- Oversees both the organization and its members.
- Makes important decisions.
- Identifies and solves problems.
- Improves the organization.
- Monitors progress toward the organization's goals.
- Manages the operations of the group.
- Makes sure members feel welcome.

Officer Structure

Each officer is equally important to the smooth and effective functioning of an organization. Successful officers function as a leadership team or executive board, helping each other and contributing to the overall accomplishments and climate of the organization.

Each student organization should outline the overall structure of the team and roles of each leader in its constitution. The most simple leadership team has the required four officers: a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other organizations have a greater number of executive board members and VPs or committee chairs for specific tasks. The following are examples to consider when structuring your officer team:



It is important to keep in mind that there is no right or wrong structure for your organization. The best structure will be the structure that fits well with the people and mission of your organization. When structuring your leadership team, take into consideration the following:

- Size of your organization
- Organization mission
- Goals
- Tasks you wish to accomplish

Officer Roles

Individual interest areas and skills often dictate the amount of time an officer spends on a particular responsibility. However, a good officer never forgets what the basic responsibilities of his or her role are. Below is a list of possible responsibilities for the most standard officer roles.

President	Vice President
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for overseeing the organization • Represents the organization to the University • Facilitates officer team meetings • Serves as a role model for other officers and members • Provides follow-up to organizational tasks • Coordinates executive board officer transitions • Provides encouragement and motivation to fellow officers and organization members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes the duties of the President in his or her absence • Recruits new members • Facilitates election of officers • Supervises committee chairpersons • Coordinates special projects
Secretary	Treasurer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records and distributes all pertinent information to members • Handles all organizational correspondence • Keeps a record of all members of the organization • Keeps a record of all activities of the organization • Prepares an agenda and takes minutes at meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes annual budget for organization • Reports regularly about group's financial situation • Manages day-to-day financial transactions • Collects organization dues • Prepares grant proposals for organization

Other possible officer positions:

- Parliamentarian
- Events and Programming
- Outreach and Community Service
- Marketing and Publicity
- Education
- Recruitment/Retention

GOOD TO GREAT: FIRST WHO, THEN WHAT Could be an aside box or on the quick reference?

The leadership team or officers in your organization makes a big impact on the success, reputation and growth of your group. With that said, you want the best team possible to be leading the direction of the organization, right? Consider these questions when evaluating your current team or building a new group of officers:

- **Are the right people “on the bus”?** In *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't*, author Jim Collins (2001) suggests that once you have the right people in place, then you can figure out the best route to success.
- **Are the members of your team ambitious and passionate about setting the future of the organization up for success?** Collins calls this being a “Level 5 Leader.” Great leaders expect personal growth, but are also in it for the greater good and success of the organization as a whole.
- **Are the officers on your leadership team doing the right job that fits their strengths and skills?** If an officer is doing something that he or she is passionate about, your organization will feel that passion and get better results!

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap...and others don't*. New York: HarperCollins.

References

Northwestern University Center for Student Involvement. (2010). Building a leadership structure. *Student Org Guide 2010-11*. Retrieved from <http://www.norris.northwestern.edu/>

Southeast Missouri State University Center for Student Involvement. Officer roles. Retrieved from <http://www.semo.edu/campuslife/>.

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