

*“I have learned to imagine an invisible sign around each person’s neck that say,
‘Make me feel IMPORTANT!’”*

-Mary Kay Ash

Recognition to those who have done something well is a practice that demonstrates gratitude, appreciation, and honor. Members of your student organization should be recognized consistently for the work they do as a member of your group.

Why it’s important.

A job well done, the amount of effort and time put into something, and/or the initiative that is demonstrated on a new project are all reasons to show elements of recognition to members in your student organization. Honoring a member for their achievement or efforts on a project is a great way to enhance the sense of community within your organization. It can help bond that student to their fellow group members as well as the organization itself. Recognition also works as a big motivational factor. Members are more inclined to put hard work into a project when they know their efforts will be appreciated by the group. Help your organization and its members by using recognition as an everyday practice.

How it’s done.

Recognition can be a simple, yet highly effect gesture. Think about ways you can highlight members for doing a great job, but also just for being a part of your student organization. Recognition does not have to cost a lot of money (or any at all) and can come from a variety of people. It can be a formalized program or just a random occurrence.

Here are a few creative ideas to jump start your organization’s culture of recognition:

- **Award Programs:** When you think of recognition, these probably come to mind first. Put a twist on the typical awards banquet and develop a **Member of the Month** program for more frequent recognition. Give a shout out to this person on your Facebook group or Twitter page!
- **Personally thank** a member for their hard work with a written letter or phone call. What an easy way to make someone feel like they matter!
- **Provide food** at your next meeting. Who doesn’t love a free meal or home baked cookies?
- **Remember birthdays!** Highlight member birthdays in your monthly newsletter or blog post.
- **Encourage members to encourage each other.** Create a Recognition Box and bring it to each meeting. Pull a recognition slip from the box and acknowledge a different member to open and close your meeting. This gives a chance for members other than your leadership team to offer recognition, while also allowing them to remain anonymous if they so choose.
- **Remember the golden rule.** Treat others the way they want to be treated. Recognize others the way they want to be recognized. How do your members want to be recognized? What makes them tick? Cater to this!
- **Create a recognition team.** Members will have more buy-in to your organization if they are designing and evolving the programs. Can this group create a recognition program for the entire organization? What will they do to champion recognition in every meeting, event, and even email sent to members?

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