

Goals provide purpose and direction to student organizations. They serve as a guide for your organization in the planning and decision making process. They also set the scene for your group's activities, events, and ultimately, your accomplishments. By working together to establish, pursue, and evaluate goals, your organization will be on track to success!

### How do I go about Setting Goals?

- 1) **Brainstorm and identify goals** you'd like to accomplish, for yourself and for your organization.
- 2) **Put the goals in writing.** Make sure that they are SMART goals! SMART goals are *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely*. For instance, "plan and execute two professional development events by the end of this semester to increase member involvement by 25%" is a better goal than "increase involvement in our professional organization."
- 3) **Seek accountability.** Whether it is your organization's advisor, Student Involvement staff, a friend, or a family member – find someone to hold you accountable. Have them check in with your group periodically and ask you how you are doing with regards to accomplishing your goals.
- 4) **Create a plan for success.** As Larry Elder put it, "A goal without a plan is just a wish." How are you going to achieve your goal? What do you need to learn? Who do you need to help you do it?
- 5) **Measure progress.** It's important that you take time to periodically monitor your progress. For example, if you have set a twelve-month goal evaluate your progress every three months. This gives you an opportunity to adjust your plan and stay on track.

Goal setting is valuable exercise for anyone, but especially for student organizations. As an officer of an organization it is easy to become so focused on the day-to-day details of managing your organization that you completely lose sight of the big picture. The process of setting and pursuing goals forces you to adopt a big-picture mindset.

### Questions to Consider when Setting Goals

- What is your goal in one sentence? What's the bottom line?
- By what date do you plan to achieve the goal?
- What are the benefits of achieving the goal?
- What is your action plan? What specific steps must you take to achieve your goal?
- What obstacles or challenges may you encounter when trying to achieve your goal?

## SMART Goal Setting

SMART	Questions...
Specific	Does your goal clearly and specifically state what you are trying to achieve? <i>If your goal is particularly large, try breaking it down into smaller, specific SMART goals.</i>
Measurable	How will your group know if progress is being made on achieving your goal? Can you quantify or put numbers to your outcome?
Attainable	Is achieving your goal dependent on anyone else? (i.e. Advisor or community partner) What factors may prevent you from accomplishing your goal? How can you overcome these factors?
Relevant	Why is this goal important to your organization? What values or parts of your organization's mission does this goal reflect? What effect will achieving this goal have on others? Think members, sponsors, UWM community...
Timely	When will you reach your goal? <i>Again, if your goal is particularly large, try breaking it down into smaller goals with appropriate deadline.</i>

### ACTION PLAN

*What specific steps must you take to achieve your goal?*

Task/To-Do Item	Expected Completion Date	Date Actually Completed

### References

Hale, N. (2011). Goals: The difference between success and failure. *Fast Company*. Retrieved from <<http://www.fastcompany.com/1798754/goals-difference-between-success-and-failure>>.

University of Washington Tacoma Diversity Resource Center. Smart goals. Retrieved from <<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/diversity/programs/>>.

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**WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TODAY?**

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