



# **Standardized Guide to Building Membership**

## Preface

This guidebook is designed to set a standard operating procedure for running general meetings, as well as special meetings involving guests, trainings, and events. These ideas are meant to be general and used as a frame of reference to be molded to each college/university. If a chapter president or their proxy requires further assistance they can of course ask the Regional Director, Deputy Membership Director, or the Membership Director.

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## Chapter One: General Meetings

A General Meeting will be your most common meeting and is where most of your information will be given out to your members. In these meetings it is important to understand the attention span of your average member or perspective member. People who are probing the club usually are looking for something entertaining. With that in mind, it is important to get all of the necessary information out to your members about the different clubs and caucuses. If you are running an hour-long meeting, this should only take up around 10-minutes maximum.

We live in a politically interesting time with many topics that ignite a certain passion in all of us. Use this passion to have a forum or a moderated debate between the members to discuss issues facing our world. In this scenario it is ok to be the lack's advocate. When selecting a topic it is generally a good idea to pick something is not fully agreed upon in the Democratic Party, such as what dollar amount should the minimum wage be set to, can universal healthcare work in America, when is military intervention in another country necessary, etc. These are all hot button issues that can spark lively debate. When running a discussion it is imperative to set a time limit on what you're talking about so that you don't have

someone giving a do not speech. Typically, a 45-minute speaking time is adequate for someone to get their point across. The person presiding should not be afraid to cut someone off or let them know their time is up. Tools such as a gavel or even a marker hit on a desk can be good and respectful ways to let people know their time is up.

At the end of the meetings, the president should ask the group what topics they would like to talk about next time, take the first five then vote on them, the winner will be the next topic of the week.

## Chapter Two: Meetings with Guests

A great way to get and keep members is to invite guests to come and speak and interact with the members. Members like it when people that are influential in politics come and speak to them and come and take photo with them. As it always election season in one form or another, there is always a number of people who can be called upon to speak. If there are not an candidates available, the local DEC, DWC, DBC, DHC, etc. can be called upon to speak at these events. Congressional staffers such as a District Director are also good choices to have come speak.

Guest speakers do not always have to be involved with the Democratic Party. People involved organizations such as the NAACP, SPLC, ACLU, etc. these speakers can offer options to those wishing to get politically involved in other ways than a political campaign or the Democratic Party.

These opportunities are great for people to bring resumes and business cards to gain internships and other positions.

If a speaker cancels at the last minute or just does not attend in general, always have a backup plan. Typically this back up plan can be to default to a general meeting.

### Chapter Three: Meetings with Trainings

One of the most beneficial types of meetings that a chapter can organize is one that involves training. As college students, often times we are valuable to campaigns as their “ground forces”. Campaigns use college students and others to register voters, sign petitions, canvas, VAN, etc. Often times these require some types of training in order to do them correctly and effectively. Some require certification from the State of Florida such as voter registration.

One of the best ways to enact trainings is to work with campaigns or other similar organizations that use such tactics as voter registration and canvassing to get their message out. These trainings such be advertised in advance as to attract more people to come and be trained.

If you have any important announcements to get out to your members, it is advised to do that first as to keep everyone's attention before they spread out.

Once your members have been trained, if your campus permits it, it is recommended that your practice these new skills at dorms and other student areas. If your campus does not have dorms or does not permit canvassing on campus, work with a local campaign or your DEC or another Democratic club to canvass, register people to vote, register people to vote by mail.

#### Chapter Four: Coordinating with Other Clubs

A great way to gain viewership and gain members by collecting from other clubs is to collaborate with other like minded clubs.

Collaborations can be used to help coordinate an event for a rally or to host a speaker or join together to gain membership.

Typically the best way to approach starting a collaboration is getting in touch with the president of the organization you wish to work with. Sometimes collaborations may require a joint meeting with all of those involved, if this is so, I highly recommend that there is an established leader, preferably the President of the College Democrats, to prevent unnecessary overlap and confusion.

Collaborations with other clubs such as the College Republicans is also possible for things such as debates and voter registration drives. In some private or small campuses in red areas, administration may prefer to have events that are bipartisan or nonpartisan.

If you intend on collaborating with other organizations make sure you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish and know the avenues that you must traverse to accomplish it. However, as in all collaborations do not bore all the weight alone.

#### Chapter Five: How to Work and Coordinate with DEC's and Other Non-Campus Democratic Organizations

A vital piece of our Democratic team are our DEC's. The DEC's or Democratic Executive Committees are the root and core of our effort to flip Florida blue. While there is not one in every county, there is one in every county with a chapter. Working with your DEC is a great way to get involved in the Democratic

Party, and a great way to get your members involved. Working with a DEC can show your members the fruits of their efforts even when there aren't campaigns moving around recruiting college students. If you are unsure if your county has a DEC or who is in charge, a list of every DEC is available in the "Membership Handbook".

DECs are not the only democratic organizations in the state. Across the state there is the DBC, DHC, DWC, DLGBTC, and many others. These caucuses are often more activist than a DEC whose main function is to coordinate the county democratic effort. Working with these groups or having caucuses in your organization work with these groups is a great way to keep members active and keep them in the Democratic Party.

Coordination with a DEC is typically done through the DEC Chair, a list of each DEC chair can be found in the "Membership Handbook".

There are many advantages to working with a DEC, many DEC's offer internships and/or paid positions. For trips to conferences, DEC's can even offer to subsidize the travel expenses of a local chapter.

This is a standardized overview on how to run meetings under different scenarios and working with Democratic Organizations. There may be some instances where these standardized approaches do not work as effectively which is why they should be treated as guidelines and not law. If you have any questions or need help you can email the Florida College Democrats Director of Membership: [membership@flcollegedems.org](mailto:membership@flcollegedems.org)