

Goal Setting

Goal setting is important for individuals, officers, and organizations. To create a list of goals, ask yourself: what do I need to accomplish this year? How can I make this year better than last year? What worked last year and what didn't, and what do I need to do to change the things that didn't work? If yours is a new organization, take the time to determine for yourself why you wanted to start the organization.

This resource provides tips on goal setting using S.M.A.R.T. goals. Utilizing S.M.A.R.T. goals encourages the use of detailed and measurable information so that members and officers in the organization are clear on the goal and tasks necessary to accomplish the goal.

Purpose of goal setting:

- Opportunity for organization to reflect on strengths and areas of improvement
- Realize priorities
- Provides focus and sense of direction
- Create a plan
- Assign tasks
- Track progress
- Encourage engagement, collaboration, and delegation amongst those with similar goals

What are S.M.A.R.T. goals?

- **Specific**
 - Answering the questions on who, what, where, when and why. Ex- Who is this goal for? What, exactly, is the goal? When do I want to accomplish the goal by? What resources do I need to accomplish the goal? Where will I work on the goal? Why do I want to create this goal?
- **Measurable**
 - Determine the way in which you will measure progress towards your goal, and the yardstick by which you know the goal has been achieved. Is it by putting on programs? Soliciting feedback from group members? By gaining a certain number of new members? Select a method you feel comfortable with and stick with it.
- **Attainable**
 - Answering the questions on is it possible, does the organization enough resources (time, money etc.)? Decide if your goal is attainable by breaking the goal up into the smaller steps you will need to accomplish to reach it. Assign due dates to those steps and ask yourself if, realistically, you have given yourself enough time to complete your goal. This will help keep you on track, and prevent you from failing to achieve your goal due to not having budgeted ample time to complete the goal. Ask yourself what obstacles might arise during your work and form contingency plans to surmount these difficulties.

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- **Relevant/Realistic**
 - Is this goal realistic right now with everything else you are trying to accomplish? Do you actually want to work on this goal?
Remember, if you are not actually interested in finishing something, completing the task becomes difficult. If you are consistently unenthusiastic about your organization's goals, perhaps it is time for a change. If you are willing to work on a goal, are you then able to? That is, do you have other obligations that pose a significant challenge to completing the goal, like schoolwork, other co-curricular activities, jobs, or relationships? If so, seek help from other members of your organization and delegate tasks to distribute the work evenly.
- **Timely/Tangible**
 - Answering the questions on how is the goal going to be achieved and the time frame (target date, is it attainable, is it too close or far into the future). Put a deadline on your goal! Otherwise you lose a sense of urgency and many tasks go uncompleted due to the prioritizing of other commitments. Is your goal something you will achieve with an event, within a semester, year, etc.?

Other tips to help keep you on track:

- Write your goals down and post them where all organization members can see them. This will keep the goals front and center in your discussions!
- Create a reward system for completing stages of your goal. It's important to take a moment to congratulate yourself for getting things done: it takes a lot of focus and hard work to make an organization successful.
- Do one thing at a time. Effective multitasking just doesn't exist, no matter what you've heard. You may be able to work on many things simultaneously, but you'll only do your best work if you take one task at a time. Distractions can cause serious errors or lapses in concentration that can lead to you not remembering important details.

Adapted from Allegheny College and Georgia State University.