



# HOW TO MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE POLY STUDENT CHAPTER

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**A VE REGULAR MEETINGS.** Having members grow accustomed to a regular meeting time encourages regular meeting attendance. Meetings should be held weekly or monthly. As graduate students, monthly meetings hold a greater appeal, particularly if “Free Food” accompanies each meeting! *Do* remember that a successful meeting requires ample planning to ensure near-perfect execution.

Time permitting, it is best to completely plan out your calendar of events for the upcoming academic year in the summer.

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**LP IS ALWAYS NEEDED.** As President, do not attempt to organize all events alone. Work closely with your Executive Board members. To promote member participation form subgroups. You may do so in the following ways:

(1) Have different member teams plan each monthly meeting whilst President or another Executive Board member oversees the event execution. Within the member team, one student may contact the speaker, another may order the food, another may secure the event location, and finally another may lead event advertising. If each month a different group of students plan and organize an event, this alleviates the burden faced by the President. Furthermore, this method enables each student to appreciate the time, effort, and money that go into planning an event. Thus, when an event is successful, each student will experience an immense level of satisfaction.

(2) Divide members into the *Planning Committee*, *Fundraising Committee*, and *Publicity Committee*. Using this organizational approach, members complete the same task for each event. The *Planning Committee* plans stimulating activities that reflect the interests of the chapter members. The *Fundraising Committee* secures funds for the organization. The *Publicity Committee* promotes and advertises all chapter activities.

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**STEN TO YOUR MEMBERS.** Before the start of each semester, have members complete surveys to determine what meetings times and dates work best for the majority. From surveys, you will learn what events your members would like to see more of this year. At the end of each event, send out another survey, having members rank the success of the event and have them offer ideas on how to

improve the past event. There are many websites that allow you to create and distribute surveys for free, e.g. [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and [www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com).

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**A GOOD LEADER.** University campuses usually host seminar talks each semester to teach you how to become a good leader. Don't hesitate to attend. They are FREE and you may learn new leadership and management skills.

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**BE PROACTIVE DURING YOUR SEARCH FOR FUNDING.**

Securing funding each year for your student chapter is a tedious and stressful process. Sometimes you may work really hard on an application but be denied funding. Don't give up. Continue applying. Improve your failed application. Apply to your student government, college of engineering, college of sciences, and external funding sources (e.g. corporate sponsors).

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**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS KEY.**

Spread the joy of Polymer Science to elementary, middle, high school, and undergraduate students. Organize a group of POLY members to serve as science fair judges at local schools. Give 30-minute talks on careers in chemistry to high school seniors. Be a mentor to an undergraduate student.

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**DO TWO MEETINGS SHOULD BE IDENTICAL.** Meeting topics can include:

- (1) Seminar talks by local or out-of-state professors (may be technical or/and inspirational).
- (2) Career explorations: traditional academic vs nontraditional career options.
- (3) Panel discussions covering topics such as how to survive the first year of graduate school.
- (4) Seminars on research integrity and laboratory safety.
- (5) Chalk Talks, whereby POLY graduate students are asked to describe their research in ONE PowerPoint slide in 5 – 10 mins. This helps members enhance their public speaking skills and simultaneously allows students to learn what exciting research their peers are undertaking.

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**ORGANIZE SOCIAL EVENTS.** Host potlucks in the winter and enjoy meals from a diversified student body. Host bowling nights in the spring and barbeques in the summer. Culminate a successful academic year with an end-of-year formal or casual party.

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**FORM COLLABORATIONS** with similar on-campus student organizations (ACS, AIChE, NOBCChE, OXE).

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**NEVER FAIL TO PRAISE YOUR POLY MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS** for a job well done. Positive reinforcements in the form of small gifts or/and certificates will ensure your members stay involved.