

SUMMER RETREAT PLANNING

for your Student Organization

Organization retreats enable your student organizations to briefly take a moment away from the distractions of school and work and focus on the needs of the organization and of your individual members. Taking the time to plan for the future will enable your organization to operate more efficiently during the academic year. By setting goals and planning together, members of your organization can operate more effectively as a team.



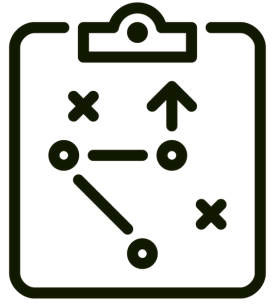
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ESTABLISH THE PURPOSE FOR YOUR RETREAT

When planning it is important to think about the following:

- Who is this retreat for and why?
- What are we planning to do?
- What are we planning to focus on?
 - **Problem Solving** - focusing on immediate problems in the organization
 - **Competencies** - focusing on possibilities and outcomes

Be sure to include your advisor and other members as well to help determine what you want to focus on.



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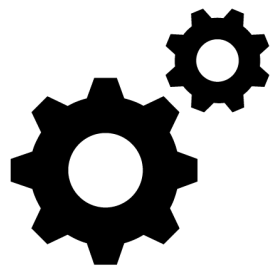
SELECT THE BEST FORMAT

In our current situation, it is important to really think about the best and safest way to host an organization retreat. There are many different options and resources available for free or a low cost for your organization to utilize.

Virtual Options - Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, or Skype

Whether in-person or virtual, consider using the following to ensure your retreat stays upbeat and active:

- Icebreakers
- Interactive activities (like Kahoot, skits or role playing)
- Breakout Rooms or Chat Rooms for Discussion
- Whiteboard feature for collaborating and brainstorming



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PLAN THE RETREAT CONTENT

When planning it's important to use information about your organization's needs to develop and set goals for the retreat. For example, if your organization is struggling with fundraising, consider developing resources and exercises to strengthen those skills.

You can break your content into three areas:

- **Knowledge learning** - what information should we possess when the retreat ends (policies, goals, requirements, etc.)
- **Skill learning** - what skills should we possess when the retreat ends (event planning, fundraising, time management, etc.)
- **Attitude Learning** - what attitudes should we possess when the retreat ends (group cohesiveness, respect, team work, etc.)



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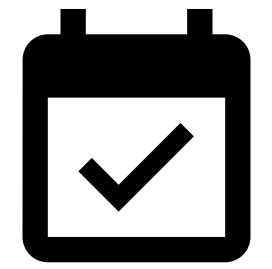
SELECTING YOUR FACILITATORS AND PRESENTERS

Determining how your content will be relayed to your group is one of the more challenging steps of planning a retreat. Once you have decided what you want to share, you will need to consider what is the best way to share it and who is the best person to deliver the message.

Questions to consider: Are there resources available? Will someone need to create content?

Potential Presenters or Facilitators:

- President/VP of Organization
- Student Leaders with experience in content area
- Advisor - source of continuity
- Faculty/Staff from various departments including the Center for Student Involvement



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RETREAT LOGISTICS

Logistics to consider include:

- **Time and Place** - Where and when are you having this event? Take into consideration the availability of your members, and be sure to build in adequate time for each topic as well as **AMPLE** breaks. If your content is intense or there is a lot to cover, consider breaking your retreat into a series, rather than a day-long or half-day retreat. Plan to either record the meeting, or designate someone to take detailed notes. This will be helpful to provide to those who may not be able to attend.
- **Cost** - Are there any costs associated with this event? Food? Subscription to a platform like Zoom? Handouts or Materials? Speaker costs? Try to think of all of the things that may have a cost associated with them and plan accordingly.
- **Responsibilities** - Who is doing what? Be sure to designate planning responsibilities to other members so the work does not fall on one person. Creating a checklist could be helpful.



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EVALUATING YOUR RETREAT

Always evaluate your retreat after it takes place to make sure you can get feedback from the group.

Questions could include:

How was each component? Were the goals met? Did they learn? Were the activities helpful? What could be better next time?

You can use a simple form through Microsoft Forms, Google Forms, or Survey Monkey. You could also assess learning in a fun way using Kahoot as a competitive quiz! Make it harmless, but get your feedback!

Happy Retreating!