



START YOUR OWN GROUP

by the student editors of ***FIND YOUR PASSION IN COLLEGE***,
a Students Helping Students™ book

While this might seem like a daunting prospect, bear in mind that every club on your campus was started by somebody. When you create your own activity, you get to shape it to your goals and watch it blossom and grow. Starting something from scratch is extremely rewarding and if you have an entrepreneurial streak in you this is the perfect way to put it to work.

So, how about it? Here are some suggestions to get you started:

• Draw up the blueprints

Say you want to start an a cappella group. You've got a few initial questions to ask yourself, such as:

- What sort of music will you perform?
- How many members will the group have, and will the group be co-ed or single sex?
- How many hours a week will you expect the other singers to commit to the group?

While you may not need to figure out every single detail at this stage (such as what color shirts you'll wear when you perform), you should at least try to sketch out an organizational structure, and, most importantly, ask yourself why you're starting the group in the first place.

• Get people to join

There are dozens of different ways to get the attention of your classmates. The most obvious is to put up catchy posters all over campus. Make sure that your poster grabs the attention of those who walk past it by using large, exciting fonts or fun images. Don't simply announce the existence of your club in twelve point New Times Roman, or no one will take the time to give your posters a second look. Your poster should be brief and include the time and place of the first meeting for your group. The idea is to catch people's attention and give them a clear explanation of what they can do to get involved.

You could also try to attract attention by sending out emails to people you think might be interested. You should avoid emailing hundreds of strangers, since sending unsolicited emails might be considered harassment at some schools. A better idea is to email your friends and ask them to forward your email to anyone who they might think will be interested in your idea.

Running a blurb in a campus publication or having a story written about your group is another tried and true method. Talk to an editor or a student reporter and see if you can't interest them in writing a story—however short—about your initiative.

• Flesh out the structure

At this early stage in the development of your group, you need to fill in the details of its structure. First, come up with an officer core:

- Do you need a president, and are you going to take that responsibility? What is the president going to do, anyway?
- Do you need a vice president?
- How about a secretary, treasurer, publicity manager, editorial chair, business manager, music director, faculty liaison, or what have you? Which positions do you need, and exactly what will they all do?

Next, work out the details of how your group will go about doing what it does. For example:

- Will you meet weekly, biweekly, or every evening?
- What types of events will you plan?
- Where will you broadcast your television show?

For more helpful tips and proven strategies from students and recent grads on exploring as many extracurricular activities as possible, thinking about activities in relation to career possibilities, gaining leadership roles, and much more, visit www.StudentsHelpingStudents.com and buy the Students Helping Students™ guide titled ***FIND YOUR PASSION IN COLLEGE***, available at bookstores and online stores, such as Amazon.com.

- How will you get the magazine printed up?
- Where can you reserve practice space?

These are just a few examples for different groups—you'll need to come with your own. One useful technique is to focus on achieving a specific goal—organizing your first protest, publishing your first magazine issue, holding your first outdoor concert, etc.—and then figuring out what needs to be done to achieve it. Focusing on doing something concrete keeps everyone organized and saves you from arguing over vague details like whether you'll have five annual events/issues/protests or one.

- **Deal with the administration**

It's worth getting to know the dean in charge of collegiate extracurriculars (or whatever the equivalent position is at your school) as soon as possible because he or she will likely be able to hook you up with resources you never knew existed. If you're lucky, this person will tell you when you can book the lecture halls in the science center for your tournament and show you how to apply for loads of grant money. Find out who is in charge of pulling strings and get to know that person as well as possible.