

Planning Your First Student Union or Alliance Meeting

The First Meeting Sets the Culture

The first meeting is about much more than introducing a new Student Union or Alliance. It establishes the culture students will experience every time they gather. During these first moments, students begin deciding whether this is a place where they belong, whether their voices matter, and whether they want to return.

Resist the urge to accomplish everything in one meeting. Instead, focus on creating an experience that makes students excited to come back. A strong first meeting lays the foundation for every leadership opportunity that follows.



FIVE GOALS FOR THE FIRST MEETING



OPEN DECK INSIGHT



Students rarely remember every activity from the first meeting. They almost always remember how the meeting made them feel.

Belonging is the first experience students should take home.



After the First Meeting...

Take a few minutes to reflect before planning the next gathering.

- Did every student have an opportunity to participate?
- Who seemed especially engaged?
- Who might need a personal follow-up invitation?
- What should remain the same at the next meeting?
- What would you improve?



Remember...



- ✓ Keep the meeting simple.
- ✓ Focus on relationships before routines.
- ✓ Invite student participation early.
- ✓ End with optimism.
- ✓ Make students excited to return.

