Orienting and Engaging a New Group of Student Leaders: The First Presidential Challenge

Madeline Annelise Stadler, Class of 2019
Carol Toussie Weingarten, PhD, RN, ANEF
Fitzpatrick College of Nursing Villanova University

Introduction

Project: One credit independent study focused on the Board orientation for the Student Nurses’ Association of Pennsylvania (SNAP)

Background: SNAP is a pre-professional association with over 6,400 nursing students in Pennsylvania. Members are diverse in age, background and geographic location. SNAP is a constituent of the National Student Nurses’ Association.

Orientation

Board orientation is a crucial first step for ensuring a successful, productive year. Board members learn about their roles and responsibilities and strategies to engage in their roles throughout the year. A well designed orientation will ensure that board members are committed to the organization, have a bond with other members, and feel confident that their training will allow them to be successful in their roles.

New Strategies: 2019

Post Convention Board Meeting

- Transition with Old Board
- Ice Breaker with New Board
- Reviewing and setting meeting dates
- General logistics. Communication Strategies

Goal: Board Members leave excited and engaged in their new roles.

Between Post-Convention and January Meetings

- Send bylaws, policies, and strategic plan for review
- President has a phone conversation with each board member.

Goal: Members can receive clarification and ask questions through communicating with the President. They feel better going into the January board meeting.

January Board Meeting

- Overview; structure of SNAP & NSNA
- History of SNAP & NSNA
- Role of Executive Director, Consultants and Director of Programming
- Overview of a formal board meeting
- Discussion; Board roles and events, potential challenges and strategies for success

Goal: Positive relationship among the Board grows. Members are clear of their activities and schedule.

A New Strategy for Board Orientation Needed

From past experience, new strategies for board orientation were needed to prevent members from becoming overwhelmed at the beginning of their term. A new strategy for orientation will empower a diverse group to understand their role, work together and not be overwhelmed.

Results

New strategies for communications, sharing of information and engagement during orientation were created. As a result, members left the 2019 Board orientation confident and prepared to serve in their roles for the year ahead.