

4. MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

4.05 STUDENT MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Membership recruitment should go on all year. Most members join at the beginning of the school year or at the beginning of a semester. Sponsoring interesting activities is sometimes not enough. You have to begin by getting people involved. Some of the following activities may help. Try those you think will be most beneficial to recruiting members for your chapter.

Suggested activities:

First of the Year Activities: First impressions are most important, especially to incoming freshmen. Let them know you're out there. Let them hear about CEC—really impress them. Some of the following activities may help:

- At freshman orientation, volunteer to represent CEC. Set up a booth and have available membership forms, scrapbooks, CEC information, posters, etc. Send a letter to freshmen explaining CEC and inviting them to attend the first meeting.
- Visit special education classes and regular education classes to invite students to the meetings and activities and to encourage students to join. Don't forget non-education classes, too, such as nursing, physical therapy, music, art, physical education, and business. Stress activities or speakers that would be of interest to them.
- Conduct Welcome Week Activities similar to a freshmen orientation. Serve donuts and coffee in a common gathering place to welcome all students. Don't forget to invite them to join CEC.
- Write personal welcome letters to incoming freshmen and prospective members.
- Design a chapter member manual containing information on CEC, definitions of common terms, disabilities, simulations and a list of local agencies that provide services for persons with disabilities. Give to all members free as an incentive to join.
- Organize a phone tree and call members prior to a meeting or activity.

Recruitment Efforts During the Year: Try some of these:

- Hold membership drives at least twice a year.
- Have your chapter represented at all school functions—especially during parents' weekend.
- Design a chapter banner complete with a logo to display at all chapter or school sponsored events.
- Disseminate a monthly letter to faculty to remind them of CEC activities to announce in classes.
- Hold a pizza party or other social activity to meet members and get acquainted.
- Ask the campus newspaper to print announcements of meetings and feature on special activities.
- Have membership applications available at all chapter activities.
- Post announcements about upcoming meetings and activities in the special education department and in the departments of other related fields.

Recruiting Non-Education Majors Into Your CEC Chapter

Who says all CEC members have to be elementary/secondary education or special education majors? Recruiting non-education majors can be beneficial to your chapter, to the non-education majors, and to the entire CEC organization.

Special education majors are not the only ones who will be working with individuals with exceptionalities. Because of career education for individuals with disabilities and/or are gifted, many job opportunities are available for individuals with special needs. CEC can help others gain an acceptance and understanding of individuals with special needs. Therefore, everyone should be involved. What better way to do it than through the largest professional organization in special education?

Guidelines for recruiting non-education majors into your chapter include:

- Co-sponsor activities with other campus organizations
- Invite speakers who would be of interest to both education and non-education majors
- Sponsor field trips
- Visit regular education, psychology, sociology, pre-med, etc. classes; inform students about CEC and invite those who are interested to your next activity
- Distribute flyers about upcoming chapter activities
- Invite the campus newspaper to "cover" a special activity in order to get more exposure; use the newspaper to sensitize all students about the needs and capabilities of persons with disabilities
- Conduct an Exceptional Children's Week on your campus

Looking for more member recruitment ideas? See TO THE POINT Section 3.0—Unit Activities.