

4. MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

4.06 STUDENT MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

Now that you have recruited MANY members into your chapter, how do you keep them active and involved? This is what membership retention is all about. First, ask your members what they are interested in. Then, try to get them involved in the planning of activities. Finally, regardless of the turnout or the type of program, it has to be well planned and well executed to effectively retain members.

Some suggested program activities include:

Speakers

- Invite professors from your university to come and talk about their area of expertise or their current research
- Invite individuals who have disabilities to talk about their abilities
- Invite special education teachers to come in and talk about teaching
- Invite local leaders, politicians, or school officials to address hot topics in education
- Invite staff from the recruitment/career center on campus to discuss interviewing skills and résumé writing

Fun Activities

- Have a graduation party for seniors
- Rent a roller skating rink and have a party with students with disabilities
- Promote and attend state/provincial and international conventions
- Develop awards such as outstanding member, freshman, etc.
- Have a mini-workshop on sign language, organize a field trip, etc.
- Arrange for members to volunteer in school classrooms
- Conduct an Exceptional Children's Week in your community

Ideas to Keep Members Interested

- Publish a newsletter
- Call or e-mail members to let them know what is going on in the chapter
- Provide seniors with information to join their local regular chapter
- Organize committees and involve members in planning events
- Develop a chapter membership manual
- Thank people for their help, support, and involvement
- Offer awards such as "Outstanding Rookie Member," "Most Involved Member," etc.
- Start/sponsor a Club for Careers in Special Education

For more ideas, see TO THE POINT Section 3.0--Unit Activities.