

MTNA

MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

COLLEGIATE CHAPTERS

H A N D B O O K

MTNA collegiate chapters work to enhance students' classroom studies by providing educational, musical, social and professional experiences. The goal of each chapter is to acquaint students with professional opportunities and career options in the music field, while developing professional leadership skills. MTNA collegiate chapters also provide an important opportunity for MTNA college faculty members to increase their participation in MTNA activities by becoming a collegiate chapter advisor.

Having a successful student organization means being actively involved in campus, community and national arenas. This Collegiate Chapters Handbook will guide your chapter through establishment and activities planning, as well as assist you with chapter communication, membership development, marketing and public relations.

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Establishing a collegiate chapter is the first step in connecting to MTNA. All inquiries should be directed to MTNA by calling (888) 512-5278 or e-mailing mtnanet@mtna.org. Each prospective collegiate chapter must submit a completed chapter application. The application is submitted online at www.mtna.org. Upon approval by the state association and national office, your collegiate chapter will receive notification and a certificate from MTNA.

Keep in mind each institution has different requirements for the establishment of student organizations. Consult your advisor and your institution's student activities office to ensure all guidelines (i.e. financial, tax and collegiate affiliation) are met as you form your collegiate chapter.

Please note, each chapter must have at least three student members and a sponsor or advisor who is an active member of the state and national associations. Students must be enrolled in a college or university to become a member of a collegiate chapter.

COLLEGIATE CHAPTER ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Establishing a Collegiate Chapter:

- Clear the proposed formation of a collegiate chapter with the proper authorities of the college or university.
- Generate interest of prospective collegiate members and faculty from all instrumental and vocal areas at the institution.
- Arrange the time, place and agenda for the organizational meeting and publicize it among the students and faculty.
- Appoint a nominating committee for collegiate chapter officers.

Sustaining a Collegiate Chapter:

- Guide and assist collegiate officers and members with collegiate chapter activities.
- Encourage attendance at workshops, conventions and conferences.

- Attend state conventions and national conferences to be aware of developments of importance to collegiate chapters.
- Encourage programs for collegiate members at state conventions and local association meetings.
- Encourage sponsorships of on-campus events for collegiate members and their students.

The Connection: The State Collegiate Chapters Chair

The collegiate chapters chair in your state is a direct connection to the collegiate chapters, respective state MTAs and MTNA. This person:

- Contacts the members of the state association who are currently faculty members at a college, university or conservatory to inform them of the importance of starting a collegiate chapter and asks them to contact students who might be interested in establishing a collegiate chapter
- Provides necessary networking between the national collegiate chapters chair and all collegiate chapter advisors within the state
- Encourages programs for collegiate members at state conventions
- Approves establishment of new collegiate chapters in the state
- Attends state conventions and national conferences to keep abreast of developments of importance to collegiate chapters

Sample Agenda for Organizational Meeting

- Presiding: collegiate chapter advisor
- Greetings from MTNA state or local officer
- Greetings from college or university music department (dean, faculty member or other official)
- Presentation of slate of nominees for collegiate chapter officers
- Election of officers
- Announcements
- Program

Running a successful meeting is much more than simply leading a group through an agenda. It requires skill developed through practice. There are four main components to every meeting—planning for the meeting, setting up the meeting, running the meeting and following up after the meeting.

Planning the Meeting

- Decide the meeting's goal.
 - ✦ Establish a clear goal.
 - ✦ Compile an agenda that will facilitate reaching that goal.
- Research any necessary information.
 - ✦ Be prepared with any facts, figures and so on to present during the meeting as needed and have this prepared before the meeting starts.
- Plan with others.
 - ✦ Use chapter members' knowledge and expertise to prepare the meeting agenda.
- Compile the final agenda.
 - ✦ To facilitate the running of the meeting, list the amount of time you think each item will take.
 - ✦ Let everyone know up front what items will be discussed on the agenda.

Setting Up the Meeting

- Start and end on time.
 - ✦ Be respectful of chapter members' schedules.
- Establish appropriate meeting space.
 - ✦ Meeting spaces should be comfortable and convenient.
 - ✦ Try to establish an atmosphere where everyone can easily see and communicate with each person in attendance.

- Plan some informal activities.
 - ✦ Plan icebreakers or other informal activities to allow members to socialize before or after the meeting.
- Meet on a regular basis.
 - ✦ Plan regular meetings so members can mark their calendars.
 - ✦ Make sure each meeting has a specific purpose. Don't meet just to meet.

Running the Meeting

- Make introductions.
 - ✦ Introductions can act as an icebreaker and help members feel more comfortable discussing potentially controversial issues.
- Keep the discussion focused.
 - ✦ It's easy to get off track when you pull a group of people together to discuss various topics. Remain focused on the tasks at hand and take note of any other issues that may need to be discussed at a later meeting.
 - ✦ Keep track of time and keep the meeting going.
- Summarize what you hear.
 - ✦ A good way of concluding discussion on an agenda item is to summarize the outcome of the discussion out loud.

Following Up on the Meeting

- Gather feedback from the group.
 - ✦ Periodically gather opinions from members about how meetings have been going and what improvements can be made.
- Summarize meeting results.
 - ✦ Compile a list of decisions and the follow up necessary to complete the tasks.

MTNA collegiate chapter projects and activities supplement the formal education of students' training to become music teachers. The information presented at various music-related events and the experience gained during the organization of them, provide an opportunity to clarify and apply principles taught in the classroom. Furthermore, collegiate chapter events reiterate the need for music teachers to continually educate and involve themselves outside the classroom in order to build and maintain a high level of expertise throughout their career.

Below is a list of possible MTNA Collegiate Chapter activities and projects. Please note that the list is organized by event type to help you focus on the needs of your chapter and institution. Perhaps your chapter may consider selecting a couple events or activities to develop and enact.

Activities

- Invite department faculty to participate in chapter activities.
- Hold a membership drive keeping membership diversity in mind.
- Host an open house for interested members.
- Attend state and national conferences.
- Volunteer to assist at your next state MTA conference.
- Research and explore various careers and professional opportunities in the music field. Create a database so future members of your organization have access to this information.
- Volunteer to assist with campus, local or state competitions.
- Organize a pedagogy library or resource center.
- Teach a music class for pre-school students.
- Organize a concert for pre-college students of local teachers.
- Invite alumni to campus to discuss current teaching situations.
- Attend local association meetings and invite local members to attend your chapter meetings.
- Build a chapter website.
- Sponsor a workshop featuring a visiting artist or clinician.

Projects

- Organize outreach programs to local elementary and junior high music students.
- Begin a mentoring program with your state MTA or an MTNA local association in your area.
- Work on a joint project with another student music organization at your institution, your state MTA, an MTNA local association in your area or a nearby MTNA collegiate chapter.
- Host a music recital featuring various forms of music from classical to contemporary.
- Organize a chapter fundraising event, such as a practice-a-thon with individuals pledging money for student practice to finance chapter events or scholarships.
- Sponsor a monster concert.
- Begin sponsoring various campus events such as concerts and music festivals. Invite local music teachers and their students to attend.
- Make presentations to local or state associations. Enter a session proposal for the next MTNA National Conference.
- Organize a recital of campus composers.
- Arrange a forum on various genres of American music.
- Establish and maintain a collegiate chapter bulletin board on campus and include job listings, local arts events, news and so on.
- Invite several faculty members to perform in a recital of teaching repertoire for their respective instruments so music education majors can learn about teaching literature for a variety of instruments and voices.
- Schedule a recital by chapter members on or off campus (senior centers, retirement facilities).
- Sponsor or organize a master class with a visiting artist for students of collegiate members.
- Organize community service projects.
- Teach classes for piano camps.
- Establish a children's scholarship fund for private lessons for needy students.
- Sponsor a recital of students of collegiate members.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is paramount in every aspect of life. Your collegiate chapter will use communication to further your music education, develop fundraisers, organize competitions and schedule social activities. Likewise, ineffective communication is inevitable and results in poor cooperation, lower productivity, tension and absenteeism.

There are many skills that can assist you with fine-tuning your ability to communicate effectively with your chapter members. Remember, good communication does not end with verbalizing one's thoughts. Other factors, such as the ability to listen and understand body language, are just as, if not more, important.

You've heard the statement, "I know you can hear me, but are you listening?" Hearing someone speak does not mean you are paying thoughtful attention to the information the individual is providing. Listening, however, requires discipline to concentrate. This active process is crucial for understanding and responding during communication. Paraphrasing the message given will confirm the information was conveyed and received as intended.

Good communicators are selective in their use of body language. Many times actions speak louder than words, and a message can be misinterpreted with the overuse or misuse of the way one uses their body. Reading an individual's nonverbal responses can communicate characteristics, such as interest in the topic at hand, if he or she is listening and what he or she is feeling about the topic of conversation. Practicing eye contact, selective gestures and appropriate responses will assist with conveying your message appropriately and effectively.

Conflict Management

A typical form of communication is conflict, and it develops when there are contradicting viewpoints between two or more people. Not always negative, conflict can help address problems, motivate individuals to participate in the conversation and help individuals learn to work together. However, when conflict hurts the group's productivity and morale or causes more conflicts and inappropriate behavior, it becomes problematic. To ensure conflict is not destructive to your chapter, learn to incorporate the following steps:

- **Verify Accuracy of the Message.** Paraphrase one another's comments to ensure the message one party is conveying is what the other party is hearing.
- **Discuss Compromise.** Acknowledge the source of the conflict, agree on a solution and make sure the solution fits with the team goals. Each party should ask questions such

as, "What can we do to fix the problem?" Focus on actions each party can do to meet the compromise. If a compromise cannot be met, a third party's advice also can be helpful.

Keep the following tips in mind as compromise is discussed:

- Listen.
- Keep an open mind.
- Avoid pointing fingers.
- Speak calmly or take a break from the conversation if necessary.
- Do not attack the other party.

Delegating Responsibilities

As a leader of your collegiate chapter, you will have to delegate responsibilities to achieve a goal. By doing so, you are holding others accountable for the results of their tasks; however, you also are giving the chapter members the power to make decisions to reach those results. Effective delegation is important in every organization, because it increases the group's efficiency and productivity while creating a team spirit.

Following are some ideas to assist you when delegating:

- **Select Individuals to Perform the Tasks.** Try to find the most qualified person for each assignment. This person will deliver the best results by capitalizing on his or her skills and knowledge.
- **Discuss the Goal.** Provide information that will help the individual understand how his or her task fits into the "big picture." Be sure to talk about objectives, deadlines and answer any questions the individual may have.
- **Trust and Encourage.** Grant the individual the ability to act independently and make decisions to reach the end result. Build the individual's confidence by stressing that this responsibility is an opportunity.
- **Focus on the Results.** Be sure to convey what you want. Offer help, but do not tell the individual how to accomplish his or her task. Allow the individual to reach the goal by exercising personal initiative.
- **Check Work and Give Feedback.** Periodically talk with the individual to make sure everything is on target. Be sure to offer the individual helpful feedback. Perhaps check dates could be set when the task is delegated so all parties strive toward progress.
- **Recognize Success.** When the task is completed, be sure to give the responsible individual full credit for his or her results. Whether this is done publicly or privately, acknowledge that person for a job well done.

Increasing Membership

All member recruitment planning should begin with an assessment of current and prospective members. Who are your chapter's current members? What are their immediate and future perceptions, needs and wants? How satisfied are they with their membership? What are their individual contributions to your chapter?

Keep in mind that individuals join associations for a variety of reasons. Why have your current members joined your chapter, and how do these reasons influence the way you introduce your chapter to prospective members?

After determining how to group your members and prospective members, you can develop recruitment strategies that appeal to their needs. Recruitment efforts should be direct and personal, as well as reflect the strength of the chapter's members and its programs. Let prospective members see your chapter in action. They need to know the chapter is doing something concrete and tangible.

One of the most important ways of reaching your target is print media. MTNA provides membership brochures free to any collegiate chapter requesting them. In addition, design several fliers, to be distributed on campus, advertising the first chapter meeting of the year. On college campuses, word-of-mouth also is very effective. Make sure all music students know about your chapter, and don't be afraid to ask well-respected music professors to announce meetings and other chapter-sponsored events.

It is imperative that organizations utilize technology to effectively attract and retain members. Fortunately, communicating to individuals on campus can be very cost effective. Electronic communication can take many forms, such as e-mail, listservs, bulletin boards and websites. Consult your institution's technology department for assistance in developing your online communications.

Sustaining Membership

Retention activities should begin immediately when a new member joins the chapter. Active members are more likely to become long-term members than those who remain on the sidelines. That's why it is the duty of every chapter member to encourage new members to become fully involved with your chapter's activities and programs.

One way of doing this is a first-time buddy system. Establish a committee of existing members who will be assigned to call new members and invite them to the next chapter meeting. Then the "buddy" greets the new member at the meeting and introduces him or her to other members to ease any initial apprehension.

Programming is probably the single most important way for a collegiate chapter to sustain membership. Plan programs that are diverse, comprehensive and applicable to all members of your chapter. Make sure your chapter is offering activities that will develop your members and help them achieve their professional goals. In addition, be sensitive to members' schedules and course loads.

Music teacher training often does not include the study of public relations or marketing. Yet, like any other management function, good PR and marketing techniques are essential to the success of any music-teaching organization. Using your communications skills to project a positive, professional image and promote public acceptance and understanding of the music teaching profession is what marketing your chapter is all about. An organization's image often is determined by its PR and marketing efforts; therefore, it is important to have these elements finely tuned to attract new members and establish a professional reputation. Whether writing a press release or designing a flier for campus distribution, this portion of the packet will provide general information about PR and marketing concerns collegiate chapters often have.

Objectives of Promotion

When planning any promotion, it is important to keep the following elements in mind.

- Create awareness.
- Provide information.
- Explain the organization's actions.
- Stimulate membership interest.
- Retain members.

Creating an Effective Ad

When designing any type of advertisement, it is important to ask these questions.

- Is the ad visually consistent?
- What is the duration of the campaign?
- Are there repeated taglines, attributes and names?
- Is it simple?
- Is there an identifiable "selling" point?

Writing a Press Release

The press release is a primary way to efficiently communicate news about your collegiate chapter to the public. Its objective is to alert the media of your chapter activities and developments, in hopes they will investigate your story further or relay the basic information even though there is not time to cover it. Regardless of how the media utilizes your press release, your main objective is to ensure your story is told, increasing local public awareness of your chapter.

The key to an effective press release depends on two variables—knowing how to correctly write a press release and recognizing placement. Following are step-by-step tips of how to achieve both.

Tips for Writing a Press Release

- Provide contact information of a designated chapter representative at the top of the press release.
- Specify the release date, such as "For Immediate Release" or "For Release on (Date)," below the contact information.

- Devise a concise and poignant headline.
- Answer the pertinent questions: **WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY** and **HOW** in your lead sentence or if necessary, lead paragraph. Most editors take approximately thirty seconds to decide if your story will be used, so the story should be summarized in the headline and lead.
- Expand on the lead by supplying details to support your story, beginning with the most important information. Because press releases should never exceed two pages, specific facts must be relayed in a small space. Always use an active voice to entice your reader; however, never use unsubstantiated claims to tell your story.
- Use quotes wisely. Quotes can add interest to your news release; however, they must offer significant support and substance to your story to be effective.
- Include a short summary about your collegiate chapter. Discuss when your chapter was established and what its objective is.
- Utilize a short summary about MTNA, because affiliation to the national association will lend credibility to your story: i.e., MTNA is a nonprofit organization comprised of nearly 24,000 independent and collegiate music teachers committed to furthering the art of music through teaching, performance, composition and scholarly research. Founded in 1876, MTNA is the oldest professional music teachers' association in the United States.
- Proofread and check facts. Editors take grammatical errors and reliability into account when selecting stories.

Tips for Getting Media Attention

- Be selective when writing and sending press releases, and make sure your story is newsworthy. Does the topic of the press release meet the following characteristics: consequence, interest, timeliness, proximity and prominence?
- Know your media contacts and begin compiling a list of those commonly contacted. This may include calling and introducing yourself to local and campus newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations. Add to your media list as you send press releases to various media outlets in different areas.
- Decide where to place your message. This factor may vary depending on what your press release is about, where the activity takes place, where your new member resides and so on. Media directories and websites are important sources for finding media information.
- Assess the best way to contact different media outlets. There are a variety of ways to deliver your press release: hand-deliver, mail, fax or e-mail. Familiarize yourself with specific guidelines and deadlines of your media outlets and plan accordingly.