Chapter One

The Team

The importance of developing and maintaining a cohesive team in order to maximize your effectiveness as programmers cannot be overstated. Although many may talk about teams, developing and managing them is often another thing entirely. Throughout this chapter, you will find tips on ways to create, motivate and guide your programming board team through transition. Although you will not find any information regarding leadership development theory within the chapter itself, you will see resource information regarding this topic in the reference list at the end of the chapter. In addition, you can find information on team structuring, or re-structuring, in *Advising Student Governments: Models for Practice and Strategies for Success* (1999).

Creating the Team

In any given group, there will be a mix of skills and strengths. The ultimate goal in managing a team is to effectively mix the skills and strengths to create a seamless whole in which each member's strengths effectively enhance each other while diminishing or, in some cases, canceling out individual areas of weakness.

While it is a simple idea, developing and maintaining an effective team is not a simple task. Teams often run aground because of territoriality, ineffective and unclear communication and uncertain expectations. In creating your new programming board team, you need to remember two things. First, you need to know what human resources are available to you. You need to inventory your team members, getting a clear sense of what they bring to the team—and what they don't. Developing a clear picture of the skill palette before you will help ensure that you achieve maximum results from your team with minimum effort. Keep in mind, however, that the inventory will change as your team members acquire new skills and strengths, and that whatever process you create to conduct this inventory must be flexible enough to accommodate such a learning curve.

Second, you must remember and live by the twin "C's" of team building: clarity and communication. One of the best indicators that a sense of team spirit is being destroyed is the statement "I didn't know." This is a natural response in three common, morale lowering situations:

- one or more team members is left out of the communication loop
- a team member is allowed to spend time pursuing one path only to find out that the other program board members were pursuing another
- a team member is allowed to think they were in charge of a project when actually they were only partially responsible

These are examples of what can happen when someone "doesn't know." Focusing on the twin "C's," however, can help ensure that "not knowing" is a rare, rather than everyday, occurrence.

Step One: Who Are We?
Defining the Team's Identity

In order to accomplish a task or a goal, you must first know what that task or goal is, as well as your role in its successful completion. So, the first step in building a team is outlining and agreeing on what the team is supposed to do.

Begin with your mission statement. Its purpose is to clearly identify your group's priorities and institutional mandate, thereby giving everyone on the team a common framework within which to operate. If your group doesn't have a mission statement, you should develop one; if you do, make sure everyone on the team has a copy and understands what it means. Remember, ensuring that the team truly understands the mission statement is likely to take more than simply handing it to them. Instead, think about structuring your first team meeting as a training and familiarization session in which you actively educate members on the meaning of the statement and its importance in day-to-day planning.

> *The ultimate goal in managing a team is to effectively mix the skills and strengths to create a seamless whole in which each member's strengths effectively enhance each other while diminishing or, in some cases, canceling out individual areas of weakness.*

Step Two: Why Are We Here?
Outlining the Team's Goals

Once everyone understands the framework, it's time to begin adding details. At this point, members should be developing goals for the year. Both team goals (e.g. "this year we plan to successfully produce two new programs") and individual goals (e.g. "I want to improve my leadership skills by effectively managing one project from inception to completion") should be incorporated. Remember that goals need to be measurable—you need to be able to see that you've accomplished them, or where additional work is needed. An example of measurable goals could include the goal of co-sponsoring at least one event per semester with a group that serves an under-represented campus population as part of an outreach effort. Another example of a measurable goal would be striving to sponsor at least four events per semester from which a certain portion of proceeds will be given to local-area charities.

Goals are also multi-layered, and there are many different ways to refer to each level. The terms *objectives*, *tactics*, *strategies*, and *action plans* are often used to describe various levels of goals. To make things even more confusing, each board or group may have its own terminology—one group's objectives may be another group's strategies, tactics may be action plans, etc. To help ensure clarity, it is important to decide what terms your group will use and clarify them so each member understands the working definition of each term. For example, in the 1997 version of its Strategic Plan, NACA defined the terms strategies, tactics and action steps as the following:

Strategy: A strategy refers to the general direction or achievement the Association (NACA) will be pursuing

Tactic: A tactic is the general method employed to achieve the strategy

Action Steps: Action steps are specific actions, programs or set of steps to be undertaken to achieve the tactic and make progress towards the strategy. Action steps include measurable outcomes and parameters of time, resources, requirements and sequence (NACA, p. 2).

In addition to levels, goals may also have specific purposes:

1. Innovative—These goals include new ideas and programs. Example: To create a new noontime series of jazz concerts to be produced in the 1997-98 school year.
2. Problem solving—These goals are meant to solve existing problems. Example: To increase attendance at the film services programs in 1997-98; will increase from the average '96-'97 attendance of 30 to a '97-'98 average attendance of 75.
3. Ongoing—These are goals that continue to exist unchanged from year to year. Example: To recruit at least 25 program board volunteers in the month of September.
4. Internal—These are goals that refer to internal program board management or personnel issues rather than service delivery issues. Example: To run more effective program board meetings by having a written agenda one day prior to each meeting placed in each member's box and sticking to this agenda during the meetings.
5 Personal Development—These are goals that refer to the personal or professional development of program board members. Example: To make sure that each program board member knows how to write about their program board experience by May 1 (Mink, p. 44).

Step Three: How Do We Get There? Developing the Frameworks and Handbook

Once goals have been outlined and agreed upon, you need to establish the frameworks for moving forward. In this instance, there are two types of frameworks: policy and process.

Policy frameworks can cover extremely broad issues from university procedures governing a particular activity or action to budget or other guidelines adopted by your board to help manage programs. Process frameworks, on the other hand, outline the methods you as a group will employ to facilitate getting the work of the board done throughout the year and include such things as overall group and project meetings, reports, etc.

Policy Frameworks

Many of the policy frameworks that will affect your programming board activities will stem from the university guidelines. These guidelines are likely to apply to programming elements as diverse as contracting and legal issues to promotion and publicity. It is imperative that all team members be aware of and understand the impact of the guidelines on their activities. For example, does the university legal counsel need to be consulted prior to signing any performance contract, or is there a standard contract for use in all situations? What about contract riders—are these elements that the programming board can sign off on without additional legal or other review?

> *To effectively match team members with team responsibilities, you must know their likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, levels of commitment, and availability. Remember—the goal is to place someone in a position in which they can grow and succeed.*

To ensure that all team members understand the rules under which they must operate, it is helpful to develop a reference handbook outlining them. To be most effective, the handbook needs to be concise and easy to understand. It is probably best to develop the handbook around a series of questions and answers, a variety of scenarios or a combination of both. Remember that the handbook needs to be flexible, as well. Rules change, and making sure that your handbook can facilitate updates is essential.

During your first team meeting, make sure you walk members through the handbook, using experiences from previous programming boards to help show how the rules affect the board's daily operations. In addition, bring the handbook with you to all meetings and refer to it frequently to help reinforce its importance and effectiveness.

Process Frameworks

Process frameworks essentially outline the methods your team will use to exchange information, develop new ideas and implement activities. In other words, these are the group's organizational and decision-making structures and procedures. Developing and utilizing agreed upon structures for process are important for a variety of reasons. First, process guidelines eliminate confusion, lessen frustration and enhance involvement by illustrating that no decision-making is going on somewhere behind the scenes. For example, if all team members know that the second meeting of every month is devoted to discussing new proposals, they all have the same opportunities to get proposals heard.

Second, process guidelines help level the playing field. For example, one important part of process guidelines outlines the parameters under which decisions will be made. If your team has decided that all new projects will be judged on the criteria of budget, promotion, relevance and projected outcome, this helps anyone who is submitting a new program understand exactly what information needs to be included for thorough consideration. Outlining objective criteria lessens concerns arising from cliques and personalities while encouraging active participation from a wide variety of team members. While there will always be differences in how members choose to present ideas, developing parameters helps ensure that those differences are more matters of style than of substance.

A third important reason for process guidelines is that they help guarantee projects are accomplished in an effective and timely manner. Proper guidelines help prevent the "reinventing of the wheel" syndrome, which can result when strong and dedicated personalities want to put their stamp on individual projects. For example, everyone has been in meetings that seemed to be more about the airing of one or two people's ideas than about getting work done. Process guidelines can help alleviate this problem by indicating certain meetings are for brainstorming ideas while others are for operational purposes. Using these guidelines, a team leader or meeting moderator can move the topics forward by indicating that those discussions should be held during the upcoming brainstorming meeting and that the meeting needs to move on to address the remaining items on the agenda. The guidelines provide an objective reason for moving forward, reinforcing the concept of fairness—no one is allowed to dominate, and everyone is given opportunities to be heard.

The fourth reason process guidelines are an important component of creating a team is that they enhance communication among and between team members. The most effective communication is always accomplished face to face. Process guidelines help standardize that communication, while also encouraging the development of other forms of communication to augment personal meetings. For example, your team determines that the entire board will meet every other week, individual project teams will meet on the off-week, and any important updates needing to be communicated during the interim should be posted on a centrally located bulletin board, and/or sent to each person's individual e-mail account. Outlining this process not only ensures that everyone can allocate time appropriately, but also provides a common method of information delivery, which alleviates the potential of leaving someone out when communicating crucial information.

Finally, the fifth reason process guidelines are important is that they help set expectations by outlining the organizational structure of the team. While everyone on the team is important, that importance is different for each member. Not all members, for example, will be involved in all decisions. Just as in the business world, different positions carry different responsibilities and different levels of knowledge. Understanding that structure and how you as a member fit into it helps ensure that unrealistic expectations do not develop.

Process frameworks should also be included in whatever handbook is developed for the team. While the policy frameworks are likely to be understood, it is important that the team develop process frameworks during its first meetings. Including everyone in process development will help ensure that the processes are appropriately tailored to the actual needs of the individual team.

And Then There Is the Budget...

One other element that needs to be included in your handbook is the team's budget. Individual schools will handle budgets differently, but most likely, the budget will be a combination of non-negotiable and negotiable elements. For example, your team may receive a lump sum of money from the school that you need to work together to allocate, or there may be parts of your budget that are specifically allocated by school mandate or by the previous programming board. Regardless of the situation, making sure your team understands its budgetary parameters is essential. (For more information on budgeting, see Chapter 2.)

Step Four: What Is My Role? Taking Inventory of the Team and Developing Job Descriptions

To create an effective team, you must first find out the various strengths and experiences of your team members. Unfortunately, you can't really wait until you've had time to work with each member before each is assigned to a role within the team, so you must begin with what they tell you. It is important to remember that you need to find out not only what their tangible experiences have been (e.g. "I worked on my high school newspaper for three years") but also what intangible strengths they bring to the team (e.g. "I consider myself very detail-oriented").

To help accomplish this task, you may want to develop a survey that team members complete. Make sure you give the survey to both experienced and new team members in order to capture any new information. Ideally, you would give the survey to the team before the first meeting, and they would bring it to you for a brief one-on-one discussion before they receive job assignments. To effectively match team members with team responsibilities, you must know their likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, levels of commitment and availability. Remember—the goal is to place someone in a position in which they can grow and succeed. (See Example 1.1 for a sample skill survey/interest inventory.)

Through the use of a personality inventory tool such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), an advisor, or program board president, can make informed decisions about which program board position is right for which board member. The use of the personality type indicators can help reinforce team building efforts between the executive board and other program board members. By understanding each other's personality type, or preferred style of interaction, executives and members can minimize potential conflicts or power struggles (Dunkel & Schuh, p. 205).

One of the best known and most comprehensive of current personality assessment tools, the MBTI describes each individual's personality through four sets of two basic traits. The MBTI's creators, Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine Briggs, believe individuals' personalities can be described through a combination of four aspects: extroversion or introversion, sensing or intuitive, thinking or feeling, and judgement or perception. There are a total of 16 possible combinations of Myers-Briggs personality types. Once your board members have taken the MBTI, they can begin to apply this knowledge of the basic personality traits and motivations of their fellow board members to their interactions with each other. An experienced professional who is trained in MBTI interpretation should administer the personality inventory (Dunkel & Schuh, p. 205).

TIP:

Consider using a personality inventory tool such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a guide in making programming board position assignments. Personality inventory tools draw on your program board members' strengths, which help them grow and succeed in their program board service.

Once you have determined the team's skill palette, you can make job assignments. At this point, it is important to either distribute job descriptions or develop them for new positions. Make sure that all descriptions clearly outline the individual's duties and responsibilities, reporting structure, time commitment, and the criteria upon which success will be judged. Also make sure that you discuss job descriptions with team members. This one-on-one communication is extremely important to ensure that both you and the team member are on the same page with regard to expectations. Ideally, the process guidelines you develop will outline a schedule of formal meetings throughout the year between you and each team member to periodically assess and evaluate the individual's performance, satisfaction, etc. You should also try, however, to make time for informal opportunities to touch base with each team member throughout the year. (For two sample job descriptions, see Example 1.2.)

Finally, remember that you will need to fine-tune your team throughout the year to accommodate personalities and working styles that may not have been apparent during the initial job assignment phase. In addition, some individuals may define themselves in ways that you later realize are not completely accurate; for example, someone may not indicate a strength in planning and attention to detail that in reality exists. Use the formal and informal touching base opportunities mentioned above to help you in this ongoing process. Formal touching base opportunities can occur through scheduled meetings with your advisor, or through the use of checklists or similar forms. Informal touching base opportunities can occur through memos, e-mail, voice mail, or unscheduled "drop-in" office visits.

XYZ Programming Board
Skill Survey/Interest Inventory

1. Please list all volunteer positions held with campus organizations at Our University, along with dates of service.

Campus Organization/Club	Position(s) Held	For How Long?

2. Please briefly describe the most significant skills you developed through your experience with these organizations.

3. Please list the tasks, or aspects, you most enjoyed while serving these campus organizations.

4. Please list the tasks, or aspects, you least enjoyed while serving these campus organizations.

5. What skills do you hope to develop as a member of the XYZ Programming Board?

Example 1.1: Sample Skill Survey/Interest Inventory (See Appendix D for a full-size version.)

Step Five: Where Are We Going? Developing and Implementing the Calendar

Given the school year cycle, part of your program calendar may have been developed by the previous programming board or may be tied to previously approved budget parameters. The first step your team should take is to determine the calendar non-negotiables, which also determines those areas you need to fill. Remember that non-negotiables will include not only programs or events booked or initiated by a previous board, but also existing campus or national activities. For example, you probably wouldn't want to plan something on the night of the Super Bowl unless you chose to play off the Super Bowl theme for your own event.

Once the non-negotiables are identified, your team needs to develop two tracks—one to provide new programs and one to begin implementing the scheduled programs. At some point during the year, the first track will become less important as less scheduling but more implementation remains to be done.

At this point, process guidelines in the form of checklists, timelines, and communication activities come into play. Checklists and timelines are important to ensure that everyone, both new and experienced members, covers all the necessary bases, while communication is important to make sure everything runs smoothly. (See Chapter Six for more information on checklists and timelines for various activities.)

Maintaining the Team

Once the team has been developed and responsibilities have been assigned, there is still more work to be done. Maintaining a sense of team spirit in the beginning can be easy—everyone is excited, everything is new and enthusiasm is high. Unfortunately, that euphoria doesn't last very long. Classes and other responsibilities begin to take up more time. Tasks being done within the team become routine. Members may become discouraged due to expectations that haven't been completely met or because of circumstances outside their control. It's at this stage that sustaining motivation becomes extremely important.

To help get a sense of what will motivate the individuals who make up your team, ask them. People will generally tell you what makes them want to do their best.

The first step is to determine the factors that will motivate the whole team as well as individual members:

> Motivator factors are things like achievement (solving work problems, seeing the results of your efforts, completing a difficult task, creating a 'whole' tangible product, having meaningful responsibilities), recognition (respect from peers, acknowledgement for the program board president or advisor, receiving feedback on your performance, knowing you have accomplished a meaningful task), participation (planning and scheduling your work, being allowed to make important decisions, being part of organizational decision-making and problem-solving teams that are related to your area of responsibilities), and growth (being able to increase your skills and competencies, applying new learning to job tasks, becoming more competent) (Simonds, 1998, p. 230).

In an article in *Programming* magazine, Mink (1997) outlined the following ways to keep team members motivated:

> 1. Look for small victories. Even if it is just one objective for one goal that has been accomplished, celebrate wildly!
> 2. Design and implement monitoring systems. Creating and implementing ongoing goal monitoring systems will help as the school year progresses. Ideas for monitoring include having periodic individual meetings with members who have responsibility for each goal, asking for written updates to be turned in (you could create a goal reporting form), scheduling verbal reporting at program board meetings on a regular basis (make 'goal reporting' a regular agenda item), having a separate 'Program Board Planning Committee' that monitors the group's progress toward the goals, and creating some type of visual monitoring system such as a chart showing progress towards the goals that would be posted in the program board office.
> 3. Try to keep responsibility for reporting on each goal connected to the person responsible for implementing the goal rather than on the program board chairperson or an advisor. This way, the chairperson or advisor will not have to track everyone down to get an update, and each member will know it is their responsibility to report on their progress.
> 4. Remember to involve program board members in the development of the monitoring process as well as in the goal setting process (p. 45).

Executive Position Job Description

Title: President of the Campus Programs Board

Duties: The president shall conduct meetings, represent the Board, appoint special sub-committees when necessary, consult with the program advisor, and perform other duties customarily involving that office. He or she will serve as a member of the Budget Review Committee.

Qualifications: Organizational and leadership skills, ability to motivate others, previous experience in campus activities (preferably with Campus Programs Board). Must be an enrolled student carrying a minimum of nine credit hours with a grade point average of 2.5 or above.

Length of Commitment: One year.

Committee Member Job Description

Title: Concert Committee Member

Responsible to: Concert Committee Chairperson

Expectations: Members of the Concert Committee are expected to attend regular committee meetings to assist in the selection, planning, and evaluating of concerts. Members should make every effort to be available the day and evening of each show.

Duties: Throughout the year, members of the Concert Committee will be involved in such activities as

- calling record stores and radio stations to assess current interest,
- making room reservations,
- setting up catering,
- arranging for sound and lights,
- designing and implementing promotional campaign,
- selling tickets,
- setting up staging,
- loading in and taking out equipment,
- transporting crew and artists,
- arranging dressing rooms, and
- providing house security.

Qualifications: Interest in music, ability and desire to work with others. Must be a full-time enrolled student in good academic standing.

Time Required: 1-3 hours/week (more time is required during the week of the show) (DiSabatino, p. 33).

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Example 1.2: Sample Programming Board Job Descriptions

Although Mink was outlining ways to maintain motivation during the goal setting process, the elements she mentioned work well in this context, too. Remember the process guidelines discussed earlier? As you can see, many motivation elements also involve process elements: a monitoring system, forms, sub-committees, reporting methods, etc.

Although the need to motivate involves the entire team, the actual elements used to motivate will vary from individual to individual. To help get a sense of what will motivate the individuals who make up your team, ask them. People will generally tell you what makes them want to do their best. You may want to give them a little help in letting you know by distributing a brief outline of a variety of things that can be used to motivate someone and asking them to chose what they consider the be the top motivators on the list.

Whatever elements or combination of elements you use, also keep in mind that different team members will need different levels of motivation and validation. Some people, for example, need to frequently hear that they are doing well and are on the right track, while others may find frequent statements of their performance to be unnecessary and even somewhat unsettling. Finding the balance for each of the individuals on your team can be challenging and time-consuming, especially in the beginning when it is an experience in trial and error. The end result will be a team that has an optimum performance and experience level. Again, use the formal and informal one-on-one meetings to help gauge the levels of motivation each person needs and develop the appropriate balance.

Guiding the Team Through Transition

All good things must come to an end, and the same goes for all good teams. Members graduate and move on, and new members join. A final key element in developing teams is training them for transition. To guide a team through transition essentially involves preserving and transmitting relevant experiences and information from one group to the next. Some of this will occur naturally in teams with a mix of experienced and new members: the experienced members will help relay information from previous years to new members, who then, as experienced members next year, continue the cycle.

It is important, however, to not rely completely on personal exchanges for this type of information. One method you may want to use involves having team members keep journals of their experiences, with the understanding that these journals will be passed on to their successors. Journals of this type can also help with the evaluation and monitoring process outlined in the previous section and can serve as valuable sources of information for modifying job descriptions of team members to reflect current activities.

Other ideas for effecting transition include

- Developing a departmental filing system with agreed-upon key words and elements—this type of system helps to ensure that important files are available to all team members rather than kept in individual offices or lost when a particular person leaves; and
- Establishing a series of "checklist notebooks" based on previous board experiences—creating and utilizing a series of notebooks outlining the checklists that previous programming boards have used to develop, plan, promote, implement and evaluate programs helps alleviate the possibility that an important task or consideration will slip through the cracks. Each board can spend time at the end of the semester updating the notebooks, ensuring that information stays current and practical.

Conclusion

The team is the single most important element to successful programming that you can develop. A good team can overcome almost any problem or obstacle to create successful programming for the student body while also encouraging a positive developmental experience for all members. Conversely, a bad team can take even a good programming schedule and turn it into a less than satisfying experience for everyone. Developing and maintaining the team is a time-consuming proposition, but in the end, it pays off handsomely.

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