Meeting Guide

Purpose:

This guide will provide tips and resources for student leaders as they lead meetings, whether it be for a club, organization, or a one-on-one.

Types of Meetings:

There are several types of meetings and appropriate lengths to each type. The following is a list of meeting types and lengths to match:

- Regular Team Meeting (updates, icebreakers/teambuilders): 30 to 45 minutes
- Decision-Making Meeting: 2 to 3 hours, possibly more depending on the type of decision
- Brainstorming Meeting: 40 minutes to 1 hour
- Retrospective Meeting: 30 minutes
- One-On-One Meeting: 30 minutes to 1 hour
- Strategy Meeting: 1 to 2 hours

Essential Tips for Running an Effective Meeting:

In order to run an effective meeting, there are some essentials and prep work you will need to work on, such as:

- Set the agenda beforehand; every meeting is being called for some reason, so make sure to clearly list out what you plan to do and/or discuss in your meeting prior to the meeting and during the meeting so your attendants know what to expect.
- Start and end on time; be respectful or your attendants' and own time when running meetings. Start your meeting at the time it is intended to start and end it at the intended or reasonable time.

- Try to engage your members every 10 minutes or so as this is the length of the average attention span.
- End your meeting with an action plan; save the last 10-15 minutes of your meeting to discuss what is expected to be done by the next meeting and who holds each responsibility, which you can then implement into the agenda of your next meeting.

What A Meeting Actually Is:

Before you call or hold a meeting, consider whether or not it is an actual meeting. The following are some examples of what may not constitute the label "meeting" or what may not require meeting:

- Presentations; if your meeting will mostly consist of someone talking through a presentation without discussion or engagement, this is a presentation. To better engage your members, try sending out the slides in advance and then doing a portion of presenting during the meeting time and devoting the rest of the time to discussing the material to avoid losing engagement.
- Updates; if your meeting is to only consist of brief updates from individuals or working groups, avoid holding a meeting and create a group chat (or using a platform like Microsoft Teams, GroupMe, or even using a whiteboard) where people can share updates/progress. You can also have a paper meeting where updates are given via email, chat, or through a virtual document. From there, members can have follow-up discussions with the people involved in particular projects on their own time.

How to Create a Comfortable Meeting Environment:

- Provide food and drinks if possible; not always necessary but could be fun from time to time.
- Find a room with comfortable seating and desk space, as well as one with natural lighting.
- Find an optimal meeting time for your club/organization/individual to ensure you have your members' full attention; perhaps some work better in the morning, afternoon, or at night, so find the best balanced time of the day and week.

- Before diving into your agenda items, open your meeting with an icebreaker (see the Monmouth Student Activities' "Teambuilding Resource Guide" as an example) to foster team building.
- Ask members to put electronic devices like laptops or phones away depending on the type of meeting to prevent distractions.

How to Make Meetings More Inclusive:
- Encourage team members to take written notes, which will help them recollect facts and information post-meeting.
- Have members write down questions during the meeting, then either have them put it into a bowl or submit them electronically; this may help introverts or those who do not feel comfortable speaking up have their concerns addressed.
- Break people into groups and have them accomplish small tasks or make decisions together, then have them share their findings with the larger group.
- Break the meeting into sections with a different person leading each section or part of the agenda; switching up presenters will keep meetings fresh and engage members' attention.