EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Before the Meeting

- **Determine the purpose of the meeting.** Every meeting should have a defined purpose! If you find you don't have much to discuss, don't be afraid to cancel a meeting. You will show respect for other member's time and ensure you are hosting effective meetings.

- **Reserve a meeting space.** Consider what type of space you need and what setup will work best. For example, do you need theater-style seating or a U-shape conference setup?

- **Create a meeting agenda.** It is important to keep meetings focused and on track, and a pre-determined agenda helps greatly with this objective!

- **Review your organization's policies and procedures.** The people leading the meeting should be an expert on the proper way to conduct business for the organization. Make sure you know what to do in any situation, such as if there is a tie during voting, just in case it comes up.

- **Review the agenda** a day or two before the meeting and make necessary adjustments to reflect changes. Make copies of the agenda or any other materials to bring with you to the meeting.

- **Send a meeting reminder to confirm the date, time, and location.** This ensures that all members are on the same page and are likely to be present for the meeting. You can also send a copy of the agenda so all members know what to expect at the meeting.

Meeting Agendas

The agenda sets the intentions for the meeting and helps you to meet your goals for what you wanted to accomplish during that time. Here are some tips for creating your agendas:

- Ask for contributions and feedback from other officers or advisors to make sure that all pertinent information and discussion points have been included.

- Think about how much time you have for the meeting and how much you want to allocate to each item on the agenda. If needed, remember to allocate time to guests or speakers who will be present.

- It is often helpful to leave space on the agenda for notes and action items.

Sample Agenda

- Roll Call
- Icebreaker (Optional)
- Old Business
- New Business
- Reports from officers and committee members
- Announcements
- Adjourn meeting

Engage ELEVATE Explore

During the Meeting

- Arrive early to set up and greet members as they arrive.

- Start (and end) on time! Respect the time that attendees have set aside by starting on time and sticking to your agenda.

- Have someone record minutes for future reference.

- Follow the agenda and keep track of time. You most likely don't want to spend 75% of your available time discussing just one agenda item. You can determine how much time to spend on one topic based upon the relevance to the meeting purpose, time sensitivity, etc.

- Keep the conversation focused on appropriate topics. Digression and side conversations can lead to confusion and frustration and will prolong the meeting. Refer topics to an appropriate time on the agenda. Alternatively, save items that were not on the agenda for the next meeting or make a note to discuss them individually with the people involved.

- Encourage group discussion to increase decision making quality and transparency. Engage the participants with respect. Listen actively, try not to interrupt a speaker, and even when you do not agree with a perspective that has been voiced, make an effort to indicate that you value the contribution to the discussion. One way to manage discussion is to use parliamentary procedure—consider implementing that practice for your group.

- Celebrate any successes that your organization has had since you met last. This helps to keep members engaged and excited to participate.

- Prior to ending the meeting, summarize the main discussion points and any actions that were decided .

After the Meeting

- Stay after to discuss relevant issues with members following the close of the meeting.

- Send out minutes within 1-2 days.

- Make note of any unfinished business to add to the next agenda.

- Follow up on items that require further action or with individuals if applicable.

- Follow up with members who missed the meeting.

- Get feedback from other officers and participants to evaluate meeting effectiveness. This will help you to learn what worked and what you could improve in the future. What could you change to make the meeting run more smoothly? Was your group focused and did you stay on task? Where could you improve?