

Recruitment Ideas

About this resource

This resource is meant to offer a list of tips and ideas for campus recruitment. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to add them using the commenting tool!

This resource was made by Alyssa Lee <alyssa@betterfutureproject.org> at Better Future Project/Divest Ed. It was last updated on [2017-09-07](#).

Ideas

- **Schedule your meetings early!**
 - Before you do anything else, make sure to schedule your group meeting times early on so you can get your core, active members organized as soon as school starts.
 - If you can't decide on a regular meeting time, try to organize a special "start-of-school" meeting time on a day most people can make, and then set a regular weekly time after that. The goal of this meeting is to set all the other recruitment plans in motion as soon as possible.
- **Table at the Student Activities Fair/Club Fair at the start of the semester.**
 - Make sure to sign up early! This is obvious but really such an important move!
 - At least a week before that fair, get someone on top of making fliers, signs, and anything else you might need for tabling!
 - For more information on tabling, see the [How To Table](#) resource.
- **Have a General Information Meeting**
 - Plan on holding a General Information Meeting sometime in the second or third week of school so that you can direct all your recruitment efforts there. The goal of this meeting is to be an orientation to your group. It is generally good to use this meeting to do the following:
 - Provide the mission and goals of your group.
 - Give some context on the problem that your group aims to address.
 - Go over a *concise* history of your group that covers the key points - when did you start, what major checkpoints or victories have you had, how did you end the last semester?
 - List some ways for people to be involved, i.e. what members do.
 - Give a key upcoming ask, whether it's helping out the next event, attending an educational event, or planning an upcoming action.
 - Make the meeting interactive, fun, light-hearted, and organized. This is a window into the group. People want to join something that seems like it has a purpose, that has clear ways to get involved, that seems like it will be fun, and

that will offer learning and skills. Give people a chance to talk to each other during the meeting, and time for questions.

- Try to have enough core/active members of your group attend so that there can be one sitting next to every 5 or so new attendees.
- Free food. This is so important. Don't expect to bring people out on an evening if they aren't going to be fed.

- **Table during the year.**

- Choose prominent locations, such as the student center, dining halls, or in the quad/plaza.
- Choose times that are peak student traffic times, such as weekday mornings and early afternoons.

- **At the start of the semester**, plan on doing some tabling, flyering, class raps, and chalking on campus.

- This is most effective the first 2 weeks of classes when people are still putting together their schedule.

- **Do some 'chalking' around campus.**

- For some campuses, it's common to see announcements about events or clubs on the chalkboards in classrooms. This is called 'chalking.' Members of a group choose a concise message and then choose several key rooms around campus to write this message in. You do this early in the morning, before the first class (usually between 7:15am-8am).
 - You want to get a group of at least 5 people to do this. Individuals should split up, not stay as a group or in pairs, otherwise you can't reach as many classrooms.
 - Don't chalk every possible classroom. Choose classrooms that are on the bigger side, like large lecture halls.
 - You should write the message in the corner of the chalkboard, out of the way but still visible. If you write it in the middle, it has a higher chance of being erased. At some schools, chalked messages may stay up for an entire day of classes.
 - It's possible that some buildings will be locked, but many of them will be open. If this is a successful tactic for you, try to note which buildings tend to be locked for the future.
 - It's best to do this in the morning, rather than at night, since custodial staff tend to clean chalkboards at night.
- Make your message as concise as possible. Make sure to include date, time, and location.
 - Sample:
 - Challenge fossil fuels and climate change*
 - Join Divest ___!*
 - Monday, 9/17, 7pm, Wilson 201. Free pizza!*

- Your campus may allow you to leave chalk messages on sidewalks and buildings as well. If you do this, try to make your message even shorter.
- Tip: Make chalking more fun by having people meet up for coffee/pastries for 5 minutes beforehand OR afterward.
- This tactic requires commitment and waking up early, but it can be a really useful tactic because it gets a lot of visibility.
- **Make class announcements.**
 - A class announcement, or ‘class rap’ is when you stand in front of a class at the start of the class and make a very short announcement (think 1-3 minutes).
 - Email the professor or teaching assistant a couple days in advance and ask if you can give a 1-3 min class rap. You can let them know what it’s for, but you don’t need to give all the details unless they ask. Some professors won’t allow this, but others might. Some professors may not respond to an email - you can always arrive early to class and ask them as they are setting up.
 - It’s alright to try to make announcements in classes that don’t seem directly aligned. You don’t have to limit these to environmental science classes. Hit up the big first-year classes/seminars. I would look at English, Chemistry, Physics, Math - all the big classes that many first-years have to take.
 - It’s helpful to have fliers for your announcement that you can leave at the front of the class OR, if your professor allows, pass around.
 - This takes a bit of courage and initiative, but it can be really good practice for canvassing and tabling. It can also be really effective since you have a captive audience.
- **Advertise in your dining halls/student center.**
 - If your dining hall has ads (sometimes they have tv screens which show ads, or tabletop fliers), talk to them and see if you can get one there! It usually takes a bit of time and an application process, so ask early in the semester.
- **Canvas in your dining halls.**
 - Ask if you can set up a table in or near a dining hall where there is a lot of student traffic. If you can, treat it just like you would any other tabling event.
 - If you are not allowed to do that, you can also just casually go with other members and pass out fliers. If you do this, remember to bring a sign-up sheet so people who are interested can give you their information.
- **Do ‘dorm storms’ or dorm canvassing.**
 - Sign up some members of your team to do a “dorm storm,” which is basically canvassing dorm rooms. This means having a small team of people who go to dorms and knock on doors to spread the word about the campaign.
 - Depending on your campus culture, you should probably talk to the residential advisors beforehand to get permission.
 - It’s helpful to match up people who live in those buildings to be the canvassers since it’s a lot easier to get in if you live in the building.
 - This is a great way to easily involve first and second years, since they are generally more likely to live in the dorms.

- For some tips on developing a canvassing “rap”, see the [How To Table](#) resource.
- **Make announcements at residential hall meetings.**
 - If you can’t do a dorm storm, you can ask your residential advisor if you can make a plug at the next residential hall meeting. Similar to any other kind of outreach, it’s helpful to have fliers and to bring a sign-up sheet.
- **Make announcements at other club meetings.**
 - This is best to do if you already have a relationship with another club. Even if you don’t, if you feel like a club might be similarly aligned or share people with the same values, it can be worth asking. Send an email or message in advance of their meeting. A week’s notice or at least a few days is good.
 - In your message, make sure to acknowledge that this is a favor the other group would be providing and be humble. Include what your announcement will say and how long it will take. Try to make your announcement no longer than 2 minutes. Make sure to ask if you can pass around a sign-up sheet or fliers.
 - Be humble and courteous! Be thoughtful of the fact that you are asking to borrow their important meeting time to help your club. If there is a favor your group can offer in return, offer it. Make sure to be clear with what you are asking for, and thankful with whatever their response is.
 - If they do not respond, don’t assume that means it’s okay!
 - There’s not a “best” time to do this - it’s okay if you don’t do this in the first couple of weeks. It’s worth asking later on as well, especially if there is a very specific ask, such as attending an action.
 - Make sure that there are clear point people in your group assigned to do this. It’s very annoying for a club to receive multiple inquiries from the same group.
- **Do a ‘visibility action’**
 - Consider spending the month before classes to start coordinating a ‘visibility action.’ This means something that’s not necessarily targeted (at the Board or the President or other decision-maker) but rather just creative and artsy. Some ideas are “sea rise limbo” or a “divestival” or holding big signs or a non-confrontational banner drop. The goal is to be seen and spread a simple and exciting message, not to be polarizing or make a demand.
 - As with all actions, choose a time that’s well suited to visibility and student traffic, and plan for the weather.
 - Since the goal of this type of action is to be seen by as many people as possible, advance outreach is not as important as choosing a tactic and message that is simple, creative, and easy to understand.
 - If you have capacity, try to get media attention for this by contacting your school newspaper a week in advance. Make sure that when you contact them, you provide a sense of the “visual” of the action, which will make it more likely to be covered.
- **Plan a social event**

- Shortly after your General Interest Meeting, plan a fun event like a potluck or party or hot chocolate night - something that gets people excited about being involved and can allow people to interact. This can be just a 1 ½ hour event on an evening.
- **Make posters and put them up around campus.**
 - Posters can be expensive but a really good use of money if you design them to be simple, concise, and easy to understand. If they're well-placed near food areas, bathrooms, student centers, gyms, and large classrooms, they can truly be an effective way of spreading awareness about your group.

Tips

- **Have food at your events.** Whether it's a meeting, a social, an action, chalking, etc., food brings people together, appeals to broke college students, and also shows that you intend to compensate people for their time even in a small way. You can use a club budget to buy pizza, or take turns bringing snacks. You can all contribute a small bit of money at every meeting (like \$1 each) and that can be the ongoing "food budget." Again, don't expect to have people spend their evenings with you unless they're going to be fed. It creates a really great culture of care as well.
- **Make fliers early on.** Often times, groups only make fliers for a specific event and it becomes a mad scramble. Try to make a standard "outreach" flier template in advance where you can just fill in the date and time of an upcoming event.
- **Be concise and organized.** Fliers should be simple. Facebook events should be simple. Chalking messages should be simple. Class announcements should be simple. Keep it short. And also be organized. Don't leave people wondering, "I liked the sound of that but I have no idea where or when to go." If they're interested by a short message, you'll have time to give them the longer one once they're in the room.
- **Use recruitment as opportunities for training.** Newer members can be a part of recruitment. It's a good way for them to build confidence about talking about the organization. It's another way to activate people. And it's also a good way to build relationships.
- **Apply for funding so that you can have food and free printing and all these good things.** Lots of schools offer intramural (i.e. within school) grants that registered student organizations can apply to. Identify some point people to take care of this before the next semester starts.
- **Recruitment = Organizing.** The heart of organizing is talking to people and getting them interested in your cause. Every recruitment event is just one more opportunity for organizing. Even if someone doesn't join the group or come to your event, they are that much more likely to know about what you are doing and support it passively. You will be rejected often. It's hard, but it's natural. Remember, people will not support something they don't know exists.
- **Generally just be VISIBLE and be around.** It helps to just be a name that people can recognize!