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Introduction

Creating and maintaining an environmental student group can be a significant undertaking, especially when balancing classes, work, and various other responsibilities as students. This guide aims to break down this process, lay out a general framework for group creation, and provide additional resources and ideas as you move through the process.

Forming Your Vision

There are many reasons for starting an environmental student group. Perhaps you want a space for like-minded peers; perhaps you want to organize students around an environmental initiative or goal; or perhaps you want to provide an opportunity to engage in environmental work that doesn't yet exist. Whatever your reason is, it's important to keep in mind as you develop and refine your group's mission, vision, and values.

Mission, Vision, and Values[1]

It is common practice (and perhaps required depending on your school's policies [see Appendix A]) for groups to have a Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Values Statement.

A Mission Statement describes your group's purpose and why it exists. These are typically succinct and to the point, consisting of 1-3 sentences usually[2].

A Vision Statement describes your group's aspirations as well as how you envision the group's ideal future. Similar to the Mission Statement, you want your Vision Statement to be concise with about 1-3 sentences.

A Values Statement lists your group's core principles and values. Values express the group's culture and standards, informing both group members and external stakeholders of the group's priorities and ideals. This could be a short phrase, bullet points, or a selection of words that reflect the group's values.

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[1]https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-qa/pages/mission-vision-values-statements.aspx#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20difference%20between%20a%20mission%2C%20vision%20and%20values,the%20organization%20and%20its%20culture

[2] https://www.business.com/articles/the-art-of-words-how-to-write-the-perfect-mission-statement/

For more information on Mission, Vision, and Value statements, as well as examples of each, please check out Baton Global's resource here.

Group Creation Logistics

Creating a student group involves making various decisions on how it should be structured, how it should function, and how to engage its members. While not fully comprehensive, the following section on group creation logistics is meant to provide points of reflection and consideration to guide you through the many aspects and factors involved in group creation.

Determining Scope and Status

Determining the scope of your group is an important factor when deciding how you want your group to function and for whom. This will also determine what policies you and your group may need to follow, including what requirements you need to adhere to become an official group.

However, it's also important to keep in mind that becoming an official group is optional. There are various informal groups operating within our school system that do not have to abide by certain policies and restrictions placed on official groups. Alternatively, groups may also be chapters of already existing, larger organizations, abiding by their parent organization's policies, mission, vision, and values.

Thus, you will want to decide what status your group is aiming for: official/formal, unofficial/informal, or chapter status.

The table below provides some potential advantages and challenges that may be associated with each group structure for your consideration.

Scope	Potential Advantages	Potential Challenges

	Potential Advantages	Potential Challenges
School-specific	□ May already know interested peers/classmates □ Easier to conduct outreach □ Can be focused and more relevant to members	□ Less opportunity for interprofessional/interdisciplinary engagement □ Limitation in audience/reach
University-wide	□ Increased opportunity for interprofessional/interdisciplinary engagement □ Greater audience and reach □ May provide additional funding opportunities	□ May be more difficult to conduct outreach and/or engagement □ May be more difficult coordinating campus-wide
Status	**Potential Advantages**	**Potential Challenges**
Official/formal	□ May receive greater formal support □ May have secure access to funding □ Greater visibility □ May incentivize students who wish to include participation on resumes, CVs, etc.	□ Must abide by various policies and guidelines □ May need to adhere to annual renewal requirements
Unofficial/informal	□ Greater freedom □ May promote more casual and involved engagement □ May appeal to students looking for more informal structures	□ May not receive funding □ May be more difficult to conduct outreach and/or engagement
Chapter	□ Supported by larger organization □ May have access to greater resources, especially non-university based resources □ May incentivize students who wish to include participation on resumes, CVs, etc.	□ Must abide by larger organization's policies, mission, vision, and values □ May have to pay membership fees/dues

Leadership Structure

Knowing your group's scope and structure will help you determine what your group's leadership should look like and how it should function. As mentioned above, depending on what type of status your group is aiming for, your leadership structure may need to adhere to the university's, school's, or parent organization's leadership policies (see Appendix A for more information on university versus school-specific policies).

If you're able to decide your group's leadership structure, you may want to think about the following points of consideration:

- How many people should/can be considered leaders?

- o Consider the potential group size, responsibilities/duties that need to be accomplished, and so forth.
- How will leadership be determined?
  - o Consider whether this will be via democratic vote, voluntary, appointment, and so forth.
- What roles will leadership comprise of?
  - o Consider your group's intended goals and functions and how it relates to those charged with implementing it:
    - Will you need a treasurer to manage funds?
    - Will you need a secretary to manage administrative work?
    - Will you need a social media/outreach coordinator to manage outreach and networking?
    - What other roles will leadership need to take on?
- What makes someone eligible for leadership?
  - o Consider any potential criteria and/or qualities/contributions you're looking for in your group's leadership
- What leadership structures are other similar groups utilizing?
  - o It may be helpful to look at other group leadership structures and reflect on how those structures may translate to your group.

Group Functionality

Similar to determining leadership structure, determining the specifics of your group's functionality may be dependent on university, school, or parent organization policies/guidelines. The following four (4) subsections, presented in no particular order, include aspects of group functionality that may or may not be relevant to your group; this is a non-exhaustive list, so also consider if there are any additional aspects you may want to think about.

Defining Membership

How you define membership can be instrumental in shaping who and how many members may be involved with your group. It may be helpful to keep in mind who your target audience/membership is as well as the following points of consideration:

- Who is eligible to be a member?
  - o Can staff, faculty, students from other schools, community members, etc. be considered members?
- What do potential members need to achieve to become members?
  - o Is there a sign-up process?
- What requirements do members need to fulfill to maintain membership?
  - o Are there attendance requirements? Are there membership dues?
- How many members can the group effectively manage?
  - o Consider leadership and resource capacity
- How accessible is membership?
  - o Ensure that any applicable requirements, criteria, and eligibility standards are fair, just, and accessible.
- How will members be retained and/or incentivized?

- o Consider what the group may offer its members to keep them engaged and involved, for example:
    - Networking and social connection opportunities
    - Resume/CV titles, professional development skills, etc.
    - Fulfillment of service or class requirements
    - Access to exclusive events, perks, benefits, etc.
    - Unique and engaging opportunities not offered elsewhere

Group Activities

Some groups have weekly meetings while others only focus on big annual events. It may be helpful to first define what meetings and/or events may look like to your group, then consider examples of meetings and/or events your group might like to host and how they might fit into your group's timeline. Keep in mind your leadership and membership capacity when thinking about group activities. Additional considerations are as follows:

- Frequency
    - o How often will you host meetings and/or events? Is this frequency feasible for both your leaders and your members?
- Duration
    - o How long will your meetings/events be? Is this duration feasible for both your leaders and your members?
- Timing
    - o When will you be hosting your meetings/events? Does it conflict with other calendar events? Does it work best for all involved stakeholders?
- Format/platform
    - o Will your meetings/events be in person, virtual, hybrid, or a mix? What is most accessible and preferable amongst your leaders and members? External stakeholders?
- Involvement/commitment
    - o Are there any expectations for participants? Leadership? What counts as attendance?

As you continue refining your group's activities, it is important to also keep in mind the responsibilities that may need to be addressed before and/or after a meeting or event. For instance, creating a meeting agenda every month may be more feasible than creating an agenda each week (see 'Planning Your Meetings' section for more). Ensure that the activity goals you set for your group are realistic and feasible for everyone involved.

Constitution and By-laws

A constitution is a document that states how your group will be organized. While specific content may vary, most constitutions consist of the following:

- Name of group
- Purpose and functions
- Membership (qualification, criteria, etc.)
- Policies
- Leadership structure and duties
- Decision-making procedures

By-laws state the specific rules of your group. These rules are ones not covered by the constitution and are deemed important enough to not be changed without undergoing formal decision-making procedures. Examples of rules covered by by-laws include:

- Dues, if applicable
    - How much, due date, consequences for failure of payment, etc.
- Attendance, if required
    - How often, how it will be recorded/tracked, etc.
- Elections, if applicable
    - When, how, tiebreaker procedures, etc.
- Amendment procedures
    - For constitution, by-laws, or other official documents/policies/rules

You may want to look at other groups' constitutions and by-laws for ideas and inspiration. Another helpful resource is [Youngstown State University's guide here](#).

Budget

If your group has access to funding, it's critical to create and implement a budget. To effectively do so, knowing and understanding the terms and conditions of your funding is just as important as creating the budget itself. Funding information you may want to know before creating your budget may include:

- Who is your funding source?
    - Do they have their own policies/guidelines for how the money will be used?
    - What requirements does the group need to fulfill to access funds?
- How secure is your funding source?
    - Will you have the same funding every year or will this vary?
    - What factors, actions, or otherwise would jeopardize funding?
- How much money will you actually have?
    - Do funds roll over to the next semester? Next academic year?
    - What happens when your group is over-/under-budget?

Once you have a good idea of what your funding situation is like, you can then create your group's budget. While daily, weekly, and monthly budgets exist, it may be better to focus on semester- or year(s)-long budgets depending on how your funds are distributed. Below is an example semester-long student group budget, along with examples of budget line items to incorporate.

ECO Spring Semester 2023 Budget

Spring Semester Expenses	
Total funds	$1,000
Total approx expenses	$1,000
Guest Speaker event (virtual)	
Honorarium	$50
Snacks	$25
Total	**$75**
Local Org workshop (in-person)	
Local Org Workshop fee	$100
Transportation	$20
Total	**$120**
ECO Fest (in-person)	
Food (Land of Kush catering)	$400
Drinks (water, soda)	$125
Materials (cloth & paint)	$35
Supplies (craft kits)	$100
Supplies (plant care kits)	$100
Parking permits	$45
Total	**$805**

Honorariums can only be offered to certain entities/people. See 'Policy Compliance' section for details

Off campus events may require obtaining transportation for members. Consider cost of gas, distance, number of people, etc.

Obtaining parking permits for guest speakers, partners, vendors, etc. is another great way to compensate others

Including the total amount of funds you have access to helps ensure you stay within your limits

Because this particular organization has a set workshop fee of $100, they would not qualify for an honorarium

Consider how many people are expected to attend and how much you're willing to spend per person. See 'UMB FREE' section for strategies to prevent food waste

Funding Policy Compliance

As a public state institution, the University of Maryland, including its student groups, must abide by state policies. The state policies most relevant to student groups are as follows:

- Fund usage:
    - Funds cannot be used for purchasing gifts, prizes, or rewards
    - Funds cannot be used for donations
    - Funds do not cover tips or gratuities
- Honorariums:
    - Honorariums can only be offered if the following two conditions are met:
        - The recipient is not a state or university employee
        - The recipient does not have pre-determined fee
    - Honorarium checks are mailed out approximately 6-8 weeks post-event
        - Recipients must provide their social security number to receive these checks
- Vendors:
    - Vendors must offer UMB purchases tax-exempt status

Additional funding policies and guidelines may vary based on the funding source. Below are some funding sources that your group could utilize, along with information regarding their guidelines and processes:

- [USGA (University Government Association) Funding](#)
    - UMB-based
    - Available to events/activities involving other schools on campus
- [Langenberg Legacy Fellowship Program](#)
    - UMB-based
    - Previously used by MS4SF to fund their Social and Environmental Activism Soiree (2022)

- [Student Social Venture Fund](#)
  - UMB-based
- [Veg Fund Grant](#)
  - External funder
  - For community events, special projects, and online campaigns
- [Environmental Education Grant Program – Chesapeake Bay Trust](#)
  - External funder

Student Outreach

Whether you're wanting to broaden your membership, engage with current members or leadership, or share your events, conducting student outreach will most likely be an ongoing part of your group's activities.

Outreach Timing

Given the various reasons for conducting student outreach, you may want to adapt the timing of your outreach depending on who you want to target and why. Below are examples of student outreach that student groups typically conduct along with suggested timings for each. Please keep in mind that these are suggestions only and may need to be further adapted for your purposes.

Outreach Purpose	Example Target Audience(s)	Suggested Timing
Membership recruitment	Students, especially those not yet graduating	First 1-2 months of school (i.e. fall orientation, student activity fairs, fall class visits)
Leadership recruitment	Current or prospective members	First 1-2 months of school for any open positions Mid-year till end of year for next year's leadership
Meeting promotion	Students, current/prospective members	1-3 weeks before meeting date
Event promotion	Students, current/prospective members, all UMB affiliates	3-4 weeks before event date (especially for events with longer duration, it's best to give people earlier notice with reminders)

Avenues of Outreach

There are a variety of tools, platforms, and communication methods your group can utilize to conduct outreach. Keep in mind your target audience, as well as each platform's submission guidelines and due dates. While this section only provides some examples of university-wide avenues of outreach, our Communications Guide includes more comprehensive information, including school-specific platforms.

- [Campus Life Weekly with USGA](#)
  - Published every Thursday

- [Digital displays](#)
  - Ongoing
- [The Elm](#)
  - Published every Monday
- [Office of Sustainability Newsletter](#)
  - Published monthly, last Wednesday of each month
- [UMBengaged](#)
  - Ongoing
  - Note: Francis King Carey School of Law and the School of Social Work do not participate in UMBengaged
  - For more information, please visit the [Student Event Registration and Approval Process Policy document](#)

Social Media

Social media platforms are another great way to generate greater visibility, communicate to wider audiences, and showcase your events, activities, and/or members. Commonly used social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Below are some tips and points of consideration for your group's social media account(s):

- Each social media platform draws in differing ranges of audiences, ways of engaging, and types of media utilized.
  - Consider what would be best fitting for your group, target audience, and capacity to post and maintain the account(s).
- Be sure to use your group's email, not personal or academic emails, to create group social media accounts.
  - This ensures a smoother transition year to year or whenever leadership changes and accounts are transferred.
- Keep content engaging, relevant, and consistent.
  - Tip: Canva is a great way to create promotional materials and includes pre-made layouts for Facebook posts, Instagram posts, Instagram stories, logos, brochures, and more.

Messaging Platforms

There's a wide range of messaging platforms to choose from, each with their own pros and cons. It may be most useful to ask your members which platform they prefer to utilize. Below are some common messaging platforms as examples of what your group could use:

- Microsoft Teams
- Slack
- Discord
- GroupMe
- Google Chat
- WhatsApp

Messaging platform considerations:

- What are people already using or most familiar with?

- Is the platform iOS, Android, etc. compatible?

- What will the platform be used for? Quick messages? Collaboration?

Planning Your Meetings

Meetings are the most common and familiar way for members to engage with their groups. There are various aspects to consider when planning meetings such as, but not limited to:

- Whether or not to meet
- What's most feasible regarding:
  - When to meet and how often
    - Consider how your meeting might fit into academic or course calendars, other potential conflicting events, etc.
  - Duration of meeting
    - Consider how much time is needed to cover the intended purposes of your meeting without overburdening attendees or facilitators
  - Meeting location/platform
    - Will these meetings be virtual, in-person, or hybrid? Will this stay the same throughout the year or change?

The above decisions may be completely up to you, your leadership board, and/or your group members. Regardless of who's in charge of deciding these logistical questions, it's important to consider the intended purpose of your meetings in the overarching functionality of your group. To explore these reflections further, it may be useful to (re)visit the 'Group Activities' section under 'Group Functionality.'

Creating Agendas

Creating a meeting agenda is a great way to organize your meeting and ensure you cover all that you want to cover. Depending on your school's policies, you may be required to create and submit an agenda for each meeting as well.

While there are a variety of different formats and structures for meeting agendas, effective agendas usually contain the following components:
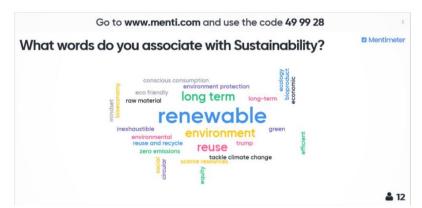
- Meeting Title, date, and time
- Approximate time breakdowns, for example:
  - 12:00 – 12:05, Introductions
  - Introductions (5 minutes)
- Agenda items
  - Informational, for example:
    - 'Upcoming event opportunity: Earth Day clean-up at Patterson Park'
  - Discussion topic, for example:
    - 'Project plan overview'
  - Action item, for example:
    - 'Next steps – stakeholder outreach'

It may be helpful to embed links into your agenda, which can then be shared and referenced amongst your members and leadership, both current and future. For more information on how to create effective agendas, check out Asana's Tips to Write an Effective Meeting Agenda.

Your First Meeting

The first meeting your group hosts is important in that it sets the foundation of your group's culture, expectations, and engagement. This is a great opportunity to learn about your group members and have your group members learn more about you/leadership and the group itself.

You may want to consider taking time to gauge your members' interests, what they expect or want out of the group, and what level of engagement would be most feasible and accessible for everyone. One way to do this is through ice breakers (see Appendix B for ice breaker ideas) and/or via interactive online engagement tools like Mentimeter.

An example of a word cloud created collaboratively on Mentimeter.

Attendees can participate by entering the Menti code via phone or laptop.

For more Mentimeter examples and ideas, please visit:
BE-Rural's Mentimeter Ideas Document.

Post-Meeting Considerations

After your meeting, and depending on your school's policies, there may be post-meeting requirements such as submitting attendance sheets and meeting agendas.

You may also want to consider following up with members, especially taking into consideration any members who weren't able to attend. This could be a follow-up email or message with the agenda, meeting materials, and/or meeting minutes attached, or delegating attending members to share meeting information with those unable to attend. Your group could even share on your social media platforms or any other more publicly facing communication methods if you'd like to keep non-members in the loop with your group's activities.

Planning Your Events

Events are a great way to broaden your group's outreach and scope, providing opportunities to engage with students outside of your group, collaborate with other groups and organizations, and/or create greater visibility for your group. When planning your events, you may want to consider the following:

- The flows of school and academic calendars
  - E.g., finals week, holiday breaks, etc.
- Any upcoming events or holidays you may want to capitalize on or integrate
  - For a list of environmentally related holidays, please see Appendix D
- Any other schools, groups, or organizations that may be great event partners or contributors

o   Also consider what events and activities these groups are hosting, whether they overlap timing-wise, and any other opportunities to collaborate

Throughout the year, you may want to first consider short-term, achievable events and activities to focus on before branching out into larger events. This is because members may feel greater immediate accomplishment and stake in your group with these short-term objectives, thereby creating more motivation to sustain engagement amongst your membership throughout the rest of the year.

For event and activity ideas, see Appendix C.

Event Goals

First, it's important to establish the event goals to identify what you'd like to accomplish through the event and how. Consider the following reflection questions to help guide you as you envision and refine your event's goals:

- What is the purpose and/or focus of this event?
- Who is your target audience?
- What do you hope your target audience will gain from this event?

Event Logistics

Once you've established the goals of your event, you can start planning out the logistics of how to carry out your proposed event. There are many aspects to consider when it comes to event planning; the checklist table below, adapted from UMBC's Eco-Ambassador program, serves as a guide to the general planning components you may want to consider but there may be additional aspects of consideration depending on your specific event.

Event Planning Checklist Item	Proposed Plan	Who will be responsible?
Where and when will your event be?		
Will this event be virtual, hybrid, or in-person?		
What type of space do you need? Will you need to reserve that space in advance?		
Will food be provided at the event? If so, what food and how much?		
What materials will you need for the event?		
What is your marketing/advertising plan?		
What is your registration/attendance plan?		

What is your documentation/evaluation plan?		
What other support might you need and who can provide it?		

Food and Beverages

Providing food and/or beverages at events, especially for longer ones, is a common way to attract and engage attendees. And, as an environmentally focused student group, providing sustainable dietary options like vegan and vegetarian foods can be a great way of introducing attendees to sustainable foods options and restaurants.

When budgeting for food and/or beverages, it can be helpful to start with an approximate total number of attendees, including any other partners, members, or volunteers who may be at the event. From there, determine how much money you're able to distribute per person for food/beverage. Knowing your approximate budget can be helpful in deciding what foods to order and how much.

Due to food safety guidelines, it's also important to keep in mind the following when ordering food:
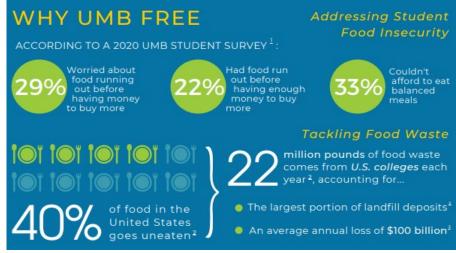
- 2- hour rule[3]:
  - All perishable foods should only be left at room temperature for 2 hours maximum
- Food source distance:
  - Prioritize restaurants, catering businesses, and other food sources that are within a 2 mile radius of your event
  - This ensures that food can arrive in a timely manner
- Traffic flows:
  - Similarly, for food deliveries, keep in mind how travel times may be impacted by traffic

For a list of sustainable restaurants within a 2-mile radius of campus, check out the Office of Sustainability's Green Eats List or the Green Eats Map.

UMB FREE
UMB FREE is a food
rescue initiative headed

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[3] https://www.fda.gov/media/84739/download

by the Office of Sustainability that aims to reduce food waste by notifying UMB FREE subscribers of any available food left over after events. Student leaders and any other students involved in organizing events with food are encouraged to partner with UMB FREE to:

WHY UMB FREE

Addressing Student Food Insecurity

ACCORDING TO A 2020 UMB STUDENT SURVEY [1]:

29% Worried about food running out before having money to buy more

22% Had food run out before having enough money to buy more

33% Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals

Tackling Food Waste

22 million pounds of food waste comes from *U.S. colleges* each year [2], accounting for...

- The largest portion of landfill deposits [1]
- An average annual loss of $100 billion [1]

40% of food in the United States goes uneaten [2]

- Learn how food waste and food insecurity impacts our campus
- Learn about different strategies to minimize food waste, including methods to proactively reduce food waste before the event occurs
- Access badges that can be used in promotional materials
- Submit Food Alerts for remaining food and beverages to minimize waste and expand food access

For more information, please check out the Program Information 1-Pager.

Minimizing Event Waste

Events can be notorious for producing a lot of waste via disposable cups, plates, documents/hand-outs, and so forth. Luckily, there are a variety of ways to minimize waste at events for both small- and large-scale functions:

Tips to Minimize Waste at Small Events	Tips to Minimize Waste at Large Events

Event Evaluation

After the event, conducting an evaluation of its successes, challenges, and opportunities to improve can be very helpful in planning future events and gauging input from your members and/or attendees.

Event evaluation can involve reflections, debriefs, or surveys with leadership, members, and/or partners/vendors.

Some helpful reflection questions, as adapted from the University of Minnesota, may include:

1. How did we meet or not meet our goals for this event?
2. What resources (e.g., human resources, financial resources, space resources) did we utilize to execute this event? In what ways was it enough? In what ways did we need more resources
3. What was the communication and promotion plan for the event? How was it successful? How can it be improved?
4. Were there any extraneous factors impacting our event's success (e.g., conflicting events, weather, changes in group membership, security and safety concerns)?

5. How was our professionalism in planning and executing the event?
6. What conflicts within the group occurred during the planning/execution of the event? How did we address group conflict as it arose?
7. In general, would we do this event again? What would we change? What would we keep the same?
8. How did this event allow us to develop critical leadership and/or professional skills?

For more information on event evaluations, including evaluation templates, please visit the University of Minnesota's [Post-Event Evaluation page](#).

Ensuring Durability

Once you've established your student group, you'll want to start shifting your focus to maintaining and sustaining your group. Disorganization, waning membership, disruptions from changing cohorts, and so forth are all potential challenges when it comes to maintaining a student group. The following sections provide a few examples of ways you can promote greater group durability and address these common challenges.

Creating and Managing Your Group's Hub

Maintaining effective organization of your group's materials such as previous meeting agendas, attendance sheets, presentations, promotional materials, and so on can be incredibly useful for current and future group leaders.

Not only would this be a great resource for ideas and templates, but having a historical record of your group can aid in tracking attendance data, challenges, successes, and other valuable group insights.

Similar to creating other accounts, it's best to use a group email versus personal emails when creating a group hub to ensure smooth hand-offs. Common hub platforms include OneDrive and Google Drive. Leadership may also want to decide whether to open the hub or parts of the hub to its members. This can be useful for members hoping to access and refer back to certain materials, presentations, and so forth.

Consider the following structure as an example of a group's hub organization:

Administrative	Listservs
	Account log-in information
	Budgets
	Policies
Meetings	Agendas
	Presentations
	Attendance sheets
Events	Agendas
	Planning materials
	Vendor/partner materials

	Event evaluations
Forms	Feedback forms
	Survey forms
	Sign-up forms
Marketing	Logos
	Promotional materials
	Outreach strategies and resources
Group Folder **(Shared with members)**	Constitution and By-laws
	Mission, vision, and value statements
	Past meeting materials/presentations
	Past meeting minutes
	Member resources

Eliciting Feedback from Members

Keeping members engaged throughout the year is a common challenge for many student groups. One effective way to address or promote engagement is by eliciting input and feedback from group members.

At the beginning of the school year (or the beginning of group formation), you may want to take the opportunity to hear what members are expecting out of the group (see 'Your First Meeting' section for more information).

At the mid-year and end-of-year mark, your group may want to elicit additional feedback from members, gauging their thoughts on how well the group has met their expectations, what other ways the group can improve, and so forth.

Eliciting feedback can be either informal (e.g., as part of open discussion in meetings) or formal (e.g., through surveys or forms). You may want to consider aspects like anonymity and accessibility when deciding how to elicit feedback. Regardless of which you choose, giving members an opportunity to speak on their experience can bolster group engagement and connection.

Leadership Succession

Given the nature of school, group leadership may change year to year as new cohorts enter and older cohorts leave. This transition can be a massive disruption if not properly prepared for so it's important to think about leadership succession well before any upcoming leadership changes. The following are some general tips when it comes to leadership succession:

- Future leadership identification can start as early as the beginning of the school year
  - Identifying any non-graduating students interested in leadership positions early on can provide greater opportunities for such students to work alongside current leadership
- By mid-year, if your current leadership doesn't yet have candidates to fill next year's positions, your group should start intentionally working to recruit student leaders

- When recruiting students, clearly communicate leadership roles, duties, and commitments
- Ensure that new leadership is properly oriented to your group's hub and has access to all necessary accounts, etc.

Appendices

A. University- and School-specific Requirements for Student Group Creation

A.1 University-wide/Interprofessional Student Groups

Groups with university-wide and/or interprofessional membership are supported and managed by the [University Student Government Association (USGA)](#) as well as the [Division of Student Affairs](#). In order to become an official USGA-recognized group, groups must complete and maintain the following [requirements:](#)

- Student-run leadership
- Membership equally open to all UMB students
- Proof of membership from at least four (4) of the seven (7) schools on campus
- Have established a truly university-wide scope as part of the group's mission

Additional information and considerations can be found on the [Starting a New Universitywide Organization page](#).

It's important to note that student groups do not necessarily have to be officially USGA-recognized to be eligible for USGA funding but do need to ensure that the funding is for university-wide events. For more information, please visit the [USGA Funding page](#).

A.2 Graduate School

Official student groups at the Graduate School are supported and managed by its [Graduate Student Association (GSA)](#). Unlike other schools at UMB, students wanting to form a new student group do not necessarily need an identified faculty advisor or defined membership. Rather, GSA can work with students to support new group formation, including identification of faculty advisor.

Thus, in order to become an official GSA-affiliated group, groups must complete and maintain the following requirements:

- Submit all proposals or ideas to GSA
- Notify GSA of leadership roles and structure
- Report all fund usage
- Include a service component to student group (typically)

A.3 Francis King Carey School of Law

Official student groups at the Francis King Carey School of Law are supported and managed by the school's [Office of Student Affairs (OSA)](#). In order to become an officially recognized group, groups must complete and maintain the following requirements:

- Obtain OSA approval before hosting a meeting or event

- Host a minimum of one to two (1-2) meetings per semester
- Have defined leadership roles
    - Note: faculty advisors are not a requirement
- Observe all school policies, including black-out periods:
    - First full week of classes in fall and spring semester
    - One (1) full week before exams start

For more information on student event planning, check out the Student Event Planning page.

A.4 School of Dentistry

Official student groups at the School of Dentistry (SOD) are supported by the school's Office of Student Affairs (OSA). In order to become an official SGA-affiliated group, groups must complete and maintain the following requirements:

- Representation at the SOD's annual Club Fair (or notifying OSA if unable to attend)
- Annual completion of Organization Information Sheet, submitted to OSA
- Mission Statement
- Elected Officers / Executive Board
- Minimum of five (5) student members
- Committed faculty advisor
    - Must be a regular full time faculty member
- Group/organization email address
    - Personal and/or school emails not accepted
- Hold at least one (1) annual board meeting
- Share any social media handles, website addresses, etc. to OSA
    - Ensure compliance with University and SOD requirements
- Completion of the Mass Email and Social Media Request Form for any advertising related to events, activities, fundraisers, and other programs
- Ensure all fundraisers follow SOD fundraising protocols
- Notify OSA of any awards or special recognition of the student group and/or individual member(s) in connection with the student group
- Provide OSA of any external affiliations

SOD student groups do *not* receive funding from OSA and must acquire money/funding via fundraising efforts and membership dues.

A.5 School of Medicine

Official student groups at the School of Medicine (SOM) are supported by its Student Council and managed by the school's Office of Student Affairs (OSA). In order to become an official OSA approved group, new groups must complete the following requirements:

- Submit a New Student Group Request form
    - Must include name of group, group's acronym, group's mission, name of proposed faculty advisor, and an upload of the New Student Group Signature Page signed by 20% of the current medical student body

- ▪ Petition signatures must be verified by the Student Council Secretary
- Final approval of new group formation from OSA and the Office of Medical Education Deans
- Remain on probation for one (1) year, following all student organization policies and procedures
- Review the How to Run a Successful Student Group presentation (link to 2022-23 version here)

Once official group status has been achieved, student groups are required to complete the following requirements to maintain official status:

- Student group leadership must add all student officers, active members, student organization events, and external affiliations to MedScope
  - o First year students may not serve in a leadership role for any student organization
  - o Leadership may not exceed more than two (2) co-presidents
- Annual submission of Faculty Advisor Agreements
- Committed Faculty Advisor identified by end of September of the current academic year
- New leadership and student officers elected and identified in the spring
  - o Group information (eg., email lists, budget information, Calendars, MedScope ownership, etc.) must be transitioned/transferred over before the end of the academic year in July
- Host at least two (2) meetings and at least one (1) fundraising activity each year

It should be noted that student groups may not schedule any group functions or activities on or before the Activities Fair date, scheduled by Student Council, typically in mid-September.

A.6 School of Nursing

Official student groups at the School of Nursing (SON) are supported by the Executive Nursing Government Board (ENGB) and managed by the school's Office of Student and Academic Services (OSAS). In order to become an official ENGB recognized group, new groups must complete the following requirements:

- Have a minimum of four (4) members
  - o Majority of members must be currently enrolled students
- Have an identified faculty/staff advisor
- Have a president and treasurer held by two (2) separate members of the organzation
- Have written criteria for different levels of membership and/or criteria for membership/participation eligibility
- Have a mission statement
- Include certain provisions in group's constitution/by-laws

For additional information, visit the Student Organization page, which provides resources on student organization policies, templates, promotion, guidelines, and so forth.

A.7 School of Pharmacy

Official student groups at the School of Pharmacy (SOP) are supported by its Student Government Association (SGA) and managed by each group's faculty advisor. In order to become an official SGA-affiliated group, groups must complete and maintain the following requirements:

- At least 5 officer positions
- At least 10-15 student members
- Submit petition to SGA for recognition
- Demonstrate certain level of events and continued membership

For more information, please refer to the SGA Constitution or reach out to one of the [SGA Officers](#).

A.8 School of Social Work

Official student groups at the School of Social Work (SSW) are supported by its [Student Government Association (SGA)](#) and managed by the school's [Office of Student Services (OSS)](#). In order to become an official SGA-affiliated student group, five (5) [requirements](#) must be completed while operating as an informal group for its initial semester:

- Mission Statement
- Constitution and by-laws
- Demonstrated student interest
    - Must have at least ten (10) SSW students in attendance at group meeting at least once per month for an entire semester
        - Attendance sheet and meeting agenda must be submitted after each qualifying meeting within 7 calendar days
- Budget for current semester
- Committed faculty advisor
    - Must identify a faculty member willing to serve in an advising role for current and subsequent years

The above materials must be sent to OSS via [Dean Henriette Taylor](#) and [Ms. Theresa Washington](#). It is recommended to reach out to both before starting any group creation process.

Once official SGA group status has been achieved, student groups are required to complete the following requirements to maintain official status:

- Have group leaders attend the student leader retreat in September
- Have at least one leader at every monthly SGA general body meeting
- Contact OOS at least 30 days in advance of any proposed group event
- Submit budget each semester by the deadlines (eg., Oct 3 for Fall 2022; Feb 6 for Spring 2023)
    - All student groups receive $1,000 per semester from OSS for meetings and events
- Submit attendance sheet and meeting agenda after each meeting/event within 7 calendar days of the meeting/event
- Order all food for meetings/events via Foodify
- Submit an End of Year Summary Report to OSS

B. Ice Breaker Ideas

B.1 In-person

Future News
(Can also be done virtually)

Have attendees work together or in groups (or breakout rooms if on Zoom) to discuss and create a news headline that they'd like to see in 5, 10, or 50 years. What would need to happen to make these headlines possible?

Never Have I Ever

Have all attendees stand up. Begin listing prompts that begin with 'Never have I ever…' For people who *have* done the prompt, they must sit down. Whoever is left still standing wins the game.

Example prompts:

- Never have I ever…lived in another country
- Never have I ever…pulled an all-nighter
- Never have I ever…gone night hiking
- Never have I ever…had ice cream for breakfast

B.2 Virtual Platforms

First Things First
(Can also be done in-person)

Show attendees a word or image on screen; attendees must write down the first thing that comes to mind. At the count of 3, everyone reveals what they wrote. Were there any similarities? Funny associations?

Green Screen Teleportation

Attendees have 2-5 minutes to 'teleport' anywhere they choose by changing their Zoom background. Invite people to explain why they chose their background.

Additional themed teleportation prompts include:

- If you could be in any fictional universe, where would it be?
- If you could go back/forward in time, what time period would you go to?
- If you could work anywhere, where would it be?

Google Image Hunt

Provide attendees a prompt then give 1-3 minutes for people to find an image related to the prompt. Attendees can then take turns screensharing their image and explaining how it relates to the prompt.

Prompt Ideas:

- Favorite or funniest meme/GIF
- Where do you go to escape (physically or mentally)?
- Favorite childhood memory
- TV/movie character you relate to the most

'This or That' Popcorn Chain
(Can also be done in-person)

Have someone start off introductions then ask a 'this or that' question, using popcorn style to choose another person in the group to answer.

That person will then choose between 'this or that,' introduce themselves, then ask a new 'this or that' question to another person and so forth.

Examples of 'this or that' questions:

- Dogs or cats
- Night owl or early bird
- Salty foods or sweet treats
- Mountains or beach

C. Event and Activity Ideas

C.1 In-person

Guided Nature Walk

Guided nature walks promote greater mindfulness and connection to nature and can be a more accessible outdoor activity compared to hiking, biking, etc. While taking your group out into more natural spaces for this event might be preferred, it's also possible to host a nature walk right on campus!

In fall 2022, SSW's ECO-Social Work in Action partnered with Nature Worx to host a guided nature walk in University Square Park right outside the SSW building. The walk included mindfulness, breathing, and light stretching exercises, as well as group and individual reflection points.

Regenerative Self-Care

Self-care is a critical component to student, professional, and personal well-being. Practice regenerative self-care by using DIY methods and sustainable ingredients that promote wellness for both you and the planet. This activity can take place virtually or in-person.

There are many different recipes and ideas online for sustainable DIY self-care recipes, instructions, and advice. Below are just a few of these to serve as examples:

- Avocado & honey face mask
- Deep sleep pillow spray
- Cookie dough sugar body scrub
- Muscle relief bath bomb

Considerations to make when hosting a DIY regenerative self-care event:

- How will ingredients/supplies be sourced?
  - If using group and/or external funding:
    - Do you have enough money in your budget to afford all necessary ingredients/supplies?
    - Who will be in charge of purchasing, picking up, and/or transporting ingredients/supplies?
    - If it's a virtual event, how will supplies/ingredients be distributed?
  - If asking members to each bring their own and/or volunteer to bring certain ingredients/supplies:
    - How accessible and/or expensive are the supplies/ingredients?

- How can you ensure that members know how much to bring and what will you do if sufficient supplies are not met?
- How many ingredients/supplies will you need?
  - Consider asking members to RSVP or utilize some other method to approximate a headcount for the event
  - Consider using ingredients/supplies that can be reused, repurposed, or redistributed if there are leftovers
  - Consider additional supplies that may be beneficial for members to have:
    - Examples include: towels, soap and water, reusable/eco-friendly containers to transport or store self-care products
- What kind of space will you need and for how long?
  - Consider how long it may take to make your self-care product
  - If you will be using self-care products together, consider which environment may be most comfortable for members to do this
    - For example, if applying face masks together, consider whether members need access to a sink, towels, etc.
- Can the product be stored and for how long, or does it need to be used immediately?
  - Certain DIY products, especially those using fresh ingredients, need to be used immediately and/or stored properly. Consider the feasibility of using the product together versus allowing members to bring and use at home

Tabling Event
A tabling event is a great way to engage other students, create greater group visibility, and/or generate momentum for a particular cause.

Some student groups table in their respective school buildings while others may table in more broadly used spaces like the SMC Center. Regardless of where and when you choose to table, ensure that you follow proper tabling procedures, including notifying any appropriate people or parties in advance.

If you are handing out any food items during your tabling event, please be sure to follow appropriate food safety guidelines (see 'UMB FREE' section for more information) as well as any allergy policies that may be in place (e.g., peanut free zone).

For more tips and ideas, check out these [10 Tips for Super Smart Tabling.](#)

Tree Planting
Joining a tree planting event, partnering with a local organization, or organizing your own tree planting event are all great ways to involve your group in tree planting.

Please ensure that your group follows proper siting and planting protocols and prioritizes the planting of native tree species. Below are some resources your group may find helpful as you plan your tree planting event:

- [Tree Planting Guidance via UMD Extension](#)
  - A comprehensive guide on how to plant trees or shrubs
- [Maryland Recommended Tree List](#)

- o Lists native trees and their corresponding information such as tree height, preferred conditions, etc.
- **Free trees via TreeBaltimore**
  - o TreeBaltimore provides free trees every fall and spring season. They also host tree planting events and provide a variety of other tree planting resources.
- **Tree Equity Score**
  - o An interactive map and resource for exploring tree inequities in Baltimore and elsewhere.

Urban Farm Group Volunteering

Baltimore has numerous urban farms, many of which are maintained by local organizations that rely on volunteer support. Organizing a group volunteering event is not only a great way to support these organizations, but to also provide the opportunity for members to engage in more on-the-ground work. Additionally, the event may provide an opportunity for members to learn from and network with an organization's members and/or other community partners.

Urban farm volunteers may be involved in farmwork, planting, garden maintenance, harvesting, and so forth. Be mindful of seasonality when planning an urban farm volunteering event as work duties often shift by seasons.

Please check out our Environmental Organizations List, which includes urban farming organizations within the greater Baltimore area.

C.2 Virtual Platforms

Eco-Trivia
(Can also be done in-person)

There are many different ways to play trivia, Jeopardy, or any similar style game with environmentally-related questions. Luckily, there are also many different resources online with question examples, game templates, and customizable platforms.

You may want to consider whether people will compete as individuals, pairs, teams, etc., as well as any potential prizes or incentives to offer.

Panel Event
(Can also be done in-person)

Panel events typically involve 3-4 speakers, ideally each with a different perspective or expertise to contribute. Keep in mind the logistics necessary to coordinate amongst so many parties as well as whether you're able and willing to offer honorariums for each speaker.

It's important to also consider the speaking time for each person. Panel events can frequently run over time if not properly planned or moderated, especially since each speaker must share their time with others. You may want to share questions with speakers ahead of the event date as well as how much speaking time they're given for each question. Ensure that you allot enough time so that each speaker feels able to properly convey their thoughts while leaving room for audience questions at the end.

D. Environmental Calendar Days

Each year, there are various days, weeks, and months dedicated to amplifying environmental actions and issues. Being aware of these various dates may help to plan or organize around certain actions or issues. Below is a list of notable dates, though not complete; be sure to double check dates for your particular calendar year as some may vary annually.

January	5	National Bird Day

February	First week	National Green Week
	Third Sunday	World Whale Day
	2	World Wetlands Day

March	Second Friday	Solar Appreciation Day
	3	World Wildlife Day
	15	World Consumer Rights Day
	18	Global Recycling Day
	20	World Rewilding Day
	21	World Wood Day; International Day of Forests; World Planting Day
	22	World Water Day
	25	Earth Hour

April	3	World Aquatic Animal Day
	10	Arbor Day
	22	Earth Day

May	Month long	National Bike Month
	Third Friday	Endangered Species Day; Bike-to-Work Day
	20	World Bee Day
	22	International Day for Biological Diversity

June	1	World Reef Day
	2	World Peatlands Day
	3	National Trails Day
	5	World Environment Day
	8	World Oceans Day
	15	Global Wind Day
	17	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
	22	World Rainforest Day

July	Month long	Plastic Free July
	26	International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystems
	28	World Nature Conservation Day

August	15	National Honeybee Day

September	First week	Zero Waste Week
	Third Saturday	National Cleanup Day
	7	International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies
	16	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
	21	Zero Emissions Day; International Day of Peace
	22	Car Free Day
	24	World Rivers Day
	26	World Environmental Health Day
	29	International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste

October	2	World Farm Animals Day
	3	World Habitat Day
	4	World Animal Day
	5	Energy Efficiency Day
	8	World Migratory Bird Day
	13	International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
	14	International E-Waste Day
	16	World Food Day
	24	International Day of Climate Action
	26	Sustainability Day

November	1	World Vegan Day
	15	America Recycles Day
	17	World Fisheries Day
	21	National Hiking Day

December	4	Wildlife Conservation Day
	5	World Soil Day
	11	International Mountain Day