

# **Chapter Officer Survival Guide 2008-2009**

An Introduction to the  
Life-Altering Excitement  
of AMSA Leadership



**AMERICAN MEDICAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Or, "What was I thinking when I took this job?"

Congratulations! Welcome to the AMSA leadership family. Being a chapter officer is one of the hardest jobs in AMSA, but it is also one of the most rewarding and most FUN! As a chapter officer, you are put in an amazing position to influence people at your school and in your community. Hopefully you recognize the tremendous potential that lies in you. Right now you might be asking yourself, how am I going to juggle this and my school? What do I do first? How do I get started? How do I work with National AMSA? Where is National AMSA? Catecholamines are released. Your forehead beads with sweat. WHAT DO I DO?! You Take it to the Next Level!

We realize that the job of a Chapter Officer (CO) can initially be a daunting one, but there are plenty of people to help you along the way. This *Survival Guide* is intended to aid you in your new job by giving you contact numbers and a variety of information that will make your job a lot easier. With a little help from this Guide and some hard work on your part, your chapter will have a fun and successful year. Please do not hesitate to contact your trustees, committees or national leaders to ask questions, brainstorm and be guided in finding AMSA resources. Inside this Guide are many helpful hints organized to correspond to your academic year. The sections are as follows:

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*Hint #1: This guide is also located on our Web site at [http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/co\\_survival.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/co_survival.pdf).*

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAPTER OFFICER

Each chapter has its own style and will delegate their responsibilities in a different manner. Large chapters may have many projects going at once. In this situation, it's often your responsibility to see that the projects run smoothly and to work with the project coordinators. The president of a small chapter may direct more time towards developing new projects and recruitment.

The Chapter Officer's Handbook can be downloaded from the AMSA website at

[www.amsa.org/coc/](http://www.amsa.org/coc/)

There are some responsibilities common to all chapter officers. These include organizing your chapter, recruiting new members and fundraising. Building solid relationships with students, faculty, administration, departmental offices, the community, other chapters and leaders is extremely important and can certainly help contribute to the success of your chapter. A chapter officer must serve as a resource for information from National AMSA and provide leadership opportunities to chapter members. You will receive an even larger, more comprehensive *Chapter Officer's Handbook* at the Chapter Officer's Conference (COC) in July, which can be downloaded from our Web site at [www.amsa.org/coc](http://www.amsa.org/coc). But first, a brief timeline/checklist to help you plan your year:

### TIMELINE

#### Spring/Transitioning into the Job

To reach Membership Services, the Board of Trustees (BOT), Regional Directors or any staff member at the National Office, call

**1-800-767-2266**

AMSA's Membership Department will send information about the **AMSA/ BAC Promotion to U.S. medical chapters**. You will receive more info on this at the COC.

Make sure your mailing address is up-to-date!

Review the Chapter Officer Resources section of the AMSA website. It has a lot of useful information and resources.

[www.amsa.org/chapoff/](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/)

A smooth transition from the outgoing officers to their successors is the key to a successful year. The best time to transition is soon after elections, while the old officers are ready to pass on their wisdom and you are excited about getting started. Timing is crucial, especially if you or your predecessor is taking Step 1 in June. Write down all of the questions you have about running a chapter and set up a time to meet with the outgoing officers. Have your old and new chapter officers meet with your Dean providing a document detailing accomplishments and future events of your local chapter and National AMSA. Getting all of your questions answered in one meeting will help you to avoid a lot of redundancy and headaches later. There are five areas to concentrate on:

#### 1. Identify new chapter officers to Membership Services and your Regional Director.

You are a major link in the information chain for your chapter. Call Membership Services ASAP and give them three pieces of information: a good *mailing address*, *phone number* and *e-mail address*, especially if you are moving over the summer. Your new Chapter President is responsible for filling out the New Chapter Officers Form. This form can be found at [www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm).

Your Chapter President should then fill out a recruitment form online [www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm) or mail in the copy you receive in your new officer packet. It's imperative you submit your form ASAP to receive your recruitment materials in time for your school's orientation. If your U.S. medical chapter is interested in participating in the AMSA/Bank of America (BAC) promotion, contact membership and convention services at 1-800-767-2266 or email [members@amsa.org](mailto:members@amsa.org).

If you are the new Chapter President, contact your Regional Director, Premedical Trustee, Premedical Regional Director, International Trustee or International Programming Coordinator, and let him/her know you are the incoming president. Membership Services can provide the contact information or you can visit [www.amsa.org/about/bot.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/bot.cfm). Trustees communicate with Chapter Presidents every month. If you need their help and you haven't heard from them, *call them*. Leadership has a budget for long distance calls, so don't hesitate to ask them to call you back. We can't stress enough the importance of getting accustomed to staying in touch with your respective leadership member. You are more than welcome to call/email other leaders as well, but the Directors will be your primary contact and the ones you will get to know well.

**2. Hold your first meeting with your fellow chapter officers.**

When you return to school in the fall, orientation and recruitment are going to come fast, so the earlier you get organized the better. At this meeting you should discuss what the strengths and weaknesses were of last year's recruitment. How can you make this year better? Assign tasks for recruitment week. See the recruitment section in this guide or go to [www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf).

You should then define your goals and expectations for the upcoming year. Record the: *who's, what's, when's, where's, why's* and *how's* of all of last year's projects. Ask whether or not the projects are worth continuing and if anyone has any ideas for new or improved projects. Identify possible coordinators to continue your projects and allow them to transition with outgoing coordinators. Let them know that you are a resource for help as well. Contact AMSA's committees for ideas and help—for more information, check out the website at [www.amsa.org/about/ac.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/ac.cfm).

Last, but not least, choose one officer\* to attend the **Chapter Officer's Conference** (preferably, the president). Your chapter pays travel and registration fees, but many chapters receive support from their school. Again, a reason to meet with your Dean before summer break. AMSA routinely sends a letter to your dean encouraging them to sponsor one officer to attend, and can have a national officer call if you would like. National AMSA pays for hotel and provides most meals at the conference. The atmosphere at the COC is one of total enthusiasm and fun, and it is slated by many to be the best time you'll have at an AMSA event. The national leadership will offer advice on nearly every topic involved in running a chapter. Sending someone to COC is the single most important step you can take towards ensuring success for your chapter.

**For more information:** [www.amsa.org/coc/](http://www.amsa.org/coc/).

\* To attend the COC—*Medical* chapters may select one chapter officer, while *premedical* and *international* chapter officers must first obtain approval from their respective premedical or international trustees to attend.

**3. Contact your Dean's office.**

Make an appointment with the Dean or other customary person to introduce your officers and outline your goals. Ask your Dean how he/she envisions AMSA's role at your school. How does that perception differ from your own? Ask last year's officers about the level of support the Dean's office had provided to AMSA in the past so that you will have reasonable expectations. While some Deans provide thousands of dollars for conferences, others provide minimal support. It's rare to find a Dean who is not supportive of student organizations in some way. Discuss details: copying, phone costs, mailing, supplies and funding. The Dean's office is useful and can save your chapter time and money.

**4. Explore your fundraising options.**

Develop a budget with each project or event and its associated costs. This budget will guide your fundraising efforts. Ask last year's officers which fundraisers were most successful and which were labor intensive. With the outgoing officers, create/obtain a database of potential contributors, including the Dean's office, clinical departments, medical supply or textbook companies, local doctors and local merchants. Record the outcomes of your interactions with each contributor, noting particular times of year when funds become available, guidelines for giving and reasons for giving or not giving. Your budget should be used to demonstrate to contributors what your chapter does with its money. If you organize a residency fair each year, picking a date early will allow you to send invitations out early. Fundraising will be covered at the COC, and you can refer to [www.amsa.org/coc/fundraising.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/fundraising.pdf).

**5. Finally, develop a chapter timeline with local, regional and national meetings and events.**

This timeline should be a collaboration between the incoming and the outgoing officers. A schedule of the major happenings in your chapter's year coordinated with the big National AMSA events is always a useful tool. A sample timeline is available in the COC handbook, which can be found on our Web site.

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AMSA has several Committees that can assist you with chapter projects:

- Community and Environmental Health
  - Culture of Medicine
  - Gender and Sexuality
  - Global Health
  - Race, Ethnicity and Culture in Health
  - Student Life
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Have questions? Contact Membership Services. If they can't help, they will put you in contact with someone who can.

**1-800-767-2266**  
[members@amsa.org](mailto:members@amsa.org)

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**Summer / COC:  
Fun in the Summertime**

**AMSA Glossary:**

**BOT**—President; Vice President for Membership; Vice President for Finances; Vice President for Internal Affairs; Vice President for Programming; Secretary; Alumni & Resident Trustee; International Trustee, Premedical Trustee; AMSA members who are elected to supervise all national aspects of AMSA.

**Chapter Officers Conference (COC)**

The COC is the annual training conference where AMSA prepares its chapter officers for a successful year. For three days, you'll absorb useful information on topics such as fundraising, project planning and implementation, and national AMSA resources. You'll meet AMSA's staff, the Board of Trustees (**BOT**) and most importantly, you'll get to know your regional/premedical/international trustees/directors and your fellow chapter officers. For more information: [www.amsa.org/coc](http://www.amsa.org/coc).

**First Year Orientation Planning**

The rest of the summer is a mere prologue to your school's orientation. If you are not involved directly in your school's orientation, **get involved**. Offer your chapter's full support in orientation planning to the Dean—they will at least let you pitch in and at most put AMSA's name on it. Be sure to schedule late summer and early fall meetings with your fellow chapter officers so you're not caught unprepared for your recruitment activities during school orientation. Be sure to plan recruitment as a year-long event. Every event, conference or meeting is an opportunity to recruit new members. Recruitment can be very overwhelming and you can never start preparing early enough. Before you go back to class you should start to get your recruitment materials together and be sure that all of the chapter officers know what their responsibilities are for recruitment. You can have a conversation with your Dean about including AMSA recruitment materials in your school's mailings and possibly enrolling the incoming class as members by connecting the activities fee billed to students and AMSA dues.

**Fall & Winter / School year:  
Workin' for a Livin'**

The school year is the longest chunk of the AMSA timeline ([www.amsa.org/chapoff/timeline.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/timeline.cfm)), and is filled with many events. These are constant tasks, emphasized sometimes, present always. The year provides a variety of different events, however, and they deserve monthly notice.

**July, August and September are for ORIENTATION**

Consult the recruitment section of this guide for plenty of ideas and follow your successful orientation with an organizational meeting to start involving new members. Next, start a simple project that a few new members can work on. Whether it is a voter registration project or a blood drive, a simple project will make them feel involved and might help you identify some really interested members early on. Make sure your committee liaisons get in touch with the National Chair of their committee and enter all events into the Local Project Database at [www.amsa.org/resource/projects/projectdirectory.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/resource/projects/projectdirectory.cfm). This will serve as a resource so your chapter will have an archive of projects done.

**October and November are for REGIONAL CONFERENCES and PROGRAMMING**

Regional conferences ([www.amsa.org/region/regconf.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/region/regconf.cfm)) are the high point of Fall and you should budget accordingly so you can take some AMSA folks. The superb speakers and workshop programs are great ways to introduce first year students to regional and national AMSA. The people they meet at these conferences will be an inspiration to them and the relationships they build a lifelong connection.

Check AMSA's website for the second local project grant deadline. Want to start a Hepatitis Vaccine Awareness program for veterans or a health promotion activity? Apply! It's easy to fill out the local project grant application. And, to receive a grant is a nice reward for your chapter. Writing a grant is also a great skill to have. For more information: [www.amsa.org/member/lpg\\_med.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/lpg_med.cfm).

Engage new members and work on planning for your fall/winter projects. Introduce the topics in health care and medical education to your classmates, engage your administration and reach out to other student organizations at your school.

Check out recruitment information on the AMSA website!  
[www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf)  
Find your region and check out which schools will be attending regional conferences with you by surfing around [www.amsa.org](http://www.amsa.org).

**AMSA Glossary:**

**HOD**—AMSA’s official policy-making body. Delegates vote on AMSA’s policies and elect new national officers.

**Fundraisers—**

Instrument sales  
Residency fairs  
Exam packet sales  
School funds  
Local project grants  
Directory funds

**Money info—**

[www.amsa.org](http://www.amsa.org)

COC Handbook

Regional Directors,  
Premedical Trustee,  
Premedical Regional  
Directors, International  
Trustee, International  
Programming  
Coordinator—just  
contact them:

[www.amsa.org/about/  
bot.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/bot.cfm)

**November’s a good time for COMMUNICATION**

Have you spoken to your regional/premedical/international trustee since your Regional Conference? Communication during the late fall/winter months can bog down under exams, but this is a good time to make sure all of your projects are running smoothly and to troubleshoot problems. It’s also a great time to start thinking about running for a regional or national leadership position. Get a hold of current officers to find out more about positional responsibilities. If you have a new project idea for the spring, now is a great time to flesh it out and apply for the next deadline ([www.amsa.org/member/lpg\\_med.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/lpg_med.cfm)). It’s never too late! And as always—fundraise, fundraise, fundraise!

**December is for RECRUITMENT GOALS**

Now is the time to start planning your winter recruitment drive. A winter recruitment PowerPoint presentation is available to you at [www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruitment.ppt](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruitment.ppt). This is also the time to revisit your timeline ([www.amsa.org/chapoff/timeline.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/timeline.cfm)) to see if you’ve achieved your goals for the fall season. And, be aware . . . the big one is coming! The **national convention** is in March and deadlines for committees, submission of resolutions to the House of Delegates (HOD) and early registration are rapidly approaching. If you wait until after the holidays, it may be too late to organize these efforts. You should’ve received the *Official Call* in the mail in November (it has all of the details), and you can refer to [www.amsa.org/conv](http://www.amsa.org/conv). We cannot stress enough how important it is to do whatever you can to get the most students to convention. It is an amazing experience, an inspiration and a ton of FUN! This will also be a great opportunity to recruit members.

**January is time to get things organized for NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Hold a member informational meeting to discuss plans for the rest of the year and run your winter recruitment drive. Returning students may have more funds for the membership fee than at the beginning of the year, they may be more willing to participate in extra-curricular activities after the initial fear of exams is gone, and they’ll be excited about attending convention.

You should be formulating plans for the upcoming National Convention. If you have a small chapter, think about getting a few first-year students psyched to go—it’s a great motivator for future leaders. If you have a large chapter and plan to send lots of folks, appoint one reliable student to organize advertising, fundraising, travel and logistics for the event. Also, beat the last Local Project Grant deadline ([www.amsa.org/member/lpg\\_med.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/lpg_med.cfm)).

**February is for ANTICIPATION**

Your chapter’s collective engine begins to rev for the National Convention. Select people to be delegates (medical and international chapters) and get together and review the HOD resolutions: your chapter has a responsibility to have a position on them. These resolutions represent AMSA’s internal policy and our principles ([www.amsa.org/about/ppp](http://www.amsa.org/about/ppp)). Often, they shape the issues on which we will lobby Congress in the upcoming year. You should also make a schedule for who is going to be voting/debating in the HOD. Everyone should take a turn representing your chapter in the HOD. This is a great time for your members to learn about how AMSA works and those that have participated in the HOD in the past have really enjoyed the experience.

If individuals in your chapter are seeking a leadership position, let your chapter know. Medical members—run for a Board of Trustees or Regional Director position. Premedical members—run for Premedical Trustee or Premedical Regional Director. And, international members—run for International Trustee or International Programming Coordinator. If you’re a more issue-oriented person, get involved in AMSA’s Committees or Interest Groups. For information about each position, visit our website at [www.amsa.org/conv/opportunities.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/conv/opportunities.cfm).

It is especially important to identify the future leaders of your chapter. If you have a member who has worked hard all year and has that AMSA spirit, take a special interest in getting them to convention.

## Spring / Convention: Where's the Party?

Make sure to attend AMSA's 59<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Washington, D.C.

March 11-15, 2009

For more information:  
[www.amsa.org/conv](http://www.amsa.org/conv)

There is *nothing* quite like AMSA's National Convention. The programming represents everything new and progressive about medicine and infuses enthusiasm and fun into more than a thousand diehard AMSA members every year, making it the largest annual gathering of medical students nationwide. Getting your chapter members there is one of the most important parts of your job. As March rolls around, you should have a solid idea of the number of attendees from your chapter, the number of delegates (medical and international chapters, but premedical members can still attend and engage in the debates) and your travel plans.

- **Fundraising** is always key, since convention is costly. Set a budget, then talk to your dean, fundraise or have chapter members serve on convention committees. Members who serve on committees receive registration fee waivers, which can save your chapter money. Consult the COC handbook fundraising tab ([www.amsa.org/coc/fundraising.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/fundraising.pdf)) for ideas and prepare early. The convention holds a Medical School Fair for premedical students. Ask your dean to support your medical chapter (medical/international chapters) at the Medical School Fair so you can plug your school—and get some travel support, too. For more information: [www.amsa.org/conv/medfair](http://www.amsa.org/conv/medfair).
- **Travel and Lodging** should be handled by one coordinator. Find someone who likes to plan early, check Internet airfares and negotiate group sales with airline representatives. This person can also use [www.farecast.com](http://www.farecast.com) as a resource to see if fares are predicted to increase/decrease within 90 days of travel. If you're within driving distance of the convention, consider carpooling or renting a van. Take a list of attendees and some official notes regarding your reservation to the hotel. Make sure everyone who is going knows arrival and departure times.
- **Information** about the convention site and program can help generate interest before the convention. It's a nice touch to post the tentative program of keynote speakers and convention programming for your members ([www.amsa.org/conv/program.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/conv/program.cfm)).
- **Leadership Development** is a key part of the National Convention. Encourage members to attend the organizational meetings of the Committees and Interest Groups, or to run for a director/trustee position. Also, encourage members to think about a chapter officer position.
- **Enjoyment** is central to the convention experience. Each night there are planned social events, mixers and club events. This is the last big event of the year, so have a great time.

## Finale: Pat Yourself on the Back for a Job Well Done!

Help develop new AMSA leaders—encourage promising first-years to run for chapter office. Many National Officers were motivated by the gentle advice / shove of a past leader.

Remember which chapter members showed real initiative or leadership during the year. By now, you should have some idea about who would make a good chapter leader. If you do, tell them you think so. You've worked with the chapter all year, so use your experience to encourage new leaders. Within two to three weeks of convention, capitalize on everyone's enthusiasm and hold elections. Make sure to inform AMSA's Membership Services about your new officers ([www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm)).

In your final days of office, give your chapter a report on the past year and synopsis of your projects. Follow up with project heads, treasurers and deans and close out your term with a view of what you did. What worked and what didn't? Think about the pitfalls of your year, and let the new officers know what they were. And, as a final favor, introduce them around to the folks you have trusted.

Are these requirements? Roughly, yes. These are our expectations of you as a chapter officer during the year. Do you have to accomplish them all by yourself? Perish the thought! There is a dedicated team of people at the national level who exist to help you accomplish your goals. As a chapter officer, you should *demand* help from the national office and the board of trustees and directors.

## RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

### Or, Membership, membership, membership!

There are two ways you can reach AMSA's Membership Services Dept.:

1-800-767-2266  
[members@amsa.org](mailto:members@amsa.org)

AMSA currently represents more than 67,000 physicians-in-training. Recruitment is our most important goal each year. Without our membership, we lose our ability to be a voice for students, our ability to find and fund good projects and our ability to discover what students really want.

You and membership recruitment chairs should use this guide as a thorough overview of the recruitment process and as a toolbox of ideas for local activities related to welcoming and orienting students. Before getting to the nuts and bolts, we want to emphasize the importance of successful recruitment drives for your chapter, the national association and your new members.

## WHY RECRUITMENT IS CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS AS AN ORGANIZATION ...

1. **AMSA's motto: It takes more than medical school to make a physician.** Medical education ignores many important topics in health care and AMSA provides students with the opportunity to learn about issues they might otherwise never hear of through *The New Physician*, conferences and local activities.
2. **The size of our membership determines the size of our voice in representing medical students.** In 1995, AMSA lobbied the National Residency Match Program to change its algorithm to favor the ranking choices of students instead of hospital residency programs. In situations in which AMSA challenges the status quo in medical education, our voice is more reputable when we can say that we represent more than 67,000 physicians-in-training.
3. **The size of your membership increases the programming at your school.** High recruitment will increase the support of your school administration (financially as well as logistically) and will make your efforts more productive throughout the year. Plus, your AMSA chapter can begin to develop a reputation for enthusiasm, activity and involvement even before new students arrive at school.
4. **More members lead to better benefits.** Increased membership numbers allow us to negotiate better deals, like our AMSA/WorldPoints® Platinum Plus® credit card; auto and homeowners insurance; discounts on hotel, car rentals, books; and more! For more information: [www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm).
5. **Membership dues help us help you.** Membership dues are one of the sources of income that allow the national organization to provide additional membership benefits and training—like the Chapter Officers Conference (COC), committee activities and support for local projects. In addition, AMSA offers a chapter recruitment rebate on an annual basis (Jan. 1-Dec. 31), to arrive in early 2009.
  - **For medical chapters**—your local chapter will receive a \$2 rebate for each new member recruited. If your chapter recruits more than 50% of its incoming class, you'll receive a \$5 rebate per member, and if your chapter recruits more than 70%, you'll receive a \$6 rebate per member.
  - **For chartered premedical chapters**—receive \$2 for each new member recruited after you recruit 10 members.
  - **For chartered international chapters**—receive \$1 for each new member recruited.
6. **Charging nominal local dues empowers your chapter.** Many chapters charge nominal local dues of \$5-10 per member, excluding the initial membership fee. A small fee provides an excellent discretionary source of income and does not deter students from joining. Instead, the prospect of additional money motivates many chapter officers to work harder at recruiting members. The income from local dues gives your chapter more flexibility in organizing programs and reduces your dependence on vanishing outside sources of income.

Perhaps the best reason for to join AMSA is simply the opportunity to interact with so many diverse students from across the country and internationally. So get excited, get organized and have fun with it!

## Planning Membership Recruitment

### 10 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

#### STEP 1: CHAPTER OFFICERS CONFERENCE

Sending one officer to COC is the single most important thing you can do for your recruitment effort. There are opportunities to learn about AMSA, but also to learn from other chapters how they plan and organize recruitment. Materials and project ideas are available at [www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf).

#### STEP 2: SUMMER WELCOME LETTER—MEDICAL CHAPTERS ONLY

During the summer, the Chapter President should write a concise welcome letter to the incoming class. This letter should include information on your plans for orientation week, local activities and projects. It should let incoming students know they can join AMSA online at [www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join) or in person during orientation week (anyone participating in the U.S. AMSA/BAC medical promotion should **NOT** join online, but in person during orientation week), and should mention a few member benefits. Before you write the letter, ask yourself why you joined AMSA and how you could have been convinced to join earlier. Include the contact information of the recruitment chair/chapter officer. A letter from the national president describing the reasons for joining AMSA is available to all chapters through Membership Services; this letter is designed to accompany your letter. There are two ways to distribute both letters.

Find a sample recruitment letter in the COC Handbook:

[www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/recruitment.pdf)

If your medical school is willing to give you the names and addresses of all incoming students, then you need only send those addresses, in the form of labels, with one copy of your local letter to Membership Services. Our national staff will print and mail a copy to each incoming student.

If your school does not release addresses, then request that both the local and national recruitment letters be included in a summer mailing from the Admissions or Dean's office. You can obtain as many copies of the national letter as you need from Membership Services ([www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm)).

#### STEP 3: SELECT AN ENERGETIC MEMBER TO COORDINATE RECRUITMENT

Find an extrovert—someone who revels in the spotlight but can also pitch in to get the job done. Select your recruitment coordinator in March and relay their name to your regional/premedical/international director/trustee and Membership Services ([www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm)). We will contact him/her regarding strategies and needed supplies or assistance. The coordinator may organize a barbecue/picnic, organize a big sibling/little sibling activity or plan a survival seminar

The magic phone number & e-mail address are ...

1-800-767-2266  
members@amsa.org

#### STEP 4: GET AMSA RECRUITMENT MATERIALS—ALL CHAPTERS

Call Membership Services for a form or fill one out online at [www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm).

#### STEP 5: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ORIENTATION WEEK/FIRST MEETING

Meet with your fellow officers to develop an agenda for orientation and beyond. Brainstorming sessions often bring a lot of good ideas that can be refined through further discussion. Use the attached *Planning Guide* to make a “to do” list and divide up duties.

#### STEP 6: FALL WELCOME LETTER

Have a letter ready for distribution on the first day of orientation either during an activity fair or in student mailboxes. Distribute with an AMSA membership application. Communicate AMSA's mission, purpose, goals and benefits.

#### STEP 7: PRESENT AMSA DURING ORIENTATION

Remember the information overload you experienced during orientation? Be sure to make your pitch brief and to the point. Try and have other AMSA members with you to make your group as diverse and interesting as possible. At Temple University, 43 people were on stage doing an AMSA cheer. Say little, but make an impression. Read the *Activities* section for more details.

**STEP 8: FIRST MEETING**

An outgoing officer should have the AMSA recruitment video. If no one has it, call...

Schedule this meeting during the first few weeks of classes. This is your opportunity to express yourself about what being a part of national AMSA means to you. Show the AMSA recruitment video and let it lead you into a discussion about AMSA’s many benefits. Emphasize the benefits of being a part of the largest independent student-run medical organization—our alumni network, leadership opportunities, paid fellowships, international health electives, national conferences, opportunities to learn about the changing health care environment and medical education. Check out the Chapter Management tab of the COC Handbook for more information on your first meeting ([www.amsa.org/coc/management.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/coc/management.pdf)).

1-800-767-2266

**STEP 9: SEND COMPLETED MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE**

It is very important that you return your members’ applications to the national office promptly. A delay means new members won’t receive their welcome packets with ID cards or *The New Physician*.

**STEP 10: RECRUITMENT IS A YEARLONG PROCESS**

Carry membership applications with you wherever you go. Run a winter recruitment drive mid-year with another letter and membership application in everyone’s mailbox.

Obtain a list of all of your chapter’s members at [www.amsa.org/chapoff/officerlogin.cfx?tool=roster](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/officerlogin.cfx?tool=roster), or as always, you can call or e-mail Membership Services. Use this list to guide your winter recruitment efforts and to encourage new members to be active. Your regional/premedical/international trustee/director can help you plan more recruitment efforts and arrange a visit from a national officer.

**ORIENTATION AND RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES**  
**Or, more ideas than anyone could possibly use!**

Download the AMSA online PowerPoint presentation located at:  
[www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruitment.ppt](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruitment.ppt)  
 or use your chapter’s recruitment video.

The following activities have proven successful at many schools and might work at yours, as well. Each school is different, so your choice of recruitment activities should depend on factors like:

- Orientation schedule
- Available facilities
- Enthusiasm of your officers
- The attitude of your administration

Once you select appropriate activities, speak with your Dean about listing AMSA events in their official calendar, or allowing AMSA to participate in the official orientation activities. For more details, visit the Chapter Officer Resources area of the AMSA website to read about these ideas ([www.amsa.org/chapoff](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff)).

**Presentation:** Nearly every school includes time during orientation for student organizations to address the incoming class. This may be your only chance to speak to the entire class. The AMSA recruitment video is perfect for such situations, especially if you follow it with a brief summary of local chapter activities. Another resource is the PowerPoint presentation: [www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruitment.ppt](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruitment.ppt). Emphasize that AMSA is a community and a family to help you get through medical school. Membership is also a financially attractive and worthwhile investment and mention leadership opportunities for first year students. Most importantly, be enthusiastic. There will be plenty of time for consciousness-raising and education during AMSA meetings. Most students love free food. Provide lunch during orientation week and you’ll have a captive audience eager to learn about AMSA.

**Recruitment Booths:** After your presentation, have a recruitment booth set up in a convenient location. Keep it open during lunchtime or class breaks for several weeks. Display AMSA publications—*The New Physician*, AMSA timeline, pamphlets on Action Committees ([www.amsa.org/about/ac.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/ac.cfm)) and Interest Groups ([www.amsa.org/about/ig.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/ig.cfm)), or fact sheets on our health policy fellowships/study tours.

Don't "hard sell" by passing out pamphlets to people who aren't interested. Instead, concentrate on the people who are asking questions or looking at the literature. Distribute both paper and online applications ([www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join)), but try to collect paper forms and checks on the spot, if possible. Communicate information about your first meeting and returning completed forms.

**MEDICAL**  
 Additional medical chapter information can be found on the AMSA website at:  
[www.amsa.org/member/listmed.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/listmed.cfm)

**PREMEDS**

Additional premedical chapter information can be found on the AMSA website at:

[www.amsa.org/premed](http://www.amsa.org/premed)

**INTERNATIONAL**

Additional international chapter information can be found on the AMSA Web site at:

[www.amsa.org/intl](http://www.amsa.org/intl)

**Most importantly, don't close your booth after just a couple of days.** Many students are too rushed or preoccupied to think about joining organizations as soon as they arrive. After a couple of weeks, they will be a bit more relaxed and willing to talk to you about AMSA. In this way, you can also keep reminding forgetful people to bring in their checks and applications. Have a raffle or immediate incentive, such as lab coats or dissecting kits. Provide food. Just a jar of candy can give someone an excuse to come to your table. Remember, if students feel that the benefits of membership start immediately, they are more likely to join.

**Picnics and Parties:** New medical students often feel isolated and out-of-place. An informal social gathering like a picnic, softball game or bar night<sup>1</sup> is a great way to facilitate social interaction in the class while promoting AMSA. If it is convenient, well advertised and fun, nearly all first-years will attend. Have applications and other recruitment materials available and talk openly about AMSA without trying to "hard sell" them. Good advance publicity is, of course, essential to the success of any party or meeting.

**Survival Seminar:** New students rarely know what to expect in the first year. In a "survival seminar," a panel of diverse upper-class students can share experiences and advice to new students. (Note: this is a great way to get second-years reinvigorated about AMSA.) Is it possible for a married student to get through school? Why do students sometimes fail courses? What's the best way to study? Which books are worth buying? What problems can minority students expect? You can provide a real service to incoming students while providing testimony that students can be involved in AMSA and still succeed in school.

**Weekend Retreat:** The Medical College of Pennsylvania traditionally sponsors a weekend retreat for incoming first-years at a rural summer camp. Although the main purpose of the retreat was to stimulate social interaction, AMSA officers included a session on "activism in medicine." What better opportunity to describe AMSA's philosophy and programs, while demonstrating our concern for humanistic values in medical education? Your dean or student association might be willing to cosponsor such a retreat.

**Education:** Don't forget that our most important function is to raise medical students' awareness and involve them in their communities. If people view AMSA as an organization that simply perpetuates itself by recruiting new members, it's time to change your approach.

**Lecture/seminar series:** Think about sign language, medical Spanish, physical exam techniques, careers in medicine and other topics that would interest students.

**ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Or, How to Distinguish AMSA From Other Student Groups**

Learn to KNOW and LOVE this sound bite! It really helps!

**What is AMSA?** The American Medical Student Association is the largest, independent medical student organization in the country. Currently, AMSA is focusing our energy on a few key areas: Quality, Affordable Health Care for All; Global Health Equity; Enriching Medicine through Diversity; and Professional Integrity, Development and Student Well-Being.

**What Does AMSA Do?** AMSA leads initiatives both locally and nationally in medical education, public health, student and patient advocacy, health policy and global health. We have a long history of political activism in Washington as well as at the local level. Here at our chapter, we have projects ranging from *talk about your favorite projects here*.

**Why Should I Join AMSA?** We provide a community of support for the challenges faced during medical school. By joining, you can access AMSA's great member benefits and discounts. It's a great opportunity to network with other students and expand your knowledge past medical school lectures and basic science. AMSA provides unparalleled leadership opportunities locally and nationally; and so much more!

<sup>1</sup>Note that AMSA, under its policy on alcohol, cannot provide alcoholic beverages for its members because of liability issues. However, you may be able to arrange a deal with a local bar, whereby AMSA members or medical students in general get in free or get discounts on drinks. Make sure that the bar's liability insurance will cover any potential problems.

**What Do I Get if I Join?** Lots of benefits! We have a credit card that requires no annual fee, a great magazine titled *The New Physician*, insurance programs, a discount with Barnes and Noble.com and lots more, visit [www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm) for a complete listing.

**Why Should I Be a National Member if I Can Just Participate Locally?** Your national dues support AMSA and many of our national and local initiatives. Your dues support an organization that represents the voice of medical students to groups like the NRMP (the Match), the NBME (the boards), the AAMC and more. Your dues go toward providing amazing leadership opportunities, more than any other medical student organization. And as a national member, you can attend our National Convention in Washington, DC, March 11-15, 2009. Past speakers have included several Surgeon Generals, Marion Wright Edelman and Patch Adams.

**What is the Difference Between the AMA and AMSA?** AMSA began as the student branch of the AMA in 1950 but split off in the late 1960's when the AMA opposed the creation of Medicare and failed to provide support to the civil rights movement and the community health movement. Because no parent organization dictates our priorities and policies, students have a much stronger voice in AMSA. We are the largest, completely student-led, medical student organization in the country.

For more information on AMSA's position on Residency Work Hours, visit:

[www.amsa.org/rwh](http://www.amsa.org/rwh)

**What is AMSA's Policy on Residency Work Hours?** AMSA supports the reduction in hours as long as patient care is not compromised. In fact, the ACGME's new rules on residency work hours were a direct result of AMSA's activism on this issue in the last few years. We have other very exciting policies regarding issues, such as: physician-assisted suicide; sexuality; complementary and alternative medicine; and reproductive rights. If you want to change or add a policy, you can write a resolution to be voted upon at the national convention in the House of Delegates.

**How Can I Join AMSA?** There are several ways to join. If your school is participating in the AMSA/BAC promotion (*U.S. medical schools only*), you will want to have your new members complete a paper application at your recruitment orientation. If not, the easiest way is for you to go online at [www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join) and submit a completely secure membership application. Be sure to tell your member to print out the AMSA confirmation page, as you will not be able to tell if they joined online if they do not provide this page to you when they come back to redeem their AMSA/BAC promotional gift.

## WHY SHOULD I JOIN AMSA?

### Responses To Common Excuses...

As you introduce new students to AMSA, you may find that they hold various preconceived or erroneous perceptions. This section provides you with sample responses to these misconceptions. If someone decides not to join AMSA despite full knowledge of our organization, there is little you can do. If their reluctance is based on inadequate information, they may be more interested after learning what AMSA is really about.

**"But I'm a Medical Student—I Don't Have Time to Join Organizations!"** Being an AMSA member doesn't need to take a lot of time. You can take advantage of AMSA's membership benefits and read our publications without ever going to a meeting, much less working on projects. In fact, many students and physicians join advocacy organizations like AMSA so their interests can be represented without their actually having to spend time to lobby themselves. Not every member has the time or inclination to be active so we neither request nor expect universal involvement. But, medical school should not and cannot occupy 100% of your time. Personal happiness and growth depend upon how you balance academics with outside activities. Extracurricular activities are essential for well-rounded professional development.

**"But I've Heard That AMSA is a Radical Organization."** With more than 67,000 members, AMSA is made up of a diverse cross-section of the medical student population. AMSA's policies are established by its House of Delegates, which is comprised of representatives from every medical school in the country. Any member can introduce a resolution; speak in support of, or against a resolution. When resolutions pass, they become a part of AMSA's official policy, and are included in AMSA's *Preamble, Purpose and Principles (PPP)*. If prospective members are concerned about AMSA's political leanings, invite them to review and discuss the *PPP*. Not every member will agree with all of AMSA's principles, but *every* member does have the right to submit and defend resolutions to the *PPP*.

AMSA's *PPP* can be found on our website at:

[www.amsa.org/about/ppp](http://www.amsa.org/about/ppp)

**"Do I Really Have Anything to Gain by Joining AMSA?"** This is the type of question you should be ready to jump on! In addition to its numerous benefits, AMSA offers travel opportunities, the Annual Convention, internship opportunities, local project grants, national leadership positions and the ability to network and work with medical students from across the country. Members have the opportunity to participate in numerous AMSA summer programs and AMSA provides a mechanism to members to get involved in the education of their peers and the health of their community. The academic world recognizes and acknowledges the leadership, personal and professional development provided by AMSA when these skills are presented on CVs.

**"I Joined AMSA During the Summer but I Haven't Received Anything."** Since the mailing lists for each issue of *The New Physician* must be prepared several weeks in advance, a new member will not receive his/her first issue immediately. You should keep this student's complaint in mind while collecting checks for paper applications—DO NOT SIT ON CHECKS!

**"A Second-year Told Me That AMSA Does Nothing But Recruit New Members Each Year."** This statement is easy to refute. Describe AMSA's national programs and emphasize that activity at your chapter level varies depending on the enthusiasm and effort of its leaders and members. Tell them to join AMSA and get involved!

### TOP 10 REASONS TO JOIN AMSA:

1. Become part of the *largest, independent* organization of 67,000+ physicians-in-training, advocating for patients, students and healthcare reform!
2. AMSA is committed to inclusiveness, valuing diversity, transforming healthcare and true patient advocacy.
3. AMSA empowers students through student well-being, professional development, cutting-edge information, internships and year-long fellowships, and international health opportunities and global health resources.
4. Strengthen your leadership skills and become one of our over 100+ national leaders or hundreds of regional and local leaders.
5. Meet and work with national leaders and students from around the country in policy and public health.
6. Become active in changing medical education and healthcare on a national level.
7. Participate in a variety of leadership institutes and retreats.
8. Attend AMSA's amazing regional conferences and national convention in Washington DC, March 11-15, 2009.
9. Receive a FREE monthly subscription to AMSA's award-winning magazine, *The New Physician*.
10. Member discounts on hotels and car rentals... and insurance, instruments, books and many more!

**A TON OF FUN, INSPIRATION and LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS**

## PROGRAMMING:

### What is it that we do again? The Heart and Soul of AMSA

Local activities are the heart and soul of AMSA. Consider surveying your class to find out which activities or curricula they think are missing. Do you need new ideas? There are many resources at your disposal:

**ACTION THROUGH OUR COMMITTEES:** These committees are open to all members: Community and Environmental Health; Culture of Medicine; Gender and Sexuality; Global Health; Race, Ethnicity and Culture in Health; and Student Life; as well as the following teams, Education; Grassroots Leadership; Humanism in Medicine; and Policy. ([www.amsa.org/about/ac.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/ac.cfm)).

**AMSA RESOURCES:** projects-in-a-box and how-to manuals are on the AMSA website ([www.amsa.org/resource](http://www.amsa.org/resource)).

**INTEREST GROUPS & SPECIALTY FORUMS:** groups of students interesting in developing activities around areas such as Business in Medicine, Child and Adolescent Health, Geriatrics, Surgery and more ([www.amsa.org/about/ig.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/about/ig.cfm)).

**AMSA's BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND REGIONAL DIRECTORS, AND CHAPTER OFFICERS:** each region fosters communication between its chapter officers through listserves, newsletters or retreats. Learn from other chapters ([www.amsa.org/region](http://www.amsa.org/region))!

**YOUR STUDENT BODY:** the best ideas come from within the student body. Consider doing surveys or brainstorming about possible ideas during your first meeting.

## WORDS TO LIVE BY: SUMMING UP SURVIVING AS AN OFFICER

### or, "Finally, the Moral of the Story..."

Being a leader is fun and survivable, even without this *Guide*. A few final hints:

**Transitioning and planning** are key. They set the tone for the year and provide a solid foundation that will weather almost any problem. Without this foundation, little problems can snowball into massive ones. They lend invaluable perspective and can save enormous amounts of time.

**COC and Orientation** are close together, so use your COC energy to light a fire under your orientation work. If you can't make it to COC, *find someone who can*. This event is too valuable to miss.

Remember, throughout the year there are two rather indefinable characteristics that will help you build your chapter, **motivation and leadership development**. Motivation is infectious and you must lead by example. AMSA is a group that is easy to be fervent about. And, while you motivate, watch closely for the people who respond best and light up themselves. Effective leaders for the future can turn your successful year into a string of them.

**Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy.** There are few experiences as satisfying as this one in AMSA. Use the chance to learn about yourself, be inspired, meet new people, Take Medicine to the Next Level and have fun. You'll never regret it!

## **AMSA Membership Services and Benefits** **2008-2009**

AMSA offers a variety of membership services and benefits. While medical student members receive all of these benefits, eligibility varies for premedical, resident/alumni and international members. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of these programs, please contact:

Membership Services  
American Medical Student Association  
1902 Association Dr., Reston, VA 20191  
1-800-767-2266 / [members@amsa.org](mailto:members@amsa.org)

### **PROGRAMS AND THEIR PARTNERS**

#### **Insurance Programs**

Student health and accident insurance	UnitedHealthcare
Automobile insurance	GEICO
Homeowner's/tenant's insurance	GEICOAffiliate

#### **Financial Services**

WorldPoints®/Platinum Plus®/Gold MasterCard® and Visa	Bank of America
American Express Rewards	Bank of America
AMSA GoldOption® line of credit	Bank of America
Practice Solutions (for physicians opening own business)	Bank of America

#### **Travel**

Discount hotels	Choice Hotels
Rental car discounts	Alamo and National Car Rental
AMSA's online travel center	ATC
AMSA student housing directory	AMSA

#### **Other**

Online bookstore	Barnes & Nobles.com (via AMSA website)
Online instruments	The Medical Store (via AMSA website)
<i>The Medical Letter</i> discount	The Medical Letter (via AMSA website)
USMLERx discounts	Via AMSA website
VisualDx student medicine	Via AMSA website
Contact lens discounts	VisionDirect.com (via AMSA website)

### **OTHER BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

- Discounted registration for national conventions
  - *The New Physician* magazine
- AMSA's Catalog and Resource Center publications
- Leadership opportunities on local, regional and national levels
  - Advocacy on local, regional and national levels
- Networking opportunities with students and physicians from across the country
  - Electives in health policy, international health, etc.
  - And, much, much more!

*Benefits, services, programs and promotions are subject to change without notice. Call AMSA's Membership Services at 1-800-767-2266 or check out [www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm) for the most current information.*

## AMSA Chapter Recruitment Worksheet

Chapter name: \_\_\_\_\_  Medical Chapter  Premed/International

We are a:  Strong  Stable  Struggling  Dead Chapter

My school is:  Conservative  Bleeding liberal      We are a:  Small  Large School

Date 1<sup>st</sup> years start: \_\_\_\_\_ Orientation Week: \_\_\_\_\_

We have access to the mailing addresses of incoming students through our Dean:  Yes  No

We have/will send out a welcome letter:  Yes  No      My Dean supports AMSA:  Yes  No

When will new students first hear about AMSA? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is running Recruitment (president, recruitment chair, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

The following people will be helping: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Recruitment Goal: \_\_\_\_\_. Last year was:  Successful  Mediocre  Painful

Check all which apply:  There is a house to hold a BBQ  There is a bar/club everyone can get to

Our School organizes a social mixer  Downtown/Campus is cool enough to hold a scavenger hunt

My Dean/Administration will speak at a recruitment event

There is interest around an Issue Based Workshop for *new members*

What *social* event can you plan for the new students? \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment is normally:  All at once (Activities fair, etc..)  ~1 Week  > 1 week

Our first recruitment event will be a: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of first general meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ How will new members be engaged? \_\_\_\_\_

3 Challenges to Recruitment	3 Proposed Solutions

**Year-long recruitment:** When planning your upcoming year's programming, list a few of the events you know you will hold and how a component of recruitment can be included:

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

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Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment component: \_\_\_\_\_

What else will you plan at your chapter to welcome and include new students and how can AMSA help you facilitate this (please share with your regional director)?

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## Membership Recruitment Planning Guide

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Done by</b>	<b>Delegated to</b>
Choose new membership coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• send name to regional director and Membership Services at (800) 767-2266 or at <a href="http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm">www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm</a></li> </ul>	March 30	_____
Assemble membership committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brainstorm for activities</li> </ul>	April 15	_____
Reserve time for orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact admissions, student affairs</li> </ul>	May 1	_____
Prepare your local recruitment letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write letter</li> <li>• Determine method of distribution</li> </ul>	May 1	_____ _____
Mail recruitment letter	June 1	_____
Order membership supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See attached form or fill out the online form at <a href="http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm">www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm</a></li> </ul>	June 3	_____
Finalize orientation activities. Activity #1: _____ Activity #2: _____ Activity #3: _____	June 15	_____ _____ _____
Implement summer activities, i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up contact from letters</li> <li>• Other: _____</li> </ul>	June-Aug.	_____ _____
Orientation week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMSA presentation/slide show</li> <li>• Recruitment booth</li> <li>• Distribute recruitment materials</li> <li>• Other activities (as above)</li> </ul>		_____ _____ _____
Follow-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-evaluate recruitment</li> <li>• General meeting</li> <li>• Elect/appoint first year officers</li> <li>• Local projects/activities</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> </ul>	Sept. 15 Sept. 15 Sept. 15	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____