

Tips and Talking Points to Assist AMSA Chapter Officers – Medical Chapters

We asked our chapter officers what their greatest challenges are with membership recruitment. Here's what they said:

CHALLENGE: AMSA's dues for Medical Members is free. How do I get people to sign up and what information do they have to supply?

RESPONSE: New AMSA medical members can go online at www.amsa.org/welcomemeds and click 'join now.' Feel free to send that url out to your medical school friends or post on your Facebook page. If you are hosting a chapter event or if there is a gathering at your school, be sure to bring a signup sheet for membership. One is included in your recruitment kit as well as on the AMSA website. In order to become a member, students need to supply their name, email, mailing address, school and graduation year.

Challenge: Many students at my school have joined, or are planning to join the AMA. Why AMSA?

Response: It's true you could join the AMA; they do have a student division. But if you don't join AMSA, you'll be missing out. The AMA is a huge organization that focuses on practicing physicians -NOT- future physicians. AMSA is intentionally different. At AMSA, medical and premedical students are the focus. You come first. You govern, you create programming, and you lead. Unlike the AMA, at AMSA you don't have to wait for your medical degree and pay your "so called" dues to be heard. Your voice matters now.

Challenge: Not very many people on my campus are aware of AMSA - my chapter is new, small or hasn't been that active. How can I change that?

Response: It really doesn't take much to invigorate a chapter. Try hosting a couple of fun events with your current members and invite your friends and classmates who haven't yet joined AMSA. Keep in mind that the events you hold should be based on the character of your own unique school (and ideally on facets that may otherwise be lacking.) Here are a few event ideas:

- **Community service:** Look for local opportunities - some hospitals have a community outreach person that will know what is available in your community. Have your current members bring their non-member friends to the event, post a message on your class message boards, websites, student paper, etc. This is a great way to give back to your community, and build relationships between members and future members.
- **Social events:** Any "themed hang out" is a great way to bring people together. Try a Midnight Breakfast Study Break or a 1st Year Medical School Survival Pizza Party. Be sure you to post that the social gathering is an AMSA Chapter Hosted event and invite as many non-member friends as you can.
- **Educational Event:** Would students at your chapter enjoy a debate about health care reform? A panel on student debt? A lecture on PharmFree or patient safety? AMSA provides lots of chapter resources including "Projects in a box" that are ideal for lunchtime talks. For a list, visit www.amsa.org/AMSA/Homepage/TakeAction/Projects.aspx.

Challenge: People are opting to join my chapter locally—they just don't want to make the commitment to joining nationally.

Response: It is important that we let all potential members know that in order to truly be members of AMSA, **they must join AMSA National**. There is no option for "local only" membership. This is important for a number of reasons. First, in order for students to take

advantage of any of the AMSA benefits, they must be national members. Sometimes students will not realize that they only joined at the local level, and will be confused when they try to take advantage of a member benefit only to discover they are not really members at all. Second, students will often list their affiliation with AMSA on their resumes when they are applying for medical school or residency programs or jobs. The AMSA National office receives calls from residency program admissions representatives who are following-up or “fact checking” an applicant’s resume. Unfortunately, if the applicant listed AMSA membership on their resume, but did not join nationally we will have no record of them. AMSA National will then have no choice but to tell the admissions representative that the records do not show membership. This makes the applicant look like they were being dishonest, when in many cases the applicant had actually only joined on the local level.

To make sure we are providing every member in good standing with the benefits, interested students must first join AMSA National, followed by local membership. Chapter Officers have a responsibility to ensure this happens.

Students should visit www.amsa.org to join online.

If you need any assistance or further advice about how you can effectively market you chapter or a chapter event, please call AMSA’s membership hotline toll-free at: (800) 767-2266 or email Noreen Rich, AMSA’s Director of Membership at nrich@amsa.org.