

10 Tips for Increasing Your Student Membership

The key to building a successful Student Chapter program begins with a strong foundation. Without this foundation, too much energy is spent starting over every year and developing momentum to carry the Student Chapter throughout the year. It is equally important to get a strong message out to the prospective student members about the benefits of joining A&WMA. Once the students become A&WMA members, then the next step is to transition them into the Young Professional membership.

Foundation

- **Faculty/Student Chapter Advisor** – The key element of a successful Student Chapter is a strong faculty advisor who is recognized, supported and involved in the local Chapter/Section. The faculty advisor can effectively get the word out to the students in their colleges and encourage participation. An alternative to a faculty advisor is having a member who is willing to identify and work with targeted faculty members with the goal of developing a faculty member into leading the A&WMA student chapter in the future.
- **Freshmen to Senior/Graduate Students** – A Student Chapter with a good mix of students joining and leading the chapter prevents the gap that often occurs as students graduate and the academic year ends. With underclass student involvement, the chapter can consider building on past years' accomplishments and develop a strong leadership.
- **Joint Meetings with other Clubs or Associations** – Often the motivated students are already involved in clubs or other professional associations that have similar or complementary missions to A&WMA. By partnering with these other organizations, student membership can be increased and broadened without diluting the importance of A&WMA student membership. Partnering can include joint meetings which allow the students to participate in both organizations without having to attend a separate meeting.
- **Broaden Involvement** –By getting the student leadership to participate in the local Chapter/Section Board meeting, they can see a bigger vision of A&WMA in action to take back to the Student Chapter. Also board members should volunteer to go to the Student Chapter meetings to meet the students. When the local Young Professionals reach out to the student membership and involve them in their activities, the students gain insight into the next step in their careers. To encourage students to attend these and any other local meetings, the Chapter/Section can offer to waive the costs for students and faculty advisors.

Benefits

- **Networking** – Of course the number one benefit that sells A&WMA membership is meeting the professionals who can help the students get a job. This is a very important and tangible benefit that can be realized by attending Student Chapter activities and taking advantage of the local activities. On an international level, A&WMA had Environmental Career Webinars scheduled for Fall 2011 and Spring 2012. This content can also be presented at the Student Chapter meetings.

- **Mentoring** - By providing a local mentor to interested students, the membership can reach out to demonstrate the value of A&WMA membership in providing a variety of services to meet their individual needs including career advice and job opportunities.
- **Scholarships and Student Awards** – Opportunities exist for scholarships and awards for the student membership on local and international levels. Also, the students may participate at the ACE by presenting poster papers or competing in the EnviroChallenge. The local Chapter/ Section can provide financial assistance to enable students to attend the ACE and compete on the international level. These scholarships and awards are excellent resume builders.
- **Service Projects** – An important component of student chapter membership is participation in service projects which allow them to interact with the community and other A&WMA members. These projects can vary widely from teacher training to beach sweeps.
- **Technical Information** – Students can avail themselves of all of the technical information afforded by membership which include EM magazine, the Journal and A&WMA Library. Many local Chapters/Sections host webinars or annual technical meetings packed with the most current and important environmental issues. Always make sure to include the student membership when planning these events.
- **Free Pizza** – Last but certainly not least, never forget the power of pizza. Students enjoy just getting together for a purely social gathering where they can have fun and build relationships with their peers.