



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION of
GRADUATE
STUDENTS

Advice for new division student leaders

Collected by former division students reps in 2012

Take the temperature

Try and identify where your division in terms of student development and activity.

Learn from people who were in your position previously; get info from the past rep on what to expect.

Spend time picking the brain of the student leader before you; he or she will have insight as to the dynamics of the group and what has or has not worked in the past.

Talk with past presidents/chairs in order to better understand your position.

Fear not

Ask more questions – don't wait for someone to tell you.

Don't be afraid to reach out and get involved.

Be proactive in seeking out new leadership opportunities. Don't hesitate to apply for opportunities if you think you may be eligible.

Don't be afraid to speak up!

Connect

Reach out to other division leaders and leaders within your own division

Use the DSRN listserv and read the emails!

Try to network with other student - don't go it alone!

Regular communication with your fellow division student council members is key.

Foster inter-division collaboration and promote awareness about how the different areas of psychology can both provide insight to and learn from others.

Continually introduce yourself to others, and ask questions about how other divisions are recruiting students and advancing their field. Stay in touch with other student representatives because opportunities for collaboration are always there.

Find out who is on the Board of your division; begin networking with higher-ups in your division and with other student division members.

Ask for help

Find an ally before your first Executive Committee meeting.

Ask for help from those that are happy to be of support

Ensure that you have excellent mentorship.

Be open to learning and discussions from other division leaders. Many other divisions have done great work already, learn from them.

Do not wait for your division to contact you when you assume your APAGS student rep duties.

Do your job

Be motivated. You are your division's student leader because you want to be. Use your motivation to inspire others and get others as interested as you are in the field.

Gather a team of leaders that have the time and dedication to communicate the vision and direction of your activities.

Plan ahead for conference and convention events – months in advance

Personalize communication (in any way you can) to your student members. Make them feel connected and show you care about their individual development.

Develop strong communication networks with division leaders, such as those who sit on council, so that things will move quickly when an issue comes up that needs immediate attention, such as a vote on Council. Tell the division leaders of your intention to be in close contact at critical times and that they should feel free to be candid if they don't agree with what APAGS is trying to do. Division council reps, in my experience, tend to agree wholeheartedly with APAGS goals, but allowing division leaders the room to disagree is a nice way to ease any tension in the executive committee.

It is important to establish a line of communication with the division executive committee early on.

Talk to your student members and ask them what they want/ need and work toward providing it.

Take baby steps. Being a DSR is an additional honor on top of your own research, work, responsibilities and life. Making progress on developing student support within your division is best done with appreciation for taking BIG tasks and creating smaller, well-defined, time sensitive/possible tasks.