

## Planning a Retreat

### Why have a retreat?

- To provide informational workshops for members
- To motivate members for the year or semester
- To set goals
- To build an effective team
- To evaluate the progress of long-term goals and objectives
- To introduce and orient new members
- To resolve group conflicts
- To have fun!

### When should an organization have a retreat?

Retreats can be useful anytime! Here are some ideas:

- At the beginning of the year or semester (form a team, train new members)
- Before an important program (set goals, evaluate progress)
- After an important program (celebrate and assess)
- In the middle of the semester or year (re-focus and motivate)
- Before officer transition (share pertinent information)

### Who can help plan or facilitate a retreat?

- Any Student Activities staff member
- Professional consultants
- Experienced members
- Your advisor
- Student leaders from other organizations

### Where can you have a retreat?

On-campus:

- Neuhoﬀ Catholic Center (Contact Cindy Dixon: [cdixon@smu.edu](mailto:cdixon@smu.edu), 214-987-0044)
- Hughes-Trigg Student Center
- Dedman Center

Off-campus

- There are a variety of lodges/camps/retreat centers in the area: Google “Dallas retreat location” for many ideas!
- Reserve a local park
- Utilize the meeting space/clubhouse at a member’s apartment building
- Remember to register your travel on Orgs@SMU!

### Retreat Planning Guidelines

- First, set some goals. Common goals for a retreat are:
  - Gathering new ideas for programs or activities
  - Planning a specific program
  - Solving problems
  - Teambuilding
  - Learning more about the organization or leadership development
- Know your budget. Expenses may include:
  - Retreat site fees
  - Transportation (Students’ Association vans)
  - Travel insurance
  - Materials (copies, AV equipment, etc.)
  - Meals
  - Fee for professional facilitator or consultant

- C. Make an agenda.
  - a. Remember that participants will need a bit of free time
  - b. Determine who will present which sessions
  - c. Don't try to cover too much material. Prioritize!
  - d. Vary the presentation method to keep it interesting
  - e. Make sure you have enough material to fill the time, but don't worry if you have to make last-minute changes to the schedule
  - f. Stay focused on your retreat goals
- D. Plan your meals.
  - a. Does the retreat site offer meals?
  - b. Is there a kitchen? Is cooking an option?
  - c. Can members provide a meal for themselves?
- E. Develop a post-retreat evaluation. Ask for feedback on:
  - a. The location, agenda, and facilitators
  - b. Evaluate your budget. Were there unexpected costs?
  - c. Make a report with the pertinent info for next year's retreat planner