

# Empowerment – How to Pass the Baton

Your greatest legacy as a student leader may be most defined by how you prepare those who will be continuing your leadership efforts long after you are gone. And, the first step in “passing the baton” is through empowerment!

## The “How To’s” of Empowering Up and Coming Leaders

- **Keep your eyes and ears open**—be on the lookout for individuals who are consistently coming to meetings, programs, offering feedback and ideas, and displaying genuine interest in the work your group is doing for campus.
- **Start small**—don’t ask a new volunteer or member to plan an entire event. Ask her what she might be interested in working on, and give her a meaningful chunk to be responsible for. As time goes on you can offer larger tasks for her to manage.
- **Be a coach**—if you really want to empower future leaders, coach and mentor them along the way. Not only help them accomplish the goal at hand, but assist them in becoming strong, confident leaders by coaching through the dips and dives of leadership.

### Encouraging Emerging Leaders

Providing emerging leaders the opportunity to spread their wings and explore their talents is very empowering. And you can help them do that by:

- asking a student to work with you on planning a program—and really letting him do good work instead of just “grunt” work
- encouraging other students to take initiative, whether it’s starting up a sustainability effort among group members, planning an event or doing an icebreaker at the next group meeting
- offering genuine feedback when a student gets involved—go beyond saying just “thank you” to let her know *why* you are saying thanks



...how you have felt empowered by others in the past. What helped you gain more confidence and competence?

- **Let go**—as a student leader you have probably had many rewarding opportunities, had access to privileged information, and earned the trust and respect of many on campus. It is now time to share some of that with the next pool of student leaders. This can be hard, because it means you may have to step to the side for someone else to be recognized and rewarded, but just remember that someone did it for you too!

## Empowering Through Involvement

Help fellow group members take ownership and feel empowered by considering a few different ways that you can enhance their involvement:

- **Share Information.** Providing accessibility to information, decision-making and problem-solving empowers people to see AND get involved in the big picture.
- **Ask for Opinions.** This is a good way to hear from those passive participators. See what insights they may have gleaned from their observations.
- **Look Beyond the Obvious.** The enthusiastic “sure-I’ll-help-you!” students are easy to spot – and easy to love. Yet, if you look beyond these obvious helpers, you’ll also find a wealth of talent.
- **Welcome Change.** If someone identifies a challenge, invite him to create the change that will resolve the problem. An environment that invites and celebrates change is empowering.