

Making the Most of the Second Year

Often referred to as the “sophomore slump”, the second year of college can feel a little less exciting than when you first arrived on campus. However, involvement and leadership can be the cure-all to what otherwise might be just another year of college. You know the ropes now, so what better time to really explore, question, and try new things?

Peel back the layers of your first year of involvement and dig deeper. Take the first steps in setting the stage for a successful second year of campus involvement by:

- **Visiting the Career Services Office**—By meeting with a career services advisor you can get a jump start on your professional preparations rather than waiting until your senior year. Getting a head start will help you avoid the scurry and worry of senior year, plus you’ll be in a better position to explore quality internship and job possibilities.
- **Tracking Your Leadership Experiences**—Keeping track of the details related to your leadership experiences can be tough and overwhelming. Continually write down the types of programs and projects with which you’ve been involved. Take the time now to save time later!
- **Assessing Your Current Involvement**—Are there any activities you’ve “tried on” in the past year that don’t really seem to fit? If so, be honest and extract yourself in an ethical way by giving notice, rather than just avoiding meetings or responsibilities.



...that flexibility is key when it comes to leadership! For instance, just because you once believed something, it doesn’t mean that you have to stick by that belief forever. We are flexible, ever-changing creatures! So, when new information comes your way, incorporate it into your belief system.

The Name Game

As you grow as a leader, you will meet more and more people AND need to remember more and more names. Here are a few memory tricks:

- **Unique Features.** Focus on something interesting about the person, from hair color to a wacky interest they may have.
- **Repetition.** During your first meeting, repeat the person’s name out loud (“It’s really nice to meet you, Steph!”). Also, say the name to yourself several times during that first encounter.
- **Mnemonic.** Try turning the person’s name into a mental image of an object. For instance, Steph sounds like “step” so this will remind you of her from now on.
- **Associate.** While repeating the name, try to associate the mnemonic with the person. Steph sounds like “step” so imagine her running up the stairs.
- **Double Take.** At the end of your initial encounter, repeat the person’s name (“See you later, Steph!”).
- **Write it Down.** And if your memory needs a nudge, write it down!

- **Asking Big Questions**—You have so many opportunities to learn more about different backgrounds, interests, and cultures through getting involved. Jump into something new!
- **Giving Back**—If you haven’t already, this is a great time to consider how you can incorporate service into your involvement life. How are you giving back to the college and community? Volunteer on campus or off – either way you will reap excellent leadership experience from serving others.