

The background image shows a group of people sitting around a table in a meeting or study environment. A prominent green banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the main title and subtitle. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows.

4.0 Creating Teams

Recruiting & Goal Setting

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4.1 Strategic Thinking for Recruiting

Whether you are starting out from scratch or looking to expand, this chapter can help you recruit, retain, and work with new members. First you are going to need to recruit some members. We got tips for that. But keeping members interested and engaged is tricky, so we will discuss leadership strategies for retaining members. Finally, once you got a group of ESW members you need to kick off your team with a good goal-setting session, which we will help you plan.



Almost every chapter wishes they had more members. A larger membership base means you can support more projects, build a stronger and more diverse community, and educate more people. Many chapters struggle with recruitment, and for good reasons – it's difficult. This section explores how you can begin strategizing to recruit new students.

What does the freshman in the intro class have in common with the fifth-year senior knee-deep in senior design? Both have a great potential for joining your ESW chapter, but reaching out to them likely requires two radically different approaches. A senior brings

more advanced engineering knowledge to the team, but may lack the time commitment. Freshman are usually seeking a community and are more than ready to get involved, but may lack the experience to lead projects.

It can be difficult, especially for smaller chapters, to attract and accommodate every student's interests and schedules. Therefore, you should think critically about who you want to target as members of ESW. Here are some guiding questions:

Do you want to focus solely on engineering majors, or reach out to other STEM majors and/or

students outside of the sciences? Smaller schools in particular may want to expand their targeting pool. Even at large schools where engineering majors alone can provide a strong community, reaching further afield can bring in new skills and perspectives.

Are there opportunities for freshmen and sophomores who may have not had much engineering coursework? This could take the form of entry level board positions, working on a budget for a project, or doing educational outreach. Many projects, with the right leadership, can also provide small tasks as a way of getting new team members involved and interested in the topic.

Are there opportunities for people with low time commitments? If your only project time occurs during three hour design sprints, you may be restricting people who want to join ESW but are too busy to dedicate so much time. It is good practice to have a range of meetings and project intensities including social events, lectures, and even projects that simply require less time. A good strategy that chapters of any size

can use is to host engineering workshops – an event to learn a skill or do a small project. Recruitment can often become a circular argument: you need more members, more members ensures projects get done, projects will entice students to join. If you are starting off with a small membership base you can get stuck in this rut. This section will discuss advertising strategies you can on campus to recruit members.

Use email list-servs. This is your bread and butter of recruitment. At the beginning of the year it is appropriate to send out emails to the entire engineering department or to green/sustainability oriented list-servs. Advertise beginning of the year interest meetings, large events, and project opportunities through these general lists. It is not advised that you use these lists constantly; however, they are a great starting point for new chapters. Once you have a basic and established member base, save announcements to these lists for big events.

4.2 Advertising on Campus

Chalk around campus. If your campus allows it, chalking is an innovative way of informing students about your meetings. Granted, cold weather and rain can make this difficult, but it can also be a fun activity for your members. Start by chalking the details of your next meeting at popular locations on campus. Some chapters have had “awareness weeks” where they chalk sustainability facts (along with “ESW” written somewhere). It is a great way to improve visibility on campus!

Present in classes at the beginning of the semester. If you ask, some professors are kind enough to give you some time at the beginning or end of their class for you to give a spiel about ESW. Typically you have one shot at this: at the very first class of the semester. It is best to target first year classes, as they will have likely not heard about ESW. Be sure to mention that ESW will provide hands-on engineering experience.

Use social media! Facebook and Twitter are staples of college life, so use them to your advantage. You can kill two birds with one

stone here: recruit a first year or sophomore student to be your webmaster, someone who manages all of your ESW social media (make sure to feed them some content to start).

A well managed Facebook Page or Twitter feed can increase visibility, publicize to a wider audience, and easily remind people of meetings. In addition to improving your chapter’s visibility, you get someone involved early in their college career – great for creating long-term leaders. If you post to multiple social media sites, link everything back to one page such as your Facebook Page or website.

Remember that ESW-HQ is also active on these networks, so reposting some national news – particularly things like webinars – can be a good source of content as well. Depending upon the culture of your college, you may also want to consider using Tumblr, Reddit, or some other site.

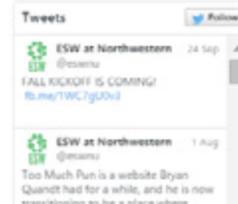
Create a website. If you have a website, anyone who wants to learn more about your chapter can simply Google it. This is



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A Snippet of ESW-NU’s website, created by Brian Lange.

especially helpful for prospective and incoming students searching to find out more about way to get involved in college. A website will also serve as a portfolio of all the projects you’ve completed and events you’ve hosted. This will come in handy when it comes time to edit your résumé or when you show off your chapter to a first year student.

ESW-HQ recommends using Weebly or Wix if your college does not offer website hosting. Your website should have all the meeting times and locations for the semester, current project opportunities, and contact information. Watch out for old websites created in previous years, as they can outrank your new page on search results. Delete them if possible.

4.2 Advertising on Campus

Share your passion. One of the most frustrating things a chapter leader can face is a lack of student interest. If you feel like you have tried everything, ask yourself this: what makes you passionate about ESW? Whatever your answer is you should share it with your community so that others feel your passion as well.

Incorporate passion into your spiel when you talk to interested students. Have a meeting to explain why ESW is important to you

and how it can be important to others too. Passion is contagious and soon enough you will see more people enter your chapter. In the end, most students won't remember the details of your specific club, so the goal of tabling is to get people to sign onto your email list. Have a clipboard and plenty of pens for students to write their email addresses – or a computer/tablet with a spreadsheet so that you don't have to read handwriting later while inputting addresses.

Create a banner. Investing in a banner that can be used from year to year is great for effective tabling. While you can order a plastic banner online or from a local printer (likely cost: ~\$100). Vistaprint can print a banner for relatively cheap.

If you are looking for a more sustainable alternative, hit up your local Goodwill for a sheet or large piece of fabric. Get together with your new ESW members and turn the blank canvas into a beautiful

banner. Not only will you have a banner that will last for years, but this is a great bonding activity.

If you are looking to include the gear in your banner or any other piece of advertising material, just remember, the official ESW gear has eight teeth.

Refer to our [official branding guidelines](#) for more information.



Tabling 101

What can be better than situating yourself among masses of students who are looking for ways to get involved on campus? Ask board members to sign up for shifts.

When you table, remember to both show and tell. Have a tri-fold of pictures showing off your recent projects and events. Try to have a demonstration or two like a solar panel hooked up to a voltmeter. Have handouts on your table including something that has your meeting location

and time on it.

Practice your pitch for the chapter - what makes you awesome in 1-2 sentences. Be able to talk about new projects that might not have pictures yet. Stand in front of the table and engage people walking by. You can learn more about pitching your chapter in **Section**

And here is a pro-tip. Stand *in front* of your table! You will be surprised at how many more people you engage just by standing with the crowd!

4.3 When Nothing Seems to Work

So you have been recruiting for months, employed every strategy you can think of, and still have yet to see any real growth in your membership base. That is perfectly ok! Recruitment is one of the top struggles for chapter leaders. If you are frustrated with your recruitment efforts, try out one of the following.

Reach out to your Chapter Relations Coordinator. Your coordinator's main responsibility is to help chapters. If you are having any kind of problem, reaching out to your chapter coordinator is a great way to help resolve the issue. Your coordinator can help direct you to more resources, work with you to provide tailored advice, or simply be a person to vent to.

Voice your frustrations to your adviser. Like your coordinator, your adviser can provide advice. Do not be afraid to ask for help, as you will likely learn something new from your adviser. They may be able to help connect you to other faculty members' classes, different email lists, or new groups.

Host a brainstorming meeting with your executive board. If you have been the sole person in charge of recruitment, getting fresh ideas from different perspectives may be just the thing you need. Gather all your officers to objectively and openly discuss your membership and recruitment situation. Refer to the links in the Resources section below for strategies on how to effectively lead a brainstorming meeting.

Wait. Sometimes you have trouble recruiting because you have missed your golden opportunity, the beginning of the semester of the year. This can be the most frustrating part, but waiting for a new semester to start up really can make all the difference. In the meantime, make sure to take photos of your activities, spruce up your web presence, and have some great tabling materials for the next time around.

Workshops are your friend. Not all students can be part of a project team. Seniors are often swamped with capstone projects and first years often don't have the necessary engineering knowl-

edge. Hosting a one to three hour workshop is the perfect event for widening your target audience while adding skills to your team's metaphorical toolbox. Successful workshops in the past have included making solar powered cell phone chargers, DIY bike repair and maintenance, and educating students on how to talk to climate skeptics. ESW-HQ has project info for many of these workshops, and can help you set them up.

Reach out to new members. Utilize the time before meetings to socialize with new members. While it's tempting to talk to friends you already know, you and your board are the best ambassadors for the org. If you see someone new, go up and get to know them – introduce yourself, give your position on the board, and then ask how they heard about the meeting or what classes they're taking. This small act will have a large influence on students and make them feel more welcome at meetings.

A Note on Paper

You may have noticed that none of the above strategies require paper. Many chapters struggle over whether to use paper to advertise (often in the form of posters or fliers). On the one hand, making posters or paper handouts is a staple of most clubs and organizations, is easy to do, and usually works. On the other hand, it is a lot of material that needs to be recycled and may not be necessary.

ESW-HQ encourages you to think outside of the box when you are publicizing your org. Often, creative advertising methods will also win you more attention than standard flyering. Flyers tend to be a high-effort, high-material, low-return form of advertising. But, the life-cycle impacts of paper are very small, and most schools use or have recycled or FSC-certified paper. In other words, don't worry.

4.4 Keeping Members

Membership recruitment goes hand in hand with membership retention. It is difficult to discuss one without the other. Membership retention concerns strategies and methods for keeping members. In general, effective membership retention strategies include developing good meeting logistics, providing opportunity for everyone, creating community, and rewarding your members.

Successful membership retention is often the result of a strong team dynamic, which is a sign of effective leadership. A strong team dynamic has the following aspects:

- Everyone at a meeting should communicate their opinions and ideas.
- People have a clear understanding of what is expected from them on a short and long term basis.
- Work is getting done well and on time.
- Your team should feel satisfied and proud of their work.

Set regular meeting times and locations. Time and time again chapter leaders have found out the hard way that changing your meeting location every week is disastrous for membership retention. If possible, reserve your meeting space in advance for the entire semester. Otherwise, pick a space that you know will be generally available.

If you can, look at when key required classes are offered, or when other major campus groups meet. If you know that first years always have a lab on Friday evenings, and you're looking to recruit some more first years, don't have events during that time! Try to avoid those times so you don't unintentionally prevent people from attending. You won't be able to avoid everyone, and that's OK too.

Make sure your members know about your meetings. This may be a big no-brainer, but it's easy to forget to send out a reminder email. You can use Google Calendar to set up a recurring meeting time that automatically sends

out email reminders. Also, it is important to find a balance between making sure people know about meetings and overloading their inboxes. One recommendation is to email everyone the afternoon before, and post on social media the day of the event. Tell your members about your social media presence!

Make sure everyone has a voice at meetings. Often veteran members will dominate discussion during meetings. To ensure that everyone is contributing, provide opportunities for more people to speak up. Ask an opening question and have everyone go around and answer it (break up into smaller groups if needed). If one member is dominating the discussion, politely ask them to save their comments for later and invite someone else to respond.

Nominate exceptional members for campus wide awards. One of the most surefire ways to prevent burnout in any team setting is to highlight their accomplishments. If your school has

campus-wide awards, be sure to nominate your project leaders, outstanding individuals, or anyone else you see fit. The nomination itself will be a huge compliment to the member and make them feel proud of your work. If campus-wide awards aren't a thing at your school, make your own! Remember that ESW-HQ also has annual awards for outstanding individuals, presented at our Annual Conference.

Say thank you. Unless you express it directly, your team may never know just how much you appreciate their hard work. Take the time to randomly send out a quick email to members highlighting a recent accomplishment. You should also reiterate this gratitude in person. It is especially crucial to thank newer and younger members on your team who may feel like they are not contributing as much. When you take the time to say thanks you keep your team motivated and happy!

4.5 Getting Started with Goal Setting

Now that you've recruited your first few members, how do you proceed? It is easy to focus on immediate tasks or simply start working on a project. What can get forgotten with this approach are efforts to building long-term capacity for your chapter and ensure that your efforts have a real impact. Goal setting helps alleviate these problems.

By setting goals, you are developing a metric in which you can assess the strength and growth of your chapter. You can determine if and where you are struggling as a chapter. When you accomplish a goal, you are providing tangible proof that your team's hard work paid off. Goal setting will help strengthen your chapter by giving you something to work towards.

Consult your team. While you may have a clear idea of what your personal goals for the chapter are, your team's input is vital to the goal setting process. Not only will they provide different perspectives and ideas, but the goals should be agreed upon by everyone involved in their fulfillment. Section 4.4 discusses running goal setting meetings with your team.

Make it feasible. Finishing ten projects in a year or raising \$10,000 are not easily achievable goals for most chapters. Assess the strength of your chapter and determine what is feasible. It is more important that you set goals you can actually reach, as developing unrealistic expectations will lead to frustration, disappointment, and burnout.

Be specific. The more precise the language of your goal, the easier it will be for you to assess whether you have actually achieved that goal. "Recruit new members," while admirable, is vague. Instead, try to "increase involvement in project X by three members by the end of a semes-

ter." This statement makes it clear what kind of members you are seeking, when the deadline of the goal is, and how many members you want. It is these metrics that make this a specific goal.

Break it down. Once you have developed some overarching goals, begin thinking about the steps it will take to reach that goal. If you are trying to fundraise, you may first have to locate sources of funding, then apply to grants, then set up the financial system to process any awards.

Document it. One excellent method is to create and share a modified [Gantt chart](#) with your main and sub goals. If a Gantt chart seems too complex, at least write down your goals in a location that you see on a regular basis – an office white board or digital sticky note. If your goals are visible, they are less likely to be forgotten. Make time on meeting agendas to discuss current goals on a regular basis.

Example Goals

Most ESW goals tend to be centered on one of three things: fundraising, projects, and recruitment. Check out the example goals to kickstart your goal setting process!

Increase membership by 10-15% by the end of the fall semester.

Create a working prototype of project by the end of the year.

Host two on-campus events related to sustainability education for students.

Co-sponsor at least three events with three other clubs on campus.

Finish current project by the end of the semester.

Fundraise at least \$1000 through grants by the end of the year.

Sell at least \$500 worth of merchandise by the end of the year.

Recruit at least 10 junior or senior engineering majors to increase technical expertise on projects by end of the semester.

4.6 Leading a Goal Setting Meeting

Leadership would be a lot easier if you could throw all your officers into a room and have them come up with perfectly scoped goals right off the bat. But leadership is not easy and facilitating goal setting sessions requires preparation and skill. This section presents a sample structure for leading a goal setting meeting.

The main process of a goal setting meeting is illustrated below and includes four main steps: brainstorm, collect, focus, and SMART. We elaborate on each of these steps below.

Brainstorm. Kick off the meeting and get people thinking with a quick free write activity. Hand out a small stack of post-it notes to each attendee and first pose the following question: What has your chapter done well in the past

year? Give everyone a few minutes to write out all their thoughts and then collect the post-its. Now for the real action.

Flip the question and ask attendees to think of areas they see ESW improving in? What issues do they see with in the chapter? Again, give them a few minutes to free write. Encourage them to generate as many ideas as they can think. We're going for quantity over quality here.

Collect. Gather everyone's post-it notes from the brainstorm and place them where they can be seen. A white board works great for this. The next task is to group all the ideas into categories. As the facilitator, you should have some idea ahead of time what these categories might be.

If you're having trouble determining categories, reflect on the mission of ESW/your chapter. Focusing on projects, education, and community, the three pillars of ESW, is a great way to orient your goal setting meeting.

Focus. In a perfect world, you could address every issue raised in the brainstorm. Unfortunately, time and energy limit how categories you can focus on. Therefore, we recommend picking 3-4 of the categories you formed to spend your time on. You can take an informal vote to easily decide which categories to pick.

SMART. Use the SMART goal format to develop the goals you decided to work on in the previous step.

For example, you may originally have the goal of raising more money, but this is vague for several reasons: you do not have a specific amount set, you do not have a deadline set, and you have not connected it back to the mission of your chapter.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Below is an example of a S.M.A.R.T. goal around money. Instead of saying "get more money," we have fleshed out the goal.

Specific

Work with the Treasurer and President to apply for at least \$3,000 in on-campus grants.

Measurable

Completed and submitted grant application(s), totaling \$3,000 in potential funds.

Attainable

The Treasurer has experience in writing grants and we feel we are a strong candidate.

Realistic

This money will go directly towards project funds, the core function of our chapter.

Timely

The grants will be submitted by the end of the semester.

Learn more about [SMART guidelines here](#).

Post-It Notes

Such a simple tool can lead to powerful results. Post it notes are the bread and butter of goal setting. Hand a stack of post-its out to your officers and ask them to write out every idea that comes to mind. Then you can gather all the post-its and rearrange them on a wall to organize your ideas. Just make sure to recycle the post-its when you are done with your meeting!