As the current leader of your organization, think about what is important to pass on to the new leadership. What would have made your transition easier? How can you insure that the new officers are as ready as they can be to continue to provide your organization with strong leadership?

A smooth transition!

When new officers have been elected, it is advisable that you orient them as a group with all the outgoing officers, and your advisor. This will allow the new officers an opportunity to understand each others’ roles and to start team building. An example agenda of the training follows:

Overview and Purpose:

- Purpose of the organization, mission, and constitution
- General discussion of officer roles and team approach to leadership
- Group’s relationship to other groups, the university, the community, and others

Individual Officer Exchange:

- Outgoing and incoming officers meet to discuss position specifics
- Particular duties and responsibilities
- Materials turned over to new officer are reviewed
- Goals of the previous year for that position
- New goals
- Organizational and university policies
- Budgetary issues, SAFAC request forms
- Necessary/appropriate leadership skills

New Officer Planning Session (new officers only):

- Identify goals for the coming year, and put in writing
- Share individual goals and how they relate to group goals
- Team-building activities
- Discussion of accountability and team decision-making

Goal Review and Wrap Up (new and old officers):

- New officers present proposed goals for feedback from outgoing officers
- Goals are refined and modified if necessary

Organization Meeting:

- New officers present ideas to group for feedback and review
- Group modifies goals and then accepts these for the coming year
Many groups hold their elections at the end of the academic year. COSO strongly recommends groups have their elections in January, with instillation at the end of the semester.

Here’s why:

1. This will give the new leadership more time to start functioning as a team.
2. The new leaders will have plenty of time to ask questions of the old leaders.
3. The new leaders can put together their own SAFAC allocation request (usually due in mid February) for events and functions that they want to do.
4. The new leadership does not have to start until later in the semester, until they feel comfortable will all the responsibilities.

As the current leader of your organization, think about what is important to pass on to the new leadership.

What would have made your transition easier?

1. Talk with the new leaders about leadership skills.
2. Share problems of the past and your solutions to dealing with them.
3. Discuss projects that have worked and ones that have not. Also talk about possible future projects or events. Go through the files together.
4. Include your advisor in the process because they will be working with the new leadership.
5. Review the constitution of the group and its mission statement.
6. Go over previous SAFAC request forms.

For some people, they might be the president of an organization one day and then be a member the next. This can be a difficult position for the old and new leaders, especially if there is a month or more left in the semester.

It is important for the outgoing leaders to know that:

1. The new leaders may do things differently, but that does not mean that what the old leaders did was wrong. People have different leadership styles and ways to do the same thing.
2. What you say during a meeting may tend to take more weight because members assume that you speak with experience and wisdom. Therefore, watch what and how express yourself. Your comments may also appear to be a question of the new leadership’s ability in the eyes of the members and may make the new leader feel insecure about their ability.
3. It is a strong possibility that the group may do new and innovative things. This does not mean you are a failure or that you did not work hard enough. You did the best with what you knew. It is important to think of the group and what is best for the group.
4. Let the new leaders know that you are still available for questions or to act as a sounding board. You are a valuable asset to the group because of your knowledge.