

Why Get Involved?

Being involved is one of the more important aspects of your college education. It enables you to mature personally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually. Involvement enhances your opportunities for career development exposing you to various skills, which will assist you upon graduation to find gainful employment. Giving your time and talents to an organization will not only help that group, it will make your college experience a valuable and enjoyable one.

A major concern of new students is how to meet people and make friends. No one can relate to 30,000 people so we attempt to find smaller groups. These groups can be student organizations, campus organizations, residence hall governments, or community service units.

*

Students who become involved in campus groups and organizations are more likely to continue through graduation. The reason is that they develop ties and friendships, which help them “anchor” into the campus. This acts as a source of support during the difficult moments in a student’s college career.

*

Through involvement, you are likely to meet more people who share similar interests (i.e. drama), abilities (i.e. tutoring math), or ideals (i.e. to advocate for the poor). They can serve as reinforcement of your interests and ideology, which often leads to personal satisfaction and a greater sense of purpose.

*

Through involvement, you will not only acquire skills and values which will enhance your growth and development, but also enable you to fulfill your civic and social responsibilities in the future. These skills and values include: problem solving, interpersonal skills, organization, responsibility, service orientation, and participating attitudes.

*

The education and personal development you acquire through organizational experiences while at OU can be important to your career. The University of Oklahoma as an institution supports and encourages participation in extracurricular activities, considering them an important part of the student’s education and training. The University provides the best setting for people to explore their potentials, to take risks, and to try out new things and ideas.

Questions to Think About:

What have I been involved with previously? (Think about the projects and organizations with which you have been involved).

*

What did I gain from those activities? (Make a list of the skills, knowledge personal contacts etc. that you gained from those prior experiences).

*

What new skills and abilities would I like to gain? (What new skills would you like to develop through your new involvement's?)

*

What am I interested in getting involved in? (Based on the skills you would like to acquire or develop, decide what activities will afford you the opportunity to develop those skills.)

How do I get involved?

Now that you have a better understanding about why you should be involved, let's talk about how you are going to do it. There are several avenues to get involved on campus. The trick is figuring out which organizations you want to invest your time and energy into.

When you first arrive at the University, begin looking in the paper for different volunteer opportunities and group meeting times. Attend as many different meetings that you can in order to find out about the opportunities available to you. Test the waters and see if you fit within the organization and if you feel strongly about it's mission on campus. You can also come by the Center for Leadership Development and we can point you in the right direction.

Once you have an idea about which organization you want to invest yourself in, continue to volunteer and serve that group in any way you can. When you feel ready for more responsibility, apply for a leadership position (special events, public relations, secretary, treasurer) within that organization. This will allow you to have a more active role and shape the university community. Eventually, you might want to apply to be the chair or vice chair of that organization. These roles include a great deal of responsibility but are very beneficial for your personal development.

In Review:

- Read the paper, specifically campus notes on Mondays, looking for volunteer opportunities and group meetings.
- Attend as many meetings as possible and volunteer to help with their different programs and events.
- Decide which groups you want to invest yourself in and begin taking on more responsibility within that organization.
- When you feel ready for more leadership, apply to be a member of a committee or an officer.
- If you enjoy that aspect, continue to be an officer and consider being the chair or president of the organization.