What should I do after the meeting?

- Send out meeting minutes. This will remind members of tasks they volunteered to complete, decisions that were made, and dates to reserve. As well, minutes make it possible for members who were not present to remain involved. Minutes should include meeting date, time, and location; participants; agenda items discussed and decisions made; summary of action plans with assignments; and date, time, and location of the next meeting.

- Follow up on things that came up at the meeting. Did the group have a question you need to find the answer to? Did someone offer to research costs for an event? Send individual reminders as well as minutes.

- Start working on the next agenda. Are there discussions that need to be continued?

- Check on the progress of committees as they do their work between meetings.

- Do a self-evaluation of your facilitation following each meeting; ask for feedback from others whom you trust.

For more information about the role of group dynamics and development on your organization’s meetings, please refer to the respective guides to group dynamics and development.

You are also encouraged to meet with your CLSI advisor for coaching and advisement regarding your current skills. We can observe you in practice and provide helpful feedback to you.

More resources for student organizations are available at the CLSI office, O’Connor Campus Center. Call or visit any time.
Guide to Effective Meetings

Running a meeting can sometimes be harder than it looks. Most of us have to learn the elements of successful meeting facilitation through trial and error. This can sometimes be a painful process! Perhaps you can recall a time when you dreaded a meeting you thought would be disorganized, unproductive, and never-ending. Hopefully, this brochure will give you some hints that will help you facilitate productive and engaging meetings.

Meetings serve a variety of purposes. They give group members a chance to discuss and evaluate goals and objectives, establish common goals and group identity, share knowledge and experiences, interact and develop relationships, keep updated on current events, generate and discuss ideas, and contribute to the group’s cohesion. Meetings also allow groups to consolidate resources in order to make decisions.

What should I do before the meeting?

- Try to schedule your meetings at a regular time each week. Consistency in meeting times helps reduce confusion.
- Choose a location conducive to your group’s size and the purpose of the meeting. Make arrangements for any materials or audio-visual needs.
- If you’re meeting in a classroom or other meeting room, you will need to reserve the space with the appropriate person in advance of the meeting. Rooms in the Coop and Student Union Building are reserved through Denise Upton in CLSI (x6843). For information about reservation managers for other spaces, contact your CLSI advisor.
- Determine the purpose and type of meeting, and set attainable objectives for the meeting (e.g., brainstorm spring semester performers and rank top five choices).
- Create an agenda before the meeting. Solicit agenda items from group members a couple of days ahead of time; this can enhance their sense of contributing to the group’s business. An agenda will help you remain focused during your meeting and give you an idea of how long you’ll need to meet. It’s no fun to have a big issue come up when you have 5 minutes left to meet.
- Send the agenda in advance of your meeting via email and bring copies of the agenda to pass out to your group members. This way they’ll know what’s coming up and can also take notes if they want.
- Make sure that committees are working out details before the meeting, so you don’t get bogged down in details at your meeting. If possible, have committee chairs send updates to you before the meeting; you can include updates in written form on the agenda.

What should I do during the meeting?

- Start and end on time. This shows respect for the other group members’ busy schedules and their other commitments.
- If you have time, it’s nice to work in some social or check-in time, so the group members can keep up with each other.
- Welcome any new members or visitors to your group, and do introductions if necessary.

Establish a climate that encourages sharing and participation.

- If discussions are getting repetitive, you have the prerogative to close discussion and move on to the next topic. Make sure that all views have been expressed before you do this!
- Make sure you are discussing only one topic at a time. It’s confusing and time-consuming when discussion digresses. Finish your business, and then come back to the tangential topic.
- Don’t let one or two people dominate the discussion. Make sure that everyone is involved and has a chance to share their thoughts. Make eye contact, and give your attention equally to all members.
- Show your enthusiasm for your group and the topics you’re discussing. Your attitude will reflect in the group members’ attitudes.
- Allow opportunities for disagreement. Encourage members to respect others’ opinions and allow ample time for discussion.
- Remember that as facilitator, your role isn’t to impose your own goals on the group, but rather to look out for the interests of all group members. That means you shouldn’t force through your own ideas just because you have control of the agenda.
- Help the group achieve consensus. You can do this by clarifying and summarizing what is said and by offering many different solutions and compromises. There also are methods to create consensus in groups; talk with your CLSI advisor for some ideas.
- Take minutes. When plans are being made, be sure to clarify who will take the action and when and where it will be taken. Take good notes, so you can send reminders to members.