**Personal Goal Setting Tips:**

- Be sure your goals are your own. You may want to solicit input from others, but do what means most to you. Self-set goals are better motivators than those imposed by others.

- Put goals in writing. This will lessen the odds of losing sight of your goals in the shuffle of daily activity. Writing down your goals also increases your commitment.

- Make your goals challenging but attainable. Good goals are neither too easy nor impossible. They should cause you to stretch and grow. A challenging, attainable goal will hold your interest and keep you motivated.

- Goals should be as specific and measurable as possible. Don’t say, “I want a better college experience.” Ask yourself: What might that look like? How do I assess my options? What classes and activities should I pursue? By when? Specify clearly what you want, and you will save an enormous amount of time and effort.

- Every goal should have a target date. Never think of a goal as a goal until you set a deadline for accomplishment.

- Check your major goals for compatibility. Don’t fall into the trap of setting major goals where the achievement of one will prevent the attainment of another.

- Frequently revise and update your goals. As a growing person, your needs will change over time, and this means goals will have to be modified, discarded, and added from time to time. Plan flexibly. Don’t think of your goals as carved in stone.

Some of the material in this brochure was obtained from the University of Michigan’s student activities and leadership office.
**Goal Setting**

**Why take the time to set goals?**

Goals can help define your organization, giving it direction and avoiding chaos. We all dislike the feeling of busily spinning our wheels and not accomplishing anything. Goals can give the members focus to decide what projects they want to undertake. Goals can help motivate members by communicating what the organization is striving for, as well as providing a basis for recognizing accomplishments and successes. Organizations that set goals are often more effective in recruiting members. They are also more successful in maintaining membership, since members can see what progress is being made.

It is a good idea to set your goals as an organization. This creates many positive results because people will support and be responsible for what they help to create. You can expect:

- A greater commitment and motivation among officers and members to help achieve goals.
- A clearer understanding of the goals and the rationale for selecting them.
- A reflection of consensus rather than one person’s opinion, since everyone’s ideas and opinions are considered.

**Where should we start?**

There are three things to consider when beginning to define your organization’s priorities. Each is important in deciding the next. For example, it’s difficult to create goals if you don’t know what your purpose is.

Although this process may seem a little stuffy and cumbersome, it will help your group as the year progresses.

The **purpose** or **mission** is a broad, general statement that tells why your organization exists. It usually doesn’t change from year to year and can provide some broad consistency for your members.

**Goals** are statements describing what your organization wishes to accomplish, stemming from your purpose or mission. Goals are the ends toward which your efforts will be directed. They often change from semester to semester or year to year, depending on the interest of current members.

**Objectives** are descriptions of exactly what is to be done, derived from the goals. They are clear, specific statements of measurable tasks that will be accomplished as steps toward reaching your goals. They are short-term and have deadlines.

**What are the steps for goal-setting?**

1. Brainstorm a list of potential goals as a group. Brainstorming means letting your members be creative with their ideas. Write down every idea, no matter how improbable or ridiculous it seems at this point.

2. Choose from the brainstorm list those goals on which you want to work. Think about the time, money, and human resources that you might need to accomplish these goals. Is this a reasonable goal? Does it support your mission? Will other members be invested in it? If not, toss it out and pick another.

3. Prioritize. Decide which goals are most important and which are lower on the priority list.

4. Determine objectives for each goal and plans of action for each objective. (There can be several objectives for each goal). Make sure that the objectives are concrete, measurable, and time-limited.

5. Move into action by creating an action plan. Then be sure you follow it!

6. Once the plan is in action, don’t forget to evaluate and revise your goal. You may need to change it in order to accomplish it. You may also discover that it is not going to be feasible and decide to throw it out. Sometimes it’s better to abandon a plan that’s destined for failure rather than invest too much time and energy.

**How do we develop an action plan?**

Ask yourself the following questions. Your answers should give you a solid outline of what needs to be done and how to accomplish it. Keep referring to the action plan throughout the process in order to reach your goal.

- What is to be done?
- How will it be accomplished?
- What are your resources in terms of people, money, and materials?
- Who is responsible for completing each task?
- What is the deadline?
- How will you know when it is accomplished?
- How will you measure the results?