

The goal of this toolkit is to provide a resource for WEF Student Chapters that are looking for new activities for their chapter or want to become more engaged and host events within their community. For WEF Student Chapters it is essential to not only gather and share information and data, which are both current and relevant to their studies but to also become active in the water industry through involvement in the community, promoting the sustainable use of water resources, and meet and interact with professionals in the industry. There are numerous activities that your group could be involved in and the following sections outline a few ideas, tips, and best-practices and point to a few specific examples that have been successful for particular student organizations and individuals.

This document is organized into these general recommendations:

1. Determine what you want to do
2. Look for partners
3. Examples of activities
4. Do your homework and be professional
5. Develop a plan and document it
6. Examples

Determine what you want to do

Activities can be broken into four general categories: 1) social, 2) service, 3) technical, 4) networking. The first step in planning an activity is to determine which category or categories your activity falls under. Activities can meet the intent of one or many categories but it is important to have a clear goal for each event so volunteers know what to expect. Activities can either be led by the Student Chapter or completed in partnership with another organization or activity, or you MA.

Look for Partners

Are there other organizations, groups, or clubs that would be interested in participating or attending your event? This could include and is certainly not limited to:

- Chemistry Department
- Environmental Science
- Geoscience/Earth Science
- Ecology
- Wildlife/Fisheries
- Environmental law
- Public Policy
- Civil Engineering Department
- Environmental Engineering Department
- Chemical Engineering Department
- Mechanical Engineering Department
- Local River Keepers
- Local AWWA Group
- Local EWB
- Local ASCE

Partnering with other organizations not only serves as a great networking opportunity but allows for pooling of resources which can save money and helps volunteers from getting burnt out as they can share the responsibility of planning events.

Examples of Activities

Below is a list of activities that have been successful for other Student Chapters and in parenthesis, which categories they can fall in. Some activities are focused on gaining members and others are focused on providing involvement opportunities for existing members.

- Hold regular committee meetings (Social, Networking, Technical)
 - Consider inviting technical speakers (e.g. local consultants, regulators, operators, etc.) to speak about a particular topic.
 - Use available Student Chapter budget to buy pizza for each meeting or ask the invited speaker or Member Association to pay for pizza.
- Advertising of Student Group and upcoming meetings (Social, Networking)
 - Advertising can be as simple as a flyer on a poster board or could be an online presence through Twitter/Facebook. The most important thing with advertising is it needs to be maintained, up to date, and relevant.
- Present at Intro to Civil/Environmental Engineering Class at the beginning and later in semester (Technical)
 - Meeting with new students provides excellent opportunity to showcase the technical skills you've learned, as well as inviting students to join your organization.
- Student activities fair (Social, Networking)
 - Some colleges host Student Activity Fairs and provide an excellent social and networking opportunity to meet other organizations on campus for future partnering opportunities.
 - Try to think of something that will make your organization stand out – is it a fun fact, a video, a giveaway. This will increase interest in your Student Chapter and potentially help retain more members.
 - Reach out beyond the engineering department. The water industry impacts many disciplines and this is a great way to recruit new individuals to the water sector. Departments could include math and science, business, marketing, public policy, etc.
- Student Design Competition (Technical, Networking)
 - Form a team for the National WEF Student Design Competition.
- Field trips (Social, Technical, Networking)
 - Field Trips provide an opportunity to visit either a current construction project, industry, or facility related to water. Field Trips also provide an excellent networking opportunity with area professionals. Consider touring local wastewater treatment plants, drinking water treatment plants, hydropower dams, industrial facilities, or construction projects.
 - Manufacturing facilities such as equipment/structure manufacturing sites. There is no better way to understand equipment than to see how it is made and how it is used in the field. You may live near a pipe manufacturing facility, precast structures, treatment

equipment, valves, or any combination of parts used will be helpful in gaining real-world experience about the industry.

- Local utilities can provide you with tours of the treatment facilities, however they can also provide you with a look into how a utility is run, the capital projects that are done on a daily basis, budgeting, materials, tools, everything that is useful to keep water and wastewater services in your City. River Cleanup (Social, Service)
 - This could include picking up debris along a shore line or retention pond as well as marking storm drains so the public is aware they drain directly to the river. This is a great opportunity to partner with a Rivers Keepers or similar watershed organization.
- Student Focused Conference (Social, Technical, Networking)
 - Host your own Student Conference where Students are the planners, presenters, and attendees. This provides a great opportunity to work on presentation skills and network with students and professionals in your industry.
- Presentations in local K-12 schools (Technical, Networking, Service)
 - Similar to the student conference, this provides an excellent opportunity to gain presentation experience as well as engage and educate kids on the importance of our industry.
 - Meet with local teachers and ask how a water-related lesson plan or activity might fit into their curriculum. It's often challenging to get out to a field trip so bring the "field" to them.
- Volunteering at Regional Conference (Technical, Networking)
 - Your local MA likely has an annual conference where industry professionals gather to present technical topics while networking with other environmental professionals. Volunteering provides an excellent networking opportunities with area professionals as well as the chance to sit in on their presentations.
- Judge Science Fairs (Social, Networking)
 - Judging provides an opportunity to get your Group together and work with and motivate kids who have done experiments related to your industry.
- Career Activities (Networking, Social)
 - Work with professionals in your community to host a resume review.
 - Similarly, work with professionals and/or the Career Center to set up mock interviews.
 - Host an etiquette dinner with industry leaders.
 - Funding – solicit sponsorship from local companies. Companies can sponsor a table and bring 1-2 individuals for the dinner. The benefit to them is getting to interact with great engineering (or other) candidates that are nearing graduation.
 - Structure –
 - Speaker – often someone in the Career Center will be great at sharing information on things like conversation topics, what to wear, what to

order, and what silverware to use. This is great not only for interviews but also future professional dinners.

- Find a location to host a 3-4 course seated meal. Start with a social hour and then transition to the dinner portion.

Do your homework and be professional

At any event that you participate in as a Student Chapter, remember that you are not only representing yourself but your university, department, Member Association, and WEF as a whole. Ask questions about the type of event you are attending so that you are well-prepared. Other attendees could be potential employers or future co-workers. Similarly if you are hosting a local professional at a monthly meeting, do your research and know a little bit about their company. A little preparation can go a long way in improving how your Student Chapter is perceived and supported in the future.

Develop your plan and document it

When hosting an event or speaker be sure to create a “Lead Worksheet” that can be used to help schedule and manage the expectations of what it takes to plan a speaker or monthly meeting. The planning document can be changed or altered as needed, but provides a clear set of expectations on what is required to plan an event. The ability to assign dates also helps identify if everything is going smoothly or if additional help may be required.

Other Helpful Resources

Looking for things like brochures, membership applications, sample publications? Call the WEF Customer Services Center at 1-800-666-0206 to get any material you might need.

WEF Student Contact: Caroline Pakenham (cpakenham@wef.org) Phone: 703-684-2400 x7220

APPENDIX A

Example Letter:



4/14/2015

«AddressBlock»

RE: Invitation and Request for Sponsorship for Students and Young Professionals Reception

«GreetingLine»

I hope you are enjoying a fine summer! We would like to extend an invitation for you to attend and sponsor the Students and Young Professionals Reception at this year's North Dakota Water and Pollution Control Conference (NDWPCC) in Fargo, ND. This event provides a networking opportunity for students and young professionals to socialize with colleagues who share their passion of the water industry. In addition, the reception offers industry leaders a chance to recruit active and ambitious young engineers.

The reception will be held at Buffalo Wild Wings in South Fargo following the conference program on Tuesday, October 14. In order for the Students and Young Professionals Reception to be a success, support from companies such as «Company» is essential. A Monetary donation of \$100 will be recognized on a sponsorship poster that will be displayed at the reception and at the conference. If you have any questions or concerns about the reception or the request for sponsorship, please contact me at (701)-641-8759 or kellen.grubb@my.ndsu.edu.

Donations to fund the reception can be sent to Kellen Grubb no later than September 30th to allow time to budget and prepare for the event:

NDSU Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Attn: Kellen Grubb, Treasurer, AWWA/WEF Student Chapter
NDSU Dept. 2470
P.O. BOX 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

Thank you for your support of the NDWPCC and the Student and Young Professionals Reception.

Best Regards,

Kellen Grubb
NDSU AWWA/WEF Student Chapter