An open letter to the student clubs and organizations of Metropolitan State:

Hey, clubs and orgs. How’s it going?

With the school year coming up, transition is in full effect for clubs. Typically speaking, this is the part of the year in which transition and recruitment becomes the highest priority for success throughout the entire year. I have been in enough collegiate clubs to see recruitment patterns pop up. Also, as the former Public Relations Coordinator for the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA), a primary duty of my position was to encourage student senates across the state to continue recruitment and entice students to attend MSCSA conferences. Tactics varied greatly, depending on the campus, but had a great success rate.

As a result, this article is a little easier because I get to focus on one campus. But, it makes it a little bit harder because of the culture of Metropolitan State.

**University Background:**

Metro State has five campuses: the main campus, located in St. Paul off of Dayton’s Bluff; two primary satellite buildings—the College of Management and Midway Center, located in downtown Minneapolis and (Midway) St. Paul, respectively; and two secondary campuses, located in Brooklyn Park and Eden Prairie in conjunction with Hennepin Technical College. Each campus has some form of a recreational or relaxation area, so space for advertising isn’t too incredibly difficult. This is ultimately challenging to find a cohesive center to the university’s cultural center, especially when Metro State is referred to as a “non-traditional campus.” This means the typical idea of a “traditional student”—18-24 years old, full time, no kids, not married—is not the norm. As a result, the university hasn’t quite pegged the cultural heart just yet.

\*Editor’s Note: the College of Management may be a little small for a recreation area, but it is still possible, given the space on the first floor.

**Tactic One—Tabling:**

Tabling is the bread and butter of local advertising. What is tabling, you may ask? Simple: You find an area, you grab a table and whatever supplies you need, and you talk to commuting students. Even though this can be applied anywhere, from recruitment to handing out supplies, it is most effective when having a simple “sign-up” clipboard on hand. Regardless of whatever is being handed out, the key of tabling is to make sure the representatives don’t just sit behind the table itself! Be inviting, but not overly confrontational.

**Tactic Two—(Co) Hosting Events:**

This can be one of the most effective means of recruitment, but it also requires the most to put upfront. Hosting events, such as participating in Fallfest or throwing a function on campus, can be one of the great ways to become visible. But it can be costly. Whether the cost be in sheer manpower, money or organizing efforts, it’s a lot of work. Before pursuing this option, make sure that the organization can support the weight of the event’s planning. But, when it rolls around, if promotion goes well and the activities are planned tightly enough, having your club’s name as a main sponsor is amazing advertising.

\*Editor’s Note: Solo sponsoring is too much money; cosponsoring with another club or organization is an incredibly cost-effective strategy. Most non-profits outside of Metro State use this tactic.

**Tactic Three—Class Raps:**

Class raps are incredibly straightforward, but extremely effective. Simply ask your teacher (seriously, ask, because I don’t want any angry teachers messaging me) if you can speak in class for five minutes. In said five minutes, talk about: what your club is about; what the students can gain; when your club meets; and, if the students have further questions, to talk to you on break or when class ends. It’s quick, easy and gets amazing results.

\*Editor’s note: Seriously, everybody: ask your teacher. I mean, it’s just considerate to be polite and courteous to your probably overworked teacher. But, more so, I don’t want said overworked teachers—now beyond pissed at me for suggesting the announcement—to message me, swearing that my family will regret branding me with the “Mann” name.

Thanks, guys. I love you, teachers; you know this.

**Tactic Four—Participating in Public Events:**

This one may be more of a minor tactic, but, in case it works for a club, I would love to suggest it. Community outreach, regardless of organization, is never a bad thing. Things like parades, organized participation in community events, working at food shelters, and anything that relates to a club’s mission will be optimal. In this case, the recruitment tactic can be longer lasting. To show a tangible, real-world value can be more valuable than anything offered on campus. For the senate to visit the capitol in order to advocate for higher education? Incredibly tangible—they do that, by the way, via Minnesota State Universities Student Association (MSUSA, or whatever the hell they end up deciding to call themselves). For Film Club to attend film festivals, even as participants, can inspire both club productivity as well as recruitment. Connecting the real world to collegiate learning is the cornerstone of Metro State’s philosophy—and is one of the most enduring methods for Student Life to exhibit that.

**Tip One—Keep an Eye on Fallfest:**

Fallfest has always been, and, very likely, will always be Metro State’s own homecoming. Considering that enrollment of new students is at its yearly peak during the fall, this is a prime time to get new students hooked on a club. If you don’t know the full ins and outs of the event hosted by Student Life, find out as much as you can from Alysia Lajune and Philip Fuehrer.

**Tip Two—“The Campus’ Living Room:”**

Without any irony, I can say that the new(ish) student center is absolutely gorgeous. It feels open and large, providing a plethora of student goods every day of the week. Its opening during the Spring 2016 semester was a good start, but the center’s full potential will begin to show when it undergoes its first natural fall semester. The vision of a “campus living room” can swing into full effect once students see all it has to offer, including, hopefully, a food provider. This can be the cultural center the university has needed.

**Tip Three—Yes, You Will Get Rejected:**

Not all students care as much about campus affairs as you do. That’s part of the “non-traditional student” motif; the parent who works forty hours a week, the student who wants to get in, get out, and get paid—these are very valid student motivations. So, when you do get rejected, don’t be too discouraged. Understand why they rejected your club, shake it off, and keep advertising. When a student finds you as the niche that will round out their collegiate experience, and eyes light up in excitement, it will make complete sense why the effort of advertising was so worth it.

Hopefully, some of these tips create a surplus for your club in the upcoming year. If nothing else, we are all in this together. So, do your best, have fun and create something amazing that reflects the best in you and your clubs. We live in turbulent times; the closeness we share is stronger than the distance.

Best wishes, your friend,

Brayden Mann.