The Development of a College Engineering Organization and the Inevitable Transition of Power

1. The Signifiers to Start
   1. What are your reasons for starting an organization?
      1. Want experience?
      2. Want to feed your passion?
   2. Is there a gap in the community for what you want to create?
      1. Is the timing right?
      2. Will the people come?
   3. Do you see yourself as someone who can lead?
      1. The attributes of a leader?
      2. The energy/want?
   4. What are the roadblocks to understand?
      1. The people to know
         1. The Maze of Power
      2. The Drive with no Rewards
2. Identifying a Growable Team
   1. Not all starting members are long-term members
      1. Focus on the potential high impactor people
   2. Why do people want this organization?
      1. What are you offering? Does it align with what you initially thought? It won’t.
   3. What people/groups can help you at this stage?
      1. Parent organizations, nearby similar organizations
3. Building around a Project
   1. Must work on something that excites most members
      1. Don’t try too hard to make sure everyone is for it
   2. Build a project, people will come
      1. Trying to build a team with just general meetings doesn’t work
   3. Roadblocks happen, but must have the grit to push through
      1. Initially starting something takes a certain grit, can be challenging to keep motivated
4. Motivating Engineering Students
   1. Why do people want to work? What motivates humans. Why do people do what they do
   2. Getting engineering students to work on engineering projects
      1. Leading students with deadlines based on the individual, not the team dynamic
      2. Create a structure and means of communication between disciplines and engineering groups
      3. An overarching goal of each year and group of years
   3. Getting engineering students to work on non-engineering projects
      1. The inevitable struggle of motivating ‘busy’ students on ‘non’-resume building work
      2. The big picture strategy and clearly outlined duties to enable better output of various non engineering work
      3. Incentives and programs to help get people amped to help out, outline the benefits, what they can learn from it
5. Changing the Scope and Direction
   1. Was your first project successful, and if it wasn’t, where can you go now?
      1. Clubs change with people, it is important to reevaluate constantly
   2. What is the purpose of the club, and does it match the direction you are going
      1. Engineering can be fun, but the end goal is a job, even a rewarding career
   3. Growing the club to foster more non-engineering events
      1. The importance of general meetings
      2. Even engineers want to do fun stuff outside of the engineering
         1. Can be difficult to make people understand the importance of connections
         2. Commit to more time at meetings that can sometimes be dry/unrewarding for certain people
      3. The importance of social events that take time that even boost productivity in the long run
6. Growing the Culture
   1. To be a successful college team, you must respect each other
      1. Not everyone is going to get along, but it important to support the culture in respecting each other for our contributions and strengths
   2. The importance of your appearance
      1. Student engineering groups are one of the main sell points for a school… be the most presentable one, and the members and the school will be proud
   3. The importance of a home
      1. People underestimate this even though we value it so much for our family
7. Sustaining the Structure
   1. As the club grows, it is important to really pay attention to how people need to do things
      1. Easily forgotten or thrown away as unimportant
   2. Adapt to a growing community with better and more organized systems and known/clear responsibility of what members must do
8. Transitioning of Power
   1. The graduation of the initial founders and founding members is the largest pain point
      1. What special things should be done during this unique transition in general
   2. Organization
      1. There is a lot of grit and responsibility in leadership positions
         1. Future leaders must have the institutional knowledge
         2. Future leaders must have the passion and experience
      2. A strong informed member base to help support as most experience members leave
   3. Engineering
      1. The projects for past and current must be shared between all years
      2. Communication culture between disciplines very important

# Literature

1. Motivating the Middle – Fighting Apathy in College Student Organizations
   1. 64 Pages, T.J. Sullivan
2. Why Doers Do – Managing Human Performance to Optimize the Return on Your People Investment
   1. 400 Pages, David E. Wile
3. Project Management for the Unofficial Project Manager
   1. 200 Pages, Kory Kogan
4. Smart Tribes – How Teams Become Brilliant Together
   1. 200 Pages, Christine Comaford

Motivating the Middle – Fighting Apathy in College Student Organizations

“Top-third members do most of the work. They are the visible, busy leaders. If their hands are not actively doing something for the group, their minds are likely thinking about the next event, meeting, project. They run for office. They step up when there is a need.”

“A top-third member wishes everyone would take the organization more seriously and give 100 percent.”

“When you graduate, you want your efforts to be remembered. Many of your best memories of college will be of times spent with your fellow members. You will always care about your group, and you hope it achieves great things when you’re gone.”

“Bottom-third members make top-third members crazy. While you consistently go above and beyond, making enormous personal investments of time and energy to build your organization up, the bottom-third members miss no opportunity to rip it down and make it weaker.”

“You spend a lot of your time worrying about bottom-third member – dealing with their drama, mitigating the problems they cause, and trying to understand why they feel and act the way they do.”

“A middle-third member is happy to contribute to the success of the organization, but is much more likely to be a supporting player than the MVP”

“A middle-third member likes certain aspects of your organization more than other.”

“If your meeting is supposed to last for an hour, and instead goes for two, the middle-third member gets annoyed.”

“Middle-third members get excited about successes, and they worry about the failures and shortcomings. They look at the top-third members to set things right, then they follow that lead.”

“But if involvement in your organization starts feeling negative, then the middle-third member might show up less, help out less, resign that leadership position, or spend more with people he enjoys more.”

“You can spend your time wishing everyone would join you in the top-third, or you can start strategically dealing with people where they are.”

“The single biggest mistake that student organization leaders (top-third members) make when it comes to motivation and fighting apathy is thinking that all of their members will respond to the same things that motivate them.”

“By beginning and ending on time, you earn trust of middle-third members, and you support their need to juggle priorities.”

You assume that the top third is generally with you and the bottom third is generally against you, and you work to romance the middle.”

“A bottom-third sister with a 1.2 GPA is unlikely to pull a 3.0 next semester. However, that middle-third sister with a 2.76 might achieve that 3.0 if given encouragement, incentive and assistance.”

“You deal with the bottom third by setting minimum standards for your organization and then holding all members to those minimum standards.”

“Your top-third members might get very annoyed by the disparity in expectations. They will say its not fair.”

“The idea that every member of an organization will be equally committed and engaged is a fantasy, and they are wasting their time whining about it.”

“You choose to be a top-third member, because that’s the choice that brings you the greatest happiness and sense of purpose.”

“We have to be committed to excellence even when others around us inexplicitly are not. Inspire them to give their best and to create the student leadership experience that fulfills them.”

“Take a list of your current members and divide it into thirds. Who are the top-third members who always show up and do a ton of work? Who are the bottom-third who either cause problems or have a very weak commitment to the group? Who falls in the middle? (Its OK if its not perfect thirds)”

“what are some lower-pressure, supporting roles your organization could create that would appeal to middle members with more limited time to devote?”