



STUDENT ORGANIZING MANUAL

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Please visit www.ssdp.org/resources to find the following resources, which are referred to often throughout this manual.

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A NOTE FROM SSDP'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Dear Freedom Fighter,

Congratulations! By reading this manual, you've taken the first step towards starting a Students for Sensible Drug Policy chapter of your own! We hope that this organizing manual will help you generate some ideas to get your chapter started, and that you will turn to it for help in crafting projects once your chapter is up and running. As always, if you need any help or assistance whatsoever, please feel free to call the SSDP National Headquarters at any time. We exist to support you and your efforts to end the harmful War on Drugs.

SSDP chapters are the lifeblood of the organization. Without our chapters, we would not have a reason to exist. The chapters are an integral part of SSDP's efforts to reform our nation's misguided drug laws, and serve as a grassroots support network in carrying out SSDP's campaigns. Other nationwide drug policy organizations have come to rely on SSDP chapters for local support in their campaigns. You are the foot soldiers in the war against the War on Drugs!

Each year SSDP activists from around the world gather for the SSDP International Conference where you will hear amazing speakers and panelists, network with like-minded students from around the country, and participate in the annual SSDP Congress. There, our chapters have the opportunity to elect the student members of our Board of Directors, and help set the agenda for our national organization. Each chapter that meets the requirements for recognition (see chapter one) gets one vote at the SSDP Congress.

Four full-time staffers at the national office in Washington, DC support the work of our chapters across the country. SSDP's government relations director is a respected force inside the halls of Congress and a trusted source for the media. Our field director is our campus organizing expert, assisting chapters that are waging campaigns and planning events on the local- and campus level. Our outreach director assists students with starting new, vibrant chapters, walking them through their first semester on campus. Please use the national staff as a resource to make your lives easier. We are eager to help.

Finally, as the executive director, my job is to make sure everything runs smoothly. My primary responsibilities are to raise money to keep the organization financially solvent and growing, and to shape the long-term vision of the organization. I also manage the office staff and oversee all of our campaigns. I am thankful to have a network of dedicated students and competent staff to carry out our campaigns and help me grow the organization.

When history books are written about how the War on Drugs was brought to an end, SSDP chapters will rightly be recognized as having played a vital role. After all, no struggle for social justice has ever been successful without a strong and vibrant student movement. I hope you are as proud to be a part of this movement as I am to have you represent us. Welcome to SSDP, and we look forward to meeting you in person at the next SSDP conference!

Sincerely,
Kris Krane, Executive Director
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Chapter 1

10 Steps to Starting an SSDP Chapter on Campus

If there is not already a chapter at your school, then you should start one! SSDP chapters are the backbone of our organization. Starting a chapter will help you organize, educate your peers, earn media, and change laws.

In order to be recognized as an SSDP chapter by the National Headquarters, you must meet at least TWO of three requirements:

- 1. Receive school recognition**
- 2. Hold regular meetings**
- 3. Participate in national or regional SSDP events or campaigns**

This section of the manual outlines the basic steps to starting a chapter at your school. Remember to contact SSDP's outreach director if you have any questions at any time.

1. Identify several people that are interested in organizing an SSDP chapter. Most schools require a handful of students to start a new student organization. You must research recognition criteria before your first meeting and elections. Achieving school recognition is important because it allows you to use university space and to apply for funding. Check with your student activities board or student government for information and guidelines for being recognized by your school.

In most cases, your school will require you to have a faculty sponsor. It is usually not necessary that the sponsor attend meetings, but an involved sponsor can be helpful, especially for new organizers. While it is best to have a drug policy expert as a sponsor, anyone will suffice. Try finding a sponsor in the criminal justice, political science, sociology, or history departments. Or be creative and seek out a sympathetic physics, engineering, philosophy, business, or art professor.

2. Use the sample chapter constitution found on SSDP's website as a model to draft a simple chapter constitution. Only worry about a constitution if your university requires it. Don't waste time writing an elaborate, detailed constitution; just meet the university's standards. Use the SSDP samples at www.ssdp.org/resources or ask other student organizations if you can have a look at theirs if you'd like additional models.

3. Meet with your members to determine the first meeting date and time. Whatever night and time of the week you choose, try not to conflict with meetings of your student government or other like-minded student organizations. On a large campus with many student organizations, this can be difficult. Ultimately, you should do what works best for most of your committed members. Generally try to avoid holding meetings during usual class hours, on Fridays, or on weekends.

4. Get people to the first meeting. Read the next chapter, "Recruiting your SSDP Members," and table to recruit members for your first meeting. Go through the phone

book and call friends. Make announcements before classes. Use Internet sites like Facebook and MySpace to reach out. Post announcements on other organizations' e-mail lists. Instant Message your friends. Advertise the meeting with sidewalk chalk in prominent locations on or near campus, including on the chalkboards of large lecture halls. Flyer campus. (Sample flyers you can customize are available on the SSDP site, but feel free to create your own.) Be creative with your flyers and use images that jump out at people or make them laugh. Please remember that **some universities have strict rules about where groups can and cannot advertise. Advertising in the wrong place could result in hefty fines.**

Don't forget about campus and community newspapers. Try to take out an advertisement. If you can't afford to buy an ad, you can easily earn free media with an Op-Ed piece, letters to the editor, or a feature story. Contact SSDP's National Headquarters for help getting an advance article in your campus or community newspaper about your new organization.

The night before the meeting, you should follow-up with phone calls, e-mails, IMs, and Facebook and MySpace messages to remind everyone you recruited!

5. Carefully plan your first meeting. Chapter 3 includes a detailed guide on how to facilitate effective meetings, so you should read it before your first meeting. However, note that your organization's first meeting will be quite a bit different from subsequent ones, since you will primarily be introducing the organization, discussing drug policy, and setting the tone for future meetings. Try to make sure that everyone has a chance to introduce themselves to the rest of the group.

6. Set up an e-mail discussion list, so that communication can happen easily and frequently. E-mail discussion lists (or "listserves") are incredibly important. They can help your chapter plan events, pick meeting times, or share news and ideas. A listserv simply allows anyone in the group to send a message to everyone in the group. The SSDP National Headquarters has the ability to host your chapter listserv. Talk with SSDP's outreach director about setting this up.

7. Conduct the second meeting. Send an e-mail out to your listserv reminding people of the date, time, and place of the meeting, as well as a brief outline of the meeting's agenda. The night before the second meeting, call everyone who attended the first meeting and everyone who expressed interest in SSDP since then and encourage them to come to your next meeting.

Again, remember to keep the meeting no longer than one hour and try to have refreshments at the end to keep people there. The goals for the second meeting should be to 1) ratify the constitution if necessary; 2) determine the semester and long-term goals; and 3) elect responsible officers. Hopefully some of your short-term goals will include screening the film "BUSTED: The Citizen's Guide to Surviving Police Encounters" and hosting a speaker from Law Enforcement Against Prohibition or the SSDP National Headquarters. You should also begin talking about short-term or long-term campaigns, since there are bad drug policies everywhere that need to be changed!

If a lot of people show up to your meetings, consider forming teams. Assign active members to lead teams on fundraising, advertising, media, campaigns, speakers, etc. This allows you to assign leadership positions to non-officers, keeping them interested and invested in the chapter, and will help your group maximize its potential by splitting responsibilities.

8. Get to work!!! The elected officers should hold a separate leadership meeting and begin attacking important issues like finalizing the semester's calendar of meetings, events, and other activities. Besides educational events, you'll want to start to think about ways to change campus and community approaches to drug use. Officers need to think about resources for the chapter and coordinate the chapter's work with the SSDP National Headquarters.

9. Have regular meetings and HAVE FUN! Try to have an event or meeting every week, preferably at the same time and in the same location on campus to encourage regular attendance. For regular meetings, but especially if you have a major event planned, be sure to advertise! SSDP is the premiere national student organization working to end the Drug War. It's important that we maintain our credibility. But at the same time, we are also fun-loving people! You should be creative when you plan enjoyable and engaging activities.

Holding parties and social events after your meetings are a great way to keep your members happy and coming back for future meetings. However, a party should not be the reason someone attends a meeting, and should not be considered a right. Use after-meeting parties as a reward for a job well done.

10. Utilize the resources available on the SSDP site and develop a relationship with the National Headquarters. Check the website for featured actions and campaigns, contact information for other chapters, flyers, media hits, and blog posts. Be sure to respond to e-mails and calls from the SSDP National Headquarters. We are here to help you, but we also need your help. And, as always, feel free to contact the SSDP staff with any questions.

Notes:

Chapter 2

Recruiting Your SSDP Members

Membership in most SSDP chapters ranges from two to five core organizers to several hundred active members. Regardless of your current or ideal membership, you should make an effort to reach out to like-minded students on your campus.

Recruitment is all about visibility. The goal of every SSDP chapter should be to ensure that every student has at least heard of SSDP. Is a student able to walk out of his or her dorm, go to class, eat at the dining hall, and walk back to the dorm without seeing the “SSDP” acronym? If so, you aren’t visible enough!

By far, the best way to increase visibility is to work on exciting events or campaigns! Many chapters get to the point where they are working on so many exciting activities that they don’t have to worry about fishing for members — because new members actively seek the chapter out.

However, if you just have a few members, you’ll need to proactively recruit. The best ways to increase visibility with just a few people is by **flyering** and **tabling**.

Flyering

On SSDP’s resources page (ssdp.org/resources), we have many pre-made flyers and brochures that you can download, edit with your chapter’s contact info, print, copy, and distribute. (Of course, feel free to be creative and make your own flyers! And please share them with the National Headquarters so they can be made available to other SSDP chapters!)

People should not be able to get away from your flyers. They should be on light posts, bulletin boards, garbage cans, the ground, and anywhere you think they might be seen. Keep in mind that some schools have strict rules about where you can and cannot flyer, so find out these rules first. But as long as you are following the rules, go nuts! Put them where people can’t get away from them. The key to advertising is repetition.

The actual act of flyering can be incredibly fun if you have a few friends and a roll of sturdy tape. If it’s a nice day (and there’s no rain in the forecast) bring some sidewalk chalk with you too! Make sure you advertise your meeting time and place in **BIG LETTERS**.

Also, ask if the National Headquarters has any stickers or buttons. Covering campus with SSDP stickers and backpacks with SSDP buttons will improve your visibility greatly.

Tabling

Tabling can solve many of your chapter’s problems. Want to increase your membership or event turnout? Table! No one knows SSDP exists on your campus? Table! Worried no

one will show up at your event? Table! Want to run a campaign but need more volunteers? Table! People think SSDP is just a bunch of lazy stoners? Table and prove them wrong! Broke? Guess what you should do? Table!

If you've done a good job flyering, tabling will be a piece of cake. If students have already seen your flyers, they will be much more likely to approach you and ask what the organization is all about.

There are a couple questions you'll want to answer before you start to table.

1. What literature, materials, and other resources do I need before I start to table?

- **First and foremost, you'll need a table.** Borrow one from your university or buy one.
- **You should display literature and materials from SSDP and other organizations.** There is a ton of information available online from SSDP and other organizations. SSDP has stickers, buttons, leaflets, booklets, t-shirts, and videos available for you as you start to form a chapter and table. If you need literature, contact the SSDP National Headquarters and we will send you some.
- **Use the Action Alert Sign-Up Sheet to build both the chapter's list and SSDP's national list.** An SSDP Action Alert Sign-Up Sheet is on our website at www.ssdp.org/resources/. Simply fill up the sign-up sheets and send the forms back to SSDP, or if you have time, enter them into an excel spreadsheet and e-mail them to the National Headquarters.
- **Don't forget a banner.** It's wise to invest in a sturdy nylon banner with SSDP's name, logo, and website, as well as your school's name. It'll catch the attention of passer-byers. If you can't afford one, don't sweat it. You can easily make one out of poster board.
- **Have flyers announcing the time and place of the next meeting or event on hand.** Print copies of a flyer announcing the date, time, and place of your meeting or event. Also, consider creating quarter-page handbills to pass out to students as they walk by the table. There are flyers on the website at www.ssdp.org/resources/flyers.shtml or you can create your own.
- **Take advantage of virtual opportunities too.** Use Facebook, MySpace, and blogs on Blogspot to create an online community for your chapter. Don't forget to collect people's screen names and use Instant Messenger to remind them about meetings and events.
- **Public Service Announcements.** Most universities will allow you to access recording equipment on campus, especially if one of your members has a campus radio show. Consider recording a PSA that promotes SSDP and announces your meeting time and website. At www.ssdp.org/psas you'll find general PSAs that you can download and give

to your campus radio station. Ask your campus radio station DJ's to add them to their regular PSA playlists.

- **Collect Signatures to support an HEA or Campus Change resolution.** Many students may be apathetic to drug law reform in general but will be upset that students on your campus are being denied financial aid or expelled from housing or school because of minor drug offenses. Use these issues to bring people to SSDP. Be sure to collect e-mail addresses from everyone who signs the petition, and add them to the Action Alert Sign-Up sheet and your chapter's e-mail list.
- **Get creative!** Hang an American Flag or a picture of a student in handcuffs behind your table. Play music. Give out candy or treats to attract students to your table. Enjoy yourself and make SSDP look like a fun organization to join.

2. What else should I know before I start to table?

- It is best to table between 10 am and 2 pm, Monday through Thursday.
- You should select a high-traffic area on or near campus to table.
- Have the SSDP Sign-Up Sheets at the front of the table.
- Place small stacks of materials and literature on the table, and additional copies nearby.
- Keep the table neat and tidy.

3. What do I do once I'm at the table?

- Be available to talk to students about SSDP.
- Greet people in a friendly manner and don't be afraid to ask students to join SSDP.
- Don't wait for students to approach you; approach them and ask questions as they're walking by.
- Collect names, addresses, preferred phone numbers, and e-mails on the Sign-Up Sheet.
- Be prepared to answer the question, "What is sensible drug policy?" (See http://www.ssdp.org/what_is_sensible_drug_policy.doc for some good answers.)

4. What are good tabling talking points?

- Through youth involvement in the political process, SSDP educates the public about the harms caused by the Drug War and promotes an open, honest, and inclusive dialogue on alternative solutions to drug abuse and addiction.
- We lead the student movement to repeal drug laws and policies that block access to education and prevent students who have gotten into trouble with drugs from going to school and turning their lives around.
- On this campus, we hope to change the way the university approaches drug violations so that education and treatment are prioritized over punishment.
- As students, we are uniquely able to speak to the way the war on drugs hurts, not helps, young people. We study drug policy, but we don't all agree on what a perfect policy is. We know the Drug War isn't working, so we need to find solutions that do work.

- The Drug War is waged in the name of youth. After decades of this Drug War, drugs are cheaper and more prevalent than ever. As members of the D.A.R.E. Generation it is our responsibility to stop the government from waging this war in our name.

Don't forget to have new or interested members sign-up on the SSDP list. Remind everyone about upcoming meetings or events, and get commitments to attend. Invite enthusiastic new members to hang out at the table with you.

Don't forget to follow up! Enter new contacts into the chapter list, and send an introductory e-mail to the list shortly after tabling.

Notes:

Chapter 3

Becoming an Effective Leader

To organize a committed, active chapter on campus, you must learn to become an effective leader. **Leadership involves an assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses as part of a continual effort to improve on one's performance.** Leaders usually have a handful of characteristics in common. This chapter offers a snapshot of the qualities essential to leadership, especially the qualities that enable a leader to effectively guide an organization's campaigns and actions.

A Leader...

- **Leads by example.**
- Is committed to the **mission** and **success** of an organization.
- Is able to **plan and implement campaigns** to meet an organization's goals.
- Is **flexible** and able to **cope with change**.
- Is able to **delegate** tasks and responsibilities to others, instead of trying to do everything individually.
- **Listens to the concerns of others** before making a decision.
- Is able to **prioritize one's time**, and only takes on the few most important projects that he or she knows there is time to manage.
- **Is able to say "No"** to less important projects, in order to avoid becoming too overworked and stressed out.
- Has **respect** for others and is respected by others.
- Has the desire to **motivate** others.
- Ultimately **takes responsibility** for the actions of the group.

Obviously, the qualities that transform an individual into a leader aren't attainable in the time it takes to read this manual. But you can use this as an opportunity to explore a handful of tools that you can use throughout your years as a leader.

There are traits common to effective leaders. **Leaders manage their time. Leaders want their time to turn into results, so they think about what they can contribute to an action or campaign. They concentrate on one or two areas where outstanding performance produces outstanding results. Leaders build on their own strengths as well as the strengths of others.**

You will gradually develop many skills that will contribute to your chapter's success. On the resources page of our website (www.ssdp.org/resources), we provide some handy guides to assist you with those essential skills (e.g. working with the media, public speaking, etc.). However, since the most important skill to master, meeting facilitation, is one that you will need to learn right away, we have included a detailed how-to guide here.

Introduction:

As you know, meetings are an essential part of running an organization. Because meetings are where your members convene regularly to set goals, plan events, discuss policy, and get to know each other, it is up to you, the chapter leader, to ensure that those meetings are focused, productive, and fun.

We know that preparing for meetings can sometimes be stressful. But it doesn't need to be. While every chapter is different, and experience is the only sure way to develop your unique leadership style, this guide can help you to start planning more productive meetings.

The most important thing to keep in mind when planning a meeting is that **SSDP chapters do not exist for the purpose of just having meetings!** There's a big, nasty Drug War out there, and it's our job to change it. Your chapter should be doing everything in its power to contribute to the drug policy reform movement, from planning educational events, to heading up aggressive grassroots campaigns. So when planning for meetings, always ask yourself: *How will this meeting contribute to our chapter's campaigns and events?*

If you formulate your meetings around specific short- and long-term goals, you'll realize that productive meetings are key to the success of your chapter's activities. This step-by-step guide offers suggestions that will help you make meetings as productive as they can be.

STEP 1: Preparing for the Meeting

- a) **Leadership Meeting:** *Always* meet with your chapter's leadership before each general meeting to ensure that you are all on the same page before going into it. Make these leadership meetings open to anyone who wants to be involved in the leadership and planning of the organization.
- b) **Set an Agenda:** At your leadership meeting, come up with an agenda for the next general membership meeting. Include introductions, announcements, topics of discussion, and anything else you might anticipate coming up at the meeting (see Step 3).
- c) **Advertise:** Never, ever, underestimate the power of flyers, chalking, and tabling (see Chapter 2).
- d) **Reminders:** Send an e-mail and Facebook reminder to your members about the meeting several days in advance. Include date, time, place, etc. Also, include the agenda, and ask for additions. Send an additional reminder on the day of the meeting, and if it's an especially important meeting, make phone calls or send text messages and IMs to your core membership to ensure that they haven't forgotten. People won't be annoyed... they'll be thankful for the reminder, since they probably have lots of other things on their mind.
- e) **Punch and Pie:** Don't be afraid to bribe people with food and drinks. Most likely, your meeting will be in the late afternoon or early evening, when people are tired from classes and hungry. If you don't have money in your budget for food, ask your core leadership to pitch in a few bucks for some pizza and soda. And be sure to advertise "FREE FOOD!"

STEP 2: Getting the Ball Rolling at the Meeting

- a) **Timeliness:** Start on time. Don't delay things more than five minutes if you are waiting for people to show up. If you do wait, it will give people the impression that it is okay to show up late, and soon enough, half your membership will get used to showing up 15, 20, or 30 minutes late. Avoid this by setting the standard that meetings will always start on time.
- b) **Agenda:** Pass around copies of the agenda so that everyone is on the same page. Ask for last minute additions.
- c) **Collect Contact Info:** Pass around a sheet where new members can write down their contact information (name, e-mail, phone number, screen name).
- d) **Establish Meeting Responsibilities:** If you don't have a secretary or moderator, ask for a volunteer to take notes and a volunteer to moderate the meeting. Both are important responsibilities that should be carried out by someone other than the chapter president. Notes can be given to absent members and used to plan the next meeting, while a moderator can ensure that the meeting is moving along in an efficient manner.
- e) **Introductions:** At the start of the semester, introductions are important to get everyone comfortable with one another. In addition to asking people to introduce themselves, ask an "ice breaker" that might elicit interesting or fun responses. Depending on your leadership style, it can be something silly like "What's your favorite ice cream flavor?," or something more relevant like "How did you find out about SSDP, and what made you decide to come?" The important thing is to get people talking so they feel comfortable working together. If your members have already gotten to know each other, but there are new faces at the meeting, ask the new people to introduce themselves. And always thank them for coming.

STEP 3: Showtime

- a) **Tone:** It's tricky but essential to make meetings both professional and fun. You want the meeting to be productive and on-task, but you also want to leave room for comfort and laughter. If the meeting is too strict and professional, people will be uncomfortable speaking up, and they won't want to come back. But if the meeting has no direction, people will feel that their time has been wasted. A good solution is to find something fun to start the meeting with, such as a "Know Your Rights" skit, a drug policy trivia game, or a video of a ridiculous "anti-drug" commercial. Then, after having a good laugh, get down to business.
- b) **Discussion:** *Always* leave room for discussion. Don't sit there yapping the whole meeting – people will be bored and disinterested, no matter how interesting of a person you are. Drug policy is a fascinating topic that people want to talk about, and SSDP meetings should provide a forum for that discussion to take place. However, two things are required in order to ensure that discussion is focused and on topic: Asking the Right Questions and Moderation.
- c) **Asking the Right Questions:** Instead of telling people about drug policy, ask them about drug policy. For example, before telling people about what's happening with SSDP's HEA campaign, ask if anybody knows about it. This will give members who have come to past meetings the ability to teach the newer people about what they've learned. This also saves you the burden of having to talk for an hour, and it gives

members a rewarding way to contribute. As a general rule, a good teacher teaches not by lecturing, but by engaging the audience in a productive discussion by asking the right questions.

- d) **Moderation:** Without effective moderation, discussions can become unwieldy and unproductive. Make sure that you have a discussion topic (it can be phrased as a question), and that you stick to that topic. A moderator (preferably somebody other than the chapter president) keeps track of the order of people who want to speak. If the discussion begins to get off-topic, the moderator's job is to tactfully bring it back on-topic. It's important to make people feel like what they have to say is important, so if you need to get the discussion back on track, say something like: "I think this is a great discussion. Since we don't have too much time together today, and we still need to get to some other agenda items, let's see if we can get back to the original topic, and revisit these important issues another time..."
- e) **Decide:** Remember, a meeting should *always* result in decisions being made. *What events will we host this year? What will our major campaign or campaigns be? Who will take the lead on our next project? Who will be president next semester?* As a chapter leader, it is important to build consensus on these issues, by facilitating a civil debate, and introducing compromise solutions if there is a disagreement in the room. However, sometimes disagreement is unavoidable, and a vote is necessary. It's always a good idea to make paper ballots to keep people's votes anonymous. This will ensure that people will be comfortable voting how they feel, without worrying about what others will think about their vote.
- f) **Act:** Or at least, set a plan for action. Once you decide what you need to work on, narrow that to what you are able to work on, and then divide that into actual, concrete, measurable **action items**. Come up with a short list of tasks (giving too many can be overwhelming) that will contribute most to the campaign or event that you are working on. For example, if you are planning for a speaker to come to your school, you will determine that there are a few important tasks that need to be completed in order for the event to be successful (e.g. booking the room, securing A/V equipment, securing an honorarium for the speaker, working with the speaker to figure out travel and lodging, promotion & advertising, etc.). Ask for volunteers to lead up teams, and make the tasks and the timeline for the tasks very clear before the meeting ends. Everybody should leave the meeting with a piece of homework, large or small, that they know they are responsible for. At the next meeting, ask how people's homework went.
- g) **Form Action Teams:** Teams are essential to breaking down a project into manageable parts. Unlike "committees," teams have a definite goal, and a definite end point. For example, the goal for your "advertising team" for the speaker project is to tape up 200 flyers around campus, distribute 200 hand-held flyers, and put "table-tents" on all the dining room tables. Once these goals are accomplished, the team is no longer a team. If a new project comes up, simply form a new advertising team. (This avoids setting up long-term committees, which often can become stagnant for a number of reasons.) A team leader is responsible for staying in touch with team members and ensuring that the tasks the team promised to complete are completed.
- h) **Reward:** If an individual or a team goes above and beyond the call of duty, be sure to reward them! If you have chapter t-shirts, give a free t-shirt. If you don't have

anything to give, at least express your heartfelt appreciation. If the whole chapter pulls off a successful event or campaign, reward them with a fun social event. Regardless of how you choose to show your appreciation for hard work, make sure you do so often.

- i) **Reiterate Tasks:** Be sure to repeat what needs to be done, and who is responsible for doing it, and make sure that people take detailed notes about what they are responsible for.
- j) **Wrap It Up:** Ask “Is there anything else?” Make sure all questions are answered. Remind people when the next meeting/event is. Thank everyone for coming, but don’t rush people out. Encourage post-meeting socializing so people can get to know each other. And **always** have your leadership take the time to approach new members and introduce themselves on a personal level.

STEP 4: Follow Up, and Repeat

- a) Send out the minutes (notes) of the meeting as soon as possible to your e-mail list.
- b) Repeat the process, making sure to always follow up each meeting on the decisions and tasks made last meeting.

With practice, you can become a skilled meeting facilitator. Once you master this skill, your chapter will be able to accomplish great things!

Notes:

Chapter 4

Campus Events

Organizing events on campus is not the sole reason your chapter exists. It is, however, a way to increase the presence of your chapter on campus, grow the chapter, educate people on campus and in the community, earn media, and start to build support for campaigns.

What are common chapter events?

- Screen “BUSTED: The Citizen’s Guide to Surviving Police Encounters.”
- Invite a speaker from Law Enforcement Against Prohibition to talk about the Drug War.
- Co-sponsor other organization’s events on issues related to the Drug War.
- Hold a roundtable discussion, symposium, teach-in, or debate on the Drug War.
- Bring in a noted author to discuss and sign a book on the Drug War.
- Host a benefit for SSDP with local artists, musicians, and entertainers. [More on Screening a Movie](#)

Movies are easy and fun events to organize. And the best ones are educational too. One favorite film among SSDP chapters and activists is *BUSTED: The Citizen’s Guide to Surviving Police Encounters*. Screening *BUSTED* can be part of a larger Know Your Rights training, possibly featuring a Q&A with a local defense attorney. Contact SSDP for more information on *BUSTED* and other movies. *Grass*, *The War on The War on Drugs*, *Traffic*, or *Maria Full of Grace* are all fine choices. If there’s time, consider hosting a post-movie discussion on Drug War issues.

More on Hosting a Speaker or Entertainer

Good speakers convey enthusiasm, build a sense of community, and impart important information. As a general rule, don’t pay for an honorarium unless the university covers the cost or other organizations are sharing the expense. Again, contact SSDP for more information on great speakers and entertainers.

More on Having a Symposium

Use a symposium to expose all sides of a controversial issue. Symposiums are usually best when more than one organization is involved because it adds different perspectives and increases turnout. SSDP can connect you with chapters and activists that have had successful symposiums.

The steps to organizing any event on campus are basically the same. Read on for the simple steps involved in planning and implementing any type of event. Don’t hesitate to contact SSDP’s field director if you need help or have questions.

1. Book the event. Two or three people should share the responsibility of organizing the event. The lead organizer should pick a date, time, and locations that work for the chapter, the speaker, and the university. Check with the university calendar and other

student organizations to avoid competition with other meetings or events likely to attract the same audience. **Allow at least one month for planning the event.** Obviously, the more time you have to plan, the better your plans can be.

2. Pack the house. Filling the seats is the most important part of organizing any event. You must find people to attend the event. **It looks and feels better to pack a smaller room that seats 50, even if it's overflowing with people, than to have a large lecture hall for 300 that seems and feels very empty.**

Find a few teachers or teacher assistants to offer credit to students who attend the event. Blast your personal list, as well as SSDP's local, regional, and national lists. Make announcements before classes. Advertise the meeting with sidewalk chalk in prominent locations on or near campus, including on the chalkboards of large lecture halls. Flyer campus and ask other groups to announce the events at their meetings and send it out to their lists. Post announcements on Internet sites like Facebook and MySpace. Remind your friends by sending them instant messages. Follow-up with phone calls to everyone the night before the event! Don't forget about campus and community newspapers. List your meeting in their free calendar of events or take out an advertisement, if you can afford one. If you can't buy an ad, you can earn free media with an Op-Ed, letter to the editor, or preview story. Contact SSDP for help getting an advance article in your campus or community newspaper about your event.

3. Get the media to cover the event. Designate one person as a spokesperson to work with the media. He or she should work with SSDP to blast news advisories and releases and follow-up by pitching the story to reporters. SSDP will also provide you with talking points and we can help you develop Op-Ed pieces and letters to the editor as well.

4. Don't forget the advance work. Call and confirm the travel and lodging plans for the invited speaker or entertainer. Make sure his or her equipment needs are tended to. Arrive early to meet the speaker, but have a back-up plan if he or she is late. Try to anticipate and prepare for any other problems that might arise.

5. Get the bang for your buck. Collect names, e-mails, and phone numbers from everyone who attends the event. Unless they opt-out, add them to the chapter list. Promote SSDP before and after the event. Have a table to display SSDP literature, materials, and resources during the event. Stick around after to spend time with attendees.

6. Follow-up! Be sure to thank the speaker, as well as everyone who attended the event. Add them to the chapter list and remind them about upcoming meetings and events. **Remember, events are a way to build the base of your chapter, to prepare you for future campaigns and actions that actually effect change to law and policy.**

Notes:

Chapter 5

Ongoing SSDP National Campaigns and Actions

SSDP currently coordinates five national campaigns and actions aimed at getting rid of drug policies that negatively impact youth. You can read and download everything you need to know about these efforts on the SSDP website at www.ssdp.org/campaigns.

It is a good idea to print out some of the information on these efforts to distribute at the first meeting of the semester as well as when you table. Not only will the information help all students understand SSDP and the organization's agenda and goals, but the information will help you and your chapter decide what to work on.

Campus Change Campaign

SSDP is excited to launch the Campus Change Campaign – a campus-by-campus effort to help students foster sensible, compassionate approaches to drugs at their own schools. As young people, we will live with the implications of drug laws and policies for the rest of our lives. That's why it's up to us to create more sensible, compassionate approaches to the real and complex issues of drug abuse and addiction. As students, we have a chance to take the lead in formulating and enacting alternatives. Students caught with drugs should not face expulsion from school, eviction from the dorms or any other punishment more severe than how the administration deals with alcohol violations. With a broad network of students across the country, we have the opportunity to see exactly what works and what doesn't. See the Campus Change Campaign online for information, materials, and other resources to get going: <http://www.ssdp.org/campaigns/ccc/>

The Higher Education Act Aid Elimination Penalty

After seven years of hard work, SSDP recently achieved a significant reform in the HEA Aid Elimination Penalty, the law that strips financial aid from college students with drug convictions. Our success is due to the work of thousands of SSDP students across the country who educated their elected officials, on campus and in Congress. Under the new rules, the federal financial aid ban only applies to students who are convicted of a drug violation while they are receiving federal financial aid, and those who had convictions before coming to college will be eligible again. SSDP will never stop fighting for a complete repeal of the penalty, but we are moving in new directions in our attack, including federal lawsuits. We continue to rely on our chapters to spread the word about this terrible law. To learn more about this issue and what you can do, visit the Higher Education Act section of our website: <http://www.ssdp.org/campaigns/hea>

Drug Education and Counseling

Drug abuse and addiction are real problems in many schools throughout the country. Clearly, students, parents, and educators need to work together to address the

problems that drug abuse presents to schools and communities. Unfortunately, more often than not, the government-sponsored programs aimed at solving these problems actually make them worse, while alienating students in the process. Currently, the largest such program is the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. But the research shows that D.A.R.E. is ineffective in achieving its stated goal of reducing student drug abuse. Perhaps it should be no wonder that a program that fosters a culture of fear and distrust between students and their drug counselors would be doomed to failure. As those of us who went through it understand, the D.A.R.E program employs uniformed police officers – not health care professionals – to teach students about drugs. Rather than providing students with science-based information about drugs, the students are scared with horror stories about drug addiction. Students need and deserve effective education and counseling that provide accurate, non-judgmental, science-based information about drugs. To learn more about this issue and what you can do, see the Drug Education and Counseling section of our website: <http://www.ssdp.org/campaigns/dec>

Students' Rights and Privacy

Currently very few high schools in the U.S. perform random drug tests on their students. However, the federal government has recently ramped up its campaign to encourage schools to implement drug testing programs and even offers grants to fund them. Meanwhile, representatives from drug testing companies are increasingly arranging presentations in front of local school boards to promote their products. As a result, some schools require students to submit to drug testing if they want to participate in any competitive extra-curricular activity. Student drug testing is ineffective, counterproductive, expensive, and personally invasive. Though intended to reduce student drug use, the science tells us that testing simply does not work. Many have raised concerns that such programs could even aggravate an existing drug problem by pushing students away from the same extracurricular activities that are proven to reduce drug use. The concerns about invasiveness and civil liberties violations are self-evident. Forcing a student to urinate into a cup while a school official listens outside the stall undermines a student's Fourth Amendment privacy protections. Just as alarming as the government's promotion of student drug testing is the emerging trend it has fueled regarding the erosion of students' rights and privacy in other areas. At many schools, students can expect unannounced police searches of their persons, book bags, and lockers – with or without cause. To learn more about this issue and what you can do, visit the Student Rights and Privacy section of our website: <http://www.ssdp.org/campaigns/srp>

Youth Culture

Since its inception, one of the primary motivations behind America's War on Drugs has been concern for the welfare and social development of children. Policymakers have rightly argued that laws should be crafted to protect young people from the dangers of drugs. In recent years, however, the policy debate has left young people themselves in the crossfire, and too often assigned blame for the drug problem to youth culture itself.

Youth frequently find themselves the targets of raids at social gatherings and entertainment events and are treated as though they are under perpetual suspicion for committing drug crimes. In 2003, an 11th hour amendment to the AMBER Alert bill made business owners liable for the drug law violations of their patrons, even when they take steps to prevent on-site drug use. The amendment – popularly known as the RAVE Act – has the practical effect of shutting down dance and concert venues frequented by young people. Law enforcement have broad discretion to apply the law to whatever groups or events they happen to personally dislike, as evidenced by the DEA shutdown of a 2003 SSDP fundraiser in Billings, Montana. To learn more about RAVE laws and what you can do, visit the youth culture section of our website: <http://www.ssdp.org/campaigns/yc>

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Chapter 6

Fundraising, *Friend-raising*, and Development

Fundraising and development are really all about making friends. Friends *with money* – or, more likely, your parents’ or professors’ friends – can help your chapter organize and run campaigns and actions, as well as host and attend stellar, inspirational conferences and events. This chapter goes over a few ways to add to your chapter’s funds – what the pros call “development.”

Apply for university funding. A significant benefit to being recognized by the university as a student organization is that you have the right to funding from the university. This money is yours! You pay for it with your mandatory student activity fee. Research the university’s guidelines and apply for funding as soon as possible. It is likely that you need to submit your budget one or two semesters ahead of time. Be as specific as possible. Look through the calendar of events you’ve planned to determine funding needs. It is also a good idea to check reformer and community calendars for upcoming events. You’ll want to ask for money to cover basic costs such as printing, supplies, banners, refreshments, advertisements, and honorariums, but you’ll also want to ask for money to cover the costs of event travel, lodging, and registration. Always ask for more money than you expect to receive, since you will rarely receive as much as you request. **Don’t forget to ask for money to cover the costs to attend SSDP’s annual conference hosted in the fall and our regional conferences in the spring.**

Sell t-shirts, hold a bake sale, sell raffle tickets. Do not forget about simple and proven fundraising methods. Consider selling shirts, baked goods, or raffle tickets while tabling or at an event. Local businesses will often donate goods and services for raffles. Contact the SSDP National Headquarters about discounts on SSDP merchandise. Concerts, car washes and parties can also raise a lot of money. Be sure to follow all local rules and guidelines governing fundraising on campus by student organizations.

Consider outside sources of funding. Some SSDPers have succeeded in developing relationships with foundations or donors in their communities and secured funding from sources outside of SSDP. The Marijuana Policy Project, the Drug Policy Alliance, and Americans for Safe Access offer grants for sizable, significant campaigns and actions. If you are interested in applying for funding from MPP, DPA, ASA, Campus Progress, or another outside source, please contact SSDP. We will assist you in preparing an application, and work with you to avoid duplicate proposals to foundations or donors.

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Chapter 7

A Final Word About Joining SSDP

SSDP is a family, committed to helping one another grow and reach our full potential as activists and as human beings. We work together at every level to achieve the changes we wish to see in the world. We ask for your time, your energy, your ideas, and your willingness to work hard. In return, we offer you a national organization in which you can learn and grow as an activist, developing the skill sets that are highly sought after by employers in every sector imaginable. Employers prize SSDP students after graduation in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors due to their accomplishments and skills. We hope you'll choose to join our family and help us end the War on Drugs. Welcome to SSDP!