The successful transition of an executive board is important to ensure that the operation of the organization runs smoothly during the changing of leadership from one academic year to the next.

**Elections**

Transitioning a new executive board has to begin with elections. In section 2 of Article V, each student organization’s constitution should outline their basic elections process which is specific to every organization. This section describes the different executive board positions, their responsibilities, the eligibility requirements of each position, and your role as the advisor.

Every election process should begin with a timeline (organized by the elections chair to accommodate their and your schedule) so that the event runs in a smooth and timely manner. Some organizations might provide different meetings or interest sessions for those curious about running for a board position, each of which might be held on a different date. There could be one meeting set aside as an informal session for general members of the organization to become informed about how the executive board works and then be able to decide if they would like to run. Another possible meeting could be set up for the nominations process. Lastly, a meeting can be held for the actual elections. Showing your support during these meetings will also give you the opportunity to see the students’ interest in the positions and showcase your involvement with the organization.

The length of the elections process itself will vary depending on how many positions are available. A good option to keep in mind for elections is for the organization to have a moderator, such as the organization advisor, a highly involved alumnus, or the highest non-returning executive board member, appointed by the president to run the elections. This person will facilitate the elections and have control over the entire process. This person’s main responsibility will be to control the time of the election process.

**Inauguration**

The installation of the newly elected executive board should occur during the spring semester, at least two weeks before the end of the academic year. When inaugurated by the exiting board, the new executive board should assume control of all of the responsibilities pertinent to their elected position. A shadowing period with the outgoing executive board can allow the new executive board members a sneak peak of what their new position entails. This experience would be a good idea either before or during the first few days after inauguration.

If the student organization normally hosts an end of the year banquet or other formal event, make sure to present the new board before the general members. Additionally, if the organization has
their own office, the keys to the office as well as email and listserv logins and passwords should be passed down to the new board.

Retreats

One of the best ways to transition an executive board is by having a retreat. A retreat will allow for time to focus solely on your organization and for the outgoing board to pass down the necessary skills for the new board’s role as leaders of the organization. A retreat offers opportunity for motivation, evaluation of organizational goals, bonding time for the new board, and program planning for the new academic year.

Where you plan your student organization’s retreat, there are several important factors to consider. Take into consideration who will be attending, individual schedules, time of the year, and accessibility if it is on or off campus. The location of the retreat should be somewhere different with adequate accommodations for everyone. This way the members are slightly disconnected from the outside world and better able to focus on the tasks at hand.

Some organizations invite past executive board members to their retreats in order to help with the translation of information. Older members can offer a different take for running an organization, advice for running specific events or programs, and insight into how things have changed from their time in office. As advisor, your knowledge will provide a professional standpoint and history.

In transitioning the new executive board, ask the outgoing executive board members to answer the following questions:

- What is important to pass on to the new leadership?
- What would have made their transition easier?
- How can they ensure that the new officers are as ready as they can be to continue leading your organization?
- As the advisor, ask yourself what the difference is between the exiting board and the new board, and how you can help make their experience better.

In addition, the incoming executive board should consider:

- Are there any faculty or staff members that they will work with?
- Could the outgoing executive board introduce me to them?
- What were your best and worst experiences this year with the exiting board?
- What are the main responsibilities of this office?

These questions help establish a basis for other questions and topics that should be concentrated on during a retreat. There are endless topics to be addressed at an executive board retreat; while many topics remain the same for different student organizations, other topics are specific to an organization and the manner in which it is run. Among topics to consider are:

- Organization’s history
- Challenges to be faced