

MEMBERSHIP TOOLKIT AND RESOURCES



NCPA Student Chapter Membership Toolkit

Your student membership drive is one of the most important activities that you plan for your student chapter. The number of members you retain, the number of members you recruit, and the membership dues you collect are all essential to the success of your student chapter and chapter programs. Depending on the size of your student body and the level of interest at your school/college, the information you use and the approach you take may vary. However, the most important thing is that your membership drive is the most aggressive and strategic event you execute all year.

This document will lead you through a progressive timeline that will outline some ideas for membership recruitment beginning the year previous to the academic school year you are planning for. Feel free to browse through the ideas and choose which ones will work for your chapter.

From the last two months of the academic year prior to the one you are planning for. . .

Membership Development

There are three aspects to membership development:

1. Recruitment
2. Engagement
3. Retention

These three aspects make up the key to a strong organization. Strong member recruitment involves acquiring new members who have not previously been members of NCPA. Member Engagement refers to involving the new member in activities and programs as early as possible. Engagement can be as simple as inviting members to events or asking them to join a committee and take part in a project. By developing your member engagement activities, you can strengthen your relationship with members and mentor them as they grow in the organization. Member retention is the ability to maintain a student as an active member of the organization. Your ability to retain a member is dependent on how effectively you were able to recruit and then engage each student member, showing them the value of their membership and their value to the organization. *(Refer to Suggested Membership Development Activities section for a more extensive list of ideas)*

1. Strategies for Recruiting Members

No matter how much effort goes into planning an activity, it won't be successful if no one knows about it! Be sure to publicize your chapter's membership events and encourage others to participate.

Inform the administration and faculty about the event and invite them to participate and to announce the activity or event to their students.

Also, remember that **Membership is everyone's job!** And a large part of your efforts will be coordinating with fellow chapter leaders to ensure that membership development activities are given a high priority. Finally, be prepared to ask students to join or renew. Don't be shy! You

are, after all, reaching out to your colleagues to ask them to take advantage of a strong portfolio of membership benefits.

Student chapters share stories of their successful membership drives with us every year. Following are examples of some successful ideas pharmacy students have used nationwide to plan membership campaigns.

Welcome New Students:

- Begin recruitment early with pre-pharmacy students and first year pharmacy students
- Showcasing NCPA chapter at orientation! Utilize tools such as the NCPA banner, a tri-fold poster, brochures, membership applications, and giveaways such as donated Rx vials filled with M & Ms, raffle.
- Highlight your chapters history and show students how they can make a difference!
- Classroom presentation or visits (independent pharmacy presentation, i.e. invite compounding pharmacist, junior partner, NPCA Ambassador)
- Offer discounted membership for a limited time at the beginning of the semester by lowering or waiving local chapter dues

Provide a Chapter Orientation Package:

- P1 Welcome letter/packet mailings
- Create a membership folder for student members containing information about NCPA, important contacts, and upcoming events
- Articles showcasing the chapter in school publications or other pharmacy related publications (i.e. NPCA's *America's Pharmacist*)
- Announcements on bulletin boards/showcases

Sponsor a Meet and Greet

- Sponsor a snack break, lunch, or meet and greet with NCPA chapter officers
- Welcome to Pharmacy School Cookout or a NCPA sponsored lunch meeting with a local independent pharmacist, SLC member or NCPA Student Affairs representative
- Plan evening information sessions during the beginning weeks of the fall semester

Show Your Passion

- Promote membership benefits such as loans & scholarships, the Good Neighbor Pharmacy NCPA Pruitt-Schutte Student business plan competition, conferences, and other member benefits
- Deliver a legislative advocacy presentation – invite the director of government affairs from your State Pharmacy Association, etc.

At the end of your membership drive, welcome new members, share with your members how much the chapter grew, and update your membership spreadsheet with all the new members' contact information.

From “No” to “Yes”: Rolling with Resistance for Membership

It seems like people tend to say “No” whenever they are asked to join anything, but don't be discouraged by this tendency. A valuable membership tool is knowing how to turn that “No” into a “Yes”! Overcoming a “No” or “Maybe” will become easier as you learn how to properly respond. Consider the following objections and some clever responses:

- **“But I work at a chain” or “I'm not interested in owning a pharmacy”**
 - “NCPA represents all community pharmacists working in the country. The issues that NCPA is fighting at a national level work to ensure that community pharmacists are able to continue to thrive in the future. The National Association of Trade Drug Stores (NACDS) works very closely with NCPA and is comprised of corporate members such as the companies that own the chain drug stores.”
- **“I'm interested in residencies though...”**

- “There are actually residency options in many areas of the profession. Community Pharmacy Residency Programs as well as Independent Pharmacy Ownership Residencies both provide students avenues for growth that can be very lucrative”
- “Involvement as a student can give you opportunities to set yourself apart from other students and give you the skills that residencies are looking for.”
- “By joining NCPA you are giving yourself the opportunity to learn about a side of the profession that might have more to offer you than you might think.”
- “By joining NCPA you can show that you are more well-rounded than your competitors.”
- **“But I’m already a member of another organization”**
 - “Your membership with NCPA can help you develop leadership and communication skills that will be valuable in your work with the other organizations”
 - “Many students join multiple organizations to become exposed to more aspects of the profession”
- **“Maybe, I’m just not sure if I’m interested in joining an organization”**
 - “Really? Do you realize what you’re missing? NCPA offers numerous opportunities throughout the year to help students understand new ways of making money, innovative practices, resources for being a leader in the profession, as well as opportunities to connect with students and professionals across the country.”
- **“I’m too busy to go to a chapter meeting”**
 - “We regularly send out updates of the topics discussed at our chapter meetings in order to update our members on what is new with the organization”
 - “Your benefits as an NCPA member cover so much more than can be obtained just through our chapter meetings...”
 - “As an NCPA member, the benefits offered are accessible online as well as countless resources that can help you over your time as a student pharmacist.”
 - “There is no requirement to attend chapter meetings as a member, we understand that things come up and that not everyone can attend everything”
- **“I think dues are too high”**
 - “Have you seen all the valuable benefits that come with NCPA membership? You’ll have access to networking opportunities and NCPA’s Under My Wing Mentorship Program which can open doors to job opportunities following graduation!”
 - “Your membership dues are actually instrumental to advancing the profession at a national level by supporting the activities of NCPA and the work they do to create programs for pharmacists and have a stronger presence on Capitol Hill.”

[2. Strategies for Engaging Members](#)

An often overlooked but critical part of membership is engagement. If we think of NCPA as a car, our members are the gasoline that fuels our core objectives! By consistently keeping our members engaged, we will be able to accomplish more than just improving membership numbers, we will have more leverage to make a positive impact on the profession! This is why it is important to develop an overall member engagement strategy.

- **Utilize Committees Effectively:**
 - Offer discounted membership for a limited time at the beginning of the semester by lowering or waiving local chapter dues
- **Pay Attention to Your Members and Feedback:**
 - Survey your members for feedback on new programs or provide an annual survey to see what the members thought you did well and what they think you can improve on. Although some feedback might not be feasible to implement, the feedback does provide insight into the member mindset.

- Create an open source for communication between the executive committee and the members.
- **Cultivate Involvement**
 - Invite students to participate in activities throughout the year. Use the chapter of the year award and the Practice Transformation Challenge as a way to foster chapter unity and togetherness. Members will have a sense of ownership if they are actively involved with these activities.
- **Highlight the Benefits**
 - Always encourage students to take advantage of the membership benefits and remind them throughout the year of the various scholarships available to them, as well as the option for student loans from the NCPA Foundation.

3. Strategies for Retaining Members

- **Prioritize Member Retention**
 - Make retaining membership a priority. Retaining members is just as important as recruiting new members for the sustainability of your chapter. Send out thank you cards along with reminders to expiring members to renew their memberships.
- **Membership Committee**
 - Create a membership committee (think tank) to focus on ways to both bring in members and to recognize the contributions of current members.
- **Incentivize**
 - Consider using a point reward system for members that participate in events. Different events will have different point gains. Members who accumulate x number of points will get a prize or some honoree plaque. This point system can be expanded to other areas of the chapter as members see fit. Chapters can add other incentives to the point system such as an NCPA pin, mug or pen to members who recruit at least two new members.
- **Make Each Member Feel Special**
 - Make an effort to remember names and to smile and greet people by name when they are spotted around campus. This should be standard practice and remember to always speak with excitement and pride when describing your chapter.
- **Show the Impact**
 - "A picture is worth a thousand words." Create a bulletin board display in a prominent place showing pictures from chapter activities, trips to NCPA conventions, membership information, and a calendar of upcoming NCPA events.

Membership Timeline:

From the first day of summer through the first day of class. . .

Monthly Emails

Send out monthly e-mails to students with the application attached. Ask your school or college of pharmacy for permission first. In the email you can include the following information:

- Describe your excitement for the upcoming year
- Highlight the advantages of your NCPA student chapter.
- Emphasize and highlight early registration cost versus the normal rate, if you chose to do this. Be very clear about the specific date that a mailed application should be postmarked by.
- Include contact information for questions
- Attach the application
 - Include where to mail the application once completed
 - Highlight who to make checks payable to

Continue these emails into the first month of school if you feel the e-mails have been effective.

Mass mailings

As the matriculation period for colleges/schools of pharmacy begins many schools begin to send out mass mailings of information to the incoming and returning student body. Around this period of time the students are very attentive and read everything in detail to be sure not to miss any important information that they may need. Take advantage of this trend in student behavior and send out a mass mailing from your student organization. The president should draft a letter on behalf of the organization to the whole student body welcoming them to the college/school of pharmacy or upon their return to another academic year. Within this welcome letter there should be some information on your organization and what the benefits would be to join. Include a printed membership application for students to fill out and mail in. If your student chapter has P1 / Level 1 Representative, include the position description. Coordinate with the admissions office to stuff envelopes and have them sent out through the school to all students including the incoming P1's / Level 1's.

With regards to general information distributed by the school, be sure that NCPA Conference dates are included with all school-distributed documents that list important dates for the upcoming year/semester(s).

Incoming Students Orientation Week

Most colleges/schools of pharmacy have an orientation week or something similar for the incoming P1 / Level 1 students. During this week the students receive multiple presentations on a variety of topics and subjects. Because these presentations include important topics as financial aid and housing the students are once again very attentive to detail during this period. If there are any segments where faculty or students are discussing student organizations or extracurricular activities in general make sure you are present, and the organization receives proper representation. Also, during this week, the school will sometimes solicit the assistance of students and student leaders to be break out group leaders or a mentor for an incoming student. Be sure that your board members and members that signed up for the summer volunteer to help when the school calls for such assistance. This will allow you and your student membership to begin to build friendships with individuals in the incoming class and will make your organization stand out as a driver of professional and community development.

From the first day of class. . .

Recruitment Booth

A recruitment booth or kiosk is always a good way to catch students at different times of the day. Setup with all of your materials and as students pass by you can approach them, discuss NCPA and independent pharmacy with them, and the benefits to joining your student organization. It is to your advantage to begin the first week of school and continue every day through the week. If you can do the first two weeks of school the investment will still be fruitful because it gives unsure students time to ask questions, compare the organizations, and make a confident decision. Just like an independent pharmacy, choosing a location is critical! Make sure that you

choose a location with a lot of foot traffic and appropriate visibility. Be sure to table at appropriate times during the day, if not all day, so all the students have sufficient time to talk to an NCPA member, ask questions, read materials, and possibly fill out an application. Have two or more members staff the table at all times. Make sure that each person is prepared with the information and references for dialogue with inquiring students.

- Put together a tri-fold board
 - Pictures
 - Past programs
 - Independents in your state (contact studentaffairs@ncpa.org)
 - List of programs planned (major programs highlighted)
 - Logos of sponsors and supporters
 - Brief description of the purpose of the student organization
 - NCPA Website
 - Student Chapter Website

On the table you should have multiple items readily available to provide to students who show interest:

- Half-sheet / full-sheet informational pieces
- Membership Application
- Receipt book
- P1 / Level 1 Representative position description and application (if your student chapter has one)
- Membership Guide Book
- NCPA Annual Convention & Exposition information
- Committee sign-up sheet
- Giveaways (eg. school supplies, snacks, candy, buttons, stickers, etc.)

Informational Session

An informational session is the cornerstone to any quality membership drive. You may schedule this session either at lunchtime or after school. A couple things to take into consideration 1) if it's a lunchtime event, how long will it take students to file out the lecture hall or room that you need, how long will it take you to setup and get everyone organized, how long will it take to get all the interested students in, fed, seated, and quiet, and how long will it take you to effectively make the presentation versus the total amount of time for lunch 2) if it's an after school event, how likely is it that your students will stay instead of going home, how many students have to go work, and are there any upcoming exams that make students more likely to go home. Competing programs will be an issue for both time periods and you should work to coordinate with other student leaders to avoid such a situation.

Giving a PowerPoint presentation is a good idea to present your information. When choosing presenters and a presentation model, you should do what best fits the time you have and the level of interest of the students that will be attending. These are three suggestions for a presentation model: 1) each chapter officer can take a turn speaking to the students about a topic 2) invite a representative from the NCPA National Office to give the presentation or 3) do a joint presentation between the chapter President and a representative from the NCPA National Office. Keep in mind the mere presence of non-student attendees (e.g. Dean, Faculty, Community Pharmacy Owners / NCPA members, etc.) can have an influence on how the students perceive the importance of the organization.

PowerPoint Presentation:

- What is NCPA
- What's exciting about being an independent community pharmacist or owner
- Introduce the student chapter leaders
- Member benefits
- Activities planned for the year
- NCPA annual convention

Other items that you might consider having available:

- Free food
- Membership applications
- P1 / Level 1 Representative position description and application
- Half-sheet / full-sheet informational pieces

Contributed by David A. Sedrak, NCPA National Student Leadership Council President 2005-2006

PowerPoint Presentation

Develop a short (5 minute) presentation and present to all the classes. Include the following items in the presentation:

- What was accomplished this past year
- NCPA student membership benefits
- Plans for next year
- Pictures, pictures, pictures!
 - Less text and more pictures make the presentation more attractive and keeps the attention of the students
 - When students see themselves or their friends on the screen they are more likely to rejoin or join the following year. Public student recognition always plays in your favor.

Early Membership Discount

Offer a discounted price for students who sign up before the beginning of the next school year. This membership discount can be offered to students who sign up by the end of the current academic school year. You may also decide that you want a longer window for the discount and extend the deadline all the way until the first day of class.

- Produce bright, attractive, attention-grabbing flyers and post them everywhere. Include deadline to sign up, where, and what times.
 - Hand out flyers at the beginning or end of class after obtaining permission from your instructor(s).
 - Post flyers on a bulletin board in your School or College of Pharmacy.
 - Be considerate and make sure to pick up fallen flyers from the ground and to remove all materials from walls as soon as the deadline has expired.
 - **Make sure to obtain permission from school administrators on designated posting areas and restrictions.**

Suggested Membership Development Activities

- 1) Raffle first year membership dues covered by the chapter to someone who joins during your membership drive
- 2) Host an Orientation to NCPA event
- 3) Highlight the success stories of members from your chapter who have gone on to do great things in the profession
- 4) Call or email visitors after they have attended a meeting and thank them for joining you at the last event
- 5) Obtain testimonials of the value of NCPA membership from former chapter members now working in pharmacy and share them with potential members
- 6) Ask faculty members to offer extra credit for attending the NCPA Annual Meeting. A benefit of this is that for students who are not members of NCPA, their first year's dues are included in the non-member registration fees.
- 7) Hand out NCPA fliers and enrollment forms to students at the College of Pharmacy and in pre-pharmacy classes.
- 8) Announce upcoming chapter meetings in your class and invite everyone to attend.

- 9) Ask members for names of friends that they think would benefit from joining NCPA (even though everyone would!)
- 10) List your upcoming meetings in the college newsletter and campus announcements.
- 11) Prepare an elevator pitch of why students should join and the benefits of student involvement (Be prepared to “Roll with Resistance” using the tools from page 59)
- 12) Waive the chapter dues of students who join during their fourth year *or* publicize that students who join during their fourth year will have their chapter dues donated to the NCPA – Political Action Committee!
- 13) Set up a table or booth during orientation week
- 14) Offer recruitment incentives to the student who gets the most new members to join
- 15) Hold a donation drive for items to be used as incentives to be offered to new members who join during your membership drive
- 16) Send out a flier about your chapter to a targeted group such as pre-pharmacy students.
- 17) Invite a successful professional in your community to speak to your chapter about the value of joining professional associations.
- 18) Display copies of your chapter calendar and upcoming events in highly trafficked areas on campus
- 19) Ask faculty members to mention NCPA to students in their classes
- 20) Write an article highlighted your chapters successes or a high-profile speaker
- 21) Create a membership committee to focus on new ways of attracting incoming students
- 22) Organize chapter trips to community pharmacies in your state who are practicing in innovative ways!
- 23) Offer a chapter scholarship for travel to the annual NCPA convention
- 24) Offer to reimburse a portion of the cost of student attendance at the NCPA annual convention
- 25) Incentivize student members to reach out to their friends to join them at the NCPA annual convention
- 26) Hold a joint meeting or event with another professional pharmacy organization or fraternity and pass our NCPA information packets to attendees
- 27) Survey current members to determine what benefits they find most valuable and emphasize these benefits when speaking to potential members.
- 28) Participate in a charity event with other organizations on campus or host an interprofessional charity event. Invite members of other organizations to visit one of your meetings and learn more about your chapter.
- 29) Make each potential member feel special and try to remember names and greet people.
- 30) Host a networking seminar and have speakers who can highlight the importance of networking in the profession
- 31) Make participating easy! Establish rapport with students on campus and make sure they know where to go to find upcoming activities!
- 32) Offer incentives such as NCPA mugs, pins, or shirts to members who recruit at least two members.
- 33) Formally recognize new members at chapter meetings or in publications by listing them by name to showcase their dedication to advancing the profession.
- 34) Announce membership updates at each meeting and remind people to invite a friend to the next event.
- 35) Let your members know that recruiting is a top priority for the group.
- 36) Always speak with excitement and pride when describing your NCPA Student Chapter!

Sample Membership Letters/Emails

Letter to First-Year Students

“Dear Future Pharmacist,

The *(Your School/College of Pharmacy)* NCPA Student Chapter would like to say CONGRATULATIONS and welcome to [SCHOOL/COLLEGE NAME]. I encourage you to get involved this year in the various organizations in order to meet your fellow students and learn what pharmacy can offer you. More importantly, we are excited about what you can offer the world of pharmacy!

One of the many organizations you can join is the National Community Pharmacists Association, or NCPA. NCPA represents the interests of independent community pharmacists. Because independent pharmacists are involved in such several varied professional activities, NCPA represents many different specialties within the pharmacy. This includes specialties such as long-term care consulting, home infusion, and specialty areas such as diabetes, respiratory care, veterinary pharmacy, compounding, and immunizations. NCPA is also heavily involved in the political issues facing community pharmacy.

There are many reasons why you should consider joining NCPA. Listed below are just some of the benefits NCPA membership provides:

Student Pricing for Registration to National Meetings

Newsletters from NCPA including the national journals such as “America’s Pharmacist”

Summer Internship Opportunity- at our headquarters in Virginia

***[list special activities your chapter hosts]**

And so much more...

Even if community pharmacy is not where you see your career taking you, NCPA Student Membership can inform you about aspects affecting the profession of pharmacy, not only in community settings. Please Consider joining NCPA and finding out what our organization can offer you in your time as a student pharmacist.

If you ever have any questions about what is possible at the school or just want to talk, feel free to get in contact with any of the exec members and if we cannot help we will put you in contact with the right people!

Sincerely,

(Chapter president or membership committee chair)”

Letter to Second- and Third-Year Students

“Hello P2s!

It is an exciting time of the year because you are about to enter your second year of pharmacy school! And one thing that is always important to remember is being involved in a student organization outside of the classroom. That is why I wanted to reach out to you about renewing your membership for the [SCHOOL/COLLEGE NAME] NCPA Student Chapter.

There are many reasons why you should consider joining or renewing your membership with NCPA. Listed below are just some of the benefits NCPA membership provides:

Scholarships such as the Presidential Scholarship and many other scholarships worth thousands

Student Pricing for Registration to National Meetings

Newsletters from NCPA including the national journals such as “America’s Pharmacist”

Summer Internship Opportunity- at our headquarters in Virginia

***[list special activities your chapter hosts]**

And so much more...

Even if community pharmacy is not where you see your career taking you, NCPA Student Membership can inform you about aspects affecting the profession of pharmacy, not only in community settings. Please consider joining NCPA and finding out what our organization can offer you in your time as a student pharmacist.

If you ever have any questions about what is possible at the school or just want to talk, feel free to get in contact with any of the exec members and if we cannot help we will put you in contact with the right people!

Sincerely,

(Chapter president or membership committee chair)”

Letter to Fourth-Year Students

“Dear Seniors,

At [SCHOOL/COLLEGE NAME] NCPA Student Chapter, we know that thoughts of owning your own pharmacy may be a faraway dream. After all, you’ll have student loans to pay back, cars to buy, and trips to go on to celebrate your achievement of your PharmD and passing the NAPLEX but, we also know that, soon enough, you may tire of the world of hospital pharmacy or of the mad, volume-driven rush at a chain drug store – or you’ll realize you are ready to be the boss. Those far-off dreams of pharmacy ownership will creep back into your head. You very well may make them come true because as a pharmacy student you joined and grew a network with NCPA.

Many of you have probably already received a renewal email from the NCPA headquarters. Please renew your membership. Keep in touch with me so we can include you on all the things we have planned for the year and on our membership roster.

I want this year to highlight the rich history of independent pharmacy in our state and I want to encourage our students to take the chance to understand that this profession is still strong, but it will take passionate people to keep it that way!

I want to involve the P4 class this year in all our activities. Please feel free to contact any of our officers. I want as many of you to attend as possible because you have been an important part of our chapter.

Thank you,

(Chapter president or membership committee chair)”