

**2008 STATE OFFICER SELECTION PROCESS  
NEVADA FFA ASSOCIATION  
COMPOSITION ACTIVITY**

**INTRODUCTION**

State FFA officers are expected to complete a number of written correspondences with FFA staff, students, teachers, sponsors, and state leaders they meet throughout their year of service. As an officer, the ability to communicate clearly through writing is just as critical as the ability to communicate through speech. Officers are often asked to write or speak about issues facing the National FFA Organization and the State Association. This component of the state officer selection process provides each candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to effectively communicate about a given topic.

**DIRECTION**

Today FFA membership is the highest it has been in recent history. However, the face of local programs has been changing to meet the needs of American Agriculture and our national lifestyle. Many instructors and chapter leaders meet many challenges in recruiting new members to the organization, retaining active membership, and engaging student members in FFA activities and enrichment.

The following is an excerpt from an e-mail by an agriculture teacher.

*"I'm looking for several ideas on recruitment that both myself, and our chapter officer team can use. Our students come from many different backgrounds. How can we engage non-members in chapter activities and increase our membership numbers?"*

*~Mr. James Tester, Ochowala FFA Advisor*

**Please write a response addressing the needs of this agriculture instructor and his officer team. What can they do to increase membership recruitment, retention and engagement? What resources are available to them?**

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN (SELF-)EVALUATING COMPOSITION ACTIVITY RESPONSES**

- Where does the candidate's work fall in each of the competency areas evaluated during the activity?
- Is the writing clear and concise?
- Does the work meet the needs of the audience regarding: Tone? Voice? Structure? Facts and information? Resource references and referrals?
- Does the candidate show evidence that they are familiar with the writing medium's conventions? (E-mail has a subject line, contact information is provided, resources referenced/referred to are appropriate for medium, length and detail is correct for detail)
- Does the candidate address the needs/issues expressed by the stakeholder?
- Does the candidate address each item set forth in the (bolded) prompt?
- Does the work flow appropriately for the type of writing?
- Is the audience empowered to problem-solve on their own?
- Does the candidate encourage and motivate the stakeholder? Is it in an appropriate manner?
- Do the solutions presented account for more than one point of view?/Does the candidate show through their work that they are accepting of others thoughts/opinions/solutions?
- Does the candidate draw upon their own experiences? Those of others?
- Does the candidate provide for continued dialogue?
- (Is) Does the candidate's response (genuine) provide evidence of their personality and character?

**SAMPLE COMPOSITION ACTIVITY RESPONSE  
FOR 2008 NEVADA FFA SELECTION PROCESS PROMPT**

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To: [jtester@school.nv.edu](mailto:jtester@school.nv.edu)  
From: [DirectorCO@asun.unr.edu](mailto:DirectorCO@asun.unr.edu)  
Subject: Membership Recruitment Ideas

Mr. Tester,

I am excited to hear that your chapter is working to build a strong and diverse membership! My experience has been as a member of an urban chapter that also has a diverse set of member backgrounds. One of the best ways that we found to increase recruitment of new members was to highlight this diversity through an annual chapter fun fair, where current members showcase their interests through interactive booths and activities geared towards 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Together with our school guidance counselor, the chapter secretary and president send invitations to each of the local middle schools and the reporter creates an article for the district staff newsletter. Chapter sponsors are also invited to show students the possibilities for agriculture related careers. The event allows prospective members to learn about agricultural education and FFA activities, provides current members with an opportunity to engage fellow students in learning, and highlights the chapter's accomplishments over the past year.

While the fun fair is a single, large event that attracts many participants, we also have a mentorship program with local 4-H clubs which takes place throughout the year. Through this program, FFA member who participate work consistently with two to three younger 4-H members on various projects that relate to a common area of interest, such as a market animal or prepared speaking activity. The 4-Hers who are mentored by the students are encouraged to attend chapter meetings as guests to update the chapter about the progress they have made. Each mentee and their parents is invited as a special guest to our year end banquet. The program develops relationships between younger and older students, allowing for shared experiences, and requires continued relationship building between the FFA advisor and local 4-H club leaders.

Also, I recently visited a chapter in neighboring California where the advisor described one of her activities. Each year she teaches a "workshop" for elementary school teachers that encourages use of the Agriculture in the Classroom materials. By motivating these primary educators to involve lessons about the diversity of the food, fiber and natural resources industries in their curriculum, and providing them with a jump start, the advisor has had both a direct and indirect impact on students outside of her classroom. Student leaders are also now involved, helping the elementary teachers put on agricultural labs. Now that the agriculture instructor has been actively working with the primary instructors, she is beginning to have new students enter the classroom that had been impacted by an Ag in the Classroom lesson or one of the lab presentations by FFA members.

These are several ideas that came to mind immediately. I will speak with the rest of my team to get their ideas and experiences as well. There are also a number of resources available through the National FFA Organization that are designed to assist agriculture instructors and FFA chapters in successful member recruitment and retention. Available for purchase from FFA Unlimited are a number of materials on recruitment, including the REV it Up! kit (which stands for Recruitment/Retention, Engagement, and Volunteerism), the Colors of Leadership brochure which discusses how 4-H and FFA work together, and a number of other training and promotional videos and print materials. You can access the list of materials available at [www.ffaunlimited.org/recruitment.html](http://www.ffaunlimited.org/recruitment.html). There are also a number of free resources available from National FFA's Local Program Success (LPS) site on [www.ff.org](http://www.ff.org), as well as from the National Council for Agricultural Education at [www.teamaged.org](http://www.teamaged.org) (including links to the Agricultural Education Magazine and the Team Ag Ed Learning Center). The National FFA Organization has also launched the new Living to Serve program which will provide grants for various chapter-level programs, including Diversity Grants and the Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) program. In Nevada, Learn and Serve grants are available to help fund service-learning opportunities. The contact person is Heather Dye, the State Executive Director, who can be contacted at [hdye@doe.nv.gov](mailto:hdye@doe.nv.gov). Finally, you can request a state officer visit using the State Officer Visit Request form (available online at [www.nvaged.org](http://www.nvaged.org)) to have one of my team members conduct a workshop with your chapter officers on recruitment and diversity.

I hope I have been able to get you and your officer team off on a great start. Please feel free to contact me with any other questions or for more information. We would love to hear updates about your chapter's success!

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