

Planning & Conducting a Successful Classified Senate Retreat: Overcoming Obstacles Activity Responses

Obstacle #1: Finding the Perfect Time

1. Use flex days, spring break, or before fall term starts.
2. There is no perfect time. Do a doodle poll to find the best time for most.
3. Send out a survey with dates to choose from.
4. Make them swear a blood oath. ☺ “Require” participation.
5. Find mid-semester days that impact the fewest departments. Get buy-in from as many as possible.
6. Get board approval and survey classified staff. Compare academic calendars.
7. Plan well in advance. Incentivize.

Obstacle #2: Getting Full Participation

1. Have all members lead a part of the retreat.
2. To get manager permission, you may need to work with higher ups to get support.
3. Poll ahead to find topic that is most interesting to most people. If they want to come, they will come.
4. Outlook invite.
5. Make it a requirement. Incentives: prizes, food, etc.
6. Have a reward for attendance.
7. Get direct and enthusiastic support from College President. Emails from managers encouraging people to go. Lots of food needs to be available – breakfast and lunch. Advertise in advance programs that sound fun and relevant.
8. Going around talking to other classified employees. Introducing ourselves and talking to them excited about the senate.
9. Offer certificate of completion. Credit towards comp time or college credit/certificate, etc.
10. Find fun activities and food. Entice people with what the retreat will offer.
11. Create incentives like certificates. Communicate with managers for support.

Obstacle #3: Obtaining Release Time/Manager Permission

1. Release time can be obtained by getting the president on board and having them “sponsor” the event (e.g., President X’s leadership retreat).
2. Get managers on board by getting college council on board first = pressure from above.
3. Get College President buy in.
4. Get manager buy in.
5. Find evidence (through studies, State Chancellor’s Office or accreditation report) that will justify and support a retreat.
6. Stress to College President the importance and outline the development skills senators will acquire. Also request that the President let the other administrators know the importance of their staffs’ attendance at the retreat.
7. Ask College President for release time. Have College President draft a formal release time statement.

8. I sent an email out to all supervisors, leads, managers, etc. requesting release for 20-30 minutes to celebrate our year's success. Our President notified her management team to allow Classified Staff to attend.
9. Have President and VP of Senate meet one-on-one with managers/administrators after getting approval/support from College President.
10. If the administrators have a problem, then they can talk to the Senate President and College President.

Obstacle #4: Finding/Securing Funding

1. Use Professional Development funds.
2. Write a foundation grant.
3. Fundraise.
4. Ask your College President, Academic Senate, ASG, Foundation and others for financial support.
5. Potluck for food. Keep expenses to a minimum by using a free space/venue.
6. Ask everyone to pitch in (e.g., Associated Students, Academic Senate, President, VPs).
7. Write a proposal for award/grand funding.
8. Copy/borrow from other areas.
9. Get donations from other places.

Obstacle #5: Identifying/Getting Speakers

1. Ask the senator who attended CLI to be a presenter.
2. Solicit alumni/professionals.
3. Solicit corporate trainers.
4. We brought in a specialist from our sister college in the district.
5. Our Interim Chancellor did the presentation herself.
6. Ask 4CS for suggestions or a speaker list.