



Students from Western Washington University SER Student Association

STUDENT ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK

Next Steps and Tips for Success

Administration

Administrative systems help student associations stay organized over time, especially as leadership changes. The ideas below are intended to support continuity, transparency, and long-term planning rather than add unnecessary structure.

Getting started:

- Many student associations find it helpful to set up a shared Gmail and Google Drive account. This can make leadership transitions smoother and provides a central place to store documents, graphics, and institutional knowledge.
- Meet regularly through the school year to discuss upcoming opportunities, events, and promotion.
- At the end of the school year, reflect on what did and did not work and then plan for the year ahead.

As your association grows:

- Consider documenting goals for the next 3–5 years and discussing leadership succession.
- If available, establish a budget for the year to support communications, events, and other administrative needs.

For more established groups:

- Longer-term planning documents or mentorship systems may be useful.



Students from the University of Washington SER Student Association

The Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner-in-Training (CERPIT) Program and Academic Alignment:

SER's Certified Ecological Restoration in Training Program is ideal for new graduates of restoration programs and emerging professionals who are in the process of accumulating practical experience. SER's Academic Alignment Program helps students get accredited with their CERPIT faster upon graduation. Please learn more and if helpful please utilize the resources below.

- You may find it helpful to utilize SER's Learning and Training Opportunities.
 - Learn more here: <https://www.ser.org/page/learning>
- If it is available, work with your university to gain academic alignment.
 - Visit this webpage: <https://www.ser.org/page/academic-partnerships>
 - Contact certification@ser.org for more information.
- Some associations choose to encourage club members to become CERPITs.
 - Click here to learn more:
- Reach out to certification@ser.org if you would like to have the SER Certifications Manager present virtually about the CERPIT program to your student association.
- Consider presenting to relevant lectures, classes, tutorials, and labs to educate students about the CERPIT program.



Students from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point SER Student Association

Chapters and Thematic Sections

Working with your local Chapter can be very beneficial for some student associations. Chapters and Thematic Sections of SER are here to support all student associations and are excited to collaborate.

- To find out how to get in contact with your local Chapter, [click here](#)
- Some student associations have partnered with their local Chapter to apply for the [Partnership Fund](#) to help subsidize student association membership and event fees.
- Chapters and Thematic Sections enjoy the opportunity to collaborate on events, or have members attend relevant events.

Communications

Communicating with your student association and recruiting new members can vary largely between groups. Below are some in person and online options to consider for communicating within your group, on campus and to the broader SER community.

- Access the Student Associations group on [SER Connect](#) to connect with students from around the world including North and South America, Europe and Africa.
- Please email membership@ser.org if it would be helpful to set up a student association specific group to communicate with fellow members.
- Most student associations find it helpful to host bi-weekly meetings for members to attend.
- If resources allow, print posters to have up in relevant places on your school's campus.
- Many groups find it helpful to recruit students by:
 - Presenting to relevant classes.
 - Creating a slide to email to relevant professors that they can add at the end of their lecture slide deck (professors want to see their students engaged) with contact information or a QR code for prospective students to use.
- Some student associations have found it helpful to create a monthly or quarterly newsletter to keep their community informed on upcoming events and opportunities.
- Please share upcoming events on [SER's Community Calendar](#)
- Once established, some student associations have submitted a [Member in Action](#) Profile to membership@ser.org or a [Restoration Story](#) about a restoration project your student association and/or school is involved in.
- Some student associations find it helpful to share information about the [CERP/CERPIT](#) program.
- In the SER Connect Student Associations group, use the spreadsheet provided to follow fellow SER Student Associations, Chapter and Thematic Section social media accounts.

Events

Hosting events is one of the most effective ways to foster a sense of community within a student association. Events help bring members together, maintain momentum throughout the year, and create shared experiences that strengthen engagement. Whether focused on restoration work, learning, or social connection, events can be adapted to fit the size, goals, and energy of the group.

- Some student associations choose to participate yearly in SER's Make a Difference Week, doing so will promote your event through the Make a Difference week event map by registering.
- Submit upcoming events to SER's Community Calendar to reach a broader audience.
- Some student associations find it helpful to share upcoming events by posting a discussion on SER Connect.
- Some groups also use social media channels to inform members about upcoming events.
- Many associations choose to partner with other student clubs on campus to host joint events.
- A small group of student associations partner with classes or labs to help implement restoration projects on campus.
- Alternatively, some groups have partnered on events or activities with local Chapters and/or Thematic Sections of SER.
- If there is a budget, provide food for when you're meeting in person.



Students from the University of Waterloo SER Student Association

Categories	Examples
Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive species pulls • Seed dispersal • Seed collection • “Work parties” to restore areas on campus • Trail restoration • Seed propagation • Restoration gardens or nursery areas • Adopting and upkeeping a pollinator garden • Native plant potting • Create seed packets • Seedball workshop • Track bird collisions or create an iNaturalist project to track species on campus
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature hikes (learn how to identify native species) • Field trips to local nature centres, conservation areas, parks, land trusts, etc • Do surveys of relevant species • Pick up litter in a relevant ecosystem • Cold plunges in local water bodies to raise awareness for local keystone species • Talks with professors • Guest speaker events • Alumni panel on what they do now or how they got their first field job • Research showcase • Attend relevant conferences within your area • Host wilderness first aid or benthic monitoring courses
Team Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird Jeopardy • Coffee chats or tea Tuesdays • Host holiday socials • Scavenger hunt • Environmental trivia
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crayon prints of local species • Build bird houses • Create an ecosphere • Film screening • Create zines, restoration themed cards, jewelry or art • Wood carving or basket weaving

Finances

Financial needs vary widely across student associations, depending on size, goals, and available resources. Some groups operate with minimal funding, while others benefit from small budgets to support events, materials, or outreach. This section highlights funding options and financial considerations that student associations may explore as capacity and needs grow.

Funding Sources:

- If there is capacity, research whether there are grants and funding opportunities available to you on campus or in your community, local and regional governments. Ask your student advisor and relevant professors for support if you apply for grants.
- Some student associations are starting to partner with their local Chapter to apply for SER's Partnership Fund
- Some groups recommend partnering with community organizations when possible
 - For example, trade plants and seeds with local nurseries

Fundraising Ideas:

- Sell plants, seed mixes, zines, cards and art on campus or at local fairs and markets
- Partner with your local pub or university bar for an environmental trivia night where 10% of each drink goes to the club
- Ask members of the student association to pay small dues or get your members to volunteer at events in exchange for their dues

Managing Funds

- Some groups have created a budget to help manage funds
- We recommend that you store funds at the Chapter level or with your faculty advisor



Students from Grand Valley State University SER Student Association

Governance

Governance will vary across student associations depending on the institution, size and resources available. Some groups may operate with 1-3 leaders that stay the same for a number of years, while other groups may have a full board with rolls that are elected yearly. This section showcases how leaders can interact with fellow student association leaders and leaders across the SER community.

- All undergraduate and graduate students are able to join.
- If capacity allows, student associations may wish to designate a representative to connect with their local Chapter. Use SER Connect to contact your local Chapter or email membership@ser.org for more information.
- Apply to have a representative join the Student and Emerging Professionals Committee (SEPC). Please email membership@ser.org for more information
- Some groups have an executive committee with roles and responsibilities and have outlined what those are.
 - Some student associations have found that informal activities, such as camping trips or retreats, can help members build relationships and feel more comfortable stepping into leadership roles.
 - Some groups have utilized a board mentorship or buddy system to ease transitions between current and future board members.

Marketing

Marketing upcoming events and opportunities within your student association can help expand your reach within your institution's community and help to grow capacity. This section outlines what marketing efforts can look like for your group.

- There are many free design programs out there including Canva, Adobe Express, and GIMP which can be utilized for social media campaigns, posters and more.
- When choosing social media platforms, many student associations start with one channel, often Instagram, before expanding. A smaller, well-maintained presence is usually easier to sustain than multiple inactive accounts.

