

Student Society Handbook



2015-2016

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The Academy

The [American Academy of Physician Assistants \(AAPA\)](#) is your professional association, representing the views of graduate and student physician assistants throughout the United States. It is the united voice of physician assistants in all medical and surgical specialties and all practice settings.

Origins

Established in April 1968, AAPA consisted of the first students of the Duke University PA Program. In 1973, 300 members strong, a national office for AAPA was established in Washington, D.C., with an executive director and two support staff. In 2015, there are more than 40,000 members representing every state in the nation and a national office in Alexandria, Virginia, served by more than 70 staff members.

Purposes and Activities

The Academy's mission is to promote quality, cost-effective, and accessible health care and to promote the professional and personal development of physician assistants.

Chapter Structure

The Academy has a federated structure of chartered constituent chapters, representing the interests of physician assistants in 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Air Force, Navy, Army, Public Health Service, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Student membership and leadership opportunities are available in most chapters. Chapter involvement provides a network of colleagues, professional representation, and legislative support. Many chapters have scholarship programs for PA students.

Governing Bodies

The AAPA House of Delegates meets annually to adopt legislation and policy proposed by AAPA standing committees and councils, the constituent chapters, the Board of Directors, the Student Academy, the Caucus Congress, and officially recognized specialty organizations. Other AAPA partners include the Physician Assistant Foundation, which grants scholarships to deserving PA students and a Political Action Committee, which supports federal candidates friendly to the PA profession.

Recognition

The Academy is the official organization of the physician assistant profession and is recognized as such by other medical associations and federal, state, and local governments. The Academy maintains liaison relationships with the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, and others.

Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants

The [Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants \(SAAAPA\)](#) is a unique part of AAPA, as it was established in 1978 with its own bylaws, a Student Board of Directors, and a legislative and policy-making body. The Student Academy does not have individual members, as the student members join AAPA; instead SAAAPA's members consist of the registered student society at each accredited PA program. The students' voices can be heard through their student society representative to the Student Academy's [Assembly of Representatives \(AOR\)](#), SAAAPA's legislative and policy-making body.

AOR

The [AOR](#) is a two-day session held during AAPA's annual conference. The AOR establishes Student Academy policy for the coming year by voting on resolutions submitted to the AOR by PA students. AOR representatives are responsible for discussing the resolutions with students from their programs prior to the conference, debating and voicing the concerns of their fellow students during the conference, and voting on each resolution as the representative from their PA program.

In addition to discussing resolutions, AOR representatives are also responsible for electing the [Student Academy Board of Directors \(SBOD\)](#) for the following year. These student officers will direct the Student Academy activities for the year, based on the guidelines that have been provided to them by the resolutions.

Student Board of Directors

As part of their responsibilities to the [SBOD](#) and the Academy, student officers perform liaison duties and represent student interests with other governing bodies within and outside AAPA. Assigned SBOD officers sit on the AAPA Board of Directors, AAPA Advocacy and Government Affairs Commission, AAPA Constituent Organization Work Group, and AAPA Health Disparities Work Group.

The Student Board of Directors consists of eleven officer positions. The president elect, chief delegate, director of outreach, director of student communications, six regional directors – Mid-Atlantic, North Central, Northeast, South Central, Southeast, and West are elected annually, while the president is in the second year of two-year term. The SBOD officially meets throughout the year to plan Student Academy affairs and conduct business.

SAAAPA leadership

Also there is one [appointed student representative](#): PA Foundation Student Representative. The PA Foundation Student Representative is elected by the AOR and confirmed by the Student Board of Directors.

The [AAPA graduate advisor](#) is appointed by the AAPA Board of Directors, the [PAEA graduate advisor](#) is appointed by the PAEA Board of Directors, and the staff advisor is from the AAPA national office.

Community involvement

SAAAPA encourages student societies to get involved with their local community throughout the year. Involvement not only gives back to the local community, but it also helps promote the PA profession to individuals who might not be as familiar with it.

Students are encouraged to participate in the National Service Project – where PA students do good works in their communities through the year. The PA program can share what their students are doing through the Student Academy.

PA students also help the [PA Foundation](#) through the [Caring for Communities](#) program, where they raise money which is donated to charities and provides funds for grants. Students benefit as the funds support the Foundation's student scholarship program and grants that student societies can apply for.

Students are a critical part of getting PAs involved with the community as they have raised more than \$300,000 since 1997 assisting numerous communities around the country.

Student society

What is a PA student society?

After you are accepted into your PA program, you might be asked to join your student society, so what exactly is that?

[Student societies](#) are groups of PA students who assemble on a regular basis to discuss issues of common interest that often deal with health care, the PA profession, or other social issues. Each student society can have its own unique mission and goals, but all of them are also working to promote the physician assistant profession and PA students within the profession.

Any PA program can start a student society; however, to become a student society that is officially recognized by SAAAPA, the student society must meet the following criteria:

- Four PA student officers of the society must also be student members of AAPA : president, Assembly of Representatives representative, Outreach Chair, and State Chapter Student Representative
- The PA program must be accredited or provisionally accredited.
- The student society must register online with the Student Academy.
- The student society must provide a list of its members and the latest version of its bylaws.

Only one student society will be recognized by SAAAPA from each accredited or provisionally accredited PA program. PA programs with multiple campuses are allowed one officially recognized student society from each campus.

Why would you want to have a student society?

There are many advantages to being involved with a student society, such as

- It opens the door to new opportunities for yourself, your peers, your program, and your community.
- It provides unique opportunities to network with fellow students, promote the PA profession, and provide input to AAPA as it makes important decisions impacting future students and the profession.
- It acts as a support group for PA students during their studies.

Why should you register your student society with AAPA and the Student Academy?

- It enables your program to send a representative to SAAAPA's [Assembly of Representatives \(AOR\)](#) at [AAPA's Conference](#) each year. The AOR is the legislative and policy-making body for the Student Academy and the decisions made there, affect PA students currently and in the future. Participation allows your student society to have a voice in the direction of the Student Academy.
- It is an eligibility requirement in order to be eligible register a team for SAAAPA's [National Medical Challenge Bowl](#).
- It provides your society with an opportunity to enter into the competition for the [Student Academy awards](#), some of which have a cash prize for your student society.

How can the student society register with the Student Academy?

Complete [the application online](#) starting September 1. Student society online applications will require the following information:

- PA program name and student society name
- Student society bylaws (electronic version)
- School term – start and end dates for the program
- Student society email address
- List of members of your student society
- PA program faculty advisor name and e-mail
- Student society officers (name, phone number and e-mail) for the following positions:
 - President – required
 - Outreach Chair - required
 - State Chapter Student Representative - required
 - Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative - required
 - Vice President - optional
 - Secretary - optional
 - Treasurer - optional
 - AOR Alternate - optional
 - Student Historian - optional
 - Student Diversity Committee Representative - optional
 - Green Chair - optional

You will want to register your society as soon as you can after September 1 so that your society officers can start communicating with the national officers of SAAAPA. A list of all [PA programs and a checklist of registered societies](#), including eligibility for individual events is available online.

Take advantage of this important opportunity to affect your future. It is not difficult to establish a student society or to register your society with the Student Academy. Once you have established your student society, you will realize the impact student societies have on the Student Academy and vice versa.

Leadership positions within a student society

The below descriptions will help student societies to understand the role of some of their officers.

State Chapter Student Representative (SCSR): Serves as representative for the student society to the state chapter. The duties of this person vary from state to state, depending on how many PA program are located in the state and according to the bylaws of the constituent chapter. However, the SCSR is responsible for attending all constituent state chapter board of directors meetings and reporting back to his or her student society as directed by the state chapter. Also, the SCSR should increase interaction between the student society, constituent chapter, SAAAPA, and AAPA.

If the state chapter has student representatives, then the SCSR should maintain contact with these students to keep the state chapter aware of what the PA program is doing and so that the student society is aware of what the state chapter has accomplished for PAs in their state.

Outreach Chair (OC): Coordinates activities and public relations efforts between the student society and external groups, which can include but are not limited to: other medical professionals (MD, DO, PT, OT, nurses, speech, etc.), city/county organizations, state organizations, national organizations, and other community-related organizations. This individual promotes the PA profession and seeks out ways to work with other organizations in their community.

Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative: Responsible for distributing all Student Academy information to his or her program; monitors the SAAAPA website for announcements, leadership opportunities, and available resources which would be of interest to fellow students; and serves as the contact for SAAAPA leaders and committees. Attends the annual AOR meeting at AAPA's annual conference to elect new officers of the Student Academy, to establish and amend policy of SAAAPA, and to conduct business as necessary.

New student society

Forming a student society – where to begin

If this is your PA program's first student society, you will need to do a little more work initially than societies which have been around for years.

First work with your program director and PA program to see about getting a student society set in motion. Talk with the program director and faculty about their expectations for the society and how they are willing to assist the society. You will want the support of your faculty and program to help make the student society a success.

Next, talk with other students in your PA program about the idea of starting a student society. New student societies need the support of fellow PA students in terms of society members and participants in the society's activities.

Faculty and students' involvement in the society is crucial and will help ensure that your society thrives beyond your time in the PA program.

Society name

Once the program and students agree that starting a student society is a good idea, begin by thinking of a name for your student society. Many students choose to name their societies after an influential physician assistant from their program, favorite instructor, or past student. This is a special way of honoring a person who has played an important role in the education of physician assistant students at an individual program.

Bylaws

With a name selected, the student society will want to develop bylaws. Remember that bylaws are your organization's legal and governing documents. One of the first items of business for your student society will be to adopt them.

Bylaws should be clear, concise, and easy to understand. The purpose of bylaws is to allow the leaders and members of an organization to understand the rules, policies, and procedures of that organization. As the governing document, they must be updated regularly and easy to understand and use.

As a student society, there are specific areas that should be listed and defined to make your bylaws accurate and effective.

- Name and purpose of the organization (identifies who and what you are)
- Membership requirements and categories (specifies who can be a member and what responsibilities they have)
- Dues and fees (including amount, payment, deadlines, etc.) if you have any
- Officer positions and duties (states the specific positions, requirements, and responsibilities) for each officer
- Elections (explains the procedures, dates, and requirements)

- Meetings (details dates, times, frequency, and attendance)
- Committees (states who, what, and how they work)
- Amendments (explains how your bylaws work and how they may be changed)

Sample bylaws

The sample bylaws are intended to be used as a resource and reference for student leaders when creating their governing documents. Remember that each student society must determine its own membership requirements, dues, officer duties, elections requirements, etc., based on the needs of its members with the understanding that the bylaws will be amended as the membership changes.

The example originated from various student society bylaws, while the format of listing articles and sections and the order of the topics is a standard one to follow. Student society bylaws should be amended as necessary to include new or altered policies.

BYLAWS OF *Name of Student Society*

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of our student society is *name of student society* herein referred to as the student society.

ARTICLE II. Purpose

The purpose of the student society shall be to serve as the official organization for the students of the *PA program's name*, to promote academic achievement and clinical excellence, and to promote the physician assistant as a member of the health care delivery team.

ARTICLE III. Membership

Section 1. All physician assistant students enrolled in the program shall be eligible for membership in the student society.

Section 2. Active members shall be defined as full-time students, paying dues, and retaining voting privileges. Inactive members shall be defined as students who have left the program in good standing, show continued interest in the student society, but are ineligible to vote.

Section 3. Students leaving the program for any reason shall retain membership in the student society for the remainder of the current academic year but shall be designated as inactive members.

Section 4. It shall be encouraged that society members become active student members of AAPA and of their state constituent chapters.

ARTICLE IV. Dues and Fees

Section 1. Upon payment of the student society dues, students will become active members of the student society.

Section 2. The student society officers shall establish the annual dues during the first board meeting of the academic year.

ARTICLE V. Officers and Their Duties

Section 1. The officers of the student society shall be: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, a constituent chapter student representative, student diversity committee representative, AOR representative, AOR alternate, HOD student delegate, director of external affairs, student historian, and any other positions that the student society deems necessary. All officers and representatives/delegates must be student members of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). In addition, there shall be a faculty advisor (appointed by the student society officers).

Section 2. The President shall preside over the monthly meetings, set the meetings' agendas, and submit the same to the secretary for copies and distribution, coordinate the activities of the committees, and keep the membership informed of the activities of these committees.

The State Chapter Student Representative shall be the liaison between the student society and the constituent chapter. The student will attend the state chapter meeting representing his or her student society.

The Outreach Chair shall coordinate activities and public relations efforts between his or her student society and external groups, including but not limited to other medical professionals, such as physician, osteopath, physical therapist, occupational therapist, nurse, and speech therapist; city, county, state, and national organizations; and other community-related organizations. The OC shall convey any and all concerns and issues external affairs to the SAAAPA directors of external affairs.

The Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative shall be responsible for the distribution of all Student Academy information to his/her program. The AOR representative will serve as point of contact for the Student Academy Board of Directors and committees. If possible, the AOR representative shall also attend the annual AOR meeting at the AAPA annual conference to elect new officers of the Student Academy, to establish and amend policy of the Student Academy, and to conduct business as necessary.

The Faculty Advisor shall provide insight and direction into the proper, ethical and professional standards of the physician assistant. He/she shall have no voting privilege.

ARTICLE VI. Elections

Section 1. Offices to be Filled – Elected offices of the name of student society Student Society include president, state chapter student representative, outreach chair, and Assembly of Representatives (AOR) representative.

Section 2. Terms of Office – Each officer, with the exception of the AOR representative, will serve a one-year term commencing immediately upon election and terminating after the new officers for the next year have been elected and oriented by the outgoing officers.

Section 3. Eligibility and Qualifications of Candidates — All student society officer nominees shall be active members of the student society and the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

Nominees must submit in writing their intent to run for office along with a personal profile by the election deadline of _____.

Nominee profiles shall be distributed to all members of the student society no later than one week prior to election date.

Section 4. Time of Elections – Elections will be held no later than _____. Officers of the previous year and the faculty advisor shall be responsible for distributing and tabulating ballots. Tabulation must be done immediately and the elections results posted and winners notified. In event of a tie, a run-off election shall be held immediately.

Section 5. Once elections are completed, the student society online registration form must be completed and returned to the AAPA national office within 30 days.

Section 6. Vacancies in office – In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the vice president shall become the president to serve the unexpired term. In the event of a vacancy in any other position, the new office shall be elected by a majority vote of the remaining *name of student society* Student Society Board of Directors from a slate of qualified candidates prepared by the Board of Directors. All terms of office shall expire at the time of the next regularly scheduled student society elections.

ARTICLE VII. Officer Training

It will be the responsibility of the outgoing officers to train and familiarize the new officers with their duties and responsibilities and the materials needed to perform their jobs. Training must be completed within 30 days of the officer elections.

ARTICLE VIII. Removal of elected or appointed position

Candidates for elected and appointed leadership positions are in good standing at the time of election or appointment. Once elected or appointed, all students holding leadership positions must remain “a student in good standing” (as defined by the PA program or institution where the student leader is enrolled). If a student is found to be “not in good standing,” the student will be removed from office by Board of Directors consensus, and will be notified by the faculty advisor within two weeks.

ARTICLE IX. Meetings

Section 1. The student society shall meet monthly for the transaction of society business. The date and location of these meetings will be decided by the board and announced to the student membership.

Section 2. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the president provided no less than one week’s notice has been given to the membership in writing or by phone.

ARTICLE X. Committees

Section 1. The standing committees of this society shall be the Public Relations Committee and the Fundraising Committee. Other committees shall be formed as necessary by the board with an established function and an established time of dissolution.

Section 2. Each committee chair shall be appointed by the president.

Section 3. All committees shall report their proceedings to the board at the monthly meetings and submit a written report at the end of the leadership year.

ARTICLE XI. Amendments and Parliamentary Procedure

Section 1. The Parliamentary source used by the student society shall be Sturgis’s *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*. In all proceedings, the constitution and bylaws of the student society shall take precedence.

Section 2. The constitution and bylaws may be amended by a majority vote, provided all amendments proposed are submitted to the president at the preceding month's meeting and are in turn submitted to all members at least two weeks prior to the vote.

Section 3. Any bylaws necessary to supplement this constitution shall be approved at a monthly meeting and voted upon at the following monthly meeting.

RATIFIED, _____
date

AMENDED, _____
date

AMENDED, _____
date

With all your governing documents in order you can work on your elections.

Elections and appointment

All of the student society officer positions can be elected or appointed depending on how your student society bylaws read. The majority of student societies hold elections, but a few appoint some of the positions, for various reasons, such as the requirements and responsibilities of the positions or the length of time the position is necessary.

If your student society holds annual elections for the upcoming year's officers, the elections should be held within one month of the class starting the PA program so students have a chance to introduce themselves to each other and will have ample time to determine and carry out the goals of the student society for the upcoming year.

Eligibility for office

It is suggested that student society officers be elected from the first year or junior PA class (didactic year of PA training). When officers have completed their terms of office and have begun the second year (clinical year of PA training), it is expected that they will provide continuity and assistance in leadership to new first year officers. However, participation from all students in the program is encouraged and appreciated.

Term of Office

It is suggested that each officer will serve for a one-year term commencing immediately upon election and terminating after the new officers for the next year have been elected and oriented. However, the terms of office are determined by the student society's bylaws.

Continuity of student society

To enhance continuity, student societies should remain intact, with their officers, until new officers are elected, trained, and have the opportunity to assume their new positions.

Secret ballot elections for officers' positions should be held within a month after classes begin. This allows time for candidates to become acquainted with their classmates.

Responsibilities of student society officers

The Student Academy requests that your officers have the following duties related to the Student Academy. This does not list every responsibility of each office, as the positions mostly likely will be required to assume additional duties as determined necessary by the student society.

If a position is not listed, then the position would be expected to fulfill the duties of his or her office according to the student society bylaws.

Your student society officers' duties should be listed in the bylaws; however, if this information is not covered in the bylaws, consider amending the bylaws or adding supplemental policy that states the duties of the individual officers.

The student society president is expected to

- Carry out appropriate duties according to his/her student society bylaws
- Relay information received from SAAAPA to the student society
- Hold regular business meetings of the student society, at least every four to six weeks
- Provide copies of the student society bylaws to the SAAAPA staff advisor at the AAPA national office immediately after elections for each incoming class have been conducted
- Cooperate with the outgoing officers at the end of their terms of office to provide assistance to the first year class in holding elections and to ensure that a list of the new officers' names and addresses are provided to the SAAAPA staff advisor as soon as possible after completion of elections

The state chapter student representative is expected to

- Attend all state chapter board of directors meetings and report back to the student society
- Increase interaction between the student society, state chapter, Student Academy, and AAPA national office
- Inform the new incoming class about the importance of professional involvement and membership within the AAPA and your state chapter
- Educate student society members on national, state, and local PA issues

The outreach chair representative is expected to

- Coordinate activities and public relations efforts between the student society and external groups, which can include but are not limited to: other medical professionals (MD, DO, PT, OT, nurses, speech, etc.), city/county organizations, state organizations, national organizations, and other community-related organizations
- Promote the PA profession to outside organizations and involve PA students with their community

The AOR representative is expected to:

- Be responsible for distributing all Student Academy information to his or her program

- Monitor the [Student Academy website](#) for announcements, leadership opportunities, and available resources of interest to fellow students
- Serve as the contact for SAAAPA leaders and committees
- Attend the AOR meeting at AAPA's annual conference

Register student society

With the creation of the student society, the bylaws, and the elections being successfully held, you will want to register the student society with the Student Academy at AAPA's national office. Just complete the [online registration form](#).

Congratulations! Once you have achieved all these steps, you have established your officially registered student society. Now the next part is to get your student society involved with students, PA faculty, and the surrounding community.

Established student society

Your PA program's student society already had a name, bylaws, and tradition, but remember that you still need to register your society with the Student Academy annually to become an officially registered student society.

Registration opens September 1, which means that you will want to make sure that you have held elections and amended your bylaws prior to needing to register your student society.

Elections

Usually elections are held by the second month of the program's enrollment date; however, you will want to refer to last year's bylaws to check the exact timing of your society's elections.

If you need more information about the leadership positions, suggestions for terms of office, and other election-related items, review the information in the new student society section of the handbook.

Amending bylaws and governing documents

Even well-established societies should review and perhaps amend their existing bylaws each year. Your society may deem the bylaws appropriate without any changes. Your student society may make any changes which the members feel are necessary as long as the changes do not conflict with existing SAAAPA or AAPA policies. All members, especially officers, should take time to become familiar with the society's bylaws.

Register student society

Finally, to make the student society nationally recognized with SAAAPA, do not forget to register your student society with the Student Academy at AAPA's national office.

Each year, as soon as possible, after completion of student society elections, a list of the newly elected officers' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses must be [registered online](#) with the Student Academy.

You will also be able to see when your [registration has been processed](#), if your student society is missing any information, and other student society websites.

Organizing a student society

Here are some suggestions on how you can work to get your student society organized so that it will continue to do great work on behalf of the PA students at your program.

Meeting tips

Meetings have several functions: they give members a chance to discuss and evaluate goals and objectives, keep updated on current events, provide a chance to communicate, and keep the group cohesive. Most of all, meetings allow groups to pull resources together for decision making. The following are some tips to help make your next meeting successful and productive.

Before the Meeting

1. Develop an agenda and stick to it.
2. Choose an appropriate meeting time and location. Set a time limit and remember that members have other commitments.
3. Plan ahead for meetings. Ask students for their suggestions for topics to be covered and speakers to be invited.
4. Use visual aids to enhance communication. Distribute or post agendas.
5. Establish the role of a student liaison to the PA faculty and administration. Allow time for administrative announcements in all society meetings. Encourage the participation of the administration and faculty in the student society.

During the Meeting

1. Start on time. End on time.
2. Follow the agenda.
3. Encourage group discussion and feedback, but keep focused on topic. Allow the members to be part of the decision-making process.
4. Summarize decisions and actions and record minutes.
5. Thank the members for their involvement.

After the Meeting

1. Ensure that the minutes are prepared and distributed promptly.
2. Involve as many students as possible on different committees and encourage different individual leadership in each committee.
3. Discuss concerns or issues raised during the meeting with other officers to determine plans of action.
4. Follow up on delegation. Verify that leaders fulfill responsibilities.
5. Conduct a periodic evaluation of meetings. Weak areas can be analyzed and improved for more productive meetings.

Agenda

This key part of the meeting should be developed in advance with input from the officers of the student society and the faculty advisor. Try and distribute this information about two weeks prior to the meeting so that society members will know what is being discussed at the meeting.

The following is a sample meeting agenda, which you can use as a model when creating your meeting agenda. Remember that it is not necessary to have all of the components listed here; however, the more interesting the agenda, the more members will attend your meeting.

Sample Meeting Agenda

- I. Welcome and review of agenda
- II. Introduction of guest speaker
 - A. Guest speaker
 - B. Questions
- III. Business meeting
 - A. Roll call/attendance
 - B. New Business
 - C. Old Business
- IV. Officer Reports
- V. Committee Reports
- VI. Update on Student Academy and AAPA national events
- VII. Announcements
- VIII. Date, time, and location of next meeting
- IX. Adjournment

Minutes

Keeping the membership informed is vital to the survival of your organization. Minutes give continuity to procedures, document activities, and inform members who are absent.

Meeting minutes are more than a convenient record; they are a necessary legal document. Minutes should be kept on file for the duration of an organization's existence. Minutes serve as historical references for decisions made by the leadership, including policies and positions adopted by the group.

Minutes should not be a verbatim account of the meeting, but a functional summary report of the items discussed and the decisions reached. All motions made should be highlighted in the minutes, noting the person who made the motion and the one who seconded it. The minutes should reflect the order in which items were discussed and should be approved with any necessary amendments by the group at its next meeting.

Minutes should include

- The name of your organization
- The type of meeting being held
- The date and location of the meeting
- The name of the presiding officer and secretary, with signatures, at the end of the minutes
- All major motions and points of order or appeals, whether sustained or lost, and all other major decisions; include the name of the person making the motion
- Names of officers and committee members and a statement of assignments
- List of members present (often kept in a separate section)

Tips for writing minutes

- Use full names, not nicknames.
- State whether or not the motion was carried. The number of votes cast is not necessary unless it is required in your bylaws or for a special situation.
- Record what is done, not what is said; summarize important discussions if this is necessary to understand the decision.
- Actions taken by the leadership should include the date and reference the group.
- The action should clearly state what is to occur, who is responsible for the outcome, the deadline, and the budget.
- Actions may include a discussion or support statement in order to clarify the intent of the action.
- Indicate whether the action was passed, defeated, or amended.

Activities

Programs and activities provide an opportunity for fellowship, by encouraging your members to work together; for education, by helping your school and local community in health-related areas; and, of course, for fun. Programming also provides excellent public relations for the PA profession, your program, and your society. Planning and participating in these programs foster student involvement within the society. Programs are easily coordinated with organizations in your community, groups of students of other health professions, and the state constituent chapter. All in all, good programming will be one of the most rewarding and beneficial aspects of your organization.

Project ideas

- Coordinate activities with your constituent chapter and participate in chapter projects.
- Offer a CPR review course for students, graduates, hospital personnel, or local citizens.
- Create informational brochure with a list of local resources and provide to shelters.
- Help at a local shelter, donate clothing or items of need, or plan a foot wash and check for people staying at the shelter.
- Coordinate activities with the county Heart Association, Cancer Society, March of Dimes, Kidney Foundation, etc., to help with their annual meetings, fundraising, or public relations projects.
- Sponsor a Red Cross blood drive with screening for cholesterol, etc.

- Plan a health fair, providing routine screenings. These events not only increase visibility and awareness of physician assistants, but reinforce procedure skills necessary for the clinical year.
- Promote health awareness and literacy to local schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, or Girl Scout and Boy Scout groups.
- Participate in Special Olympics, blood pressure screening projects, working first aid stations for sporting events, high school and junior college career days, and intramural sports teams (coed volleyball, softball).
- Plan a job fair or educational program for a local high school or elementary school.
- Plan programs for community organizations to increase their knowledge of the PA profession.
- Work with other health profession organizations to exchange speakers for your meetings, to have joint meetings to get to know one another, and to share educational speakers.

Budget

It is the responsibility of the student society treasurer to create and implement the organization's budget. However, all officers and committee chairs should be familiar with the budget process, as well as with their own expenses. Each society must establish its own budget. There are basically two ways of creating a budget.

1. Determine how much money your group has from dues, savings, and fundraising projects, and then plan your activities and programming around this total.
2. Plan your activities and projects, determine the cost of each, and then from that sum, determine how much each member must pay for dues and how much money you will need to raise with your fundraising projects to fund your programming.

Whichever method you use, remember this good advice: Do not spend money that you do not have!

Formulating budget

When determining your society's budget, keep the following items in mind:

- Operating costs, including supplies and administrative needs
- Rental cost for meeting rooms (if applicable)
- Refreshments for meetings
- Basic expenses for projects, e.g., poster board and markers for making signs for your car wash or PA Day advertisements
- Cost of sending your representatives to AAPA's annual conference, including transportation, lodging, meals, etc.

Reimbursement

Each officer and member should follow the no-receipt, no-reimbursement policy. The treasurer should be responsible for reimbursing members for student society expenses and for keeping track of receipts and expenses. All officers and committees should keep an expense record and

stay within their designated budget. If there is a need for additional funds, it should be reviewed with the treasurer and the officers of the student society.

Fundraising 101

You may have many ideas for activities, but without funds to finance them, you may not be able to carry them out. Whether your society wants to have a welcoming party for new students or transport members to the annual conference, it takes money. That is where fundraising helps!

As soon as possible, determine the amount and cost of the activities and programming your society wants to have. Include all expenses, refreshments for meetings, transportation to the annual conference, housing at annual conference, guest speakers, etc., and determine exactly how much money the society will need to fund these activities.

Estimate what amount of time members can spend on fundraising activities. Determine if you are limited to evenings, weekends, or only an occasional Saturday or Sunday. Even if there is not a great deal of time, do not be discouraged. The important thing is to be able to count on a specific time slot far enough in advance to formulate plans and advertise them to all involved. If you have a goal in mind and some idea of times and schedules, you are able to determine the type of fundraising project that would fit your needs. This is the time to take stock of any particular skills or connections your members might have that could be useful for raising money.

Establish a fundraising committee and appoint a chair. This committee should be in charge of planning, scheduling, and organizing your society's fundraising efforts. Whether you have one large fundraiser or multiple activities throughout the year, fundraising takes good planning and organized leadership. However, even with the best leadership, the support and commitment of all the members for these projects is crucial to a successful fundraising campaign.

Remember these fundraising tips to help make fundraising pay off.

1. Do not try to condense all your money-making activities into a short length of time. This is hard on the volunteers and organizers and can lead to your losing some good people for the rest of the year simply because they burn out.
2. Creativity is crucial to successful fundraising. Watch what kinds of things other student groups in your area are doing; get together and brainstorm to come up with new and better ideas.
3. Try to plan several different types of small projects and space them throughout the year. This requires early planning, but is much easier on everyone in the end, as it allows members who cannot work on a project during one time period to work on another project later in the year.

Here are a few ideas for fundraising.

1. Garage and bake sales: Crafts, used home appliances and furnishings, unwanted clothes, plants, and other items you can scrounge up are great profit makers at a

garage sale. This is also a good place to sell baked goods such as donuts, cookies, bagels, pretzels, breads, pies, and cakes. Beverages can also be served.

2. Car or dog wash: The car wash, a time-honored fundraiser, requires a good location with ample room for cars (a parking lot or gas station), a source of water, adequate advertising, and willing volunteers. You can also do the event for dogs instead of cars.
3. Students for hire: Advertise to the local community that your members are available for odd jobs. Another possibility is a communal job held by the society as a group and worked on a rotational basis by its members. Try selling tickets at the local theater, mowing lawns, shoveling snow, working a sporting event, or working on the school campus.
4. Raffles: Charge a nominal ticket fee, with the winner getting half the money and the other half going to the student society, or have merchants donate an item of value (DVD, TV, stereo) with the drawing held in their store. Be sure to check both state and local gaming laws before conducting a raffle. Or try a reverse drawing, where the numbers that don't win are called out first to add to the hopes of the individuals participating.
5. Sporting events or tournaments: Plan a fun run or golf, volleyball, or other sports-related tournament. Charge an entry fee and search for sponsors for T-shirts or other free gifts. Contact local businesses, sporting goods stores, running clubs, or sports teams for advice and sponsorship. Your members can help register participants, advertise the event, and help organize the event. This type of event can be very profitable and, if enough funds are raised, your society can donate a portion to a charitable cause.
6. Think of creative ways to ask for donations, one group asked people to fill a tube socks with change and then they were able to pool the money from all of the socks together. Another created a box around a wheelchair and asked everyone to donate coins until the wheelchair was covered.

The key to a successful fundraising project is advertisement. People will not participate in your event or give money unless they know about your activity. Utilize your local community and university newspapers and radio and television stations. Posters, flyers, and cards at local stores and at street corners are also productive.

Also, when looking for funding for your student organization, do not overlook your own back yard. If your PA program is part of the college campus, approach the student government about formal recognition for your student society as a university student organization. As a recognized student organization, you may be eligible for campus meeting space, resources, and often funding.

Committees

Depending on the size of your society and the number of projects that your society committed to accomplish for the year, it might make sense to create committees.

First you will want to review the society bylaws and see whether information about committees already exists in the documents. If there is information in the bylaws or governing documents, then you will want to follow the policy that is provided there.

However, if committees are not discussed in the bylaws, then consider how to create them for your society and what policy you might want to establish. You will want to have defined policy about committees, such as who can participate, term of the committee, duties of the committee, and who will chair the committees.

Role of committees

The committees of your student society should perform the bulk of the organization's work. Through the use of these groups, the responsibilities are apportioned among student members.

Advantages of committees

A committee has many advantages that enable it to work more efficiently than the larger parent organization. Some of these are

- Greater freedom of discussion is possible.
- More time is available for each subject.
- Informal procedures can be used.
- Better use can be made of experts and consultants.
- Delicate and troublesome questions may be settled without publicity.
- Hearings may be held giving members the opportunity to express their opinions.

Improving your student society

As an established student society, you can now work to improve the society so that it continues to be an influential force for PA students at your program, the local community, and the program faculty.

Increased communication

Increased communications can help improve the student society, as the more people know about projects, activities, and meetings, the more involved the members of the society will be.

This does not just mean sending out more e-mails. Instead, discuss with your members and alumni how they would like to receive information from the society.

You might try sending a text message of important information so that people receive the message immediately and are not required to check their e-mail or mailbox for the vital information. However, remember to use this sparingly or it will lose its importance and be seen more as a nuisance than helpful information.

Or instead of sending multiple e-mails, only send a regularly scheduled weekly update with all the information for the week and send out only emergency e-mails at other times. This will allow your members to anticipate when they will receive information and pay more attention to it since they will not be constantly being bombarded with e-mails from the society.

Advertise

Advertise upcoming activities and meetings using posters, flyers, and information in student mailboxes. This way every time the person visits a particular classroom he or she will see a reminder about the event. This also helps to make faculty and other students who might not have joined the society aware of what is going on with the organization.

Supply a bulletin board to use for society business only and post it somewhere very public so that your society can post information on it regularly.

Enhance society meetings

Here are some ideas to help you further enhance your society meetings.

- The format for student society meetings should be varied. Include guest speakers in your program to stimulate student interest and to educate your members. Topics such as employment information, résumé writing, and clinical issues can be very popular and educational.
- Recreation, socializing, and fellowship are integral parts of your society. Make the tone of the meetings relaxed and allow students to get to know one another in settings outside of the classroom.
- Serve refreshments! Have the student members take turns bringing refreshments or budget funds to serve beverages and snacks at each meeting.

- The coordination of student society activities with AAPA constituent chapter activities is very beneficial. Many chapters have educational meetings that can be held in conjunction with society meetings. Meeting practicing PAs and involved members of your state chapter is a great experience and good way to network. Chapter members can also provide advice on employment searches and other concerns of PA students.

Continuity

It is important to continue the good work from one group to the next and this can be done several different ways.

First, it is recommended that each society president and other officers maintain notebooks or electronic documents. These notebooks allow officers to have quick access to important documents, reference tools, records of past activities and members, and national resources, and will be helpful throughout their term of office. These notebooks should be passed on to the new officer at the end of his or her term. Sample sections and inclusions are as follows:

1. Organization documents including recent SAAAPA bylaws, policies and procedures; recent student society constitution and/or bylaws; recent copy student society registration form
2. Rosters of officers, membership, and alumni
3. Meetings and minutes: including agendas and officer reports
4. Finances: including treasurer's report, fundraising projects, and banking information
5. Projects/activities: including summary of past projects, ideas for future projects, chapter vents
6. Communications: including information from SAAAPA and state chapters
7. Assembly of Representatives (AOR) information: including list of past representatives, recent AOR resolutions, and AOR handbook (distributed by SAAAPA)

In addition to the notebook, a mentoring program between the new and past leaders is helpful. This way the old leaders can continue to stay involved with the society and help support the new officers.

Remember keeping people involved and engaged is key to having a successful student society.