



Leaving Your Mark: Transition Techniques 101

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So your year is almost over in RHA and you can see all of your great plans and goals being checked off of your to-do list. The feeling of “completion” and “closure” is in sight and you are excited! Don’t get too ready to be through with your obligations, you still need to transition the person who will fill the shoes left by you. Many RHAs are slow to start year after year because the executive board has not yet perfected the art of transitioning their incoming executive board. Some ideas to keep in mind when preparing a transition meeting with your successor are:

- **Go through and make an annual calendar of events.** Each RHA executive position has its unique duties which are consistent through the years. It helps new executive board member to not just know what there duties are, but when they should be completed and how to prepare for them. This can be as simple as making lists of duties to be completed for each month, to actually making a calendar with specific due dates.
- **Create a disk, or CD, with all documents and planning forms.** It may be nice to keep all of the documents you created/used throughout the year in order to give to the new executive board member. This goes along with the theory, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” If it worked with you, share your wealth.
- **Keep a hard copy of EVERYTHING.** It may be nice to keep a hard copy of all RHA minutes and agendas, and any memos that you have received. Take a three-ring binder and separate it into your positions big responsibilities (i.e. for the NCC that could be “conferences,” “spirit,” “banner/display,” “SAACURH,” “NCARH,” “NACURH/Affiliation,” “RHA Minutes,” and so on...). This way, your successor will be able to take the calendar and the disk of documents and make the connection with the materials in your binder.

This is the bulk of your transition work, but you cannot just leave this material in your RHA office and expect your successor to pick it up and make sense of it all. This is when all of this hard work becomes “junk in the office.” Take some pride in this preparation and annual closure and set up some time with your successor to meet and go through all of the material. This will probably take more than an hour. It may be nice to meet once for a couple of hours in order to go over all of the “business material;” then, set up a social outing in order to discuss the less formal material like, “why did you run for this position” and “here is what you can expect with your stress levels during these times.”

Bottom line is to remember that the art of good transitions is that you cannot rush through it. Start your preparations NOW! If you start creating your foundations for the transition period at the beginning of your spring semester, all you have to do is keep adding to it as the semester progresses. Just because you are leaving the RHA exec board doesn’t mean you cannot keep influencing the future of the organization which you have taken so much pride in making successful. Don’t be afraid to leave your mark, and don’t leave your successor in a lurch next year.