

SOURCE

*Student Organizations
Useful Resource
for Co-curricular
Experience*

Getting Involved

Involvement is participating in college-related activities outside of the classroom and benefiting from that experience. It rounds out the academic experience with new skills and opportunities. Involvement may be playing an intramural sport, working in a community agency, or participating in activities within your living unit. Students get involved in many ways and for a variety of reasons – what is important is to find the activity that best suits you!

What's in it for you?

Students get involved for different reasons based on their individual needs and desires. What they receive varies with their individual contribution, but most students say they receive great personal dividends. Five of the most common reasons students get involved are:

- growth
- recognition
- achievement
- participation
- enjoyment

The benefits they receive from their involvement include:

- exploring career options
- working with groups (learning delegation skills, using public relations skills, etc.)
- interpersonal skills (communicating, managing conflict, listening, etc.)
- making a difference on campus
- learning and practicing leadership skills (delegating, communicating, managing time, setting goals, etc.)
- having fun

Why get involved?

There is yet another good reason to get involved – success! Alexander Astin, an educator then at UCLA, researched 200,000 students and determined that success in college is related to involvement (*Achieving Academic Excellence*, 1985). Astin defines involvement as including:

- living on campus
- working on campus
- being involved in campus activities
- having significant interactions with faculty, staff, administration or peers
- being involved in research or other close relationships with professors

According to Astin, students involved in one or more of these areas tend to be more successful in college. Even if you don't live or work on campus, there are many opportunities for you to explore to help enrich your college experience.

What involvement is best for you?

With so many choices, it might be difficult figuring out which involvement opportunity fits your needs and desires. The first step is to ask yourself the following questions:

- What have I been involved with in the past?
- Why did I get involved in those particular opportunities?
- What benefits did I get from those involvement experiences?
- Are there new types of involvement opportunities I would like to explore?

If you want help answering these questions, stop by Student Involvement and let us help you! You can set up an individual involvement consultation with one of our staff members, or you can arrange to do an Assessment of Skills, Activities and Participation (A.S.A.P.).

Goal setting is the next step!

Establish personal goals and then decide how you will reach those goals through your involvement experiences. Select activities that will help you reach your goals. Some possible sources of information are Student Involvement, ASUN, student organizations, the campus calendar, your living unit, your academic adviser, friends or the campus newspaper classified ads.

Once you know what type of involvement you are looking for, put a plan together to take that first step. Some suggestions are:

- Talk to your adviser or the adviser of one of the organizations.
- Find out as much as possible about the organization.
- Go to a meeting with a person already involved in the organization.
- Grab a friend and go to a meeting together. If you can't find anyone who wants to go, go by yourself.

For more information, refer to the "Essential Experiences" S.O.U.R.C.E sheet.



For more information on organization and personal development skills in the S.O.U.R.C.E series, stop by or call NU Student Involvement, 200 Nebraska Union, 472-2454; or 300 Nebraska East Union, 472-1780. Staff members will be happy to assist you and answer your questions.