

## Forming a Core Group

### What is a core group?

A core group is comprised of student activists and/or faculty who are committed to launching a Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance on their campus. In our experience, groups of 8 to 10 committed student activists plus at least one faculty member, preferably more, are necessary to create the “critical mass” necessary to effectively launch the program. Also, a group this size is large enough to distribute work and responsibility, and ensure participation by more than a handful of people. At the same time, it is a small enough group to allow for consensus decision-making and open discussion.

### What is the role of the core group?

The core group is responsible for the launching phase of establishing a Leadership Alliance on campus. This includes chartering the group with the college/university, applying for funding, identifying a faculty advisor(s) and/or a faculty team, and conducting the recruitment drive and general interest meeting. (See “Launching a Leadership Alliance” for a more detailed description of the launching process.)

The core group makes a commitment to the Leadership Alliance through the launching phase (approximately 4 – 6 weeks), at which time the Leadership Alliance should be fully established on campus.

### Who should participate in the core group?

- Activists who are dedicated, reliable, and eager to make the Leadership Alliance one of their priorities.
- All core group members should identify themselves as feminists and feel comfortable advocating FMF’s Mission & Principles. Members must complete a membership form and be in agreement with the terms of the national FMLA constitution.
- It is an asset to have core group members with past leadership experience in other progressive groups on campus, such as an environmental group, LGBT Alliance, Black Student Union, or Student Government.
- The make-up of the core group should reflect the diversity of the student body and encourage students from as many different academic disciplines and school years as possible.

### What happens to the core group after the Leadership Alliance is established?

A general interest meeting, open to the entire campus, should complete the launching phase of the Leadership Alliance. At this meeting, the core group explains the goals of the group, relationship with the FMF, already established national campaigns and local programs for the year. Once an individual is interested in joining the FMLA, have them complete a membership form. The dates for regular program meetings and events should be announced and a sign up sheet requesting email and phone numbers should be circulated.

Many of the core group members may be elected to positions on the executive committee of the Leadership Alliance, but some will not. It is not necessary for core group members to run for executive committee positions, but the core is encouraged to continue as active participants.

## Launching A Successful Leadership Alliance on Campus

### Stage 1

- 1) **Contact the Campus Team** to discuss your interest in launching a Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance on your campus and to learn about the program and how it might work on your campus.
- 2) **Recruit at least 8-10 founding members** who are enthusiastic about starting a pro-choice feminist activist group on campus and who will commit to making it happen. The Campus Team can help with the initial recruitment of founding members.
- 3) **Identify & Recruit Key Faculty and Staff** for the Faculty and Staff Team. From the very beginning, faculty and staff members can act as mentors and advisors to your Core Group. Begin by approaching faculty and staff whom you know. Make the effort to work with advisors in a variety of disciplines.
- 4) **Create a Plan of Action with the Campus Team** for the Recruitment Drive, Chartering Process, and Recruitment Meeting. This should be done via conference call between founding members and a Campus Organizer. We have a lot of experience launching groups, and can give you step-by-step support and materials to get you started.

### Stage 2

- 5) **Begin the Chartering Process.** Contact your Student Activities office or Student Government to learn about the chartering process on your campus. Contact a member of the Campus Team to obtain a copy of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance national constitution or copy and paste it from <http://www.feministcampus.org/fmla/program-materials/constitution.asp>. Discuss any and all necessary amendments to the constitution with a member of the Campus Team PRIOR to submitting the constitution to your school for approval.
- 6) **Submit Charter to FMF.** Once approved by your school, the constitution MUST be signed by two officers and a faculty advisor and submitted to the Feminist Majority Foundation for signature by the Campus Program Director. At this point, FMF will officially recognize the charter. The FMF will then send the FMLA its official charter.

### Stage 3

- 7) **Conduct a Recruitment Drive** in preparation for the recruitment meeting. Reach out to diverse populations on campus; strong groups will have students of all classes, majors, and backgrounds to lend their perspectives. Reach out to students by tabling, through Women and Gender Studies classes, and through other feminist and progressive networks. Throughout the recruitment drive, collect as much contact information from interested students as possible. Campus Organizers can make suggestions and provide you with materials to make this effort a success.
- 8) **Hold the Recruitment Meeting** at the end of your two-week recruitment drive. Explain the Leadership Alliances and *Choices* Campus Campaign(s) to the other students and generate

excitement about the group. Use part of the meeting to plan a small action—get members active right away! FMF can answer questions about the program and send materials to distribute.

- 9) **Fill Out Membership Forms.** Either during or at the end of recruitment meeting, every member should fill out a membership form for activists. This form serves as a formal commitment by the student to the campus group, states the rights and benefits of membership including the right to vote, run for leadership positions, and to represent the group at campus, regional, national decision making entities, conferences, and/or events. Members are also eligible to receive the Feminist Majority Foundation's bimonthly *Choices* e-zine, special online access to fact sheets, organizing materials, and a one year membership in the Ms. Community which entitles them to receive Ms. Magazine at the low rate of \$7 per year, and much more. You will also be added to the [feministcampus.org](http://feministcampus.org) student activist network and your campus group's listserv where you will receive email updates on campaigns and actions..

#### Stage 4

- 10) **Hold Elections.** Speak with a member of the Campus Team to determine an appropriate time frame for your first election based upon the needs of your group. Future elections should occur yearly during March (Women's History Month). Be sure that you have at least a President, Vice President or Co-Presidents, a Recorder, and Treasurer. Make sure all official members have the opportunity to run for office, if they wish, and to vote. Vote even if a board position is uncontested. Submit the new officers' contact information to the Campus Team.
- 11) **Implement the *Choices* Campaign!** Brainstorm action ideas and vote to determine which ones the group will carry out during the semester. Plan on organizing 1-2 major actions each semester. Check your school calendar to find the best dates. Develop a timeline for planning each action. Work with the Campus Team to learn about current National *Choices* Campus Program Campaign initiatives, *Get Out Her Vote*, the Emergency Contraception Access Campaign, and the Student Leadership Campaign. Your Organizer's Binder also includes sample local programs and ideas for the calendar year.
- 12) **Continue to Recruit!** Strive to double your membership by the end of your first semester (usually January), double it again by the end of the year, and then set ongoing goals for group growth and diversity. To ensure strong outreach, use multiple recruitment strategies, including a combination of tabling, flyering, class announcements, personal follow-up/contact, email updates, etc.
- 13) **Keep in Contact with FMF!** Set goals with the Campus Team and keep us updated on the group's progress. Let us know when things are going well and if you are having any challenges. Campus Organizers travel to campuses throughout they can help your group with a This can be done throughout your semester and during your end of semester de-briefings.