

Membership Growth and Retention

Now that you've had your general interest meeting and have recruited other feminist students to join your FMLA or affiliate, it is time to focus on keeping your membership base and expanding it. Membership retention is an ongoing process that ensures the survival of your group and increase the groups effectiveness in raising awareness about feminist issues on campus. This section will help you learn to keep your base while adding to it!

Involving Members

After recruitment, the next task is keeping new members involved! With very little funding for activist work, people are our most valuable resource. Our movement is only as strong as our members! Retaining members allows the FMLA to be pro-active, preventing the group from having to repeat recruitment efforts that take time away from other valuable projects and events.

Welcome All New Members

Welcome new members and take time for introductions between new and current FMLA members. Give new members a brief history of the FMLA (founding history and past projects), especially if they join the group late in the semester. Provide all necessary materials and tell them what the group is working on, what happened in the last meeting, and the overall goals for the semester. Make sure they know how they can become active in the FMLA right away.

During general meetings and events, current FMLA members should go out of their way NOT to talk to each other, but talk to new members. Create a mentor or friendship system where current FMLA members are each responsible for one or more new members. Members who are established within the group should call new members to remind them about meetings, make sure they have materials, and put them in contact with your FMF Campus Organizer.

Use the Membership Form

The Membership Form contains contact information and information about individual activists' interests. Use the Membership Form to learn about members' interests, strengths, and skills; look for ways they can get involved in the group.

Get Active Immediately!

Include a small, pre-planned action for the first general interest meeting (i.e., a letter-writing campaign, or a "Did You Know?" campaign). Getting new members active and involved immediately shows them that their help is needed.

In case you miss a meeting...

Have alternative forms of communication set in place for members who miss an occasional meeting. Create a listserv or post meeting minutes to the FMLA website.

Accommodate members' special needs

Commuters, members with disabilities, members with children, and working students may have different scheduling needs. Try to schedule a meeting time and place that accommodates diverse members' needs. Keep the meeting time and location consistent.

Have FUN!!

Take time out to have fun and get to know each other. Go on camping trips, plan retreats, have a movie night, organize a potluck, etc.

Abide by the decision-making process

Establish a process by which all decisions are made as a group. Meeting facilitators should make a conscious effort to let members and attendees participate fully in the meetings. Encourage people to volunteer.