

# ASEE Student Chapter Startup/Revive Guidebook

## Why establish or revive an ASEE student chapter?

There are significant benefits for students to have a student chapter at their institution. These benefits include preparation for careers in academia, mentorship from genuinely interested faculty, participation in regular seminars, discussions, forums, and workshops with interested faculty, access to up-to-date resources (journals, library files, web resources, and PRISM), guidance on academic and professional decisions, and participation and networking opportunities at regional and national conferences.

Academic institutions and ASEE National also profit from an ASEE student chapter. In addition to the distinction of producing well-prepared academics, institutions can use an ASEE student chapter to help current faculty develop professionally in engineering education. For example, the chapter creates many more opportunities for faculty to function as ASEE members.

In this brief document, you will find the following to help you start an ASEE student chapter:

*Fundamental goals of ASEE student chapters*

*Considerations to make before starting or reviving an ASEE student chapter.*

*Requirements to start an ASEE student chapter.*

*Suggestions on maintaining a successful ASEE student chapter.*

*References*

### ***Fundamental goals of ASEE student chapters***

While the exact goals may vary between campuses, the fundamental goals of an ASEE student chapter are to:

- 1) *Encourage engineering students to pursue academic careers.*
- 2) *Aid graduate engineering students in preparing to seek employment in academia.*
- 3) *increase pedagogical understanding (i.e., knowledge of how to teach)*
- 4) *encourage excellence in teaching among graduate teaching assistants by administration of teaching awards.*
- 5) *Provide a network and a community across all engineering and related disciplines.*
- 6) *Encourage underrepresented groups, such as women and minorities, to seek advanced degrees and academic careers in engineering.*
- 7) *Promote engineering outreach to K-12 students to encourage the study of engineering.*

In short, ASEE student chapters aim to disseminate information, teach skills, promote engineering and engineering education, and foster community.

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## Considerations to make before starting or reviving an ASEE student chapter

There are two main factors to consider before deciding to start up or revive an ASEE student chapter.

### 1) *Engineering and/or Education school demographics:*

It is pertinent to consider the demographics at your institution. Investigating the student population (graduate and undergraduate), the composition of the student population, the average student residency, student academic & research workload, student funding type (research and teaching assistantships), and the number of existing professional organizations on our campus can give you a better idea of how successful a new ASEE student chapter will be on your campus. Individuals who may be short-term master's students or already participate in other organizations may not be as likely to participate as active members of your ASEE student chapter. A critical mass of graduate students, specifically Ph.D. students, is vital to sustaining a student chapter in consistency and continuity.

### 2) *Factors influencing student interest:*

Another essential aspect to investigate is the factors influencing a student's interest. One key to the success of many of the current ASEE student chapters is the faculty's strong presence and involvement in ASEE National. When the faculty at a given institution are interested in society, their support can help in the longevity and success of the chapter. Highly influential faculty involved in the chapter may also make the chapter more appealing to some students.

## Requirements to start or revive an ASEE student chapter

Several requirements must be met before forming or reviving a student chapter.

### 1) *Faculty Advisor(s):*

The first step is to find an ASEE member to serve as a faculty advisor. You may have someone in mind, but if you do not, it is recommended that you first contact your Campus Representative. They should be able to put you in touch with suitable candidates. You can find a list of Campus Representatives [here](#). If your institution does not have a Campus Representative, it is recommended that your engineering or engineering technology dean appoint someone to fill this position.

The number of faculty that can advise your chapter is unlimited if they are all willing to provide help and continue to be active within your chapter. Faculty advisors are a vital component to the longevity of your chapter.

### 2) *Members:*

Second, you must identify individuals willing to participate in your Student Chapter. The chapter members can be students (graduate or undergraduate), faculty, or staff at your institution. It is recommended that a general interest meeting be held to begin building a base of members.

Student chapters can offer two tiers of membership. Participants in local activities are often considered "local" chapter members and are included in informational mailings and event invitations. These members are encouraged to become more active in the local chapter. Currently, ASEE headquarters requires that student chapter Officers be official Student Members of the

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National ASEE; however, anyone is welcome to join the national organization. Because of this stipulation, it is recommended that you recruit students willing to be National ASEE members to ensure future officers. As such, a chapter should investigate recruiting students who are a little further away from graduating, thereby ensuring the continuity of the chapter.

At a minimum, you will need four students to fill the officer positions. No maximum number of people can be part of your chapter.

In addition to being an ASEE member, it is recommended that any member of your chapter who is also an ASEE member should sign up to be part of the [Student Division](#) (SD). Joining the SD is free and can be done when signing up to become an ASEE member. If you or anyone else in your chapter are already ASEE members and wish to join the SD, please email [membership@asee.org](mailto:membership@asee.org)

### 3) *Officers:*

You will need at least four members who are student members of ASEE to serve as the chapter officers:

- a. *President* – sets the overall direction of the chapter and ensures events are appropriately coordinated. The president sets the agenda for the executive meetings and acts as the chapter representative when such a representative is required.
- b. *Vice-President* – Assists the president with setting the direction of the chapter and oversees organizing the seminars and other events.
- c. *Treasurer* – Maintains financial records and oversees the writing of grant proposals for funding of the chapter events.
- d. *Secretary* – Serves as the official communication link for the chapter by monitoring email and maintaining contact with other ASEE chapters and ASEE organizations at the regional and national levels. This person also records and distributes the minutes from the executive meetings.

Additionally, you may want to assign a Publicity Chair (oversees the distribution of the publicity for all chapter events), a Membership Chair (oversees membership lists of active students and activities to recruit new students), and (if applicable) a Newsletter Editor (oversees the publication and distribution of a chapter newsletter each semester).

Remember, when choosing officers, you select individuals who will help to continue the program after you are gone.

### 4) *Chapter Constitution & By-Laws:*

Once a faculty advisor has been named and the core group members have been identified, the group should draw up a set of by-laws and a constitution. A constitution may already exist for reviving chapters, but because of poor management, many of these original documents have been lost and must be rewritten. Each chapter must have a constitution. To construct your by-laws & constitution, looking at other ASEE Student Chapter websites for guidance is recommended. Your chapter's constitution can be fine-tuned to fit what your institution is interested in doing. In general, the constitution should include, but is not limited to, the following sections:

- a. *Preamble* – An introductory statement introducing your chapter and its mission

- b. *Name* – Clear statement of your new chapter’s name
- c. *Purpose* – A list of the goals intended to be addressed by your chapter.
- d. *Membership* – Identifies who may and may not be a group member,
- e. *Executives* – Identifies who belongs to the executive board.
- f. *Voting Procedure and Rules* – Clarifies how any group voting will occur.
- g. *Officers and Duties* – States the roles of each officer position to be elected.
- h. *Amendments* – Clarifies how the chapter will manage amendments to the constitution.
- i. *By-Laws* – Establishes the rules governing your chapter’s internal affairs.

#### 5) *Letter from the Dean:*

Once you have established a faculty advisor, a membership group, and by-laws & constitution, the dean should provide a letter pledging their support for your chapter. This step has already been completed for reviving chapters and can be done without repeating.

All these materials and information should be sent to ASEE Member Services at [membership@asee.org](mailto:membership@asee.org).

It is also highly recommended that your newly formed chapter provide a website linked to the ASEE website. The website will help publicize your student chapter and inform the Student Division of your activities.

If all these items suffice, the ASEE Student Division will add you to the official [ASEE Student Chapter](#) page hosted on the Student Division website. You should receive a confirmation from the ASEE Membership group if your submission meets their standards.

### Suggestions on maintaining a successful ASEE student chapter

Much literature has been written regarding ASEE student chapters (see references below). Many of these papers have published ideas on establishing a successful chapter. Here is a summary of their conclusions:

#### 1) *General Strategies*

- a. find a dedicated group of students willing to put forth a lot of effort and willing to establish your chapter organization (eases turnover)
- b. choose a faculty advisor who will provide a solid source of guidance and support; use their influence to gain administrative support and to bring in well-known speakers.
- c. Delegate the responsibilities amongst your startup group broadly to prevent logjams.
- d. Develop efficient and effective communication protocols to ease information dissemination (use sign-in sheets to establish mailing lists, set up a chapter email address, and develop a chapter website).
- e. Develop early on a list of benefits gained through participating in ASEE (for prospective members and funders)

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- f. Pick one set of activities to pursue and do it well; expand over the years as your chapter sees fit.
- g. Advertise as much as possible to not only pique interest but also to help grow your membership.
- h. Seek funding immediately to help establish your chapter and improve your events (free food attracts everyone!!).
- i. Remain active in ASEE at the national and regional levels by attending conferences and submitting conference or journal papers.
- j. Utilize ASEE groups such as the [Student Division](#) (SD), the [Educational Research Methods Division](#) (ERM), the [Graduate Studies Division](#) (GSD), the [New Engineering Educators Division](#) (NEE), and other ASEE Student Chapters to aid in your development.
- k. Attend [conferences](#) (e.g., ASEE Conference & Exposition or the Frontiers in Education Conference) to help grow your chapter and gain recognition.
- l. Coordinate activities with other on-campus organizations that have common interests.

## 2) *Event Ideas*

- a. seminar series for graduate students (e.g., topics: proposal funding, the publication process, and the promotion and tenure process) and or undergraduate students (example topic: process and pitfall of graduate school) on specific topics
- b. panel discussions (Ex. Topics: finding an academic job, curriculum vitae, proposal writing, interviewing, starting a research program, interdisciplinary research, teaching methods, and the state of teaching at research and non-research universities, engineering education approaches and advice, engineering education research, being/becoming a faculty member, transitions between academia and industry)
- c. brown bag lunches
- d. presenting teaching awards to exceptional teaching assistants and/or faculty
- e. teaching enrichment workshops for faculty and graduate students
- f. academic career preparation workshops
- g. participation in ASEE Annual Conferences

## 3) *Funding Source Ideas*

- a. contact the college of engineering department chairs to support activities directed toward the professional development of graduate students; many departments sponsor student organization activities, and ASEE encompasses all engineering disciplines.
- b. Request funds directly from the associate dean for undergraduate education to support activities that recognize outstanding graduate student instructors and activities that promote graduate school to undergraduate students.

- c. Register with and request funds from the Student Government Associations on your campus, which provide funds to organizations on campus for events.
- d. Request travel grants from your campus' Graduate School to support member travel to the ASEE National and Local Conferences
- e. Contact the ASEE Divisions to support workshops your chapter would like to provide.
- f. Fundraising by selling items for profit
- g. and write a grant proposal to a foundation that awards money for such endeavors.

#### 4) K-12 Outreach Ideas

- a. Connect with the groups or faculty at your institution already doing outreach.
- b. Use your institution's education department to build a list of K-12 contacts.
- c. Use websites, like [www.teachengineering.com](http://www.teachengineering.com), as resources for activities to use in the classroom (no need to reinvent the wheel).

**For additional questions about starting a student chapter or more information about the Student Division, please get in touch with the current [SD Chapter Liaison or SD Membership Chair](#).**

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