Brainstorming

One fun and exciting way to make members feel part of the planning process of an activity or organization is through a brainstorming session. These sessions allow members to show off their creativity and to feel more connected to the organization. Brainstorming sessions are energetic and generate enthusiasm and excitement.

Creating a brainstorming session is easy and anyone can do it.

**Five simple rules to follow when engaging in brainstorming:**

1. Criticism and judgment are not permitted during the brainstorming time. There is no right or wrong answer; there is no good or bad idea. Review of the ideas will come later.
2. Wild is permitted. The wilder and stranger the idea, the better. Many times a great idea can come from a wilder one.
3. Quantity not quality is the most important thing. The more ideas you can work from the better.
4. Building and combining other ideas is a great trick. Utilize ideas already stated and combine them with others to develop an even better idea.
5. Write everything down. Don’t just have people call out their ideas. If the ideas are not written down, people will forget what was said. Sometimes looking at an idea can spur more ideas.

**How to run a brainstorming session:**

1. Determine when you are going to do the session and get all the members together. The best time to do it is during a previously scheduled meeting.
2. Define the topic for which you will be generating ideas (i.e. how can we recruit more members, how can we make the campus aware of us)
3. Assign a leader for the session. This person will try to get everyone involved and will keep encouraging everyone to give ideas.
4. Assign a recorder. This person is in charge of writing down everyone’s ideas.
5. Review the above rules before starting. Stress that all ideas, no matter how strange or wild are acceptable. As the session progresses, the leader should model this by always encouraging wild suggestions and should people laugh at an idea, they should be gently reminded that no criticisms or judgments are made at this point.
6. Establish a time limit. Five minutes usually works well but don’t feel obligated to stay within the time limit. If ideas are flowing, let people keep going.
7. Start brainstorming.
8. After the brainstorming is complete, read through the list of ideas and discuss them.