

Starting A Junior State Chapter

If your school does not currently have a Junior State chapter, this section is for you. Starting a Junior State chapter requires patience, dedication and hard work, but the rewards are tremendous. A successful Junior State chapter can bring political education and involvement to an apathetic high school campus and have a huge effect on many individuals' lives.

This section gives you a step-by-step process that you can follow to put together a responsive, active Junior State Chapter. If you have any questions or problems starting a chapter at your high school, contact the Junior State National Headquarters at 1/800/334-5353.

Step One: Contact the Junior State Office

Contact the Junior State National Headquarters to obtain copies of the Junior State Handbook, a tax form, and current literature that describes the organization and upcoming events in detail. Use these materials when you explain the program to interested students, teachers, and administrators at your school. Having printed material in hand makes it easier to describe and promote the program. Show this literature to all of your friends, even if you think they "wouldn't be interested in this sort of thing." You might be surprised at their responses.

Step Two: Find a Teacher/Advisor

Every chapter must have a teacher-advisor. Your teacher/advisor will accompany your chapter to conventions and attend chapter meetings as well as offer valuable advice. Your teacher/advisor is your link to the school administration; teachers can help explain to your administration exactly what your chapter is doing. Make sure that he or she will actively work with you and not just provide an official signature whenever one is needed.

If you are having trouble finding a teacher/advisor, your social studies department chair, counselor, principal or activities director may be

able to help you. Some teachers may feel they have too little time to devote to the organization. Emphasize that it is a student-run organization and most of the work will be done by you and the other student leaders of the chapter. Review the Junior State Handbook and skim through the Chapter Binder with potential teacher/advisors and suggest that they contact the Junior State office for any additional information and assistance.

Step Three: Organize a Founders' Meeting

Call a well-planned meeting of all interested students to organize your chapter. This "Founders' meeting" should include your teacher/advisor and three or four people who will help you put the chapter together.

Step Four: Get approval from your administration

Talk with your principal and director of student activities. Get their approval for the proposed chapter as an extra-curricular activity. Once sold on the value of the Junior State, administrators can be very helpful and will often become strong supporters of the organization once they see what it can accomplish and do for the school.

Do not make the mistake of trying to work around your administration. Many chapters have been hampered by principals and other administrators who did not understand the Junior State. Become familiar with school policies, rules, and procedures — whose approval you need, how to get equipment or a place to meet, forms that need to be filled out. On most campuses, new clubs must submit their chapter constitution for student government approval.

Step Five: Get Support from Student Government

Approach your student government officials with your proposed chapter. Get their sup-

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port as they are potential members and may be a source of financial support. You will need a charter as an official extra-curricular activity and a student council that will look out for your interests when scheduling school-wide events.

Step Six: Look for Potential Members

Get other student leaders at your school interested in the Junior State. Speak to government, speech, and history classes and tell them about the organization. Approach the Honor Society, Debate Team, Journalism Staff, ethnic clubs and other groups on campus. Ask your teachers if they know students who would be interested. Be sure to not only recruit one kind of member — aim for diversity. Remember, all students have opinions and can contribute to your chapter, so try to get students of every type to join. Getting rid of the idea that your chapter is only for a certain type of student can be difficult later, so it is best to achieve diversity in your chapter in its early stages. For a thorough look at chapter publicity, see the section in this binder entitled “Publicity”.

Step Seven: Writing a Chapter Constitution

Writing a chapter constitution is a lot easier than it sounds. A sample constitution and guidelines for writing an acceptable constitution can be found later in this section of the binder as well as in the Junior State Handbook. If you like, you can copy the framework provided there and refine it after your chapter is founded. All constitutions must adhere to the Fundamental Principles listed at the beginning of this binder and to any school rules.

The structure of your chapter government and the procedures you choose to adopt are up to you and the other members of your chapter. For a detailed description of how to write your chapter constitution and the basic guidelines you must follow, please see the section below entitled “Writing a Chapter Constitution”. Your Chapter Constitution should be mailed to JSA national office. Unless you hear back quickly, you can assume that it has been approved.

Step Eight: Organize your First Meeting

Call a well planned meeting of all your potential members. This meeting should be designed to promote your new Junior State chapter and also get the chapter organized for the year to come. Make sure that this meeting is interesting and productive so that potential members can see that you are organized.

If you need assistance setting up this first meeting, contact the Junior State Office. Junior State student officials from other high schools are often available to come to your meeting and relate the Junior State experience. They can also give you organizational tips and advice. You can contact these students through the Junior State Office.

Step Nine: Collect Taxes

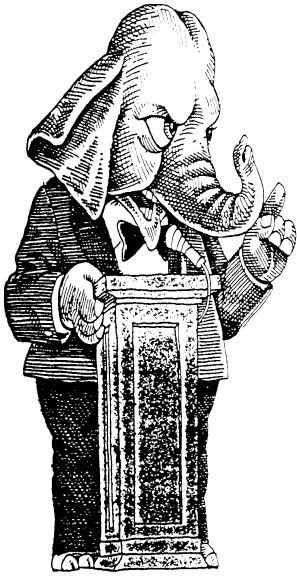
Collect and send your annual state taxes of \$3.00 per member to the Junior State Office. Send your ratified constitution to the Junior State Office; remember to save a copy for your records. Upon receipt of your taxes for at least eight members, your chapter will be officially a part of the Junior State. Elect your chapter officers and set up a chapter calendar of events.

Step Ten: Start Having Chapter Activities

Publicize the establishment and chartering of your chapter in school and community newspapers. Seek community support from organizations like the Kiwanis Club, Optimist Club, Rotary Club, Lions Club and the League of Women Voters.

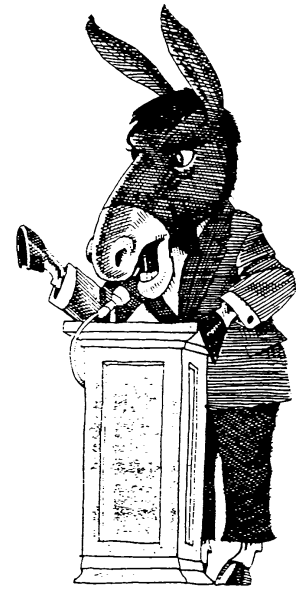
Start recruiting chapter leaders for the years to come. All of your work thus far will be worthless if the chapter disappears when you graduate. Encourage underclassmen to attend Junior State conferences and to help in planning chapter events. By training them now, you can count on them to take over the chapter when you leave.

Start having chapter activities such as debates, simulations and thought talks. The re-



mainder of this section of the chapter binder explains how to run a chapter once it is at this stage. The leaders of a new chapter should pay especially close attention to the sections on publicity, chapter activities,

membership, chapter relations and the chapter program. Starting a chapter can be a difficult task, but keeping it going strong requires much work as well. Both, however, are extremely rewarding and well worth the effort.



Writing a Chapter Constitution

Writing your chapter constitution can seem at first like an overwhelmingly large and complicated task. A good piece of advice is to not get hung up on this task at first. The sample constitution given later can be slightly altered and used very easily as your chapter constitution for a while. Once you have established chapter leadership and structure, you may want to hold a series of meetings in which you rewrite your constitution in a more specific and final form.

When writing your constitution, you should remember that you are free to structure your chapter however you feel is best as long as you adhere to the basic principles of democratic government. The traditional four elected officers and a handful of appointed cabinet members should work fine for you. Structuring your chapter and writing your constitution is, in a way, your first real experience working with politics and government in the Junior State. Through careful planning of your chapter's structure and drafting of your chapter constitution, you can gain a real appreciation for the founders of groups, organizations and nations throughout history.

All chapter constitutions must follow the

Fundamental Principles listed in the beginning of the Chapter Binder and Junior State Handbook. They also must follow all school regulations and guidelines. All chapter constitutions must include the following:

Preamble:

State the purposes and goals of your chapter.

Name:

State the name of your chapter.

Membership:

Indicate how you become a member (be sure that your chapter is open to everyone).

Officers:

Decide what officers your chapter will need. Some chapters use traditional titles of president, secretary, etc., and others pattern their titles after local government. List your officers, specify their duties, and state how they will be selected.

Activities:

Specify how often the chapter will meet, how meetings are called, and who shall preside.

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Amendments and Ratification:

Describe how the Constitution can be adopted and amended.

You should include a lot of people from a lot of different backgrounds in the writing of your chapter constitution. Including a diverse group of people with different points of view will make your constitution much stronger. The United States Constitution was built on a series of compromises, and it is often said that it is these compromises that have made it survive over two-hundred years. A chapter constitution that incorporates the opinions and ideas of many different people will be all the more lasting because of it.

You should not be too rigid in describing your chapter structure in your constitution. While you want certain things to be very clear and precise, you must realize that in order for a constitution to last a long time, it must be flexible enough to withstand changes in people and surroundings. Each new Chapter President may want to change the structure of the chapter slightly and should not need to rewrite the constitution in order to do so. Make your constitution lenient enough that it will endure many different obstacles and other situations.

One might say that the best constitutions are those whose writers not only see the current problems but also foresee future problems with the chapter. Think very clearly about how you want things to work, which things should be left up to

each year's leaders, and which things you want to remain constant. What problems is your chapter likely to face in the future, and how can your constitution minimize the toll they take on your chapter? Your chapter constitution is one of the only things that will stay with your chapter longer than you will. A really good constitution may stay around for decades, if its authors are insightful enough to see what problems the chapter might face in the future.

Before writing your constitution, you should check with your school leadership and administration on their guidelines for clubs. Some schools have certain rules that all clubs must adhere to. You should make sure to follow any guidelines your school may have. They frequently may also require a copy of your club's constitution to keep on record before considering your club an official school club and giving you such privileges as access to school publicity and meeting rooms. In general it is a good idea to inform your school leadership and administration that you are founding this club, what you are doing and why to demonstrate that you are a real club that takes itself seriously and wants to succeed. Initiating good relations with your school leadership and administration is essential as you never know when you are going to need them for something or when you will be able to do something to help them.

Sample Chapter Constitution



Constitution of the Valley High School Chapter of the Junior State

PREAMBLE

We, the citizens of the Valley High School Chapter of the Junior State, in order to achieve high standards of citizenship, improve our understanding of democratic processes, develop responsibility in the individual, and promote involvement in community affairs, do establish this organization.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be "The Valley High School Chapter of the Junior State".

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Membership will be granted to all students who have paid their annual membership tax and are attending Valley High School.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

Section A

Any student may run for office provided that the person is a chapter member in good standing.

Section B

The officers shall be elected by secret ballot at the second to last meeting of the elected term. The candidate receiving a majority of votes cast shall be declared the winner. If no candidate received a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the ballot and a new election shall commence. The process shall continue until a candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.

Section C

The term of the officers shall start June 1 and end the following May 31. In the case of a vacant position, the President may appoint a replacement with the approval of a majority of the chapter. If the President resigns or is impeached, the Vice President becomes President.

Section D

There shall be four (4) elected officers:

1. The President is the chief executive officer of the chapter and is responsible for

representing the chapter at all events. The President will preside over all meetings and be a member of all committees. (S)he is responsible for running the chapter's educational program. The President may appoint other officers as the need arises.

2. The Vice President assists the President and becomes President if there is a vacancy in that position.

3. The Secretary will keep minutes of all the meetings. The Secretary will record and maintain all chapter records.

4. The Treasurer will be in charge of all financial matters of the chapter. The Treasurer will collect monies and keep records of members attending state and regional Junior State events. The Treasurer will prepare a financial report ready at all chapter meetings.

Section E

Any officer may be removed by a two-thirds vote of chapter members present and voting, provided that notice has been given that this motion will be considered.

Section F

The chapter will have a Teacher/Advisor in accordance with the rules and regulations of Valley High School. The Teacher/Advisor will provide educational guidance, supervision and serve as a liaison to the Valley High School administration and faculty.

ARTICLE IV: ACTIVITIES

Section A

The chapter shall meet a minimum of twice a month during the school year. Meetings may be called by either the President or the Teacher/Advisor.

Section B

All meetings shall be run according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the chapter members.

ARTICLE VI: RATIFICATION

This constitution shall take effect upon ratification by a two-thirds vote of the members of the chapter and upon the approval of the Junior State Governor.

Structuring Your Chapter

How you choose to organize your chapter is largely up to you and your members. You may decide to follow the traditional structure of four elected chapter officers and a few appointed cabinet members, or you may decide to try something slightly different. The decision is left up to you and your chapter members to decide based on what you want to accomplish and how you want things to work. The following are just some pointers to assist you with building your chapter structure.

- **Use your people and resources well**

Try to take full advantage of the resources and people you have available to you. Carefully look at each person and figure out how their skills, talents and abilities could be best utilized by your chapter. If you have a member who is a fantastic writer, find a way to have him/her write a chapter sponsored column in the school newspaper, or have that member be the editor of your chapter newsletter. If someone is particularly knowledgeable about current events, have them work with debaters before speaking. If someone is an excellent debater, have them coach your less experienced debaters or run a debate workshop for the chapter. Use everything available to the best of your abilities.

- **Stick to your constitution's guidelines**

Remember that any power the chapter leaders have to structure their chapter is only given to them by their chapter constitution. When deciding how your chapter should work, you must pay special attention to the structures already stipulated in your chapter constitution. If it states that certain decisions must be made by a majority of all the chapter's members, you cannot make that decision without their consent. Well written constitutions usually are flexible enough to allow for many structural changes from year to year to meet the changing needs of a vibrant chapter. However, if your chapter constitution limits what you can do, you must adhere to those limits. Changing your constitution can only be done by the process outlined in your constitution itself.

- **Set out goals to guide your chapter**

Setting out goals at the start of each year or semester can help guide your chapter and its activities. Meet with a few key leaders to discuss what has gone right and what has gone wrong with your chapter in the past. Formulate some simple and specific goals that you want your chapter to aim for this year. Structure your chapter around accomplishing these goals. For instance, a chapter might have had very good meetings in the past but low turnout and little recognition on campus. This chapter might set better publicity as one of its main goals and appoint a dedicated cabinet member to work specifically on the chapter's publicity and bringing in more members.

Make sure that everyone knows what your chapter's goals are and discuss them and how they are coming along throughout the year. At the end of the year, consider writing up a brief report for future chapter leaders on what your chapter's goals were, why, what was done to accomplish them and how successful they were. This will be very valuable to future leaders faced with the same problems.

- **Don't make things unnecessarily complicated**

Most of the things that a chapter tries to accomplish can be done with minimal amount of complication. Some chapters think that by setting up elaborate councils, boards of directors and other complicated structures, they will strengthen their chapter. They usually find that all they really accomplish is confusing people and wasting a lot of people's talents. A simple structure where responsibilities are clearly defined is usually the most efficient way to run a chapter. While people may feel important with long fancy titles, they can usually work best knowing that they are valued for their hard work for the organization. A minimal amount of bureaucracy will keep things simple and people accountable.

- **Clearly define who is responsible for different tasks**

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Running a chapter is a big responsibility and involves many different tasks. When a chapter doesn't clearly define who is responsible for which tasks, accountability is lost and jobs are left undone. Clearly defining who is responsible for the different aspects of running your chapter will ensure that all the necessary tasks get done and people are held responsible for their work. Compile a list of all the major tasks that the chapter must do. These may include planning meetings, signing up participants, publicity, convention registration, financial records, fund-raising, running a chapter conference, taking minutes, publishing a newsletter and many more chapter related tasks. Then figure out from among your chapter leaders who is best able to take care of each. Be sure not to give too many responsibilities to one person -- no matter how capable, an overworked leader will produce inferior work.

• Don't let titles get in the way of being productive

Each person in your chapter leadership will usually only have one job or title to which they are assigned. However, each person will likely have many different skills that they can offer the chapter. Just because the abilities of someone are not all under their official title, is no reason to prevent them from using their skills to help the chapter. If your Director of Debate is also a fantastic letter writer, have him/her write some important letters. If your chapter secretary is an experienced debater, have him/her help train those with less experience. Use the skills and resources you have to the best of your ability -- don't let artificial titles and roles prevent that.

The Different Parts of a J.S.A. Chapter

The Chapter President

The Chapter President is ultimately responsible for all the successes and failures of the chapter. (S)he leads the chapter in all its programs and must stay on top of all activities. The responsibilities are great, but the rewards are greater, for it is under the chapter president's

• Don't put too many responsibilities on your teacher-advisor

Your teacher-advisor is there to help you when needed and can be fundamental to your chapter's success. However, the Junior State is fundamentally a student-run organization and putting your teacher-advisor in charge of everything that the student leaders don't want to do is counterproductive. There will always be tasks in running an organization like this that will be tedious or less than enjoyable, but in a student-run organization, these things are still done by the students. Most chapter tasks are easy enough that any willing student can accomplish. Additionally, teacher-advisors may grow to resent the chapter if they are overworked. Remember, they have no obligation to you -- they are volunteering their time and energy to help your chapter -- treat them well. Be sure that your teacher-advisor is consulted before any decision is made and before any meetings or programs are announced.

• Make things flexible enough to endure unforeseeable changes

Your chapter structure should be such that it can survive a reasonable amount of change and turmoil. Making things unnecessarily rigid is asking for greater difficulty when changes occur. In the course of a year, people may resign, your teacher-advisor may change, school rules may change, other clubs may form and much more. Creating your chapter structure with enough flexibility to accommodate such changes will ensure that your chapter will be resilient when changes hit.

strong leadership that a chapter accomplishes its goals of educating, involving and representing its members.

The Chapter President must be a leader. (S)he must be able to make informed decisions that will lead the chapter in the right direction.

At the same time, a Chapter President must be a follower. (S)he must listen to what his/her members want and be responsive to their needs.

Chapter Presidents must be able to delegate. They must understand their limitations and recognize the strengths of others. They must have a solid and diplomatic relationship with their school administration and have respect from both students and faculty at their school. They need to have a trusting and honest relationship with their teacher-advisor and must be able to confide in him or her without worry. Most of all, Chapter Presidents must have the dedication and devotion needed to lead their chapters through all times, both good and bad.

Chapter Presidents serve as the official leader of their chapter and represent them when needed. In accordance with their chapter constitution, they may appoint a chapter cabinet to help with the tasks of running the chapter. Chapter Presidents are responsible for seeing that high quality educational and social programs are run for the chapter members. They must see that meetings are called regularly and that they are high in both quality and attendance. Chapter Presidents call meetings to order and preside over all business.

A Chapter President receives many mailings and phone calls throughout the year with information that they must forward on to their members. Chapter Presidents must see that their membership taxes are paid and sent in. They also are responsible for registering their chapter members for state conventions. At conventions, the Chapter President sets the tone for good conduct. Finally, a Chapter President must see that the other chapter leaders are well trained.

The Chapter Cabinet

The chapter cabinet is the engine that runs the chapter. Chapter cabinet members may be appointed or elected. The chapter's constitution should distinguish which positions are appointed and which are elected. Under the leadership of the Chapter President, both appointed and elected cabinet members must work together to ensure that the goals of the chapter are met and the programs well executed.

The chapter cabinet is the Chapter President's greatest tool. They will either enhance or diminish the Chapter President's actions. The chapter cabinet and Chapter President must have a solid relationship -- tensions between the two can greatly hurt an otherwise strong chapter. When selecting appointed cabinet members, a Chapter President should go to every possible extent to ensure that the most qualified and devoted individuals are selected.

There are no limits on the possible positions for your chapter cabinet. Some restrictions may be set up in your chapter constitution, but other than that, it is up to the chapter leaders to determine what will work best for the chapter that year. Some of the common positions are described below. Few chapters have all of these positions and many chapters create positions not listed below. These are simply described to give you an idea of some of the common chapter cabinet positions that many chapters have had.

- **The Chapter President**

The Chapter President is technically the ranking member of the chapter cabinet and its official leader. (S)he usually appoints many of the members of the chapter cabinet. The Chapter President is virtually always elected.

- **The Vice President**

The Vice President serves next in line to the Chapter President. (S)he is expected to assist the Chapter President and take over if there is a vacancy in the Presidency. The exact responsibilities of Vice Presidents vary greatly from chapter to chapter but may include overseeing cabinet, planning and running meetings, chapter relations and many other tasks. Vice Presidents are usually elected.

- **The Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for all the financial matters of the chapter. (S)he must manage the chapter's bank account, if one exists, and should keep careful records of all financial transactions. The Treasurer makes sure that school policies, relating to club finances are fol-

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lowed. The Treasurer should be someone intelligent, meticulous and trustworthy. Many smaller chapters find that the actual work involved in the job is little enough that it is simpler for the Chapter President to handle it. The Treasurer may be either elected or appointed depending on the chapter constitution.

- The Secretary

The Secretary has responsibilities that fall under two main categories: recording and corresponding. Some chapters have so much work in each of these areas that they appoint two separate secretaries -- a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary. The tasks of recording include taking minutes at chapter meetings (both general and officer meetings), distributing minutes, writing up plans and summaries of activities and proposals for people to look over. The corresponding tasks include writing letters to chapter members, parents, Junior State leaders, and other chapters. Secretaries may be either elected or appointed depending on the chapter constitution.

- The Chief of Staff

The Chief of Staff is usually only necessary for big chapters with big chapter cabinets. The Chief of Staff is the Chapter President's right hand person and serves as a link to the chapter cabinet. (S)he is usually considered the head of the chapter cabinet under the President. The Chief of Staff may write memos to the cabinet, run and plan cabinet meetings, assign tasks based on the Chapter President's plans, and generally coordinate the jobs of the entire chapter cabinet.

- Debate Director

The Director of Debate for the chapter is in charge of running the chapter debate program. (S)he must schedule and plan debates in coordination with the other chapter leaders. The Debate Director must find debaters, help train them, find moderators and ensure that the debates are high quality and educational. (S)he may also want to run debate and moderating workshops throughout the year and help prepare people to participate in debates at confer-

ences and conventions. The Debate Director should be knowledgeable and skilled in Junior State debating and should be able to help and comfort those less experienced with debating. Debate Directors are usually appointed; although they may be elected if specified in the chapter constitution.

- Publicity/Membership Director

The Publicity Director oversees all publicity for the chapter. (S)he should have a firm sense of the chapter's strengths, the campus environment, and how the chapter can best appeal to the students at the campus. A good Publicity Director should be willing to put in a great amount of work to ensure that a positive image of the chapter is spread around campus and around the community. (S)he must understand how best to use such tactics as PA Announcements, posters, banners, fliers, handouts, telephone calls, newspaper articles, coordination with other clubs, letter writing, individual invitations and personal recruitment to enhance the chapter's strength and diversity.

- Chapter Conference Coordinator

For chapters holding chapter conferences it is usually a good idea to have one person to oversee the chapter conference planning efforts. This person should be able and willing to work with all the chapter leaders involved in the conference planning efforts. (S)he should spearhead the effort but not completely control it, as a chapter conference is an event for the entire chapter. Chapter Conference Coordinators are usually appointed sometime after the chapter has determined that it will have a chapter conference. For a much more detailed description of the Chapter Conference Coordinator and his/her responsibilities, see the section in this binder on running a chapter conference.

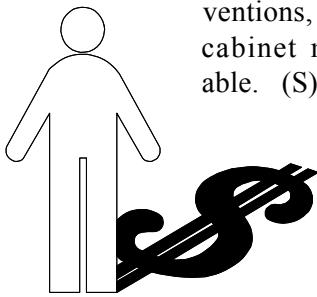
- Social Activity Director

The Social Activity Director sees that the chapter maintains a social side in addition to the regular educational activities. (S)he should work closely with many of the other chapter leaders to ensure that the social activities are a part of the entire chapter program and not sepa-

rate entities unto themselves. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the Social Activity Director is to see that the social activities are in some way educational and that they do not hinder the overall educational goals of the chapter program. Social Activity Directors are usually appointed but may be elected if specified in the chapter constitution. For a more extensive look at the challenges and goals of social activities in the chapter, see the section of this binder on social activities.

- Fund Raising Director

The Fund Raising Director is for some chapters the most important cabinet member. The Fund Raising Director plans, schedules, and runs the chapter's fund raising efforts for the year. For a chapter in need of money for chapter events and to attend conventions, the work done by this cabinet member is indispensable. (S)he must be able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of all types of fund raisers and figure out which ones will best work for his/her chapter. (S)he must also be able to motivate people to participate in fund raising. Fund Raising Directors are usually appointed but may be elected if so specified in the chapter constitution. For a more thorough look at fund raising techniques and challenges, see the section in this binder on fund raising.



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- Chapter Historian

Some chapters have one person solely dedicated to keeping a history of the chapter and its events. Such a person should be creative and understand the value and importance of having lasting records of chapter events, problems and issues. The Chapter Historian should work closely with the Secretary in keeping accurate and complete records of all the chapter events. These records can be an invaluable resource to future chapter leaders when planning chapter events and facing similar problems in years to come.

The Historian may also want to take photographs of chapter events and collect other chapter items in a chapter scrapbook. Each year, at the Spring State conventions, the Ernest A. Rogers Chapter of the Year Award is given to the best chapter based on teacher advisors and staff evaluations of their chapter scrapbook. Chapter Historians are usually appointed but may be elected if so specified in the chapter constitution.

- Newsletter Editor

For chapters that wish to have a chapter newsletter, having one person to coordinate it is important. This person generally should have final say (next to the President) over the content and style of the chapter newsletter. Newsletter Editors should be knowledgeable about and involved in the chapter and should be able to work with all sorts of different people. They should work closely with the Chapter President, Secretaries and Publicity Directors. Newsletter Editors are usually appointed but may be elected if so specified in the chapter constitution.

- Other Officers

In the states with State Assemblies or Houses of Representatives, each chapter must select one or more people to serve as chapter representatives in either the Assembly or House. The exact rules for how many representatives each chapter gets vary from state to state but are usually based on the chapter's membership. Usually these people are elected by the members of your chapter, but in some situations they may be appointed. For more information on these positions, contact your State Speaker, or Lt. Governor, or the Junior State office.

When appointing cabinet members, a Chapter President should take a lot of time to make sure that (s)he is selecting only the best possible people. These are the people with dedication, knowledge, experience and enthusiasm. Cabinet members work well with others, can deal with authority, can delegate when need be and can appeal to and motivate groups of people. Remember the cabinet represents the chapter and gives the chapter its image, therefore diversity should be a goal in selecting the cabinet.

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Whether the selection process is done by application, interview, or by another method, it is essential that the Chapter President understand how these decisions are important.

The Teacher Advisor

Another important position in every chapter is the Teacher-Advisor. The Teacher-Advisor is an adult advisor who oversees the activities of the chapter, provides adult supervision, attends conventions with students and helps the chapter in numerous other ways. Teacher-advisors in general understand that the organization is student-run and that they are there primarily to take care of issues that an adult must handle and to provide advice. However, successful chapters usually find that involving their Teacher-Advisor in officer meetings and decision making can add a new perspective and make the chapter even more successful.

At the chapter level, teacher-advisors should be involved in all the decision making processes of the chapter. Your Teacher-Advisor should be included in all general meetings, officer meetings, chapter conference meetings, and other meetings where important decisions are made. Chapter leaders should talk all ideas through with their Teacher-Advisor for an additional perspective before acting. Teacher-advisors also usually sign school forms such as PA Announcements and provide a classroom where the chapter can hold its meetings. If the chapter is holding a chapter conference, the Teacher-Advisor serves as the adult supervision for the day.

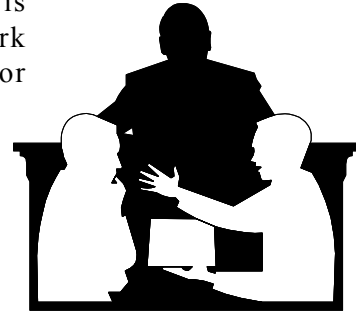
Teacher-Advisors can also be very helpful in dealing with school administrations, parents and other teachers. If you are having difficulties gaining support from your school's administrators or other teachers, your Teacher-Advisor may be able to give suggestions or speak with them directly. A letter to parents from a Chapter President and Teacher-Advisor before a convention can make many parents feel more comfortable.

At conventions, teacher-advisors serve as supervisors for their delegates. They are expected to register their chapter, help enforce curfew, provide educational advice to chapter

members, keep their delegates at convention activities at all times, and at times assist The Junior Statesmen Foundation in general convention supervision. If discipline problems arise at a convention,

the Teacher-Advisor is expected to work with The Junior Statesmen Foundation staff to handle it. A Chapter President and Teacher-Advisor should stay

in close contact during conventions and work closely together to keep things in order.



Chapter Presidents should not be afraid to appropriately use their Teacher-Advisor for advice, ideas and support. At the same time, chapter leaders must be careful not to place too many responsibilities on their Teacher-Advisor -- especially responsibilities that a student leader could handle. Chapter Presidents must assume responsibility for keeping their Teacher-Advisor excited about the chapter. They cannot assume that their Teacher-Advisor will keep the momentum going -- it is a student-run organization and these sorts of responsibilities rest on the student leaders. Neither should Chapter Presidents expect their teacher-advisors to remind them to do things or of upcoming deadlines. Rather, Chapter Presidents should remind their teacher-advisors of deadlines and what they need them to do for the chapter.

Chapter Presidents should see their Teacher-Advisor as a partner -- a vital team member -- in running the chapter. This can be difficult when most students are used to seeing their Teacher-Advisor as their teacher. Creating a dual relationship -- one as teacher-student and one as partner-partner -- can be a real challenge, but by talking openly and honestly with your Teacher-Advisor, this sort of relationship can be created.

Suggest that your Teacher-Advisor read the "Being a Teacher-Advisor" section in this binder. For more information on finding and changing teacher-advisors, see the sections in this binder on "Starting a Junior State Chapter."

Being a Leader in Your Chapter

Being a leader is difficult. It involves many skills that do not come naturally to everyone. The following section describes many techniques that successful leaders use to lead effectively. These are important concepts and skills to understand and use when leading a Junior State chapter and should be understood by all the leaders in your chapter.

Making Decisions

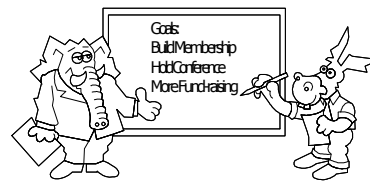
There are innumerable decisions that need to be made to run a chapter. From what topics to debate to how to publicize to when to hold a chapter conference or membership drive, every decision is important and the overall success of the chapter is dependent on the quality of your decision. There are a few guidelines you should consider when making decisions. First of all, one bases decisions on the information you have. By increasing the amount of information you have, you increase the likelihood of making a good decision. You should therefore involve as many people as possible in making your decisions. The more people involved, the more ideas and solutions presented and the greater the chances that you will make a good decision. Ultimately, your chapter's strength rests largely on its diversity, and the more people involved in every decision the more diversity you will incorporate into your chapter's workings.

Next of all, don't be greedy over control. No leader can have every decision go as (s)he thinks it should. A good leader knows which decisions to let other people make and which decisions to make him/herself. If you hog control, you will likely lose it. Try to have your decisions reflect what your members' interests are. They are the ones who put you (either directly or indirectly) in power and they are the ones whose wishes you should reflect. Next, do what you feel is best for the chapter in the long run. Don't think only of next week, think of next month and of next year. A decision that makes everyone happy right now may in the long run not be the wisest. Finally, remember that you are the leader. What you feel is best for the chapter is ultimately what should be done. Try to reflect what your members' want, but if you feel

strongly that some decision is best for the chapter, make that decision. You are the leader, and you are ultimately responsible for the chapter.

Setting Goals

Setting clearly defined, reasonable goals may be one of the most neglected practices of many chapter leaders. Having a chapter work towards something with a clear purpose inspires people to put in their best and to persevere even when things get difficult. Setting these goals at the beginning of the year is best. Base them on the strengths and weaknesses of the chapter the year before. Also take into consideration the wants and needs of the chapter members -- having your goals reflect the members' desires will mean more support from them. That is your next challenge -- gaining support from them. Convince your key chapter leaders that the goals -- the agenda for the year -- is the direction the chapter should be heading. Convince your leaders, then convince members. Speak to your chapter



about the goals, how they were created and how they will be reached. Gain widespread support for them.

Throughout the year, look back on your goals, and determine if you are indeed working toward them. Evaluate your chapter's progress and then find ways in which your chapter can improve even more. Consider setting new goals part way through the year once you have seen what has and has not worked. Don't just let these goals slip by the wayside and never be seen again. By constantly reaching for something higher, your chapter will be a dynamic, optimistic, stronger unit.

Delegating

There are many responsibilities involved in being a Chapter President. The ability to delegate is crucial to the role of Chapter President. Finding competent leaders you can trust and knowing what assignments to give them are the

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key elements to delegation. Who works hard? Who volunteers for more responsibilities? Who always comes through for you? Find these leaders and use them when you have jobs that you cannot do yourself. A good Chapter President can and will trust other leaders with many tasks.

Most people will feel valued and even honored that they are being given extra responsibilities. Once you have delegated out work, stay on top of your leaders' progress. Hold them accountable for what they accomplish. Don't give extra responsibilities to the leader who does a bad job or finishes after a deadline. Reward those leaders who work hard.

Assuming Responsibility

For many, the most difficult idea of being a leader is responsibility. The idea that **you** are responsible for all that your chapter does or does not do might seem a bit scary. Being Chapter President means that all actions of your chapter are your responsibility. You are responsible for them at conventions, you are responsible for them on campus. As Chapter President, you cannot defer to a higher authority -- you are the highest authority within the chapter. You may feel that you can always count on your Teacher-Advisor -- and you definitely can -- but in a student-run organization it is ultimately the student leaders who must assume responsibility for the actions of the organization.

Making Mistakes

As a chapter leader, you must assume responsibility for yourself as well. When you make a mistake, you must take responsibility for it. Every leader will at some point make mistakes. When you do, do not feel too badly. There has not been a leader in history who has been flawless. The important thing is how you deal with them once you make them. People will have greater respect for you if you assume responsibility for your mistakes, admit that you made them, and try as hard as you can to fix them. Never cover them up or blame them on someone else -- attempts to cover mistakes up almost always fail, and you will wind up looking much worse and losing a lot more of your members' trust and respect. Admit you made them, take responsibility for them, fix them, learn from them and move on. When people see that you do not

repeat them and that you continue to put all your effort into leading the chapter, they will likely forgive you and trust you very quickly.

Avoiding Power Struggles

One of the problems with structure in a chapter is that different people assume different levels of responsibility and that not everyone has the power and control that they would like. This tension often manifests itself in power struggles between leaders who would otherwise be working productively towards the same goals. Do everything you can to avoid power struggles in your chapter. Don't let them develop between leaders and yourself, and try to prevent them from happening among other leaders.

Power struggles are extremely destructive -- a chapter needs unity to reach its full potential. Most power struggles result in both sides losing. The key thing to do is to compromise. Leaders cannot be too strong willed or nothing will ever be accomplished. Be the one to back down first if you think you can. Don't let juvenile instincts make you the "loser" just because you are willing to compromise. In the end, you will actually wind up the winner for being willing to compromise. If a struggle develops over an issue that you feel is of paramount importance, you may feel you cannot in good conscience give in on that point. It is then your responsibility to convince your opposition of your side. If you honestly feel so strongly about something, you should be able to convince other leaders of it as well. Don't force someone to support it by intimidating him/her. Convince your opposition by rationally and logically convincing him/her of your points. If your opposition sees that you are willing to compromise and really consider their points, they are much more likely to do the same for you. Also, keep in mind the whole time the possibility that you are wrong and your opponents are right -- after all, if they feel so strongly that they are correct, they must have a good reason.

Chapter leaders must remember that the goal is not to win a victory for yourself but to win one for the chapter. If you are proven wrong but the right decision is made for the chapter, you have all won in the end. If this is the case, don't be resentful or hold grudges -- be glad

that the chapter has the strength of having a group of leaders with diverse opinions and that in the end the right decision has been made.

Gaining Support

One of the greatest skills in being a good leader is learning how to set an agenda or vision for the chapter and gain support for it. This has been discussed in relation to setting goals, making mistakes and avoiding power struggles. If you are Chapter President, you should have a vision for your chapter. That vision should be accomplished by the many goals you have set for your chapter. Now not everyone in your chapter may agree with you. While you should listen to everyone and take everyone's thoughts into consideration when setting your goals, in the end you must be able to gain support for whatever vision and goals you lay out.

There are numerous ways to convince people of your ideas. Show them facts that back up your plans. Discuss what has and has not worked in the past. Explain why you think your plan is best. In building up support, more important than what to do is what not to do. Never force someone to agree with you by convincing him/her that (s)he is the only one who feels that way. Singling people out or creating a bandwagon of supporters may very well get people to support you on the outside but not in their hearts. You need supporters who honestly agree with what you have to say and do not simply give you their support because of social pressure. You need to honor and respect the single "objector" -- the one person with enough courage to stand alone against the chapter leader -- and discuss it with him/her and see if you can agree with one another. This is the art of compromise and debate and they are the most fundamental skills of statesmanship.

Creating Win/Win Situations

There is a natural tendency to think that all struggles must result in a winner and a loser. One of the skills of being a good leader is recognizing that this is not always the case. Many times, the best solution to a conflict is one in which both parties win -- a win/win situation. These are difficult to create, but in the end well worth the effort. The key to creating win-win situations is communicating and compromising.

Write out the points of each plan or person's ideas and then compare. On how many points do you really disagree? And on which points is the other person's idea actually better? On which points does the other person see your points and agree with you? By breaking down two different plans into their individual pieces and really analyzing them together, you may very well find that you really don't disagree on all that many points. Those points on which you do disagree must be negotiated and worked out. It may be a long process, but the value of coming to a mutually agreeable plan and not leaving either side with lingering resentments makes compromising worth the effort. For a plan to be well executed, it should have the support of the chapter leaders.

Time Management

Another huge problem for many chapter leaders is finding time to do everything and still have time for schoolwork, other interests, family and a glimpse of a social life. Therefore, managing one's time effectively is crucial to being a good leader. There are a few key things you can do to help with time management.

First of all, delegate. As discussed before, all good leaders must learn to delegate. If someone else can do something just as well as you can and is willing to, why shouldn't they help you? Save your time and energy for those tasks that you feel you are best at.

Second, use small pieces of time as efficiently as possible. They are often your key to effective time management. The five minutes before a class starts can mean a few less math problems left to do at home or a little bit of Junior State work out of the way. Twenty minutes at home before going out again may seem like the perfect time to kick back, but it may also be the time to jot down a quick memo to your chapter cabinet. These little pieces of time can add up very quickly and can be the key to effective time management.

Third, get into the habit of taking things in small steps. A huge homework assignment may be too much to handle all at once, but can be done in a smaller amount. Work for your chapter is the same. You may have twelve little

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things you need to do for your chapter one night. Altogether it may seem impossible and you may just put it all off indefinitely. However, taking care of five may only take a few minutes. Once five are done, the whole list may look a lot more approachable.

As tempting as it may be, try not to procrastinate. Jobs left for later only get bigger and seem more and more overwhelming. Get into the habit of pretending deadlines are before they really are, and always be ahead of the game instead of behind. You never know when something will come up that you really want or need to do, and that little bit of extra leeway will come in handy.

You should also get into the habit of prioritizing things. Keep an organized list of all the things you need to do and prioritize them based on how important or urgent they really are. If you absolutely cannot get everything

done, at least make sure you get the most important things done. Although you may expect to hear this from your parents, not from the Junior State, always put your schoolwork and your family needs ahead of the Junior State. JSA is important but other things are as well.

Don't feel guilty about taking some time off for yourself. While it may make little difference in the long run if you spend a twenty minute afternoon break relaxing or doing some schoolwork, you do need time for yourself. Time spent relaxing and enjoying yourself will let you use your working time much more efficiently and prevent you from 'burning out'. Finally, concentrate as hard as you can on your task at hand. Find a place to do schoolwork and Junior State work where you will have as few distractions as possible. The more effectively you use your working time the more time you will have for other things.

Special Circumstances

Religious Schools

Some Chapters at religious schools may run into special rules. Sometimes the school administration will not allow certain issues like abortion or condom distribution to be discussed. The important thing to remember when leading a chapter at a religious school is to not create unnecessary tension between you and the administration. Most religious school administrations will be very cooperative with a Junior State chapter if they simply follow a few restrictions. A chapter that purposefully violates these restrictions is going to lose the support of the administration and may suffer greatly because of this. Your teacher advisor should help you understand what restrictions your school has.

Some religious schools will only let students attend a convention if they will be able to attend religious services at the appropriate times during the convention. Frequently, this can be arranged by speaking with the JSA office ahead of time. Additionally, some religious schools may

be concerned that there will be no way for students to adhere to their religion's dietary laws while at the convention. You should note that students are usually free to eat at a variety of places during the convention and may often bring their own food.

Junior High Schools

Some Junior State chapters are started at junior high schools, schools only going up to the ninth grade. These schools face a problem in that only their ninth grade students can attend overnight conventions. These chapters frequently find that they can get students of all grade levels involved in the meetings and excited about the Junior State. These students will then be the chapter's top leaders when they reach the ninth grade. Many junior high school chapters also find that they can set up a sort of symbiotic relationship with the local high school. A stronger and more established high school chapter can usually offer a junior high chapter advice, support and even joint activities.

Boarding Schools

Having a chapter at a boarding school can be as much of a plus as a minus. Many of the problems a regular chapter has are eliminated at a boarding school. For one thing, communication and organizing meetings are much simpler; everyone is on campus and can be easily reached. A leadership meeting can be called on relatively short notice and memos delivered door to door. Publicity can also be much easier. Chapter meetings can be held at many more different times without worrying about transportation.

An important thing to keep in mind is maintaining a good relationship with your school administration. Administrations will almost be always willing to help an organization that is willing to cooperate with them. You may have certain restrictions that you need to adhere to, but frequently many of the problems can be worked out if you make an effort to cooperate with your school administration.

THE CHAPTER PROGRAM

Locate your Chapter's Deficiencies

Richard Chilton, a JSA leader in the 1960's, identified some of the main deficiencies of Junior State Chapters. Does your chapter have any of these problems?

- Lack of *interesting things* for your chapter to do.
- Lack of enough *interested members* to accomplish anything.
- Lack of knowledge of *JSA activities* on the regional and state levels.
- Lack of knowledge of *JSA's goals, mission, philosophy, history, and government.*
- Lack of *public speaking ability* among chapter members.
- Lack of *publicity* or how to get it.
- Lack of *money* or knowledge of successful fund-raisers.
- Lack of *long range planning.*
- Lack of *communication* with state and regional governments.
- Lack of *records.*
- Lack of *cooperation* between administrators, teacher-advisors, and parents.
- Lack of *knowledge* concerning leadership and administration.

Check off your chapter's problems — don't be ashamed to check all of them — and get going on solving them. This binder is designed to help you attack these problems.

Your Power Base

You, as a Chapter President, are an elected public official. As such, you are expected to be not just an administrator, but, more importantly, a leader. All leaders need a "power base" in order to accomplish things. Your power base will be the people in your chapter who you can count on to get things done. This can be your chapter officers or simply anybody interested in helping out. Also, try to include your teacher-advisor, who often has the connections and the know-how to help you.

Your first Chapter Officers Meeting

At the earliest possible time, we suggest that you have a meeting with your chapter officers and teacher-advisor. At this meeting you should discuss your chapter and its future, along with your plans for the year. Consider the following things:

Goals: The Junior State of America was founded with very specific goals in mind — to get high school students aware of and involved in the American political process. We strive to achieve this goal in two ways: by conducting political education/awareness activities and by having students run their own government. The political education activities give students an awareness of local, state, national, and international political issues. The student-run nature of the Junior State lets student leaders develop

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an appreciation of the values and principles of a democracy. How will your chapter strive to meet JSA's goals?

Administration: You should decide what your administrative duties will include for the year and how you intend to get them done. Administrative duties include printing, chapter records, your treasury, a scrapbook for the E.A. Rogers Chapter of the Year Award, distributing flyers, etc. You and your officers should decide at the beginning of the year who will be responsible for which duties. Will you need to appoint cabinet members to help out? Try to make sure that there are jobs for eager underclassmen who want to help out. Also make sure that no one is burdened with too many responsibilities or impossible duties.

Chapter Program: Most chapters have never developed a good plan to guide their activities. It is, however, a great advantage to have one, so that your chapter members and you know what is happening and when. A good program responds to the needs of your chapter members and your school community. Before you come up with an overall program for the year, you must evaluate these needs.

Creating your Chapter Program

As soon as you are elected, you and your fellow chapter officers should begin planning your chapter's program. You will probably want to plan your chapter's program one semester at a time.

Psychology of a Program: Most people join organizations for the following reasons:

- Security and social acceptance
- Personal growth and development
- Accomplishment and achievement
- Understanding of a subject
- Recognition by peers
- Self-expression
- Sense of worth and companionship
- Meet people and make friends

Niccolo Machiavelli, in his classic, *The Prince*, maintained that there are two ways to preserve power. One is through fear and terror,

the other is through keeping people happy. Although Machiavelli preferred the former, as a JSA political leader, you will do better by trying to keep your chapter members happy, so keep the above list in mind. If a member quits, it may be because JSA has failed to meet one of the above requirements for that person.

How to plan a program: Your program must fulfill the intellectual and social needs of your chapter members. Before planning your program, analyze the makeup of your chapter membership. Think about the following facts about your chapter membership:

- Age
- Number of chapter members
- Their sex
- General social habits
- Political beliefs
- Preferences in JSA activities
- How well the members know each other

You want to have plenty of activities that will satisfy your current members, but because JSA strives to reach all high school students, you will want some activities that will appeal to other members of your campus community. For example, if your chapter is made up of older, seasoned debaters, you might find that holding debate workshops or informal thought talks might appeal to freshmen and sophomores who don't have much practice in public speaking. The tricky part of putting your program together is balancing activities that are popular with your current members with activities that will attract new members. This will help diversify your chapter membership and ultimately make your chapter stronger and more stable.

Have a meeting with your chapter officers and other key chapter members to get ideas for your chapter program. The more people in on the planning, the more likely the program will have the whole chapter's support. Don't try to develop your program by yourself, get as much input as possible. Remember, every public official needs to be in touch with his or her constituents. Being a chapter president is no different — if you assume that you always know what is best for your chapter, you may be the only person at the chapter meetings.

Sample Chapter Calendar

Activities Calendar	
Riverdale High School Junior State of America Chapter	
First Semester	
Week 1	"What is JSA" Meeting, plus pizza party after school.
Week 2 - Monday	Business Meeting
Week 2 - Thursday	Debate on Affirmative Action
Week 3	Business Meeting
Week 4	Adult Speakers from the Democratic and Republican Parties
Week 5	Fund Raiser — Bake Sale
Week 6 - Thursday	Debate Workshop & Arrange car pools for Regional Conference
Week 6 - Saturday	REGIONAL CONFERENCE
Week 7	Business Meeting
Week 8	Thought Talk on Aid to Russia
Week 9	Pot Luck Dinner — Pre Fall State Meeting w/parents
Week 10 - Sat. & Sun.	FALL STATE CONVENTION
Week 11	Business Meeting
Week 12	Question and Answer session with School Board member
Week 13	Business Meeting
Week 14	Holiday Party
Week 15	Vacation
Week 16	Softball game with rival chapter
Week 17	Business Meeting
Week 18	Mock City Council Meeting
Week 19	Business Meeting: Planning session for next semester
Week 20	End of Semester Party

This sample Chapter Calendar has many advantages. It is one semester long so that it can be evaluated and modified for the second semester. Secondly, the big events are spaced out to allow adequate time for planning, publicity, and for the participants to research topics. More importantly, all the members don't feel they are overburdened with too many events. Your chapter's leaders, however, should have the dedication to meet at least once a week — whether at a business meeting or participating in one of the events.

What Activities to Include: There are many activities that can be included in your chapter's program. Literally, the possibilities are endless: speakers, films, debates of all styles, seminars, simulations, field trips, etc. An appendix is included in the back of the handbook to give you a few general ideas.

General Planning: The following is a list of important considerations that should be taken care of before putting on an event:

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- Advance publicity to chapter members and the rest of the school community.
- A suitable meeting place
- Confirming guest speakers and main participants well in advance.
- Refreshments, if appropriate.

In general, sitting down and writing out your program for the semester is half the battle. Once you've done that, it is easy to remain organized for the whole year. Don't be afraid to be specific in planning your program. Usually, you will have plenty of time to compensate for any setbacks. Distribute your calendar for the semester to your chapter members so they will know what to expect in advance.

Evaluating your program: When you meet to plan the activity calendar for the second semester, evaluate your program using the same criteria you used to develop it. Try to learn from your mistakes.

- Did it meet the needs of your members?
- Did it hold their interest?
- Did it attract new members?
- Was there a good balance of activities?
- Was there any opposition from your chapter?
- Was it too expensive for your members?
- Did your program attract any reaction or support from your community?

- Was it enjoyable?
- Is your Teacher-Advisor interested, opposed, or agreeable to your activities?
- Did it attract any reaction or support from your school's administration?

and, overall,

- Was your program constructive, educational, and of value to the school and community?

You might pass out evaluation forms to your chapter members to get their opinions and reactions. Go out of your way to do this, especially with members who have missed the last few events. Evaluations let people know that you care about their opinions and give them a sense that they are involved in the planning. You will probably get a good deal of constructive criticism which will help you plan better in the future.

Where to meet and when: Figuring out where and when to meet can factor into the success of your activities. If you plan to have lengthy meetings, they should be after school or at night. When scheduling, remember to consider other demands for student's time: school, homework, sports, jobs, other activities.

The Chapter and Your School

The chapter's relationship to the school is an all-important factor that you must consider at all times. The school is the base from which chapters operate. Not only must you consider the chapter's image among the student body, but also you must think about the chapter's reputation with the school administration. You must always consider your relations with non-JSA members, your relations with the faculty, and your relationship with the administration.

Relations with other students

How do students view JSA on your cam-

pus? Is it considered to be an organization of briefcase carriers who have lost touch with reality? Is it an exclusive social clique? Are you leftists, rightists, intellectuals, or idiots? Is your chapter the "IN" club on campus or is it "in" with the "out" crowd? The student body's impression of the chapter is important to consider when you are publicizing events and trying to increase your membership. All students at your school should feel like the JSA chapter is the place to learn about politics and government and to express their opinions. Do things which will identify your chapter as an active and useful club.

Relations with teachers

Because the Junior State's activities are educational, you should try to make the chapter known to as many teachers as possible. Let social studies teachers know about all of your events. History teachers, government/civics teachers, the journalism advisor, and other social studies teachers can be particularly helpful in spreading the word about your chapter's activities. Some teachers may even offer extra credit to their students who participate in your chapter's educational activities. Having a good reputation among teachers can be important if you need additional teachers to accompany your chapter to overnight conventions. Holding a debate with two popular teachers as the main speakers can be a very successful event. Your Teacher-advisor can be very helpful identifying teachers who are influential at your school.

Relations with your school's administration

Whenever you plan an event, keep in mind your school's administration reaction. Principals, Vice-Principals, and counselors can be phenomenally helpful or incredibly frustrating depending on their view of your chapter. On one hand, your administration can help your chapter with meeting space, transportation, and sometimes even funding. On the other hand,

your administration can prevent your chapter from fund raising on campus, going to overnight conventions, or even prevent the existence of the chapter all together.

Never assume that your administration will be antagonistic towards your chapter. You should meet with the principal or other administrator who is in charge of clubs on campus. Let them know that having an active JSA chapter on campus can enrich the school community and bring pride to the whole school. Tell them your plans for the year and show them how your chapter can benefit the entire student body. Remember to emphasize your chapter activities on campus, not the overnight conventions — your chapter activities benefit the campus while the overnight conventions represent more work and supervisory issues for the administrators.

Some chapters involve administrators in activities. JSA chapters often become active in reforming school policy. Whether it be changing a dress code, opening up your campus at lunch time, or effecting the editorial policy of your school newspaper, your Junior State chapter can affect school policy if you involve administrators in the correct way.

JSA Talking Points

JSA is a student-run, non-partisan, non-profit political awareness club. Students run the chapter meetings, decide on debate topics, organize every aspect of the chapter.

JSA gives students an opportunity to voice their opinions on local, state, national, and world issues. The free exchange of ideas and views is a highlight of all JSA activities.

JSA is a club with a purpose. JSA strives “To Make Democracy Work” by preparing high school students to be active, involved citizens.

JSA is more than just a debate club. JSA encourages political awareness and involvement through its debates and other activities.

JSA gives students valuable “citizenship training” by letting students run their own government. JSA’s National, State, Regional, and Chapter governments reinforce democratic principles and prepares students to be informed, active citizens.

JSA chapters conduct a wide range of political awareness activities: informal discussions, structured debates, educational simulations, challenging mock trails, informative political guest speakers, and voter registration drives are only a few of the activities chapters hold.

JSA chapters are the center of political awareness on high school campuses across the country. Being part of JSA is a chance to meet and make friends with other bright, involved students who are aware of what is happening in the world around them.

JSA holds Saturday conferences and overnight conventions that allow students from many different high schools a chance to debate and discuss important issues. JSA events feature exciting activities, interesting political keynote speakers, and great social activities.

JSA provides a valuable opportunity for students to develop or sharpen public speaking skills. Public speaking is a major emphasis of JSA. Our debates and discussions help students develop the ability to verbally express their thoughts and opinions in a clear and persuasive manner.

JSA gives students a chance to develop important leadership skills. As a student-run organization, JSA helps its leaders develop leadership skills such as organizing meetings, delegating responsibility, and motivating their peers.

JSA helps to develop critical thinking skills. JSA members challenge each other’s assumptions about the issues that affect their lives. This forces students to reevaluate their positions and develop more sophisticated arguments to support their beliefs or to change their position altogether.

JSA encourages “PEER TO PEER” education. Students are in charge of their own educational activities. Students learn best when they learn from each other.

A strong, active JSA Chapter is an asset for any high school campus. JSA is a valuable supplement to a high school’s social studies curriculum. Our American democracy depends on an education system that prepares young people to take on the responsibilities of citizenship.