

## ADVOCACY PACKETS

# SUSTAINABILITY CHAIR

How to introduce a new position into your organization's leadership board.

### INTRODUCTION

As young individuals, we see environmental issues in our community and on the news and want to take action to protect our future. Often it can be difficult to know where to start or how to enact lasting change as a student. But students around the globe are working to change the world one step at a time - and so can you.

This series of advocacy packets, created by students for students, provides introductory knowledge on these ideas and concepts and walks you through steps on how to begin implementing change in your classroom, home or community. By using our voices and gathering support for these sustainable initiatives, we will change the world.

This specific packet on creating a sustainability chair, walks you through the process of introducing a new position within your already existing classroom, club, or school organization. This resource will enable you to present the idea to your organization's leadership, explain the importance of including a sustainability chair, and propose actions you and your classmates can take to create a sustainability centered organization.



### IMPORTANCE

In biology we learn that everything is connected. Likewise, our actions affect almost everything in our daily lives. By incorporating sustainable actions into our clubs and organizations, no matter what kind of club it is, we begin to make small daily decisions that benefit our world and environment. As we learn more, we can teach our family and friends, furthering the scope of our reach and incorporating sustainability into more parts of our lives.

If you're unsure as to why you should consider this new position in your organization, consider that the work that you do will have wide reaching impacts, benefitting your organization, your student body, your community and even the world. Sustainability is increasingly important to the health and safety of the planet, and experience with eco-projects can strengthen your resume! If you are new to sustainability and want to learn how to take action, our Advocacy Packets are the perfect place for you to start!

### STAKEHOLDERS

As your organization is already created, you may have a leadership board or set of individuals in charge of running meetings and positions, this is the group that you want to discuss your idea with and build consensus that a Sustainability Chair needs to be established.

We recommend that you use this packet to understand the importance and benefits of having a sustainability chair, so that you can present your ideas to your leadership board and convince them to include this new position. You already believe that sustainability is important and a passion of yours, use that passion and knowledge to guide your presentation and convince everyone else!



### STEPS

1. Read through this advocacy packet, as well as other resources from EARTHDAY.ORG, to learn about sustainability and the ways in which you can introduce sustainability into your organization
2. Create a short proposal or presentation to present to your organization's leadership on why they should consider implementing a sustainability chair, as well as future steps your organization can take to become more sustainable
3. With the introduction of your new position, begin to hold events and talks within your chapter meetings on how to be more sustainable as individuals and as a group

# EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO TAKE

## INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY WHEN NEW MEMBERS JOIN YOUR ORGANIZATION



- Write a one-page summary of your organization's views on sustainability including your policies and goals
- Create a presentation of previous sustainable activities that you have held to provide new members with an idea of what types of events they can expect to be a part of in the future

## STORE AND REUSE MATERIALS FOR EVENTS

- For large school events that you participate in, consider having raffle prizes instead of handing out prizes to all participants
- Research if you can rent or reuse equipment or materials for your event rather than spending money on new materials
- Reduce your plastic waste by hosting Bring Your Own (BYO) dishes events, or use reusable items as well as cloth tablecloths instead of plastic sheets
- Avoid using balloons as decorations as they can escape easily and travel long distances



## HIGHLIGHT ONE OF YOUR MEMBERS AS "GREEN THUMB OF THE MONTH"



- Encourage all students to participate in sustainable actions and challenges throughout the year to be nominated
- Recognize the month's nominee in a special way of their photo being displayed in your group's gathering place, or offering a sustainable gift to each month's nominee
- Incentivize members to nominate and be nominated and further encourage sustainable behaviors throughout the year, both inside and outside of the organization

## ROTATE ASSIGNMENTS OF WEEKLY SUSTAINABILITY TASKS DURING MEETING TIMES

- Assigned student is in charge of ensuring that all electronics and lights are turned off when the meeting is over
- Have this student brainstorm a conversation topic for the week's meeting to discuss how your group wants to change an individual action in the following week such as all using reusable water bottles or attempting a Meatless Monday



## HOST A SUSTAINABILITY EVENT DURING EACH QUARTER OR SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL YEAR



- Upcycle old t-shirts into sustainable reusable shopping bags
- Create a DIY hand scrub out of coconut oil, sugar, and coffee grounds
- Upcycle old t-shirts into dog toys and donate them to animal shelters
- Make holiday cards from old card stock and other upcycled materials
- Start a composting bin to add compost soil to your school's garden or outdoor landscaping
- Host events that are inclusive, accessible and intersectional

These are just some of the ways that your organization can begin to build upon sustainability within your school and foster an encouraging environment.

Use these tools and other resources as you begin your sustainability journey!



FOR MORE RESOURCES VISIT [EARTHDAY.ORG](http://EARTHDAY.ORG)