

PSC CHAPTER CHAIR GUIDEBOOK

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PSC CHAPTER CHAIR GUIDEBOOK

OF CHAPTERS AND CHAIRS

You were just elected as chair of your PSC Chapter or are thinking about running for election for the position. Or perhaps you are just curious about the responsibilities of chapter chairs. What do chapter chairs do? From our own experiences as chapter chairs (from Bronx Community College and John Jay) and from discussions with other more experienced chairs, we have put together what we intend as an organized exposition of most of the activities of a PSC chapter chair. Surely we have omitted much. Consider this a first attempt. Oh, and don't schedule your classes on Thursday evenings.

First, a word about chapters and chairs. Chapters are the life blood of our union. It is in and through the chapters that our members are organized and represented. For the average member (and the non-member), their local chapter *is* their union. Full-time and part-time faculty belong to a chapter based on the campus where they teach; We are both chairs of campus faculty chapters, and so much of what we have written is specific to the working of those chapters. HEOS and CLTS, or professional staff, belongs to campus-wide HEO and CLT chapters. Chapter chairs in their leadership role both shape

the objectives and functioning of their units as well as represent their chapters to the broader PSC leadership.

But how is it done? So, we're back to the question of what is it that chapter chairs do. They have formal duties spelled out in the union constitution, but largely chairs stay in touch with members and leaders by planning and conducting meetings on campus and attending union-wide meetings. They write reports and give speeches. They manage and motivate the chapter executive committee. Working with the appointed chapter grievance counselor, they investigate grievances. They conduct union business with their campus administration. They protest inequity on their campus and in the larger community and organize others to protest. They represent their members, recommend policies to the Delegate Assembly and Executive Council, and implement PSC policies on their campuses.

CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS

Article IX, Section 2 of the PSC Constitution gives the purposes of PSC Chapters:

Chapters shall serve the following purposes:

- a. To represent the Professional Staff Congress local membership on each campus of the City University or to represent specialized professional personnel throughout the university system.
- b. To recommend policies and actions to the Delegate Assembly and the Executive Council.
- c. To coordinate and implement locally on each campus, or for specialized professional personnel, policies of the Professional Staff Congress.
- d. To hold campus meetings or to convene meetings of specialized personnel in order to develop positions on union activities and to adopt policies related to local issues.
- e. To solicit membership in the union and to distribute union publications.
- f. To present grievances and complaints according to the criteria and procedures of collective bargaining agreements.
- g. To cooperate with the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly in the implementation of union policies.

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

The Chapter chair works with the other principal officers of the Chapter. Other than the Chairperson, The PSC constitution requires the election of a Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, four (4) At-Large Officers, Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Delegate Assembly. The number of delegates depends on the size of the chapter. In addition, it requires the Chapter Executive Committee to appoint Chapter Grievance Counselors for their respective units.

It is the responsibility of the chapter chair to ensure that the above stated goals of a chapter are carried out. The following sections attempt to systematically lay out the nuts and bolts of the responsibilities of chapter chairs.

PLANNING THE SEMESTER

The chapter is responsible for two kinds of meetings: chapter meetings and labor-management meetings. Regarding Chapter meetings, Article IX, section 3 of the PSC Constitution says: “There shall be at least two (2) meetings of the membership of each chapter each semester.”

The details of planning will vary with chapters. But it is imperative for the smooth functioning of the Chapter that these meetings are planned ahead of time. The chapter should set some goals for each semester at the beginning of the semester, and as much as possible, plan agendas and roles of EC members in the semester's work. At BCC, for instance, about four weeks before the semester starts, the executive committee meets to make plans for chapter meetings and other union activities of the semester. At this meeting, dates are selected for chapter meetings and Executive Committee meetings and possible dates for labor management meetings.

The PSC chapter meetings at both John Jay and BCC are usually held during club/community hours, when no classes are scheduled. College Senate meetings, Faculty Council meetings, and department meetings are also held during club hours, and we choose, whenever possible, the date each month that does not conflict with these other meetings. Of course, many other groups are employing the same strategy, so there is nearly always some event for faculty that is scheduled at the same time.

Occasionally a chapter meeting is scheduled at some time other time to allow and encourage members with obligations during club hours to attend. Extra organizing is always required to ensure a strong attendance at these meetings.

The dates for executive committee and labor-management meetings are set with considerations of maximum possible availability and pacing the meetings evenly. We will discuss the scheduling of labor-management meeting in more detail in a following section.

As soon as the meeting dates are fixed, rooms need to be reserved. Each campus has its own room reservation procedure; at BCC we make a preliminary reservation by email, and then submit a form to our room reservation office. The dates and location of the meetings should be placed on the central college calendar as soon as they are fixed. The procedure for doing this will also vary from campus to campus. These dates should also be placed on the calendar on the PSC website.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ITS MEETINGS

The chapter chair should work very closely with his or her executive committee (EC). The EC is comprised of the other elected officials of the chapter – the Vice Chair, Secretary, Grievance counselor, Delegate Assembly members and alternates, and other Officers-at-large. For EC meetings, the Chair can on occasion invite the unelected leadership like department representatives and also other members of the faculty.

It is a good practice for the EC to meet at least once a month. These meetings are best scheduled at the beginning of the semester after polling the availability of members. At John Jay, a week before the meeting the chair solicits agenda items from EC members and finalizes the agenda based on feedback. We provide lunch at these EC meetings. The primary purpose of the meetings is to routinely touch base with the principal officers so everyone is in tune with chapter issues. The EC discusses issues that require attention and the nature of action that such issues may warrant. More specifically, the EC decides the agenda for Labor-management meetings and Chapter meetings, based on concerns of the chapter..

There is much too much work to be done in any chapter for one person, the chapter chair, to do it all, and so part of the chapter chair's role is to organize the executive committee to carry out the chapter's work. You should make your expectations of executive committee members clear to them. All members of the EC should attend the chapter meetings and meetings of the executive committee. They should volunteer to chair sections of the chapter meetings and handle other meeting tasks. They should help in developing campus issues and analyzing campus campaigns. They should do member outreach. Delegates are expected to attend every Delegate Assembly. If a delegate cannot be present that delegate should let you know and help to recruit an alternate delegate to fill in. If you communicate by email, let them know that you expect a response.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

THE AGENDA

The agenda, as always, is the key element of a meeting. For agenda items to excite members or more realistically, to even motivate them to attend, it is imperative that the chapter chair and the leadership are tuned into members' concerns and issues. Timing is crucial. Certain issues come to life and die out; others are more enduring. Ideally, it is good to have a mix of both. Not everything has to be "exciting." Part of the function of chapter meeting is to keep members connected and to offer transparency and accountability to members. It is important that the agenda reflect at least some of these components.

For the BCC chapter, health and safety issues, specifically the lack of maintenance and need for repair of the buildings on our historic campus, are discussed at every chapter meeting. The John Jay chapter has recently conducted a campus campaign for the college to fund reassigned time for all faculty, and this campaign has been an item on chapter meetings. These examples show the importance of developing agenda items that address local campus concerns.

At BCC, we plan the agenda for each chapter meeting at the meeting of the executive committee held around 10-14 days ahead. That gives us enough time to arrange for outside speakers and to work to ensure a good turnout, but is close enough to the meeting that agenda items are timely. Our agenda usually includes organizing around the PSC's current campaign and also discussion of issues that are specific to our campus. We sometimes include a labor history segment, a visit from a community group with common interests, or a presentation on a current political issue. The chair usually asks executive committee members to take on roles for the meeting – handling the food arrangements or chairing a section of the agenda.

ORGANIZING TO TURN OUT MEMBERS

All chapter members receive an announcement of the chapter meeting date and time, location, and agenda, either a flier by mail or an email announcement. This announcement is sent from the PSC. A sample announcement with agenda is attached as an appendix. In addition, both the BCC and the John Jay chapter chairs send an email announcement of the meeting to all members of the PSC bargaining unit on our campus - faculty as well as professional staff. While the professional staff belongs to different

chapters from the teaching faculty, we are all members of the same union. When we attend meetings together, we see that our shared issues unite us.

However, an announcement is only the start of ensuring a strong attendance at your chapter meeting. One-on-one invitations are much more successful. It is helpful if EC members take on the responsibility of personally asking 5-6 members to attend the meeting. Chapter chairs especially should devote some time during the week before to remind members of the upcoming meeting time, location, and agenda. Each time you talk to a member about the upcoming meeting, ask for a commitment to attend.

DON'T FORGET THE FOOD

Plan to serve food and drinks at the meeting. This increases attendance and more importantly, builds community and good will. Be sure to mention this on the announcement.

Order light refreshments – sandwiches and drinks work well - for the meeting or delegate this task to a member of the executive committee. At John Jay, we sometimes order hot food, especially during the winter months and members love it. It can be

difficult to judge the correct amount to order but it is better to have a little too much than too little. The left-overs can always be shared with academic departments, other offices, or students, and that engenders good will.

The cost of food for chapter meetings and other meetings will be paid from the chapter budget. The procedure for handling reimbursement is explained in the Budget section of this guidebook.

THE DAY OF THE MEETING

If you will have a guest speaker or speakers, arrange for someone to meet them to make sure they can find the meeting location. Check on the food order, and be sure that someone will be there for the food delivery. See that plates and cups, utensils and napkins, and other necessities are available. Make sure there is a sign-in sheet for attendance.

RUNNING THE CHAPTER MEETING

Our chapter meetings start after people have a little time to get food. The chair at BCC uses a computer presentation to display the agenda, and a more detailed outline of

each item on the agenda, to help her to keep the meeting on track, and to allow for display of details if they are needed.

At BCC, our meetings are informal. The chapter chair opens the meeting with a welcome and review of the agenda. Sometimes as part of this welcome section, we go around the room allowing everyone present to introduce himself or herself. This is especially helpful for people who have not attended chapter meetings before. We pass around a sign-up sheet that asks for members names, departments, and contact information.

Other executive committee members direct parts of the meeting, leaving the chair time to observe who is present, who is speaking, and the general tone of the meeting, and to take steps to encourage discussion to be as wide as possible. We follow Robert's Rules of Order only when there is a formal decision to make, such as an election or a resolution.

AFTER THE MEETING

The secretary of your chapter should prepare minutes or a report of the meeting to distribute to members via email or chapter newsletter. This report can also be posted on the PSC website.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

If chapter meetings are primarily about organizing our membership, labor-management (L-M) meetings are about representing the membership and finding solutions to different issues. Article 2, section 6 of the PSC-CUNY contract states: "Each College President shall meet with the PSC chapter chairperson and a reasonable number of other officers of the PSC ... twice each semester for the purpose of consultation in respect of matters directly affecting the terms and conditions of employment of employees of said College covered by this Agreement, and matters necessary to the implementation of this Agreement which are local in nature Other matters may be placed on the agenda by the President or the PSC by mutual agreement.." While college administrations are bound by the PSC-CUNY contract, aspects of the contract may not be implemented with willingness and/or alacrity by the administration. L-M meetings are the place for settling such areas of concern. There are also conditions of work on which the union contract does not take a position but they are of importance to the membership. Again, it is at L-M meetings that such issues can be raised and resolved. These meetings can include HEOs and CLTs and discussion of their conditions of work.

It is important to plan a L-M meeting in advance with regards to scheduling and agenda. Scheduling takes on an extra dimension as the meeting includes administrators. So again, plan on planning ahead!

The logistics of the meetings can vary between chapters. In many chapters, for instance, it is the union that takes the lead in planning and conducting these meeting but in some chapters, the administration and the chapter take turns in doing so. Below, we discuss how it is done at BCC and John Jay.

BCC

Each campus has a Labor Designee who is responsible for ensuring the College's compliance with the PSC-CUNY contract. That individual is often the President's legal adviser, or Counsel. At BCC, labor-management meetings are scheduled with the Labor Designee. I suggest four or five possible dates and times for our two meetings, times when several members of the executive committee are available. The Labor Designee usually gets back to the chair within a week with confirmed dates.

A week or two before each labor-management meeting, the chapter executive committee meets to develop an agenda for the meeting. We select three or four problems we wish to discuss, gathered from the concerns members mention at chapter meetings and in one-on-one conversations. I notify the administration of our agenda, and responsibility for presenting the items is divided among the members of the executive committee. For most agenda items, we have a solution to propose for the problem. Every once in a while, the administration suggests a matter for discussion.

The PSC Chapter Chair serves as chair of this meeting which is held in the President's office. It is good to include time limits for items on the agenda. Usually three to five members of the executive committee are present, and a similar number of members of the administration.

The President of each campus is required by Article 2 of the contract to meet twice each semester with the PSC chapter chair and other officers, but the administration is not required to make these meetings easy or productive. The tone of the meetings and the productivity are improved by frequently addressing problems that can be resolved easily. This helps set an expectation on both sides that we can work together to find solutions, even to the difficult problems, such as the health and safety problems caused by the poor condition and maintenance of buildings and grounds.

For example, at a recent meeting we suggested the development of a procedure for electronic submission of work orders for duplicating. The College President supported this immediately, but the administration did not think to develop it until we made the request. The procedure has not yet been fully implemented, even with the President's support. We will need to revisit this issue again. I imagine things are similar on all campuses; simple improvements take a long time to be carried out.

After the meeting, the PSC sends minutes of the meeting to the Labor Designee, with agreements for action highlighted. Sometimes we review these minutes at a later meeting if the agreed action was not completed. These minutes can also be shared with members at a chapter meeting or by email.

JOHN JAY

I decide on a few possible dates for the two L-M meetings over the semester either at a EC meeting or by polling EC members over email for their availability. The dates are then sent to an administrative secretary who gets back to the chair with the dates that work for the administration. A suitable room is reserved as soon as we have a date.

The agenda items are arrived at after a thorough discussion with the EC. We try to identify key issues for the membership that need to be addressed. These can include ongoing health and safety concerns, issues of transparency like the demand for an open budget process, administrative malfunction like the delay of adjunct paychecks, aspects of working conditions like the administration of peer-evaluation or class size and so on. It is usually helpful to have a balance of different issues and different constituencies.

The conducting of these meeting is a good lesson in organizing. It is a reminder that while on some issues the administration will be cooperative, on others, their stance reflects a very different set of priorities from that of the union. If the meetings are conducted efficiently, it is easier to mark out areas of concern, possible resolution and of ongoing conflict. While the chapter chair may chair these meetings, we have found it useful if different EC members raise different issues. This is something that needs to be decided on beforehand.

It is important to record detailed minutes of these meetings. Very often, the administration would promise to act on an issue or deliver information later. The minutes are helpful in following up on such promises. Equally important, the minutes should be circulated among members.

Finally, we usually provide some snacks but it is low priority. Unlike in Chapter meetings, ensuring attendance, building member interest or community are not so relevant!

CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT

The PSC contract, negotiated between the PSC and CUNY, is the principal source of our rights on the job with CUNY. In order for these rights to be maintained, the contract must be enforced. Our union is stronger when the members work to enforce the contract.

Your chapter should have a member trained and ready to serve as grievance counselor. The grievance counselor formally handles member complaints and filing of grievances. However, many members will choose to contact you first with a complaint or potential grievance. Expect members to ask you questions as you walk around campus, by phone or by email. You will need to make an initial evaluation of the member's concerns. Some of these concerns can be handled informally as a complaint; others will arise to the level of grievance and need to be referred to the grievance counselor.

Chapter chairs should register for and take contract enforcement training the union offers to increase their knowledge of the PSC contract, and help in evaluating member complaints. It is important to develop your ability to listen with patience, sympathy and understanding. Also include contract enforcement issues on your chapter meeting agenda. Recruit members, people with an interest in the union contract and its enforcement to take the full grievance counselor training, to be ready to step in to the grievance counselor position when that position is vacant.

Finally, work on contract enforcement is an excellent organizing tool. When members take ownership of their contract, the union gets stronger. For this to happen, the first step is for members to *know* their contract. At John Jay, as mentioned earlier, we conduct “know your contract” sessions. But that is only one formal step. It is good practice for the Chair to talk about the contract in as many settings as possible. It is important to highlight both the provisions of the contract and the fact that they had to be fought for.

MEMBER OUTREACH AND ORGANIZING

The strength of the union is directly proportionate to the number of members. Increasing union membership is a crucial part of the Chair’s responsibility. This work

should be shared by the Chair and other chapter leaders. Each year you will receive a list of all of the members of your chapter and all of the agency fee payers who will be members of your chapter once they join the PSC. Some ways to do it are:

- Take information packets and membership cards to the college-wide benefits orientation for new faculty and department orientation meetings.
- Assign EC members to talk to new faculty in their departments.
- Designate a Membership Coordinator on the EC to contact department reps with the names of fee payers each semester.
- Have the list of fee payers and membership cards at chapter meetings; ask attendees to join if they are on the list.

Use this opportunity for organizing both new leaders and new members.

OTHER CHAPTER EVENTS

A Chapter is as vibrant and active as the Chair and the leadership can make it. Apart from EC, L-M and Chapter meetings, the Chair should organize other events that involve, interest and excite the membership. At John Jay, for instance, we do “know your contract” sessions in the Fall and a Holiday Party before the December break. Typically,

the responsibility for organizing “know your contract” sessions is delegated to the grievance officer. While primarily directed at junior faculty, all members are invited to the event. The Grievance Officer distributes copies of the current contract and leads a discussion on the most important aspects of the contract. We provide lunch. These sessions have been very popular. The Holiday Party is a way to make members feel included and involved. We use the occasion to briefly touch on some pertinent chapter issues. Other than that it is an occasion for socializing; gourmet food and alcohol are provided. At BCC, we organize an orientation session in the fall semester for all new full-time faculty to introduce them to the union contract, with special attention to the reappointment and tenure process and the provision for reassigned time for research in the first five years. We have an end-of semester celebration every semester. At this party we review the activities and accomplishments of the chapter in the past semester, and recognize chapter members for their activism. As at John Jay, mainly we socialize with food and alcohol.

OTHER ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES

There are many other organizing activities that chapters and Chapter Chairs may choose to engage in. Some chapters have strong connections with student organizations on their campuses, and work with them on issues like CUNY's budget that concern both the PSC and students. Other chapters have made alliances with the unions that represent

other CUNY workers, and work with them on issues such as the Workplace Violence Prevention Programs and health and safety issues. These organizing activities can energize a chapter, and increase the PSC's effectiveness in pursuing its goal of improving the work lives of its members while strengthening CUNY.

OTHER CHAPTER CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chair attends college meetings where the PSC is invited or that are open to all faculty and the PSC should be represented. This can be at the Faculty senate, the College Council, the Council of Chairs, meetings with other faculty and/or administrative officials. Often such invitations occur in the context of a particular issue in which the union has or potentially can have an interest. The Chair meets with the college President as required. The Chair has the crucial role of representing the union's perspective at such meetings.

It is important that the chapter chair see herself or himself as a union leader with a union message to present at these meetings. The details of the union message will depend upon the situation. Sometimes you will talk about the importance of complying with the union contract; sometimes you will be an advocate of shifting funds to budget areas that will provide a better education for students. Whatever the issue, remember that you have been elected by the members of your chapter to provide them with chapter union representation.

WORKING WITH ORGANIZERS

A member of the PSC organizing staff will be assigned to help with the union organizing in your chapter. As trained organizers, they can be invaluable. The organizer will work with you in planning meeting agenda and producing and circulating announcements. He or she may be available to attend your chapter executive committee meetings and often your chapter meetings, and will be in frequent contact with you. He or she will assist on the day of the meeting with greeting members and collecting attendance information. Afterward, the organizer can help you in evaluating the meeting and determining follow-up actions that are needed.

The organizer is helpful both with larger logistical issues as well as on strategic and tactical area of organizing. He or she can help in setting chapter goals, developing strategies to meet them, and evaluating your progress. They can arrange training in organizing methods for your executive committee members and other chapter members. They are your “go to” person when you’ll need to access to members’ data or other statistical information relevant to union work. Ask your assigned organizer for assistance whenever you need it.

BUDGET

Every chapter has an annual budget. The Chair should find out the amount at the beginning of the academic year by getting in touch with the PSC central office. An example of a budget is attached as an appendix. Based on the amount, it is advisable to plan the various foreseen expenditures and set aside a small amount for unforeseen ones. Most of the budget will be spent on food and drink for chapter meetings and other meetings.

Receipts should be submitted for reimbursement to the Financial Services office of the PSC for incurred expenditures. There is a form for submitting reimbursement requests that you can get from your campus' assigned organizer. Apart from the chair, other Chapter officials can also submit receipts but they have to be ratified by the Chair. If your chapter regularly uses the catering service or other provider, either on your campus or off-campus, the Financial Services office can set up an account with that provider for the chapter so that those expenses can be billed directly to the PSC and paid from your budget, saving you or an EC member from having to request reimbursement.

LIAISON BETWEEN THE CHAPTER AND PSC CENTRAL

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The chair attends **PSC Delegate Assembly** meetings twice a month. The DA comprises delegates from all PSC chapters. Every chapter has at least one delegate, the Chair, and more depending on the number of members in the chapter, one delegate for each one hundred members (except for the Retirees Chapter). Chapter delegates participate in the broader decision making processes of the union.

The Delegate Assembly, which meets monthly, is the PSC's principal policy-making body. According to the PSC Constitution, the Delegate Assembly has the responsibility “to formulate and adopt policies and resolutions to govern the actions and positions of the union.” At the Delegate Assembly there are reports from the union president, from other union officers, and from the Executive Director on union campaigns and PSC activities. A chapter chair represents the chapter at the DA, reporting on its activities and concerns around PSC campaigns. The chapter chair usually introduces resolutions adopted by the chapter to be brought before the DA. In order to ensure that the chapter is well represented, before each DA the chapter chair should check which of the chapter's delegates will be attending and recruit an alternate to attend if necessary. Attendance is important because resolutions and other motions cannot be voted on if there is no quorum, which is a majority of the number of members.

CHAPTER CHAIRS MEETINGS

The chair attends **PSC Chapter Chairs** Meetings once a month. At these meetings, the chairs discuss pertinent issues on their campuses and actions on relevant matters and receive updates from union officers.

At these meetings, chairs are given the current status of PSC campaigns. They get the opportunity to share information about activities in their own chapters, and collectively develop strategies for further organizing. Chairs are encouraged to add items to this agenda. Recently we had a profitable discussion of approaches to labor-management meetings.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE CHAIRS MEETING

The chairs of community college chapters meet most months for an hour before the regular Delegate Assembly meeting. This meeting, convened by the PSC Vice President for Community Colleges, allows community college chairs to discuss union issues on their campuses, with attention paid to how those issues might manifest at a community college.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Apart from the regularly scheduled meetings, there are many occasions where Chapter Chairs are vital to the functioning of the union. They attend Special Meetings of the PSC for Chapter Chairpersons. They provide for Chapter participation at the PSC Legislative Caucus, Political Action Committee, Contract Negotiations observers and other PSC events. Once again, delegating such responsibilities to other members/leaders not only makes for good work-sense but should be used as an organizing tool. Chairs also write reports as necessary relating to their chapters and work with the union in general. They provide the PSC with a full accounting for the Budget

EVALUATING AND REPORTING ON THE CHAPTERS ACTIVITIES

Most chapters hold a meeting of the executive committee at the end of each semester, to review and evaluate the semester's activities. Some questions you might consider discussing are:

What issues did we work on at chapter meetings? At Labor management meetings? What other organizing work did we do?

What did we accomplish in labor-management meetings? What issues should we pursue for the next semester? How shall we approach those issues?

How well did we meet the goals that were set for the chapter for this semester?

What did we do well? What of our work needs further action?

Were there unforeseen issues that arose in our organizing work? How well did we deal with them?

As chapter chair, you will be responsible for writing an annual report on your chapter's activities to submit to the principal officers and the Executive Council. Notes from these evaluation meetings will help you to write your report.

“BUT HOW CAN I GET ALL THIS DONE

To be an active chapter chair is indeed a lot of work. Here's a little of what we've learned:

SHARON PERSINGER:

Why are you asking me how to be a chapter chair? I was elected to a full term as chair of the PSC chapter at BCC in 2011, and I'm still learning on the job.

I'm a professor of mathematics and computer science, not a manager or organizer. I became involved in the PSC in part because of my experience of being managed by administrators who know little of my day to day job. But over the years, I have recognized there are many management aspects to teaching a college class - planning,

scheduling, evaluating, assigning tasks and monitoring completion. Much of what a chapter chair does is similar - organize the EC, delegate tasks, and check up on them.

In writing this manual, I've expanded on things I learned from the organizer who helped me with my first semester as interim chair. To help me in carrying out a budget hearing, she presented a timetable and a list of tasks to delegate. The timetable had been constructed using backwards scheduling, the method I was accustomed to using when planning the timing of a course. To ensure that chapter meetings and labor-management meetings run smoothly and are productive, I schedule an executive committee meeting before each to plan an agenda and recruit members to manage parts of the agenda and handle other meeting tasks.

NIVEDITA MAJUMDAR:

I accepted the position under unexpected circumstances and without a whole lot of experience. What I did have was passion for and a commitment to the goal of union organizing. But it was not long before I started experiencing a feeling of burnout. Fortunately, I am learning that the antidote to burnout is one that also strengthens the union! It is to routinely communicate, delegate work and develop leadership. As we involve members by delegating responsibilities *and* including them in decision-making, we develop the leadership base of the union and our own task becomes less onerous.

No doubt this is easier said than done! Because of my strong involvement with most aspects of the work, there is a drive to personally ensure that everything is done right. Such feelings, however, are neither necessarily productive nor desirable. We are in the union because of our belief in the principle of democratizing power – to be able to live by that is also the recipe to avoid burnout.

APPENDICES

Sample Chapter Meeting Announcement

Sample Chapter Budget