

## Guide to Engaging Young Advocates in Your Chapter

### Why Involve Young People?

**Onboarding students and young professionals is so important to increasing diversity in your chapter and creating a pipeline of future members and leaders.** With over 20,000 members and more than 200 chapters across the country, UNA-USA members are united in their commitment to global engagement and their belief that each of us can play a part in advancing the UN's mission and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. By involving young people, you can increase the reach of your message.

### How to Pitch UNA-USA

- **Think about what will catch the attention of young people.**
  - Free Membership if Under 26
  - Networking Opportunities
  - Advocacy on a Larger Scale

### How to Enhance Your Meetings

- **Ease of Access**
  - Have your meetings in a location that is easily accessible. (ie: close to public transport, easy to find, accessible by wheelchair)
  - Remember that some good locations to host meetings include a college campus, co-working spaces (such as WeWork), or even online platforms such as ZOOM.
  - Post your meeting locations/times online or have a way for young people to email a point-of-contact to easily obtain that information.
- **Be Open to Change**
  - Change can be good! Young people often come prepared with ideas on how to improve your chapter, engage with them and find a happy medium for everyone. Consider a meeting agenda that includes more time for open discussion rather than just updates, or designate a young person to help lead one of the agenda items during your meeting.
- **Support their Future**
  - Your experienced members have a great opportunity to involve young people in your chapter's leadership. Create committees or short-term leadership positions that young people can jump into right away.
- **Ensure New Members Feel Welcome**
  - A mentor-mentee program can be perfect for welcoming in younger members and making them feel more involved. Designate a mentor for a new member when they attend their first meeting with the chapter.

## Where to Involve Young Advocates

Positions in your chapter can be held by young people and often can give a great perspective. It is also crucial that you give descriptive explanations of each role, and the time that is required to perform that role.

- Social Media Chair: Oversees chapter social media such as the Facebook page, Instagram, Twitter channels
- Website Designer: Oversees chapter website creation and maintenance
- Recruitment Chair: Leads chapter membership recruitment efforts
- Virtual Manager: Oversees online chapter programming such as webinar coordinator, livestreaming, or other virtual methods of communication.
- Event Planner: Leads planning and execution of certain key chapter events such as UN Day, International Women’s Day, or Earth Day (as examples)
- Photographer/Videographer: Captures events through photos or video.

## Key to Successful Adult/Youth Partnership

- **Take young people and their ideas seriously**
  - One of the most frustrating things as a young person is to enter a space where one’s thoughts and ideas are not taken seriously. A big reason for recruiting young members is the different point of views and experiences that they bring with them. Often the ideas they bring with are big and bold, but rather than turning them down - embrace them as a resource and help them to identify small, achievable wins. This will provide valuable guidance for the youth leaders and a unique input of ideas for adults.
- **Avoid isolating young members**
  - Being the only young person in a room full of adult can feel intimidating. You can create a safe and encouraging atmosphere by inviting several youth leaders to a meeting or providing a meeting mentor or “buddy” for a new youth attendee. This will allow for the young people to speak their mind and express their ideas more freely, which is what you are looking for.
- **Allow youth members a seat at the table**
  - Youth tend to be very motivated, passionate, and energetic as they are uniquely impacted by many issues. If you can see beyond their lack of years of experience, you can take advantage of the exceptional traits and passion they bring.
- **Provide guidance, not orders**
  - Young people are assets as passionate and motivated members. It is important to keep in mind that giving advice and guidance will be better received than giving orders. Help them see how their small actions contribute to the big picture and larger outcomes.

## How to Advertise

- **Post on Social Media**
  - Making a chapter Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook could be a great first task for a young person in your chapter. It increases your presence on social media and encourages interaction.
- **Contact Local Faculty**
  - Share information with university faculty or other educators who can share with their classrooms (and even consider making attendance at your event extra credit!)
- **Peer-to-Peer**
  - Educate youth members on the importance of membership and encourage them to bring a friend to your next event

## Where to Recruit From

- **Model UN**
  - See if you can advertise at a local conference in your area to involve young people who have a passion for the UN
- **Campus Chapters**
  - Recent graduates from UNA-USA campus chapters will provide a unique insight and already have a passion for UNA-USA.
- **Academic Departments**
  - The local university/school might have an International Relations program or Sustainability major with students that you can invite to your events.
- **Other Community Organizations**
  - Girl Scouts, Fridays for our Future, and Local Sororities/Fraternities are other organizations that already include young leaders.

## Examples from Other Chapters

- **UNA Chicago**
  - This chapter developed a fellowship program to engage members of all ages!
    - <https://unachicago.org/fellowship-program/>
- **UNA Greater Boston**
  - This chapter partnered with a community space to create a series on the SDG's that invite people of all ages to participate and connect!
    - <https://unagb.org/community-programs/un-perspective-series/>
- **UNA San Francisco**
  - This chapter developed a mentoring program to engage young professionals!
    - <https://www.una-sf.org/mentors>