

Suggestions for Effective Affiliate Organizations

An affiliation is a special form of mutual cooperation that exists between an organization of mathematics teacher educators and the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE). This means that both organizations are devoted to common goals and cooperate with each other to be more effective in meeting these goals. To be a successful affiliate organization, an enthusiastic leadership and active support from the membership is necessary. Not all of the suggestions below will be suitable for every affiliate organization, select the ones that will meet your needs.

Membership: The most important element for any organization is the enlisting of members. This can be done through e-mails, newsletters, websites, conferences, or fliers and brochures that are mailed or posted. Consider posting an ad in a mathematics organization's (such as the state affiliate of NCTM) newsletter. The decisions about which ones to use will depend on the funds available for membership recruitment. Personal invitations from current members via one-to-one conversations, e-mails or personal notes yield better results than mass mailings. Recruit at local, state, regional, or even national conferences for teachers (i.e. NCTM, AMTE, NMSA, NEA, AMATYC, etc.). Be sure to have membership applications attached to brochures, e-mails, etc. Make the application process as simple and convenient as possible. The quality of the organizations' meetings, publications, and services will determine the success of the membership drive. Think about the possibility of having institutional memberships as well. Several commercial websites are available to manage the membership database. Consider the cost and advantages associated with each.

Communications: Each affiliate will want to be sure to publicize their meetings and activities, while also promoting the general public's awareness of the importance of the organizations' efforts to improve mathematics education. A periodic newsletter is the best means of achieving timely communications with members and other interested parties. Check with the state educational organizations to determine if you may publicize your organization events in their bulletins or newsletters. Also, contact school districts to reach their mathematics coordinators. Other contacts that you might want to make include your state's two-year colleges, and private and public four-year colleges and universities to reach their mathematics and mathematics education faculty.

Finances: Most affiliates' funding comes from annual dues. Other funding sources may include: meeting registration fees, contributions from school or universities where the meetings are held, grants, or the sale of educational materials.

Meetings, workshops, institutes, and conferences: Each affiliate will want to determine the frequency and type of gathering for their members. The program committee should begin planning a year in advance since the program is the essence of each meeting. Well-known speakers and large meetings will especially need this planning time. Both the affiliates' board of directors and as many members as possible should be consulted for possible directions for the program and potential speakers. Often colleges or universities may cooperate in sponsoring institutes. Aligning your affiliates' meeting with your state's NCTM affiliate meeting can increase attendance and cut down on costs. Remember that people react favorably when they feel welcome. Have designated hosts or hostesses make a special effort to greet new members and welcome returning members.