

The importance of community participation: Why college clubs & organizations matter



By The College of St. Scholastica | [@StScholastica](#) | Jul 10, 2017

When you're just starting your college experience as a first-year student, it can seem like the entire world is your oyster. Between all the people to meet, classes to take and places to get involved on campus, it's a time ripe with possibility. And because you want to squeeze every last drop out of your college experience, you're prepared to seize as many opportunities as you can.

What you may not know is that getting involved on campus comes with its own set of major perks. It's not just about meeting other students, although that's definitely one appeal of joining college clubs and organizations. But that's not the only benefit of getting involved.

Read on to learn more about how you can get the most out of your college experience through community participation. You'll also hear straight from hiring managers, former graduates and career coaches on why partaking in clubs and organizations truly matters in the long-run.

7 reasons you should get involved on campus

Community participation in college sets the stage for a lifetime of leaning in, reaching out and building connections that bridge barriers. Take a look at seven other surprising benefits of joining college clubs and organizations.

1. It's a chance to build your skillset

Perhaps one of the most beneficial aspects of getting involved on campus is that it offers you the chance to develop and build skills that you wouldn't get to otherwise. Participation and working with others helps you to round out your soft skills.

"It's a great way to build your professional skills including leadership, teamwork, communication and prioritization," says career coach [Alina Tubman](#). "All these skills are necessary for students applying

to jobs and internships." She explains that this is a brilliant way to showcase these skills instead of just listing them on a resume.

Clubs and organizations can also give you the opportunity to develop hard skills you may or may not learn in class. "On campuses where students have more autonomy, individuals in these roles could potentially manage money, create relationships with outside vendors and execute high-profile events, all valuable specialized skills," says speaker [Amma Marfo](#), who has worked closely with students on college campuses.

2. It's an opportunity to demonstrate your time management

"The main reason for my being in so many clubs was that it taught me discipline while also allowing me to have fun," says Nihar Suthar, author and recent college graduate. "I had to be disciplined to get all my work done so I could participate in clubs and organizations. This is an extremely important life skill to have."

Partaking in college clubs and organizations alongside your academic responsibilities allows you to practice not only discipline, but also time management. This is a handy skill to have in your personal life, and it's one that future employers will be looking for after you graduate. Recruiters and hiring managers like to know that applicants will be able to juggle tasks and handle all the demands of the job.

"Involvement in clubs demonstrates a student's ability to manage his or her schedule with academics and social activities," adds career coach Crystal Olivarria.

3. It helps you become more collaborative

"Clubs and organizations let students congregate around a common cause, interest or course of study at a time when social connections are crucial," Marfo says.

That's the beauty of these activities — they pull together all kinds of students under a shared mission. Participation in them encourages teamwork and collaboration, not to mention learning how to work together on a larger scale. And with collaborative work comes opportunities to step up and lead your peers, manage projects and work through any road bumps along the way.

Involvement in these groups allows students to create collaborative work experiences, such as planning events, creating learning material or performing community service, Marfo explains. "Students learn how to identify and work toward a shared vision, delegate tasks and responsibilities and work through interpersonal conflict," she adds.

4. It can lead to great friendships and new networking opportunities

Another incentive to get involved on campus is to make friends and network. Friendships form effortlessly when you share similar interests or passions with like-minded peers. Clubs and organizations can also allow you to branch out and meet students outside of your immediate social circle.

It's also true that connections with others in your field can serve you well after you graduate. "Getting involved on campus can increase your peer network, which in turn, increases your exposure and learning not only in your school environment, but also your social capital," explains Mana Sanghvi, founder of [Sittereco](#). She says this often translates to more connections as you network for future career opportunities.

5. It can build your self-confidence

Students who successfully balance a full plate of academia and extracurricular activities come away from the experience with a stronger understanding of their capabilities. This can help you build up the self-assurance needed to take on more challenges.

"Students gain confidence as a result of practicing the art of leadership and real-world skills through a campus activity," Sanghvi divulges. She feels it's a smart choice for students to take advantage of school clubs and campus activities in an effort to gain experience, confidence and transferrable skills. "These can be more easily articulated in an internship or job interview and there is low risk in doing so," she adds.

6. It can provide you with a well-rounded college experience

Aside from all of the skill-building and potential for personal development, community participation in college is just a great way to make memories. It's a chance to put yourself out there, try something new and have a great time doing so. Activities can spice up mundane school weeks and break up long blocks of study sessions. Plus, they'll help you make the most of your college experience.

"Participation in college clubs and organizations creates lifelong memories and provides a more memorable college experience," Olivarria says.

7. It can increase your marketability

You'll get a lot out of your involvement on campus while you're still a student, but the benefits don't stop once you graduate. The skills you develop and the experience you acquire add up to an enticing combination for hiring managers once you begin your job search. Your community participation in college can set you apart from the pack when you're vying for your dream job.

Sanghvi mentions the potential for campus involvement to offer opportunities to take on leadership positions. These experiences translate well in the job market and can differentiate you from your peers.

"Taking initiative signals to recruiters that these students are hard workers and have a strong work ethic, with a higher probability of being a successful hire," Sanghvi adds.

Get out there and get involved

We've all felt or heard the frustration with job openings that require years of experience before you've even lived long enough to acquire those resume items. Involvement in college clubs and organizations can be a great way to start garnering impressive skills and hands-on experience that can catch the eye of hiring managers until you're able to build up that cushion of on-the-job professional involvement.

Couple that with the many benefits listed above, and it's clear that community participation in college matters. Don't plan to arrive on campus only to lounge around your dorm room. Get out and explore all of the opportunities your college has to offer! Now that you're aware of all of the perks, you know you'll get just as much out of the experience as you put into it.