



ASEE Student Chapter Startup Guidebook

Why establish an ASEE student chapter?

There are significant benefits for students to start up a student chapter at their institution. These benefits include: preparation for careers in academia, mentorship from genuinely interested faculty, participation in regular seminars, discussions, forums, and workshops with interested faculty, access to up-to-date resources (journals, library files, web resources, and PRISM), guidance on academic and professional decisions, and participation and networking opportunities at regional and national conferences.

Academic institutions and ASEE National also profit from an ASEE student chapter. In addition to the distinction of producing well-prepared academics, institutions can use an ASEE student chapter as a means to help current faculty develop professionally in engineering education. For example, the chapter creates many more opportunities for faculty to function as ASEE members.



In this brief document you will find the following to help you start an ASEE student chapter:

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Fundamental goals of ASEE student chapters

While the exact goals may vary between campuses, the fundamental goals of an ASEE student chapter are in essence to:

- 1) *encourage engineering students to pursue academic careers*
- 2) *aid graduate engineering students in preparing to seek employment in academia*
- 3) *increase pedagogical understanding (i.e. knowledge of how to teach)*
- 4) *encourage excellence in teaching among graduate teaching assistants by administration of teaching awards*
- 5) *provide a network and a community across all engineering and related disciplines*
- 6) *encourage underrepresented groups such as women and minorities to seek advanced degrees and academic careers in engineering*
- 7) *promote engineering outreach to K-12 students to encourage the study of engineering*

In short, ASEE student chapters aim to disseminate information, teach skills, promote

engineering and engineering education, and foster community.

Considerations to make prior to starting an ASEE student chapter

There are two main factors to consider before deciding to start up a new ASEE student chapter.

1) *Engineering and/or Education school demographics:*

When looking to start a new chapter, it is pertinent to consider the demographics at your institution. Investigating student population (graduate and undergraduate), the composition of the student population, the average student residency, student academic & research workload, student funding type (research and teaching assistantships), and the number of existing professional organizations that exist already on our campus can give you a better idea of how successful a new ASEE student chapter will be on your campus. Individuals who may be short-term master's students or who already participate in other organizations may not be as likely to participate as an active member of your ASEE student chapter. It is also suggested that an overall critical mass of graduate students, specifically Ph.D. students is vital to sustaining a student chapter in terms of consistency and continuity.

2) *Factors influencing student interest:*

Another important aspect to investigate is possible factors that can influence a student's interest. One key to the success of many of the current ASEE student chapters is a strong presence and involvement of faculty in ASEE National. When the faculty at a given institution are interested in the society, their support can help in the longevity and success of the chapter. Highly influential faculty involved in the chapter may also make the chapter more appealing to some students.

Requirements to start an ASEE student chapter

There are a number of requirements that must be met before a new student chapter can be formed.

1) *Faculty Advisor(s):*

The first step to starting a chapter is to find a suitable faculty advisor. You may have someone in mind, but if you do not, it is recommended that you first contact your [Campus Representative](#). He or she should be able to put you in touch with suitable candidates. If your institution does not have a Campus Representative, it is recommended that your institution first appoint someone to fill this position.

There are no limits on the number of faculty that can advise your chapter as long as they are all willing to provide help and continue to be active within your chapter. Faculty advisors are a key component to the longevity of your chapter.

2) *Members:*

To start a new chapter, you will need to identify individuals who are willing to participate in your Student Chapter. The members of the chapter can be students

(graduate or undergraduate), faculty, or staff at your institution. It is recommended that a general interest meeting be held to begin building a base of members.

Student chapters can offer two tiers of membership. Participants in local activities are often considered “local” members of the chapter, and as such are included in informational mailings and invitations to events. These members are encouraged to become more active in the local chapter. Currently ASEE headquarters requires that student chapter Officers be official [Student Members](#) of the National ASEE; however, anyone is welcome to join the national organization. Because of this stipulation, it is recommended that you recruit students willing to be National ASEE members to ensure future officers. As such, a chapter should look into recruiting students who are a little further away from graduating thereby ensuring the continuity of the chapter.

At a minimum you will need 4 students to fill the officer positions. There is no maximum number of people who can be part of your chapter.

In addition to being ASEE members, it is recommended that any member of your chapter who is also an ASEE member should sign up to be part of the **Student Division (SD)**. Joining the SD is completely free and can be done when signing up to become an ASEE member. If you or anyone else in your chapter are already ASEE members and wish to join the SD, please consult the following page on [How to Join](#).

3) *Officers:*

You'll need at least 4 members who are student members of ASEE to serve as the chapter officers:

President – sets the overall direction of the chapter and to ensure events are properly coordinated. The president sets the agenda for the executive meetings and acts as the chapter representative when such a representative is required.

Vice-President – Assists the president with setting direction of the chapter and oversees the organizing of the seminars and other events.

Treasurer – Maintains financial records and oversees the writing of grant proposals for funding of the chapter events.

Secretary – Serves as the official communication link for the chapter by monitoring email and maintaining contact with other ASEE chapters and ASEE organizations at the regional and national levels. This person also records and distributes the minutes from the executive meetings.

Additionally, you may want to assign a Publicity Chair (oversees a distribution of the publicity for all chapter events), a Membership Chair (oversees membership lists of active students and activities to recruit new students), and (if applicable) a Newsletter Editor (oversees the publication and distribution of a chapter newsletter each semester).

Keep in mind when choosing officers that you select individuals that will help to continue the program after you are gone.

4) *Chapter Constitution & By-Laws:*

Once a faculty advisor has been named and the core group members have been identified, the group should get together to draw up a set of by-laws and a constitution. Each chapter must have their own constitution aside from the [SD By-Laws](#). To construct your by-laws & constitution, it is recommended to look at other [ASEE Student Chapter Websites](#) for guidance. Your chapter's constitution can be fine-tuned to fit what your institution is interested in doing. In general, the constitution should include, but is not limited to, the following sections:

Preamble – An introductory statement to introduce you chapter and its mission

Name – Clear statement of your new chapter's name

Purpose – A list of the goals intended to be addressed by your chapter

Membership – Identifies who may and may not be a member of this group.

Executives – Identifies who belongs to the executive board.

Voting Procedure and Rules – Clarifies how any group voting will occur

Officers and Duties – States the roles of each officer position to be elected

Amendments – Clarifies how amendments to the constitution will be handled

By-Laws – Establishes the standing rules that govern your chapter's internal affairs

5) *Letter from the Dean:*

Once you have established a faculty advisor, a membership group and by-laws & constitution, the dean should provide a letter pledging his or her support for your chapter.

All of these materials and information should be sent to ASEE Member Services at membership@asee.org or via regular mail to the address below:

American Society for Engineering Education
Attn: Member Services
1818 N Street, N.W., Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036-2479

It is also highly recommended that your newly formed chapter provide a website to be linked on the ASEE website.

If all of these items suffice, ASEE headquarters will add you to the official ASEE Student Chapter website. You should receive a confirmation from the ASEE Membership group.

Suggestions on maintaining a successful ASEE student chapter

There is a plethora of literature that has been written regarding ASEE student chapters (see references below). Many of these papers have published ideas on how to establish a successful chapter. Here is a summary of their conclusions:

1) General Strategies

- find a dedicated group of students willing to put forth a lot of effort and willing to establish your chapter organization (eases turnover)
- choose a faculty advisor who will provide a solid source of guidance and support; use their influence to gain administrative support and to bring in well-known speakers
- delegate the responsibilities amongst your startup group broadly to prevent possible logjams
- develop efficient and effective communication protocols for ease in disseminating information (use sign-in sheets to establish mailing lists, setup a chapter email address, and develop a chapter website)
- develop early on a list of benefits gained through participating in ASEE (for prospective members and possible funders)
- picking one set of activities to pursue and do it well; expand over the years as your chapter sees fit
- advertise as much as possible to not only peek interest, but to also help grow your membership
- seek funding immediately to help in establishing your chapter and improve your events (free food attracts everyone!!)
- remain active in ASEE at the national and regional levels by attending conferences and submitting conference or journal papers
- utilize ASEE groups such as the Students Division (SD), the Educational Research Methods (ERM) Division, the Graduate Studies Division (GSD), the New Engineering Educators Division, and other ASEE Student Chapters to aid in your development
- attend conferences (Ex. ASEE Conference & Exposition or the Frontiers In Education Conference) to help grow your chapter and gain it recognition
- coordinate activities with other on-campus organizations that have common interests

2) Event Ideas

- seminar series for graduate students (Ex. topics: proposal funding, the publication process, and the promotion and tenure process) and or undergraduate students (example topic: process and pitfall of graduate school) on specific topics

- panel discussions (Ex. topics: finding an academic job, curriculum vitas, proposal writing, interviewing, starting a research program, interdisciplinary research, teaching methods, and the state of teaching at research and non-research universities, engineering education approaches and advice, engineering education research, being/becoming a faculty member, transitions between academia and industry)
- brown bag lunches
- presenting teaching awards to exception teaching assistants and/or faculty
- teaching enrichment workshops for faculty and graduate students
- academic career preparation workshops
- participation in ASEE Annual Conferences

3) *Funding Source Ideas*

- contact the college of engineering department chairs to support activities, which are directed toward professional development of graduate students; many departments sponsor student organization activities and ASEE encompasses all engineering disciplines
- request funds directly from the associate dean for undergraduate education to support activities that recognize outstanding graduate student instructors and activities that promote graduate school to undergraduate students
- register with and request funds from the Student Government Associations on your campus, which provide funds to organizations on campus for events
- request travel grants from your campus' Graduate School to support member travel to the ASEE National and Local Conferences
- contact the ASEE Divisions to support workshops your chapter would like to provide
- fundraising by selling items for profit
- write a grant proposal to a foundation that awards money for such endeavors

4) *K-12 Outreach Ideas*

- connect with the groups or faculty at your institution already doing outreach
- if possible, use your institution's education department to build a list of K-12 contacts
- use website databases as resources for activities to use in the classroom (no need to reinvent the wheel)

www.teachengineering.com

<http://www.engineeringk12.org>

www.legoengineering.com

For additional questions about starting a student chapter or for more information about the Student Division, please contact either the current SD Chapter (Zone) Liaison or SD Membership Chair. Information can be found at the [ASEE Student Division Home Page](#).



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ASEE Student Chapter Checklist

- Select a faculty advisor(s)
- Find a core group to be the founding members (graduate students, undergraduate students, faculty, and staff at your institution) of the chapter
- Select at a minimum 4 officers:
 - President
 - Vice-President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary

* Note: All officers must be Student Members of ASEE National and are recommended to be involved in the Student Division (free)

- Draw up your Chapter By-Laws & Constitution. Include the following:
 - Preamble w/mission statement
 - Name
 - Purpose
 - Membership
 - Executives
 - Voting Procedure and Rules
 - Officers and Duties
 - Amendments
 - By-Laws

* Note: See other institution's documents for guidance.

- Obtain a letter for the appropriate dean at your institution in support of your new chapter
- Send all of your chapter information to ASEE Member Services at membership@asee.org or via regular mail:

American Society for Engineering Education
 Attn: Member Services
 1818 N Street, N.W., Suite 600
 Washington, DC 20036-2479