



THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS FOR LIBERTY

COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

2021 EDITION

Understanding the operations
of Students For Liberty.
The what, why, and how we
do what we do, and what we
offer and expect from our
student leaders



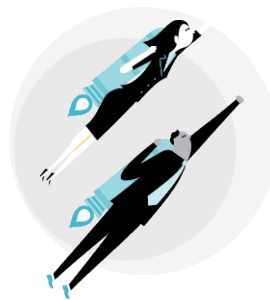


TWO THINGS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD

Ideas and People



VISION
A Freer Future.



MISSION
**Educate, Develop, and Empower the
next generation of leaders of liberty.**

Understanding the operations of Students For Liberty. The what, why, and how we do what we do, and what we offer and expect from our student leaders



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Message from Students For Liberty's Chief Executive Officer Dr. Wolf von Laer

Today, I am welcoming you as Students For Liberty's Chief Executive Officer, but I started in SFL as a volunteer, just like you. I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I applied. Little did I know, joining SFL would be the single most important decision in my personal and professional life.

I realized how serious the organization was when I first went through my leadership training. The organization meant business. I loved it.

I ran a campus group at a small university with 4,000 students in Germany. I was reading everything that I could about the ideas and trying to build a network, but I still could not organize anything with more than 50 people.

I eventually found myself in the same room with Alexander McCobin, one of the founders of SFL, and half a dozen other leaders from Europe, when European Students For Liberty was established. I remember sitting in a conference room with all of these accomplished and talented people and how it felt quite intimidating. I felt that the others had so much more experience and I would not be able to keep up with them. However, thanks to the trust, programs, and framework SFL provided me, I challenged myself and sought out more and more responsibilities as I continued to grow and develop as a leader.

From the first minute, SFL took me seriously, trusted me, and believed in me. Working together with other European leaders, I helped organize a conference with over 300 people and raised money to start the first European Local Coordinator leadership training, the first of its kind outside the United States. Students For Liberty taught me and gave me the opportunity to continuously develop myself with practical experience. I have learned so much and overcome many challenges that drove me to keep going for bigger and better things.

These experiences, the training, and my years of volunteer work with SFL showed me that I can produce great value, make a real impact, and become a better person in the process. Students For Liberty made this growth possible and I am

more than excited that you decided to join the organization. I hope you find it as much of a stimulating, challenging, and supportive environment as I did. The organization has changed my life, and I feel privileged to be in a position that allows me to work hard every day to make the same experiences possible for you!

Please let us know if we fall short or where we can improve because we want SFL to be the most important organization in the world for pro-liberty student leaders.

We want to give you the tools, and experience that will enable you to achieve great things on your way to making the world freer.

We know that young people can change the world! We see it every day and I am very glad that you have joined SFL to work towards a freer future for all! Thank you for all of your work bringing liberty to the world and for promoting ideas that lead to human flourishing and prosperity.

“ *The organization has changed my life, and I feel privileged to be in a position that allows me to work hard every day to make the same experiences possible for you!* ”



Dr. Wolf von Laer.


Introduction: **Welcome to Students For Liberty**

Congratulations! You are now part of the most dynamic, innovative, and important network of students striving for the cause of liberty worldwide today. This guide will give you an understanding of the operations of Students For Liberty (SFL), the what, why, and how we do what we do, and what we can both offer and expect from you as one of our student leaders.

Today, Students For Liberty is the world's largest organization supporting pro-liberty students who are working towards our shared vision of a freer future for all, but it wasn't always like this. Before SFL, being a pro-liberty student on campus was a very lonely experience. If a student was lucky enough to be on a campus with a pro-liberty group, it was most likely less than 2 years old and only kept going because of the founder's enthusiasm for bringing the same few reoccurring members to meetings. Such groups were unsustainable and would collapse as soon as the founder graduated or became too busy to continue the work. The idea of a global student movement for liberty was once unfathomable.

This all changed when, in the summer of 2007, a few students held a roundtable to discuss best practices for running pro-liberty groups. That roundtable inspired Alexander McCobin, Sloane Frost,

and Sam Eckman to organize the first International Students For Liberty Conference. This conference vastly exceeded their expectations when over 100 attendees turned up at Columbia University during a snowstorm. Realizing they had tapped into something special, they identified a growing need for a student driven pro-liberty movement, and so they continued to move forward.

In 2008, Students For Liberty was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit. SFL began to attract passionate pro-liberty students and started to grow the organization into a vibrant movement. From then until now, SFL has grown massively. But this growth did not occur on its own. Every stage of SFL's existence and development was met with new challenges and obstacles to overcome. It took the hard work and dedication of the thousands of students, staffers, and donors from around the world to make SFL the multi-million dollar organization and international network that it is today.

Now, SFL has a presence on every habitable continent. For operational purposes we divide this network into 8 international regions: North America, Europe, Africa, South Asia, Brazil, Latin America, Asia Pacific, and Charter Teams who work on expanding the movement into new countries and regions.

We don't have all of the answers and we can't just give volunteers a checklist for how to advance liberty, but we aren't making it up as we go along either. We have learned a lot along the way. We have a solid foundation from which our activity can take place: a set of solid programs, metrics, best practices, and principles of social change which we impart to our students through training and practical experience. This handbook outlines that foundation for you and you will continue to build upon it throughout your time as an SFL leader.

This handbook is in-depth, but it is not all-encompassing. Reading this handbook will not make you a top leader. Use it as a guide and a starting point but remember that the only way to actually become a strong leader is to go out and start leading. The most meaningful leadership education is experiential. Watching an event fall apart around you will teach you more about how to run a good event than any guideline in this handbook. Losing out on a \$10,000 donation because you mishandled a donor relationship will teach you more for the future than any simple word of caution. Leadership is a quality that cannot be gained through rote memorization or applying the same equations to every situation. Leadership is about doing. Leadership is about experience. Leadership is about daring to make a change. Leadership is about action. Leadership is a perspective.

Herein lies the key to leadership education: you cannot simply read books, but neither can you act without reflection. The best leadership education is one where you constantly evaluate your work and are more critical of yourself than others. After you run an event, debrief it by asking *"What could I have done better?"* and *"What lessons can I draw from this?"* There is a critical relationship between theory and practice that comes out more fully in leadership than anything else. At SFL, it is safe to try new things and it is safe to fail provided

we are continuously learning and developing.

Take the time to read this handbook carefully. We hope it will provide you with a strong background in what it means to be a leader with SFL. Once you have a firm grasp of the lessons in this guide, put theory into practice and gain the experience as a Students For Liberty leader now that will guide you as a competent and effective leader of liberty for the rest of your life.

Two Things that Change the World: Ideas and People

We believe that if we have the right people, with the right ideas, in the right roles, we can change the world. As one of our student leaders, you are our most valuable asset, in every meaningful sense you are what makes our organization. You are representing SFL and you decide what SFL does by the actions you take. You determine whether our organization will exist in the future or not. You are the one who will associate your personal success with the success of our organization because the success of the organization is linked to your personal success and vice versa. Young people can change the world and we have countless inspiring success stories that prove SFL's student leaders are doing just that. SFL's role in the cause of liberty is to show students they can make a difference. By creating programs and providing resources for students we are (a) getting students interested in the ideas so they will start new groups and engage in activism, and (b) providing support to our existing network to help students develop themselves both personally and professionally so they can become effective leaders and advocates of liberty both as students and as SFL alumni.

SFL's strategy is not simply to promote the ideas of liberty or accomplish short-term reform. Our mission is to Educate, Develop and Empower the next generation of leaders for liberty. We want to educate students in the ideas of liberty, we want

to develop them to become effective leaders and advocates, and we want to empower them to bring about long-lasting change. This is why the concept of empowerment is critical to SFL's mission. Empowerment means providing opportunities for people to succeed and develop necessary skills to take advantage of their surrounding world, to have a competitive edge in their careers, and to continue to be influencers for the rest of their lives.

The founders of SFL learned first hand that there are two things that change the world: ideas and people. We need to have the right, reasoned, and workable ideas but we also need people who are ready, willing, and prepared to spread those ideas far and wide. At SFL, we believe that students are in the best position to change the world and that our mission to *educate, develop, and empower the next generation of leaders for liberty* is the best way to realize our vision of a *freer future for all*.

First and foremost, SFL is a community, a network of support comprised of students and student groups working toward the goal of a freer future for all. SFL's purpose is to grow and support this network, but our actions are also driven by our network. While SFL has full time staff and different layers of leaders that run the organization, it is the global network of pro-liberty students and groups that really guides SFL's activities. If SFL's network weakens, SFL as an organization weakens.

We rely entirely on our student leaders and groups to grow our network by identifying new student leaders, providing a forum for students to meet one another, start building connections, staying active between conferences, and letting students know about the opportunities and resources available to them with SFL. There will always be new students entering college who are interested in exploring the ideas of liberty. But there may not always be an organization like SFL

in existence to support them. With SFL's founding, though, the student movement for liberty was transformed (or, in many ways, it was finally born). But the student movement for liberty will always hold a precarious status. SFL will only exist as long as it has leaders like you who are driving it to grow and innovate.

Toward that end, it is important to keep the big picture in mind. Our goal is to promote liberty and build a strong student movement for liberty. No one person can do everything, and no one program can accomplish everything. Every SFL leader must take on a particular role and rely upon other SFL leaders to fulfill their responsibilities. Every SFL project must be run with the understanding that it is not the only SFL project. Every individual's energies should be focused on what can be done to promote the greatest amount of value in relation to the work being done by everyone else.

At SFL we value initiative, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking. Being students at the time themselves, and having an entrepreneurial mindset, the original members of SFL knew there was a demand for a conference where pro-liberty students could meet one another, hear from leaders of liberty, and learn how to effectively organize on campus. Look where we are now!

We are fueled by the ideas underpinning the philosophy of liberty, but our organization is driven by the students who become our local leaders and representatives. You are now part of this growing movement. Where will you take it?



Chapter I: **SFL's Vision, Mission, Values, & Theory of Social Change**

Our Vision: A Freer Future

SFL's vision is a freer future. We are not trying to bring about a drastic transformation overnight. Rather, we are sowing the seeds today that will encourage people to be more inclined towards liberty so it leads to more meaningful and long-lasting transformations in years to come. We are empowering students to take meaningful actions today that will bring about a freer future.

Remember, there are two things that change the world: ideas and people. Ideas motivate people and people spread and implement ideas. At SFL, we believe that liberty is the right idea, it is philosophically consistent and empirically proven to produce prosperity. We have an abundance of pro-liberty ideas, writers, and academic arguments for liberty. In order to realize those ideas and bring about widespread change, what we need are the right people who are ready, trained, and willing to promote them. SFL seeks to expand the number of people who understand and support the cause of liberty by developing more leaders to be effective advocates, by empowering them to take meaningful actions that will bring about a freer future; a world with economic, intellectual, and social freedom for all.

There are 6 important tenets to this vision:

1. Ideas are important. We need good ideas if we want to begin to bring about positive change.
2. People change the world. Ideas without people to act on them are worthless.
3. Liberty can only thrive if we have the right ideas and the right people.
4. Young people are the key to the future. They can drive innovation today and will become the leaders in society tomorrow.
5. SFL develops leaders of liberty at all levels and primes

them to be successful in different fields. We need pro-liberty leaders in politics, business, journalism, academia, finance, nonprofits, and every other industry who will credibly represent pro-liberty ideas and go on to affect real and sustainable social change. There is no silver bullet for social change.

6. SFL leaders are vigilant, are willing to put in the work, time, and effort to create a freer world. We recognize that social change does not come about overnight.

Our Mission: Educate, Develop, and Empower

There are three factors that enhance an organization's ability to bring about long-term sustainable social change: 1) the number of people, 2) their capabilities and competencies, and 3) the activities they engage in. SFL's mission statement reflects this and embodies the organization's strategy for achieving a freer future:

Educate, develop, and empower the next generation of leaders of liberty.

Educate young people about the philosophy of liberty:

We want to increase the number of young advocates of liberty. We do this in two ways: (a) by teaching young people about the principles and benefits of a free society, and (b) by identifying young people who are already supporters of liberty and providing them with the resources to become better advocates and leaders. Our goal is to educate young people about liberty so they endorse these values as part of their own political philosophy. To achieve this we need to ensure that we are knowledgeable advocates of the ideas ourselves.

Develop leadership skills in those who support liberty:

To effect change, it's not enough for someone to intellectually agree with the principles of liberty, they must be capable of taking action to bring liberty about. SFL's second step is realized by providing high quality training and continued support to our student leaders. We want you to become more effective organizers, managers, writers, speakers, and ultimately better leaders who are suitably equipped to further our vision of a freer future.

Empower SFL leaders to bring about a freer future:

We want to empower students who are supportive of liberty (step 1) and have the skills to bring about change (step 2) by providing resources, training, an international network, infrastructure, practical experience, professional opportunities, and any other kind of support we can, so they become more effective at advancing the cause.

Our mission is to take ordinary students and provide them with all they need to transform themselves into extraordinary leaders who work to promote liberty and bring about meaningful change in the world. You will receive all the tools and support you need to spread the ideas of liberty while becoming a competent leader and bettering yourself as a person along the way. We trust you will do great things. This is the culmination of everything SFL does.

SFL's 10 Core Values

Values are concepts that drive success of individuals and organizations and provide meaning. As individuals, we must constantly aspire to the highest standards and set an example for others. As an organization, SFL's values are only meaningful to the extent that our people live up to them. SFL has 10 core values that the organization, and every person within the organization, upholds at all times:

1. Respect – We show respect to all individuals at all times, both within and outside SFL.

2. Individual Autonomy – SFL focuses on individuals. We care about developing individuals and providing them with the ability to make their own decisions within a context of accountability to their peers, to the organization, and to themselves. Autonomy involves both being capable of making the decision to act and taking responsibility for one's actions and results.

3. Inspiration – SFL seeks to do what no one else has done; we think big and act we act big. SFLers need to be the best example of our ideas. We need to be the inspiration for ourselves and for others.

4. Industry – It is important to both work hard and work smart. Our primary goal is to be productive, and to be as productive as possible in the most efficient manner possible. Do not waste time or any other resources. Work hard and remain dedicated to your work.

5. Praxis – SFL cares about both theory and action. It's important to reflect upon the theory behind why we act in order to intellectually understand our practices. We want to educate people to understand liberty and empower them to act to bring liberty about.

6. Professionalism – Take your work seriously and show others that you take your work seriously. This is not just about the way you dress, but the way you act.

7. Productive Creativity – We want people to innovate, develop new ideas, and ensure that those new ideas and efforts produce value.

8. Teamwork – Mutual self-supportiveness is the only way to accomplish great things. The emphasis remains on the individuals in a team, supporting other individuals.

9. Dynamic Growth – This is a mindset, a process, and an end,

all in one. Grow the impact of our work. Continually improve the quality of what we produce. Focus on the long-term when acting in the here and now. Invest not only in the organization, but also in oneself to achieve meaningful personal growth. We are a vibrant, dynamic, and results-focused organization.

10. Integrity – Every individual must always be honest. We must remain consistent in our principles, and strive to embody them at all times. To have integrity, one must understand oneself and what values she is maintaining the integrity of.

SFL's Theory of Social Change

SFL's theory of social change outlines a strategy for how to move towards a freer society as a result of our practices and processes. Our theory of social change serves as a guide for the organization's activities, allotment of resources, and where we should be directing our energy. Local projects and campaigns are most valuable if they fit within SFL's theory of change. If they have no relationship to the theory of social change, they are not advancing SFL's mission. In short, the theory of social change explains why SFL does what it does.

SFL's theory of social change follows F.A. Hayek's *model of production* which has three steps starting with 1) raw materials, which are then 2) converted into intermediate products and materials before 3) being converted into a final product. For example, trees are cut down (raw materials) and converted into wooden planks (intermediate goods) before being made into products like tables or chairs (final product).

Applying this model to the educational setting we get SFL's theory of social change. From this perspective, the raw materials are the students who we aim to educate about liberty. The intermediate products are the SFL leaders who we develop through our leadership training and valuable life experience.

The final product, though, is SFL's alumni network who, having gone through SFL's programs, are empowered to advocate for a freer future long after they graduate.

Step 1 Educate - The Student Body (Raw Materials)

Within the student body there are generally three types of students you will encounter, and there is a different strategy for how to interact with each of them:

- 1. Pro-Liberty Students:** Identify them and encourage them to join SFL.
- 2. Agnostic Students:** Educate these students about the ideas of liberty, give them books, invite to attend events, and encourage them to become more pro-liberty in their thinking.
- 3. Anti-Liberty Students:** Help them to realize that liberty is a serious ideology they must deal with instead of brushing it aside (with the right approach we can even change their minds).

Step 2 Develop - SFL Leaders (Intermediate Goods)

This step involves identifying and training future leaders of liberty on campus. SFL provides resources, trainings, and expertise to help leaders become more effective organizers and holds leaders accountable to a high level of professionalism and productivity.

We have hundreds of testimonies from students and groups who say SFL has given them the enthusiasm, know-how, and skills to promote liberty effectively and with impact. By producing competent and successful leaders of liberty on campus, campus culture will be gradually transformed by their efforts and achievements, and, in turn, these students will have more buy-in for the cause of liberty having experienced the benefits of our training and support first hand.

The skills built today will be valuable assets as they continue to promote liberty throughout their lives as alumni. The tangible actions for Step 2 include:

1. Prepare students to be leaders of liberty in the future through training and education.
2. Give students meaningful and practical life experience in leadership right now.
3. Connect students with resources to develop their talents and support their activities.
4. Increase the interest students have in the principles and cause of liberty.

Step 3 Empower - SFL Alumni (Final Product)

The final product are alumni who continue to support liberty after university. But the best way to create such alumni is to get them involved in the cause of liberty while they are still in school. Most people who work for the cause of liberty as a career have some college experience that first exposed them to the ideas of liberty. Many of them were student leaders on campus and gained experience organizing others or speaking out on behalf of liberty when they were younger. As we develop alumni dedicated to liberty, campus culture will be transformed to produce an environment more amenable to liberty, leading to more and even greater advocates of liberty.

Once graduated, these alumni will continue to promote the ideas in their personal and professional lives and, in time, culture in wider society will also begin to shift in favor of liberty. We want to encourage SFL alumni to make liberty one of their life values which they continue to pursue and advocate for after university. Real world social change in the future can be affected by pro-liberty advocates occupying professions across many fields and disciplines.

Life in SFL doesn't necessarily end with graduation, and neither should being an advocate for liberty. While you will eventually leave SFL, we hope all alumni feel part of the SFL family

for the rest of their lives, maybe by becoming mentors, supporters, donors, and by continuing to be drivers of the liberty movement as professionals in their chosen careers.

All SFL leaders and alumni are encouraged to make an effort to connect with each other, share experiences and stories, and build a robust personal international network of peers and allies. To help facilitate this we have a special **SFL International Leaders & Alumni Facebook group**. Feel free to join it now and start meeting your fellow SFLers from around the globe. You should also use take a few minutes to update your LinkedIn profile, include your new position in SFL and follow our LinkedIn page.

Student Groups and the Theory of Social Change

All steps of SFL's theory of social change are also applicable to student groups. Establishing a student group is one of the fastest and easiest ways to create a pro-liberty presence on campus enabling you to reach out to other students easily.

Student groups fulfill a number of important functions. First, they act as a symbol for liberty on campus by creating a recognizable brand which, in turn, facilitates greater outreach to students. A student group can facilitate group trainings, organize events, and provide meaningful leadership opportunities for students who are ready to get more involved with the movement. Student groups also keep alumni and students connected to a single entity as leadership changes from year to year.

Developing established groups is crucial to long-term success in reaching students, but managing a group comes with its own set of challenges and responsibilities which you should be ready for. One of the biggest challenges faced by student groups is sustainability. It is not uncommon to find a student group dissolve once its founding or most committed members graduate; so it's important to always keep leadership transition in mind and prepare to pass the torch to the next generation.

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Chapter II: **Welcome to the Coordinator Program**

SFL launched its first Campus Coordinator leadership program for North America in 2010. The aim was to identify liberty minded students and begin to educate, develop, and empower them to become the next generation of leaders for liberty.

Being accepted as a Coordinator with SFL means we believe you have the potential to achieve great things, both as a leader for liberty and in your personal and professional life. SFL empowers our volunteers by providing resources, skills, training, and opportunities to gain practical experience in areas that interest you most, because we want you to have a competitive edge when you begin your career (see above: SFL's Theory of Social Change). The success of our leadership training model has made the Coordinator Program the standard for all regions of SFL across the globe.

A student begins their leadership journey when they apply, get accepted, and complete all modules of SFL's basic coordinator training successfully. Only then will they take on an entry-level leadership role representing SFL as a volunteer Coordinator. But we don't want your journey to end here...

As you gain experience in leadership, management, marketing, event organizing, etc., as a result of the training and practical experience available to active SFL leaders, you will have the opportunity to move to more senior and specialized roles within SFL that suit your preferred path or interests. All regions already use a number of key-roles such as State/National Coordinators and Regional Coordinators who have set responsibilities managing local teams and districts, but we also offer the opportunity for you to develop into specialized roles that suit your particular ambitions and the needs of your team. With the right training and experience you could establish yourself as a Marketing Coordinator, Events Coordinator, or Outreach Coordinator, for your team. You might also join an Advanced Leadership Team where you will take a specific focus developing your country or region.

So, while you are just beginning your journey with SFL now, it's already a perfect time to start thinking about where you would like to go with SFL and how you plan to develop yourself and achieve those goals.

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations (RREs)

Supporting this basic expectation for self-driven personal and professional development, at SFL we use what is known as a *Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations* (RRE) document. An RRE is a *live document* which maps out each person's given role(s), their specific responsibilities, and what can be expected in terms of achieving those goals or support from SFL. It is important that everyone in SFL adopt specific roles with a defined set of responsibilities along with clear and measurable expectations.

SFL affords the trust, the freedom, and the responsibility to all SFLers to define their RREs in accordance with their own ambitions, while taking account of local needs. An RRE should be updated regularly and whenever necessary.

RREs are important because they provide us with an easy way to hold each other accountable, identify where we should delegate energy and resources, how we should plan our actions, and gives us a clear map of what we should individually be working on to achieve high priority goals. Having clear RREs helps you become a more effective leader in at least three principal ways:

- 1. How to Spend Your Time:** With a clear sense of purpose, you can focus more time and energy on activities that are important for your role and personal development and spend less time on activities that are less important. With specialization of roles and responsibilities, we can ensure all of our time is being used productively.

- 2. Develop Skills:** By focusing more on areas that you wish to develop in, you can gain meaningful, practical experience, and specialize with a more defined role rather than doing a little bit of everything with no discernible end in mind. Your RRE serves as a map for your intended path for development within SFL.
- 3. Establish Goals:** When you have clearly defined expectations set out about what you intend to achieve, you are more likely to achieve them. You are also more likely to feel a sense of accomplishment when you reach your goals than if you failed to set out any expectations in the first place. Expectations should be measurable, e.g. increase x by y by a certain date. You should set yourself challenging but realistic targets and update these periodically as circumstances change. Identify your key goals, make note of these and the resources you might need from SFL along with the steps you personally intend to take to achieve your goals.

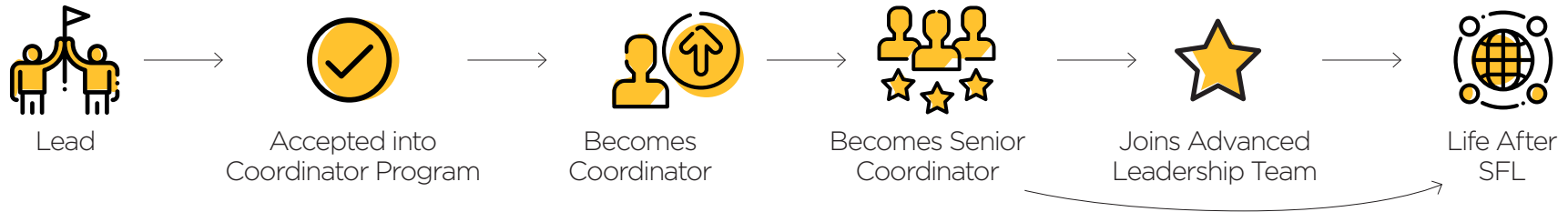
RREs also have organizational benefits. They establish a set of relationships within the organization by informing everyone about what others are working on and responsible for and what we can expect from each other as colleagues or teammates. They also help us determine how we can add the most value in relation to what everyone else is doing.

- 1. Comparative Advantage:** An RRE should identify your comparative advantage over others within SFL. An individual has a comparative advantage if they have a lower relative opportunity cost (energy, labour, value) in performing an action than that of another person. If you're a great public speaker but your colleague gets stagefright, you have a comparative advantage over them when it comes to public speaking, but they will likely have a comparative ad-

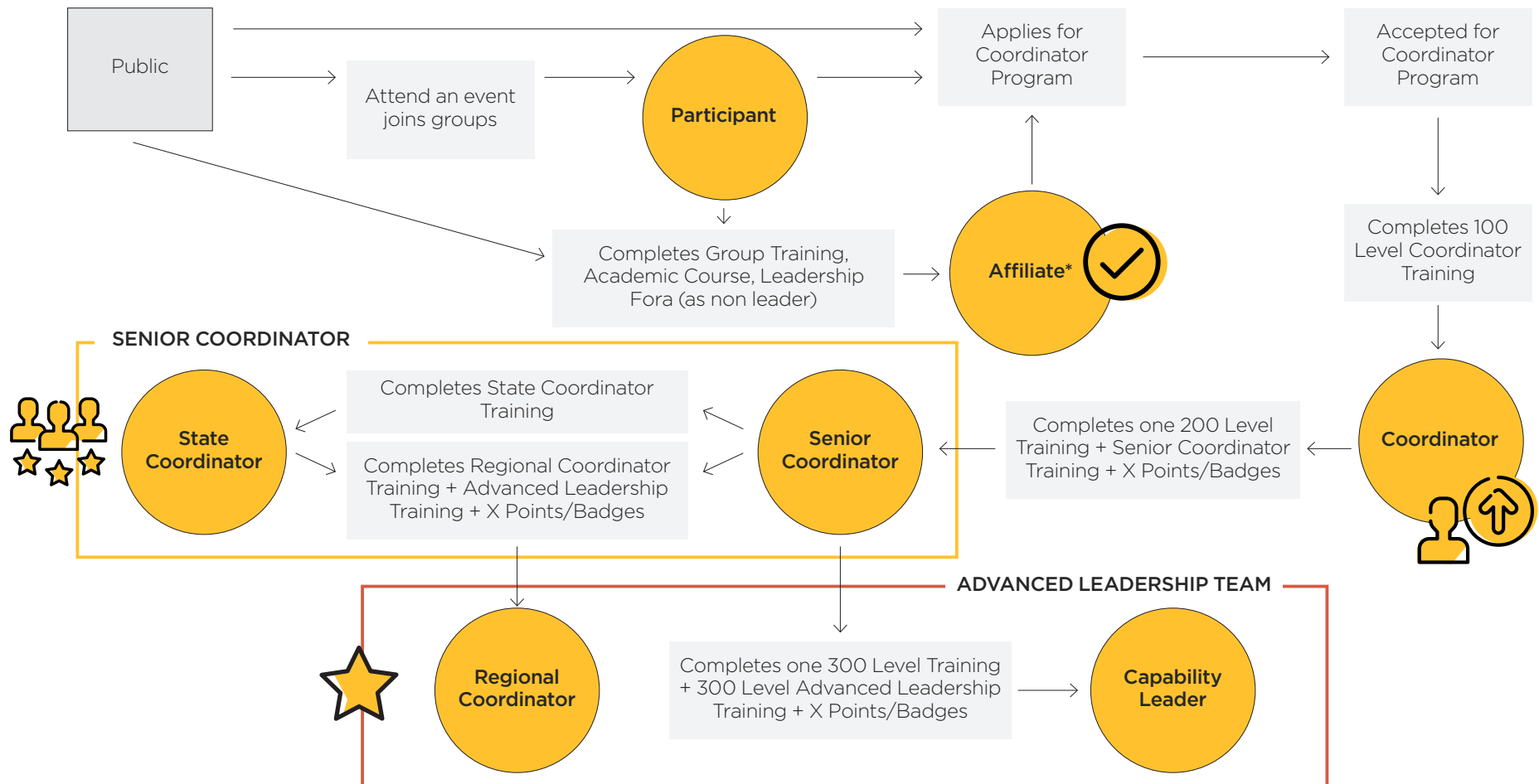
vantage over you in other areas. An RRE helps us play to each other's strengths. By making our RREs available for everyone in SFL, we can all better understand how to contribute to the overall network so we have a greater impact. Division of labour and specialization results in a better and more efficient use of resources and effort. We also ensure that people aren't overlapping on one another's efforts.

- 2. Organizational Predictability:** When a person takes on a set of expectations they are signalling to others that they will produce certain results. This means others in the organization won't waste their time, energy, or resources doing the same things, freeing them to work on other projects. Similarly, roles and responsibilities determine who people should communicate with within the organization. What you are supposed to be doing establishes what people you ought to be interacting with on a regular basis to achieve your goals, and your RRE also guides what others ought to be communicating with you to achieve overall goals.
- 3. Individual Accountability:** A person who has no role, no responsibilities, and no expectations, has no accountability in the organization. There is no way to determine if they have done a poor, satisfactory, or exemplary job. Evaluating whether investing in that person was worthwhile or not becomes a much more difficult job.

Your Pathway to Success in SFL



Journey of a Coordinator



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Chapter III: **Leadership for Liberty**

Some leaders are born and other leaders are made. We believe all of our volunteers have the potential to become great and successful leaders thanks to the training and support offered by SFL. A large part of this process, however, relies on you forming a vision for yourself as a leader and defining the goals you would like to achieve along the way.

Forming Your Vision

You can begin to form your vision by taking some time to reflect on your local situation. Identify some key issues affecting your campus or community, as well as the needs of your local team, and think up meaningful ways to address those. You can also form a vision of yourself by imagining who you want to be at the end of the process. What sort of leader do you want to become, how would you like others to see you, and what are the great things you will do along your way towards realizing that vision? The question you should be asking is: How can I add the most value both to myself and to my team?

A good vision is one that is practical, achievable and ambitious at the same time. To have a good vision, you should know your regional and local needs, your own goals and ambitions, and set clearly defined realizable objectives. A good way to get started is to look at what other SFLers have done across the globe. Reach out to senior coordinators to understand their activities and the successes and failures they have experienced. Learn from each other.

Leaders are the people who can not only develop and execute strategies to achieve goals, but can determine what things are worth achieving. In short, the best leaders identify what's important, set the standard for what counts as success, and direct all their energy to achieve those results. Staff and senior leadership will always be on hand to discuss details of your leadership development.

Management and Motivation

Management is the utilization of available people and resources to efficiently and effectively achieve a particular goal or objective. To manage is not to set a goal, but to determine how to achieve that goal given the resources that are currently available to you. What is available to achieve any goal comes down to four variables: 1) people, 2) resources, 3) time, and 4) systems.

- 1. People:** This is the most important factor for achieving a goal. More people working on a problem means you can get more done. Higher skilled people are even better because they can better leverage the other variables below to achieve the goal. Success depends on having the right people, with the right skills, in the right positions working together on a common goal.
- 2. Resources:** This includes financial resources, technology, data, and other physical and non-physical materials that can be leveraged by the people working to achieve set goals. Sometimes it's necessary for leaders to find ways to get more done with less, such as finding free venues and speakers. It's important to be thrifty and conscious of budgets.
- 3. Time:** Time is a resource of its own. It is a powerful variable that can be leveraged for success and ought to be properly appreciated. This includes the time you have before a project deadline but also the time you are willing to invest in achieving set goals.
- 4. Systems:** Who is delivering what until when? A system can be as simple as a calendar entry that reminds you to reach out to certain stakeholders. A system could also relate to how you work with your team, such as weekly check-ins, how and when you hold regular team meetings to discuss upcoming events, recruited people, monthly reporting, money raised, how you give feedback and when, or processes for collecting and reporting important data.

The role of a manager is to utilize these variables as efficiently and productively as possible. While efficiency and productivity are related concepts, there is an important difference. Increasing efficiency means achieving the same outcomes with less resources. Increasing productivity means creating the most value with the limited inputs and resources you have available to you. The most successful managers are capable of improving efficiency and productivity at the same time: accomplishing more with less.

If this sounds like an overly-simplistic explanation of management, that's because it is. We are not attempting to provide a rigorous analysis of management here. The point of this chapter is to emphasize the importance of being able to achieve meaningful goals with limited resources.

Here are 4 key management tips all leaders should know:

- 1. Management is not static:** It involves the continual rearrangement and manipulation of efficiency and productivity to achieve predetermined goals. Leverage team skills and input in brainstorming, and be humble and flexible in your approach to finding solutions. Remember to delegate tasks and responsibilities as circumstances change.
- 2. Descriptions are poor substitutes for illustrations:** Take the lead and show your team how something is done by example, talk about the process and make sure everyone understands what they should be doing and why it's important. Avoid assumptions and lead by example.
- 3. Use reports:** Managers have specific high priority goals to achieve. So, set subgoals that lead to the larger goal, delegate responsibilities, and measure how your team is progressing. Don't create reports for the sake of creating reports. Reports are only useful if you can identify areas of success and, more importantly, areas that are not going well. Then you can adjust your activities to address the needs you identify. Whenever you hold an event or con-

clude a campaign, it's important to hold an After Action Review (AAR) with your entire team. An AAR is an open discussion where every team member shares constructive criticism while analyzing what worked well and what factors could have been better.

- 4. Manage on the ground:** As helpful as reports are, don't rely exclusively upon them. Go see what's happening yourself and lead by example. If you're at a conference, take ownership and don't forget to take care of the small things. Be willing to stay back with your team to tidy up the venue after an event. Management is about taking action, motivating a team, and being an example of the sort of leader you would like others to be.

And here are 3 ways that management typically goes wrong:

- 1. Micromanagement:** When you give responsibility to someone on your team, don't act as though that person is just an extension of yourself, watching, critiquing, and revising their every move. This is not only degrading and annoying for them, it is a poor use of your time. Liberty-minded people tend to naturally resist being micromanaged. If you find that you are micromanaging your team, either you have the wrong people on the team, or you are the wrong person in charge of it. If you feel you're being micromanaged by another team member, ask them to trust you to take responsibility for your designated role.
- 2. Absentee Management:** The opposite of micromanagement, too often managers will give people a set of goals and then never check in on them again (systems are important to avoid this). You need to ensure that your team is progressing and that you will accomplish your overarching objective. As a manager, you not only need to make sure you are utilizing your time, money, and other resources effectively, but that others on your team are doing so as well. Establish regular check-ins to monitor progress on goals.

3. Relying on Management Alone: And now we are back to the concern that started this chapter. For too long, companies and organizations thought that all you needed to develop were management skills in those at the top because management was everything an organization needed. They thought having skilled strategists was enough to have a successful organization. Yet, the ability to achieve goals is not enough. You need people who are able to determine what goals are important and motivate others to both achieve those goals and help refine them.

Management is merely a tool that can drive results when used correctly. Being a manager doesn't mean flaunting a title, it means developing a reputation where others naturally follow your lead and your judgment because they trust and respect you.

Beyond Leadership, Your Identity

Being in SFL's leadership means you have personally taken on the responsibility to advance the cause of liberty. By joining SFL, you are not simply accepting the position of a representative, or a mere title of "coordinator" or even "leader". You are taking ownership over the organization and will be a driving factor in its future success. To be an effective leader, you cannot regard your position as something you do to bulk up your resumé or as an academic pastime.

SFL has taken on the responsibility of identifying and preparing students to be leaders of liberty at all levels and in all fields. Many individuals apply for leadership positions in SFL. Not all of them are accepted. Some of those not accepted may be highly qualified candidates who we believe will go on to do great things for liberty, but who were not best suited for the SFL leadership role.

We understand that being a leader for liberty is something

you want to do because it is a part of who you are. You are an example for others, both inside and outside the organization. This is your organization, your work, your cause, your community. From here on out, others will look to you as a representative of SFL. Your actions and your words will be taken as examples of what a strong student leader should say and do. In every important sense of the phrase, *you are SFL*.

By accepting this position, you are accepting responsibility for the influence you will have on other students and the liberty network in general. While you will also have a very active life outside of SFL, as an SFL leader, you are always representing SFL, and what you say will be interpreted as a message from SFL. Even if you don't intend for it to be that way, others will interpret it that way. You should always conduct yourself and your public communications respectfully and conscientiously and in a way that will reflect positively on yourself and SFL. Refer to SFL's Communications Policy for more details.

The people who get the most out of their time with SFL are the ones who think beyond our programs and have the most fun working with SFL. The best SFL leaders do this because it's part of who they are. They are thinking about new strategic plans while on the treadmill at the gym or scribbling an idea to market their program on a napkin at lunch. If your break from schoolwork at night is for SFL work, and you can't wait to do it, you're on the right track! The work is not always easy, sometimes the workload can be demanding and the obstacles challenging, but if your responsibilities for SFL just feel like a chore, something is definitely wrong.

Working with other students to promote liberty on campus should be fun and exhilarating, even if it is hard sometimes. There are few opportunities out there like this where young students like you can take ownership over a global organization, acquire access to such wide-ranging resources, and have the freedom to innovate new methods for advancing

liberty. The point is, you should have fun and enjoy your experience with SFL and not do this because you feel obligated. You should be doing this because you want to do it.

At one level, we must all recognize that our time with SFL is short. We will all graduate, no longer hold the status of a student, and need to step down while new students take our places. At another level, though, the best SFL leaders will remain involved with SFL for the rest of their lives. In the same way that alumni feel passionate about their alma mater, remembering all the good times they had there, valuing the education it provided them, and seeking to support the students currently at their school, we hope you will come to feel the same way about SFL as an alumnus in the future. The future of SFL is in your hands.

Success Stories

Whether you've just held a great event, had an article published in local media, launched a new campaign, or received academic recognition, at Students For Liberty we simply love to celebrate the successes of fellow SFLers.

Visit studentsforliberty.org/successstories for examples of some of the successful leaders, campaigns and amazing achievements from your SFL colleagues across the globe.

As one of our official local leaders, you too will have the chance to achieve great things like this. At Students For Liberty, we value your initiative, creativity, action, entrepreneurial thinking, passion, and personal growth, and as a network, we are here to support our members and help you realize your greatest ambitions. Never hesitate to share your achievements and accomplishments with us. They are the life-blood of the entire network!

4

Chapter IV: **Building Communities**

Why Build a Community?

SFL is an *international organization* made up of volunteers and staff who are all working together to realize our shared vision of a freer future. As a big-tent organization, SFL also acts as a *network* by providing a meeting ground for people who support the ideas of liberty to come together. SFL is also part of a wider *global movement* for liberty. But, in the end, SFL is a *community*.

SFL was created by pro-liberty students for pro-liberty students because too many were unaware they were part of an international movement for liberty. SFL sought to address this. One of our principal purposes has always been to build *the* community for pro-liberty students and alumni from across the globe, and that's exactly what we have achieved. It is important to continue to build and maintain this community while keeping our purpose in mind: to bring the ideas of liberty to students, identify those who have the potential to become leaders for the liberty, and then educate, develop, and empower them to advocate for a freer future. As a leader with SFL, you are responsible for doing just that.

When we say that building a community is central to your work as an SFLer, we mean you have a key role in building a network of pro-liberty students on your campus or in your community. This means building a trusted network of friends and colleagues who are united by shared values, and creating opportunities to bring people together to discuss ideas and work on projects or campaigns that advance liberty.

How to Build a Community

Building a community starts with creating opportunities for like minded students to get together (see below: *Bringing People Together*, for more about running events). Running events is one thing, but building a real sustainable community requires some extra steps. It's not enough to just get people meet-

ing and talking about the ideas, we also want them to buy-in to the cause and become advocates themselves. Right now you can probably already think of some friends, colleagues, or classmates who are already open to the ideas of liberty or are at least open-minded enough to consider the concepts in greater detail, and you can start approaching them. But what about those outside your current network? As a leader for liberty, it's up to you to create ways to expand your network in the search for new people to join the movement.

If we want to be successful at building a community, it's essential that we ourselves are excellent ambassadors for our ideas and representatives of SFL, and this should come across in our demeanor, professionalism, humility, kindness, and respect for others in all our dealings.

Who do we want to recruit?

When searching for new recruits, we are ideally looking for people with these qualities:

1. Passionate

New recruits need to be wholeheartedly committed to the ideas that drive our organization. They must believe in the values of academic, personal, and economic freedom and have a desire to promote these in their classrooms, on their campus, and to their communities.

2. Dedicated

Being a leader with SFL can be tough work. Potential leaders must be reliable, responsible, and ready to take initiative or work as part of a team to organize conferences, host tablings on campus, run campaigns, or keep up with general administrative tasks and duties.

3. Charismatic

Being a leader also means having the ability to motivate others towards realizing shared goals, to persuade, and to

be a kind and approachable public face of our organization. Charisma can also mean being humble, being likeable, and having empathy and respect for others.

Quantity vs Quality

While you should treat every interaction as an opportunity to share ideas or even recruit potential leaders, you should also keep in mind that it's not all about the numbers. It's more worthwhile to have a handful of competent, dedicated, and motivated people working together rather than one-hundred passive followers who are not really committed to achieving goals. The movement that matters is the one that takes place outside of the internet. Focusing on quality helps us ensure our limited resources are being used efficiently. When building a community keep sight of quality over quantity.

Leadership Transition: Passing the Torch

The importance of leadership transition cannot be overstated. If we are to continue to be successful, to grow, and to make an impact, it is absolutely essential that we are constantly recruiting and preparing new student leaders to take hold of the torch and continue moving our vision and mission forward.

Think of leadership transition as a relay race; you take charge and drive the movement forward while you are a student and, as you build a community and solid team, you are preparing to pass the relay baton to others on your team who can continue your hard work after you leave. Leadership transition should be smooth and feel like a natural process. To achieve the best results, you should begin working on leadership transition immediately and continue to do so as new people join.

Recruitment is the first step, but if you want to build a strong sustainable community you also need to have leadership transition in mind. One day you will leave university and SFL, and we want the good work you do to be sustainable and continue to have an impact. Leadership transition means identifying replacements who will be able to continue your work after you leave university. This is especially important when it comes to groups or campus societies. If the key organizers leave without passing the torch, the whole group often collapses. For this reason, it is especially important that State and Regional Coordinators ensure they find good leaders to replace them once they leave SFL.

The first step is recruitment to the Coordinator Program. Once accepted, new student leaders will complete our core Coordinator Training, but it shouldn't end here. Training and knowledge sharing should continue in-person while working as a team and attending leadership fora or events. New members should be included in any activities and have responsibilities delegated to them. When delegating tasks, aim to play to an individual's strengths and take account of their preferred development pathway (see below).

Having clearly stated goals and expectations is one of the most effective ways of making people feel they are part of the team and also part of the wider movement for liberty. Give new leaders responsibilities, help them to take ownership of the work and of the group or movement's success, and remember to support them throughout the process.

We want to scale up our operations consistently, ideally every leader should aim to find two replacements for themselves each semester. All team members should take an interest in the growth and personal development of their teammates and gradually hand over more responsibilities as they begin to take ownership and continue to drive our overall success.

Here is a general outline for successful leadership transition:

1. Identify new recruits for the Coordinator Program.
2. Educate them with ongoing training and guidance.
3. Help them to develop themselves into competent and effective leaders.
4. Empower them to take responsibility and ownership of their own and your team's success.
5. Encourage them to pursue an ongoing vision of leadership and personal development.

Be proactive about leadership transition and don't leave it until the final few weeks of a semester to start working on it. Commit to challenge yourself to find at least two potential leaders who would be able to continue your work each academic semester, encourage them to do the same, and watch how fast your network grows! Leadership transition means taking hold of the torch which is being passed to us and doing our best to make the flame shine bigger and brighter as we pass it to those who follow after us.

SFL Culture

Who said changing the world can't also be fun? At SFL we aim to educate you in the ideas, develop you with worthwhile skills and experiences, and empower you to achieve great things. But we also want you to make valuable memories and lifelong friendships in the process. Changing the world is hard work, but we hope you will have fun doing it! It's up to you to decide what you make of your time with SFL.

In *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, author Daniel Coyle analyzed great groups and organizations like Google, IDEO, and the Navy Seals to see what they had in common. He came to the conclusion that the common denominator of a group's success was having a great culture. Coyle also identified 3 actions which lead to

a great culture: 1) Build Safety, 2) Share Vulnerability, and 3) Establish Purpose. Safety is the foundation of a strong culture as it allows others to be themselves and establish a place within the group. Sharing vulnerability means acknowledging that we may not have all the solutions to a problem and we are willing to ask others for help. Establishing purpose gives us a reason for doing what we're doing and helps us navigate our trajectory and set goals. Sir Ken Robinson once said, "The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they're valued." If we build our culture so that honest expectations are communicated and accountability is the norm, then the group will address poor performance or attitudes naturally.

In SFL, we have created a space where ideas and individual initiative flourish naturally. We recognize that, while SFLers come from many places and have a diversity of backgrounds, we are unified by our purpose, vision, and shared goals. We work together as a team in the furtherance of our goals and we respect and appreciate individual contributions. We should, therefore, also acknowledge the role we each play in helping other SFLers have an amazing and enjoyable experience. Everyone in SFL should feel comfortable and encouraged to be the best version of themselves. We cannot tolerate bullying, exclusion of team members, or being a 'creepertarian'. If something happens to you or a team member that goes against any of this, it's important that you are communicating that to your team-leaders or escalating it to staff members. A formal complaint process is further outlined in your volunteer policies handbook.

Time and again we hear our volunteers say things like, "I joined SFL because of the ideas but I stayed in SFL because of the people." SFL attracts the best, brightest, and open-minded students from across the globe. This gives you a rare opportunity to develop a strong personal network which has an international reach but with a local feel. SFLers

don't just work together, they inspire each other, they laugh together, and they look out for one another. We each have a responsibility to make sure fellow SFLers feel like they belong in our organization, they are part of our movement, and part of our community. SFL is an international family of peers united by a shared vision. We are "SFLers". We recognize each other through our gestures, language, our exclusive SFL lapel pins, and even clothing; like our Peace Love Liberty t-shirts which are worn by our leaders across the globe. We look out for each other and we make an effort to raise each other up and celebrate each other's successes.

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Chapter V: **Bringing People Together with SFL Events**

At SFL we have learned that hosting events is both a great way to practice leadership skills and one of the best ways to attract others who may be interested in the ideas we promote. As a result, events are one of our core activities. There are a number of reasons for this approach:

1. Introduce the ideas of liberty to new students.

All of our events have the purpose of reaching people who are unfamiliar with pro-libertyism and to teach them about the ideas and the broader student movement for liberty. This should guide the topics you choose for an event. While having a few more advanced topics at some events is fine, the majority should address concepts on a more introductory level so that we can effectively bring new students into the fold. We can guide people to other programs for more advanced educational or training content.

2. Provide opportunities for leadership.

SFL student leaders are empowered to run their own events giving them an opportunity to gain real life practical experience in event management and leadership. Running a conference, or even being in charge of managing some aspect of a conference, is a very tangible way for leaders to gain valuable practical management experience. This experience goes beyond simply running the logistics of the conference.

3. Build relationships.

Events should attract people from your university and the wider community who SFL leaders can get to know and develop relationships with. All SFL leaders in attendance should aim to meet as many students as possible and engage in the kind of conversations, brainstorming sessions, and community building that only in-person interactions can produce.

4. Create ambassadors for liberty.

Being the main organizer or host of a successful event identifies you as being a local representative of SFL and as an

ambassador for liberty. Remember to put your best foot forward, always deal courteously with your team, speakers and attendees, and be an impressive representative of our cause and ideas.

5. Encourage further involvement with SFL.

Always use your events as an opportunity to promote what SFL does and what it has to offer pro-liberty students. For a student interested in starting a group, this might mean giving them our leadership handbook and encouraging them to request resources. For an established group president this could involve getting them excited about organizing a trip to LibertyCon or a Regional Conference and applying to the Coordinator Program. Special attention should be paid to identifying strong students to recruit for SFL leadership positions and in helping student groups reach their full potential.

General Guidelines For Running Events

Every event is different. Depending on the type and objectives of the event, the preparations are going to be very different from one event to the next. Nevertheless, there are certain steps and principles in event organizing that you should be able to handle in order to have a successful event.

Start early: It is never too soon to start planning, especially if it is a big event like a conference. New issues will inevitably arise as you continue through the process, so the sooner you start checking things off your to do list, the better position you will be in to handle surprises later. Many aspects may take more time than you expect and involve relying on other stakeholders, such as team members, speakers, sponsors, and venue hosts, so factor in the possibility for long response times and start planning early. Marketing campaigns also depend on time and volume to be effective. The sooner you and your team start promotion, the better.

Create a timeline: Work backwards from the event date and map out when everything needs to happen. Emails, speaker confirmations, room reservations, printing materials, presentations, tech requirements, etc. Be as detailed as you can be. Assign owners to everything and check off what has been completed as you move through the timeline.

Keep a running to-do list: Make a prioritized to-do list, refer to it often and update it whenever new items come up. Make sure to delegate tasks and include deadlines. Keep a to-do list for everyone on your team and have specific times set to follow up with them on their progress.

With logistics, the devil is in the details: Double and triple check everything. Manage the needs of your speakers and guests, make sure everything technical is working and your team knows what each member should be doing and when. Talk over your to-do list with a staff member, senior leader, and your team so they can help catch anything that may have slipped through the cracks. Walk through the event with your team to help catch any missing pieces. Do you have someone assigned to do two things at the same time? What did you forget to assign? Is someone not assigned to a task and should be? Think through possible issues and solutions in advance.

Never assume, ever. EVER: Making assumptions is the surest way to overlook a problem. Check in often with your team, leaders of attending groups, speakers, university bureaucrats, venue hosts, etc. Be very specific. Never assume something is taken care of. Be absolutely sure of it.

Empower your team: The surest way to find yourself overwhelmed is to not ask for help early on. A dedicated group of volunteers will make organizing the conference easier, especially if they feel they are a part of the team. Start holding regular conference calls and meetups with your fellow SFL

organizers, delegate responsibilities, lay out expectations, allow team members to take ownership and get them bought in and excited to be part of the event. Ask the venue hosts, campus student groups, and local leaders to help plan and promote the conference. Use precise and clear language when delegating responsibilities to ensure you are communicating your expectations effectively. For example: “Can you book speaker x by Tuesday and let me know when that is done by Tuesday as well?”

Communicate clearly and frequently: Hold regular calls with your planning team. Since we often work remotely, it is essential to always be on the same page in terms of what needs to be done regarding delegation of responsibilities, upcoming deadlines, etc. Send reminders and remain in regular communication with team-members, partners, speakers, attendees. Be proactive. Address problems quickly, don’t let them linger. Respond to emails promptly within 48 hours.

Budget early: Keep in mind that you are working within a budget. Start tracking your budget and expenses early to keep everything in order and keep costs under control. If you have questions about your budget and appropriate expenses, ask.

Don’t forget the big picture: While the details are important, it is easy to get lost in them and forget why you are doing this. Remember that if you do your job right, the event will be a fantastic success, you’ll enjoy yourself, and the cause of liberty will be better off for it.

Event Registration and Attendance: Special attention needs to be paid to the administrative side of the event such as the registration process and attendees list. Registration ideally takes place before the event, though you can often expect some walk-ins too. Your registration list helps you see roughly how many people are interested in your event

which informs your planning and logistics in advance. If you have on-site registration, be sure that your method is running smoothly: be sure to have all the necessary registration sheets, that the wifi in the venue works well enough for on-line registrations, etc. Make sure someone is always attending the registration desk and understands the registration process. After the event, be sure that all the lists are safe and that someone knows exactly where they are at all times. The lists should be added to a spreadsheet and reported according to the processes in your region. Ask a staffer or senior leader to help if you're unsure of anything.

Reporting your event: In addition to submitting high quality photos, all events that you organize must be reported to your regional director and staff. If in doubt, reach out to a team member, senior leader, or events staffer for assistance. Events staff would also like to see your best photos and a short report about what you think went well and what could have been better, such as a summary of your After Action Review. The essential information all reports need to have are:

- Name and type of the event
- Date and place
- Topic
- Speakers and partner organizations
- Attendees list (or Headcount)
- Photos

'Pics or it Didn't Happen' - A Guide to Taking Quality Event Photos

Photos are the best way of sharing the awesome work you do, so take plenty! If we don't have photos of your work, we simply don't exist to the broader network and it limits our ability to showcase our impact to potential sponsors and donors who support your efforts. We send your high quality

photos to donors, post them to SFL's social media accounts, and included them in our newsletters and Annual Report. They are our best tool for showing the world the awesome things you are doing. That is why it is vital that the photos you take be of high quality.

Qualities of good event photos:

- SFL logo or materials are presented prominently (banners, books, t-shirts, buttons, etc.)
- Students are present and are either looking at the camera and smiling, or interacting with each other or the materials
- The shot is tight and focuses on the subject
- The photo is well lit
- The photo highlights a unique and interesting quality of your event (such as speakers sitting across from each other during a debate, or a group photo of participants at a conference holding an SFL banner.
- Photos of speaking events show the speaker in focus, talking to a room full of students
- Formula for great photos is: People + SFL logos & materials.

Qualities of not-so-good event photos:

- SFL materials or logos is shown but no students are present in the shot
- Students are shown but no SFL materials or logos are present in the shot, meaning there is no indication it is an SFL event
- The photo shows SFLers engaging in activism, but no SFL logo or materials are visible
- The photo is a wide shot, and the subject is very small and not prominently shown
- The photo is blurry, poorly lit, or grainy

The 2 Most Important Tips for Taking Great Photos:

Lighting:

- Natural light is best
- Never light your subject from behind. Your light source should remain in front of your subject. Watch out for brightly lit windows and screens behind your subject.

Composition

- Use the “Rule of Thirds” if you are uncertain how to best set up your shot.
- Try to avoid sunglasses, ear buds, and cell phone usage in your shots, if possible.

Take pictures that you could imagine being used in a newspaper to accompany an article. Aim to take creative, engaging photos featuring bright colors, branding, and smiling, interested students.

Feedback and After Action Review

Use your event as an opportunity to get feedback from participants to see how you can better appeal to them. If you collect email addresses of attendees you can easily follow up with an email thanking them for attending and asking for their views or even sending a feedback survey. Identify when someone goes to more than one event and reach out to them to find out what motivates them to attend. If there are no-shows, try to figure out why they decided not to go. Experiment with topics and formats to see which types of events attract most people, etc. This will allow you to better market your events to have a greater impact and larger attendance.

After your event, you should meet with your team for an After Action Review (AAR). The AAR should happen as soon as possible after the event has finished while ideas and observations are still fresh in the mind. An AAR isn't



Example: good vs. bad event photo

about attributing blame, but it is about taking responsibility and honestly assessing the team's weak points as well as its strong points. It shouldn't last longer than an hour or so and someone should take notes of everyone's observations. Once your event is done, you should aim to send all your data (photos, contact list, summary of AAR, etc.) in a report within 7 days of the event.

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Chapter VI: **Communicating Liberty**

Remember the words of Frédéric Bastiat “*The worst thing that can happen to a good cause is, not to be skillfully attacked, but to be ineptly defended.*” If you are going to successfully and persuasively convey the ideas to others, it is essential that you become an effective communicator yourself. Whether it’s a casual conversation with a fellow student about SFL, presenting to a large audience, or a pitching a project to the director of an organization you hope to get funds from, the manner in which you give words to your thoughts, beliefs, and intentions, and how you both express and present yourself, is going to determine your success as a communicator.

Selling Ideas - The Importance of Good Communication

Remember, the primary reason we are communicating with others is that we want to persuade them about the benefits of liberty so that they adopt liberty as a personal value and, ultimately, continue to grow the liberty movement. We are essentially engaging in a type of marketing so we can sell the ideas of liberty to others. We have an amazing product, it has tons of benefits, it’s reasonable, and it’s free to become a pro-liberty, so why is it sometimes so hard to convince people? Well, it comes down to approach. When someone listens to your message or your pitch, they’re not just buying into the ideas they’re buying into you as an individual because “*People buy into the leader before they buy into the vision.*” – John C. Maxwell

If you want to have success as a leader for liberty it is essential that you continuously work on your communication skills. To be a great communicator you need look past the mere information you are trying to convey and think more about the psychology of persuasion. If an audience is not persuaded to accept your message in the way you had hoped, it is because you did not communicate the message

in a persuasive and compelling manner for that particular audience. Find something that matters to your audience, ask questions and use active listening to figure out how to appeal to them in a way that really concerns them and sell liberty as a solution.

Realize that you are not going to convince everyone the first time you meet them and usually the best you can hope for is the person thinks about the points you made after they leave the conversation or event. The next time you meet they may have more questions or maybe you can give them some books for further reading. Avoid bombarding people with your ideas and focus on building relationships where you can persuade people over time while keeping in mind the salesperson’s mantra: A.B.C. *Always Be Closing*. Use every opportunity to nurture relationships and build credibility with the end goal of selling liberty.

Being The Better People

Just having the better ideas will not be enough to win people over to our cause, we also need to be the better people. We need to be real life examples of the values we are promoting. We need to be seen by others as likeable and credible representatives of our cause. Changing people’s mind is a gradual thing and a huge part of achieving our goal is not just the content of our arguments but how we deliver them. To become a good advocate for the ideas requires not only hard work to learn about theories, history, and facts, but also requires continuous work on bettering ourselves as individuals. If you are perceived as a nice, intelligent, and trustworthy person, the ideas you represent become more attractive. The reverse is also true. We should always be conscious of the message we are communicating with others. When communicating online, remember you are still representing SFL. In the heat of the moment, it takes resolve and maturity to remain respectful and dignified on-

line. And, no matter what happens, do not feed the trolls and do not be one yourself. Constant self improvement is the single most important rule that you should follow if you want to be a better person, an effective leader, and a compelling communicator.

There have been many effective communicators for liberty. Milton Friedman was approachable, humble, non dogmatic. Thomas Sowell was eloquent, direct, and compelling. Mises, Rothbard, and F.A. Hayek wrote many books containing articulate and influential arguments for liberty, while Rand expressed her ideas through literature and the power of storytelling and presenting the concepts in a relatable style. They all conveyed their ideas using different methods and styles, but each in a way that was endearing and appealing to others and each were effective in making people think differently.

Your demeanour and manner will play a determining role in how others receive and interpret your message. If you communicate with openness, honest conviction, authenticity, and genuine passion, people will be much more open to listen to and discuss your ideas. Whether it's a one-to-one conversation or presenting to an audience, the goal should be to plant seeds for thought in the minds of your listeners, and not simply win an argument or engage in intellectual posturing. It's not just what you say but *how* you say it that will make a difference. Present yourself in a dignified, respectful, and competent manner and people will be more likely to trust you, like you, believe what you're saying and want to learn from you. In other words, you become a more credible advocate for liberty.

Consider this example from *Radicals for Capitalism* where author Brian Doherty tells the story of how Leonard Read, the founder of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), effectively converted one initially hostile individual to 'pro-liberty ideas:

"Leonard Read wrote a piece in the Freeman arguing against the right of striking airline workers to forcibly prevent anyone else from doing the jobs they chose to stop doing. It was a standard FEE piece. Objections to union violence and coercion were a common thread in the minds and writings of early pro-liberty thinkers. Read received an angry three-page diatribe from a labor union organizer, a fellow known as Whitey. Read replied carefully and with scrupulous politeness. The labor organizer wrote back to apologize for his rudeness. Read sent him a couple of FEE pamphlets, including F.A. Harper's Why Wages Rise. (The answer, you can bet, was not 'union agitation.') Whitey was fascinated and wanted to know more. After a couple more rounds of correspondence, he told Read that he'd love to read anything the sage from Irvington might deign to send him, and include whatever invoice Read thought appropriate.

Soon they were fellow members of the pro-liberty movement and good friends, and Whitey was no longer a labor organizer. Read revealed to him the simple wizardry he'd performed to nip their feuding in the bud. He'd removed the tension, given the angry man nothing to push against. When the former union man was hospitalized after an auto wreck, he wrote his friend Leonard to tell him that "you should see the interest my three doctors are showing in our philosophy."

And that, many of his old friends would say, is the kind of man Leonard Read was. It wasn't simply the logic of Read's argument that swayed the labor union organizer, it was the strength of his character and admirable demeanour, as well.

Preparing to Communicate

Your speech has two qualities: content and presentation. The content is what you want people to take away from the speech. Presentation matters because how you present your content will determine how others interpret it. People often remember how something was presented or how it made them feel more than the specific details of the content. If you present in a long-winded and boring manner, people will think the ideas are boring and not worth their time. However, if you present your content with honest conviction, humor, and passion, people will be much more conducive to the ideas. Be excited, genuine, and enthusiastic, your audience will thank you for it.

The short term strategy for preparing good content and an impressive presentation involves one very important task - knowing your audience. Your content, as well as your presentation, should change according to who your audience is. Researching your audience will give answers about their interests, concerns, past history with similar organizations, their motivations and their needs, sensitive areas you should avoid talking about, and common beliefs that you should explore. All this will help you build your content and prepare to communicate effectively. For your presentation, you should be mindful of the venue and type of meeting. You don't want to go overdressed for an informal meeting with a student or group, neither will the director of a partner organization take kindly to your arriving to see her at her office in sneakers. Adapt your style and approach according to who you are speaking with.

Remember to *respect your audience*. Arriving on time shows how much you value their time. Coming prepared with neatly organized and targeted documents or slides displays your seriousness and professionalism. Simple gestures like calling in advance, or dropping a message to confirm details, or sending a thank you note after a meeting, all go a long

way in leaving a positive impression on people you meet. This applies for formal as well as informal meetings with seniors, colleagues AND students who might be reporting to you. Remember, being pro-liberty is about respecting individuals! But to be a persuasive communicator and influencer, you need to work harder than that! Leonard Reed gave a beautiful lecture on *How to Advance Liberty*. He says:

"Ideas, be they right or wrong, are indestructible. The only possible change is people's attitude toward them. There is indifference or acceptance or rejection. Ideas on liberty are greeted more by indifference than by rejection, an attitude that tends to harden if left undisturbed. But when we try to turn indifference into acceptance by obtrusive and officious methods we get only rejection for our pains and, for good reason: these are not the methods of liberty. The sole force that will turn indifference into acceptance is the power of attraction. And this can be achieved only if the eye is cast away from the remaking of others and toward the improvement of self. This, as an aim, is in harmony with personal and human evolution; the effort demanded of each individual is not a sacrifice, but the best investment one can make in life's highest purpose."

Let's not treat our pro-liberty argument as inherently and necessarily superior to that of the other party. Let's not assume we have all the right answers and instead treat those who disagree with us as an opportunity to learn something new and as means to test or reaffirm our own views. Learning is a lifetime endeavour, so remember the words of Michelangelo when he said *"I'm still learning"* and let's be humble enough to accept our own limitations.

Communicating Under Pressure

Changing people's minds is incredibly hard, especially when discussing ideas that may seem new or alien to many people. If you want to convince an intelligent person how a free society might be beneficial, one has to know about an array of topics like economics, history, entrepreneurship, environmental protection, philosophy, etc. Articulately advocating the ideas of liberty while being friendly, open-minded, and reflective is one of the most effective ways of changing someone's mind and winning them over to our cause. But it can sometimes be challenging.

While it sounds obvious that persuasive communication is also about being nice, listening, being respectful, etc., in the heat of an argument it is easy to forget this. It can be immensely challenging not to become emotional or heated when somebody is attacking beliefs that are close to our heart and part of our identity. Remain calm and focus on the bigger picture. You may never persuade the person who is adamantly arguing with you, but you may still be able to convince others who overhear the discussion. In any case, we should always keep in mind that we are ambassadors for our cause and behave accordingly.

The best communicators are often also great listeners and empathizers. It is one thing to intellectually understand the benefits of listening but a totally different matter to do it in the heat of the moment. Those who can genuinely empathise with others and adapt their approach and style according to the situation are more likely to make a meaningful impact. Listen to what others are saying and how they are saying it, pay attention to body language, facial expressions, repeated words or phrases, and ask questions frequently with a view to gaining a deeper understanding of the other person's position.

3 simple principles for becoming a compelling and persuasive communicator:

- 1. Discount Intentions:** Discount the value of ascribed or actual intentions of people. If you understand that most people want to live in a prosperous society, you can appeal to the same goal and the conversation becomes one of comparing best ways to achieve those goals. We might get angry at someone because we see the suffering that results from a given government policy. When we are angry, emotional, and self-righteous we are less able to convince others and, even worse, we alienate the person we are talking to. Focus on the common ground and build from there - the desire for a better society.
- 2. Generosity Principle:** Interpret other's comments in the most generous way. If you are outraged about something, ask questions and do not become aggressive. Try to understand and communicate with reason, instead of seeing a conversation as a fight to be won. If the other person takes it aggressively you will look better in the eyes of others for taking the high ground and remaining respectful and dignified.
- 3. Economic Thinking:** Use economic thinking when assessing the pros AND cons of a given policy stance or argument. This enables us to consider the merits of an issue from all sides.

Let's take licenses, for example. For pro-liberty individuals this topic evokes concepts like rent-seeking, government permissions, and barriers to competition. Some pro-liberty individuals might dismiss licensing completely. However, an economic analysis would weigh both sides of the debate objectively. Looking at it from the other side, licenses can be an indicator of quality and competency, for example. Most pro-liberty individuals share the goal of achieving transparency and re-

ducing asymmetric information. Different kinds of licensing and professional standards have evolved organically (think about the Hippocratic oath for instance). That does not mean that licenses as they exist nowadays are good.

First, we have to find out what our audience wants. What is their goal? Is it security and fraud protection for consumers? Is it about trusting licenced practitioners? Licenses may be a way of achieving those goals; but it comes at a cost. Talk about rent-seeking and anti-competitive barriers. Talk about the advantages for consumers through competition. Talk about how advances in technology could ensure quality with ratings of non-licensed practitioners' services. Talk about the current failings in the system and how licenses will never be able to protect the consumer 100%; even if there's a law that a ten year certified education was required before someone can call herself a psychologist, there will still be people who call themselves something else and screw people over with pseudo-science.

Applying economic thinking when analyzing an issue is more thorough, subtle, and all encompassing. It gives credit to and acknowledges the value of the other person's position while questioning the efficacy of the means of achieving a goal in light of potentially better alternatives.

10 Communication Tips for One-to-One Conversations

A one on one conversation might be formal or informal, the objective might be to spread the ideas or to seek funding; in each case your approach will vary. However, what remains constant is the observance of these rules:

1. Be polite and respectful
2. Actively listen
3. Ask questions
4. Keep it short, concise, and simple

5. Be honest and personal
6. Use logic AND emotion (your life experiences are a valid an explanation of your beliefs)
7. Be positive in your approach
8. Show initiative
9. Give this conversation all your attention
10. Stay on the message and leave your target with 'an ask'

5 Communications Tips for Speaking with a Larger Audience

The tips mentioned above hold true for your conversations with groups as well, but here are some additional things that you should not ignore, particularly if you are speaking to a larger audience such as at an event.

1. Practice and prepare sound bites/cues that you can use
2. Find ways to engage your audience
3. Don't be aggressive
4. Relate the message to the audience's concerns or identity
5. Be concise, stick to 1-3 key points and round up your talk by reinforcing the message

Storytelling

Humans are socially hard-wired for story-telling, and your personal experiences are as valid an explanation for your beliefs and values as your reason. Stories allow us to visualize, empathize, and understand a message more clearly. Of course, facts and data are important, but wrap them up in a compelling story and you will captivate your audience and have a greater impact. Start telling stories when communicating with others and you'll quickly realize the effectiveness of storytelling as a powerful tool of persuasion.

“We all love stories. We are born for them. Stories affirm who we are. We all want affirmations that our lives have meaning. And nothing does a greater affirmation than when we connect through stories. It can cross the barriers through time, past, present, and future, and allows us to experience the similarities between ourselves and through others, real and imagined.”

- Andrew Stanton, writer of *Toy Story*.

Take a look at any TED Talk video and you'll quickly realise the power of storytelling. Every TED speaker either begins their presentation with a story, or else the work them into their presentation to give real-life examples to emphasize their points and connect with the audience on a more emotional and interpersonal level.

The Call to Action: Convert Your Hard Work into a Successful Outcome

Having a conversation is a job half done. You enter the conversation with a purpose, an objective. Your content and preparation are what convinces your audience. But sometimes, just convincing someone is not enough. You might need them to do something afterward - maybe fill out an application form or register for a conference or join a student group. In such cases, convincing your audience about the value of your proposal is only the first step. Aim to end the conversation with an 'ask' - an action that you ask your audience to perform to show their consent - and it becomes easier to reconnect with them in the future.

You can choose to pitch SFL's Leadership Program or an upcoming event, or you can choose to build up to this with short frequent conversations. But, in the end, you should always have a goal in mind and remember to *always be clos-*

ing. A lot will depend on the amount of time you have, the nature of your ask, and the kind of audience you are interacting with. But one thing you must keep in mind is to leave the door open and create a channel of communication (messages/social media/email) to build upon after the first conversation. This will make it easier for them to reach you in case they have any questions and for you to contact them for updates or reminders.

Develop An Elevator Pitch

Imagine that you've walked onto an elevator with a potential donor/investor and you only have the duration of the elevator ride to convince them that your idea is a worthwhile investment. What would you say in those 30 seconds to summarize your ideas and convince them to support SFL?

The application to the real world is that when you meet someone for the first time and want to introduce SFL to them, you need a way of summarizing the organization and its activities as succinctly as possible. You need a 30-second pitch ready to go whenever you meet someone who asks "What is Students For Liberty?" Take a few minutes now to think about the key selling points you would use to pitch SFL.

You need to be able to adjust your elevator pitch depending on the person you're addressing. If you're giving the pitch to a prospective donor, emphasize the 501(c)(3) status and the impact SFL has had on the global student movement for liberty. If you're giving the pitch to a new student at a party, focus on the programs, benefits, and resources SFL has available. If you're talking to a nonprofit representative, highlight SFL's network, the potential benefits to working with SFL, and potential collaboration opportunities.

Internal Communications in SFL

Students For Liberty is a global organization. As awesome as having colleagues spread out all over the world is, it comes with its own set of problems. The biggest of them is maintaining frequent communication. As a Coordinator with SFL, you will now be interacting with student leaders spread out in your region. Your team will often face time constraints and sometimes the means of communicating will be limited. How does one go about maintaining the team spirit and keeping coordination levels high in such circumstances? Not as difficult as you might think!

As an SFL leader you are provided with a number of communication tools, the most effective of which is your **SFL email**. Many teams utilise Whatsapp and Facebook groups too, and this is okay for organizational and planning purposes but all official communications should go through your SFL email accounts. Of course, there will be times when emails will not suffice and you will need to speak with others. You should also arrange regular **conference calls** with your team and fellow leaders using Google Meet. Be mindful of your colleagues' calendar when scheduling meetings. As a rule of thumb, **every email should be responded to within 48 hours**. Even if you don't have the answers right now, you should at least reply to acknowledge that you got the message and will follow up with a more substantial response soon. That means you need to check your SFL email at least once a day.

If you are leading a team, it is your responsibility to hold **regular update calls** for planning upcoming actions, to discuss and solve problems facing your team, and as an opportunity to build team spirit and cohesion. Having this time set aside brings stability to the team and provides a known regular space for leaders to discuss their activities and impediments.

Depending on your role and the work you are doing, you may be asked to send reports to your team leader or staff

communicating your recent updates or the outcome of a campaign or event. Become familiar with the reporting procedures in your region and take ownership over sending your updates. Good communication is what holds our network together and we each play a role in ensuring our actions and updates are being reported regularly.

Conclusion

Have you ever asked yourself why are you doing this? Why are you dedicating so much of your time and your life to the cause of liberty? Why do you believe that a freer future is not just desirable, it is achievable and worth working towards? And why do you think Students For Liberty is the best way for you to do that? These are important questions.

Students, just like you, are the future of the liberty movement. It is critical to the success of liberty that we work on getting more young people to believe in liberty and prepare them for leadership, to become advocates for the ideas in their own lives, and become examples for others to follow. As a student, your time is a valuable resource and how you choose to spend it will have a great impact on your future. We at SFL recognize the commitment you are making for liberty. We are able to provide you with the tools, resources, training, and experience you need to promote SFL's vision of a freer future, to develop yourself both personally and professionally, and give you the chance to have a meaningful part in this global movement for liberty.

First, we are working to create exceptional young leaders who are both willing and able to spread the message of liberty to others today. By offering leadership trainings, hosting events, and growing our global network, we are driving the freedom movement into the future, ensuring that the ideas are kept alive, and that there are more leaders ready to carry the torch of liberty tomorrow.

Second, we are working to inspire older generations. If older generations see the student movement for liberty grow, there is a greater likelihood that supporters of liberty in those generations will care more about the cause.

Third, we are working to change the world. Our work is not only about the future, it is about changing the world right now. Your work will have an affect on your peers, change the culture and even the policies on campuses and in communities. While our vision is a freer future, we understand that if we want to achieve this, our task is to start changing the world today.

As a student leader, you will play an integral part in the cause of liberty, so your time and commitment is incredibly valuable. Take your role seriously. Your actions today will determine the future of our world. Thought of in this way, you may be happier working on SFL at 11pm on a Friday night than doing anything else. Remember to have fun! If you're not having fun, you're not doing it right!

Welcome to the SFL family. We are thrilled to have you aboard!

Conflict of Interest Policy



By accepting a position as a SFL volunteer, I, the undersigned, agree to prioritize the best interests of both SFL's mission and success as an organization. I will not take actions that are contrary to the best interests of SFL, or in conflict with SFL's functioning or success. I recognize that SFL encourages volunteers to work with other organizations dedicated to liberty and supports volunteer interests in helping other organizations, but also recognize that any work done for or with another organization must not conflict with or hinder the success of SFL as an organization. If I am placed in a position that conflicts with the best interests of SFL, I will find a way to prioritize SFL's interests first even if that means removing myself from the position that conflicts with SFL's interests.

As a SFL volunteer, I will not solicit or accept any gifts, money, services, or anything else of value from any other student member, potential student member, donor, potential donor, supplier, or vendor of SFL. You may accept gifts (except money), but only if immediately reported to and approved by my staff regional director. The duty to report does not apply to gifts that have a value of less than \$25 USD¹.

¹ This policy does not prohibit acceptance of unsolicited advertising or promotional materials of a nominal value, such as calendars, pens, mugs and key chains.









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