



## Students For Liberty

# The Strategic Action Plan

### Overview

With the establishment of your organization, you should agree on tangible goals for the upcoming semester/year and develop a strategy for achieving these goals. The document that summarizes this information is your Strategic Action Plan. This can be very helpful for newer groups who especially want to define their direction, but every group should form a document that achieves this purpose every year.

The SAP combines two important aspects of planning, broad-based goals as well as specific events that work to reach those goals. Below is a discussion of these two aspects and a sample plan. Although you should format your SAP in a way that makes sense to you, try and achieve some level of organization like the one below does so that it can be clearly understood by fellow group members.

### How to Write a Plan

**When:** The best time to write a SAP is before the school year begins. This way you have a plan in place and can simply execute the game plan throughout the year. However, there is never a wrong time to plan ahead. Even if you are in the middle of a semester it is still good to sit down and plan out the rest of the year.

**Who:** This question largely depends on the make up of your student group. Are there multiple strong leaders who have a vested interest in the organization? If so then it is probably a good idea for all of you to sit down together to write the SAP. However if there is only one strong leader then it is often good for that person to write the plan, then submit it to the rest of the group for feedback and approval.

**How:** The best way to write a SAP is to block off time when you will be free of distractions. If you are writing it with others, set aside an evening, order pizza, drink a few beers, and don't leave until the SAP is written. Once it is done the process of running the group will get much easier.

### It Starts With the Mission

Before you start planning what your organization is going to do, first you have to answer why your organization exists. Are you hoping to: educate yourselves on the ideas of liberty, spread the ideas to others, get involved in local political activism, fight on specific issue on campus, or something else? The answers to these questions will be found in your mission statement and guide all your future activity. You can find more information on creating a mission statement within [SFL's guide to starting a student group](#).

It is not just important to have a mission statement but to make sure everyone in the organization knows the mission and why it is important. Once you have a mission statement,



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make sure that everyone in the group reads it and agrees with it so you are all on the same page going forward.

### **Creating Goals**

The specific goals and activities of the organization then derive from the mission. Once you know what you want to accomplish you can then ask yourself how you can best accomplish it. What do you want to see your organization accomplish? How are you going to be successful? Answering these questions will direct you towards explicitly stating both your long-term and short-term goals.

The creation of short term goals is more relevant to your yearly SAP. What are you pushing for this year? Better recruitment, higher quality speakers, larger scale events? Take your experiences from past years to think about what can be accomplished this year. For newer groups, goals can be simply to get started and provide a base to be built on in future years. Specific examples of goals you can set for your organization include:

- Increasing the size of your list-serve
- Increasing the number of meetings held
- Increasing the average attendance of meetings
- Increasing the number of speaker events
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- Increasing the number of flyering sessions
- Increasing the number of group members who participate in pro-liberty internships
- Increasing the number of graduating members who go on to work for a pro-liberty organization

### **From Goals to Action - Planning for the Year**

Once you have specific goals set you should start planning out your future activities. Sit down with a calendar of the upcoming year and plot out your course of action. Be as specific as possible with the dates of your group meetings, speaker events, protests, etc. You can leave some flexibility but planning ahead is always preferable to shooting from the hip.

While planning your activities make sure to research outside events and opportunities that you should avoid or leverage for your own benefit. Talk to other groups on campus and see if there are any opportunities for cooperation or co-hosting of events. Check if there are any conflicts like sporting events, concerts, or other issues that you should schedule around. Also see if there are any important dates or themes that you can leverage to your advantage. The Students For Liberty Libertarian Campus Calendar lists important dates such as Constitution Day, Tax Day, 4/20 and other notable dates such as famous libertarian's birthdays that you can use as inspiration for events. It is always better to ride a wave when people are already paying attention to an issue instead of trying to gin up interest from scratch.

Finally, always been willing to add and subtract events from this document. You may find group members are more interested in one topic over another or that you simply don't have the resources to host a big name speaker yet. Be willing to make compromises along the



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way. But with that, don't be intimidated to dream big. Contact your local campus coordinator, regional director or any of the SFL leadership if you need assistance with larger events or run into obstacles along the way.

### **Taking Action**

Once you finish the SAP, congratulate yourself and take a break. Drafting the document will take time and energy. It is a significant accomplishment to have a plan of action for the upcoming semester. However, it is only the beginning. If you don't implement the SAP or work to reach the goals you lay out in the SAP, then all your energy spent drafting it was wasted.

Here are some tips for how to successfully implement the SAP:

1. *Focus on the ends, not the means.* Don't get caught up on holding every event the day you list in the SAP or similar minutia.
2. *Delegate responsibilities.* Don't try to do everything yourself. Give other members of your group responsibilities and just check in on them to make sure they get done.
3. *Have Fun!* Promoting liberty should be fun and the people you work with should be your friends. Make sure to enjoy what you're doing.
4. **Work with SFL.** SFL is here to help however we can, and there are many resources available to you to do so.
  - a. Campus Coordinators – <http://studentsforliberty.org/about/leadership/cc/>
  - b. Consulting Team – <http://studentsforliberty.org/the-sfl-consulting-team/>
  - c. Regional Conferences – <http://politicalconferences.org/>
  - d. International SFL Conference – <http://politicalconferences.org/>



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# Sample Strategic Action Plan

- I. **Purpose:** With one final semester as President of the University Students For Liberty (USFL), I am making it my goal to establish this organization as one of the most active, well-known and productive student organizations on this campus. We have a group of dedicated, talented and incredible individuals already and it is time to tap that potential. My hope is that when I step down as President at the end of this semester, I will hand off an organization that will exist many years beyond not only my graduation, but the graduation of everyone who is reading this. This strategic action plan is meant to be a starting point, not the end, so please provide suggestions for improvement.
  
- II. **Goals:** We need to set several pertinent goals for this fall for us to make the organization grow. Here are the goals I envision:
  - a. **Recruitment:** Increase USFL membership by at least 100%. This means 15 individuals at each regular meeting and 30 individuals at each speaker event.
  - b. **Events:**
    - i. At least one speaker per month as an event.
    - ii. At least one Libertarian Social per month
    - iii. Publication of the alternative student paper
  - c. **Institutionalization:** To make the organization more institutionalized and long-lasting, we need to accomplish the following goals:
    - i. Bi-monthly meetings held regularly in the same room every time. I want fliers to read something like "First and third Tuesday of every month in Room \_\_\_\_"
    - ii. Every exec board member must be present at every meeting. There is little chance that new members will have respect for an organization that the exec board members don't show respect for.
    - iii. Elections will be set a month in advance and held with a formal process.
  
- III. **Pre-Semester Activities:**
  - a. **Blog-** Before NSO, everyone should make at least one post on the blog to give new students something to read. Once school begins, everyone will write two blog posts a month to keep it fresh and keep students visiting the page. Posts can cover a range of issues including national news, city politics, campus news, the activities of other organizations, the way classes are going, reviews of bars/restaurants, whatever to keep it active.
    - i. Information on the type of collaborative blog this will become: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collaborative\\_blog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collaborative_blog)
    - ii. **To Do:** Everyone I send this to should get an account set up on the blog and make at least one post before NSO so students have a reason to visit the site in the first place. **Email me to verify you are interested in doing this and I will get you set up.**
  - b. **Alternative Campus Newspaper-** We need articles written. Ask any of your friends to write any article they want to. They don't have to be political commentary. They can also include things like restaurant reviews around campus, bar reviews, an essay



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on Penn traditions, list of classes/professors students should take, anything that will attract freshmen's attention.

i. **To Do:**

1. Set up a Bank account
2. Write up a new grant application to the Collegiate Network
3. Assign someone position as Editor/Publisher
4. Find a printer on campus to print the paper
5. Get at least 10 articles written by August 25
6. Have layout ready by August 27

c. Students Rights Night- This will be our kickoff event for the year. After students have gone through New Student Orientation and learned about the rules and restrictions imposed upon them at school, we will tell them what rights they have and how they can challenge abuses of school power.

i. **To Do:** Anyone who wants to be involved in setting this up, please email me back to help me get a room, get food, market and finalize the schedule for the event.

d. Think You're Conservative/Liberal? Think Again!:

i. **To Do:**

1. I have drafted sample fliers for people to look over. They are attached to this email. Please give feedback and comments on them as they are merely rough drafts and need revision still.
2. Whoever is on campus just before NSO should help out posterizing them around campus so freshmen see them first thing! Email me and let me know if you'll be around.

#### IV. **Semester Activities:**

- a. Bimonthly meetings- 2 meetings a month on the same days, time, and place (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday for example). The meetings should include status reports from committees, discussions of the direction of the organization and then a 10 minute lecture on a pertinent libertarian topic followed by discussion of the issue.
- b. Libertarian Socials- Perhaps the most valuable service we can provide the campus community is to build a social network for individuals with libertarian leanings to be able to meet others with similar sentiments. I think we all understand the pressures to give up libertarianism in college and how difficult it can be if you think you are the only libertarian out there. Once a month I would like us to advertise and host a social event where USFL members get together to hang out and chat and for everyone to bring other potential members to the event. Not only will this be a recruitment effort, but also it is just an opportunity for libertarians to interact with one another more and build a name for ourselves. If we just have small events but do them well and hold them regularly, we can make a name for ourselves and the organization as a place to go.
- c. Speaker Series- At least one speaker a month. I want people to start thinking about who we can bring in and take the initiative to bring them to campus. Just let me know who you're thinking of, but then I want you to go out there and set it up. To bring a speaker to campus, just contact them or their organization and say you want them to speak, set up a night that would work well for them, reserve a room and then go through our normal advertisement process.



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- d. V for Vendetta event-
  - i. Movie Night on November 5 of *V for Vendetta*
  - ii. Youtube clip- This would be really nerdy but fun, but we could film someone in costume explaining how the current situation is bad and oppressive. We can then put it on Youtube and link to our site if we are so inclined.
- e. Libertarians v. Socialists Debate- Following last year, we will host another public debate against the campus socialists. I want serious prep for it this time as our strategy should be to use this to bring more people to our side from a historical/empirical angle rather than philosophical (the reverse strategy did not seem to be the most effective last time from audience comments, so let's just hit them hard with the numbers and facts).