

Best Practices in AGC Student Chapters



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Introduction

To strengthen the future of construction leadership, the AGC Construction Leadership Committee surveyed AGC of America student chapters nationwide to better understand what keeps students engaged, motivated, and connected. The responses came from chapters of all sizes and across diverse regions, providing a rich snapshot of what's working—and what isn't—on campuses today. This best practices guide distills that collective wisdom into actionable strategies that any chapter can adapt. From early outreach that welcomes freshmen on day one, to retention tactics that blend professional development with social connection, to industry integration and leadership transitions that ensure long-term sustainability, these approaches are grounded in real experiences from peers who are facing the same challenges.

The goal is simple: to give student leaders, faculty advisors, and local AGC partners proven tools they can use to build thriving, resilient chapters. The examples and data shared here highlight creative approaches, common challenges, and practical solutions that can help your chapter recruit more members, strengthen industry ties, and prepare students for careers in construction.

Early Engagement Strategies:

- First-Year Outreach: Partner with freshman engineering, construction management, and architecture programs to introduce AGC student chapters early. Survey data shows this is highly effective, with 93% of chapters using classroom presentations for recruitment.
 - These are standout successes:
 - Reach out to faculty and offer lots of events.
 - AGC of Kansas pays the membership fee (\$10) for all new freshmen entering the construction programs at PSU
 - Presenting the organization on the first day of class for intro construction classes
 - Club Fairs and Open houses at the beginning of the year.
 - First Meeting of the year free food, games, and discussing upcoming opportunities, benefits offered, and student incentives.

Retention Strategies:

- Clear Value Proposition: Emphasize networking, internships, scholarships, and career opportunities.
 - This is a major draw, with 85% of chapters using industry networking and internship/job placement support to prepare students for careers.
- Regular, Varied Events: Mix professional development with social events.
 - These are standout successes:
 - Company sponsored tailgates - Industry networking with student incentives.
 - Networking and career day - Industry networking with student opportunities.
 - A Presbyterian Hospital Visit, which drew interest from engineering students but also medical students. – Real world practicality and partnering with other organizations outside of construction.
 - Trivia night/Annual Poker Tournament among all student construction organizations – Engagement and Partnering with other organizations
 - Building a homecoming float – Recognition in one of the biggest campus-wide events of the year
 - Moe's BBQ Social – Partnering with local restaurants to host an event
 - The most common piece of advice was to provide free food.
- Recognition & Incentives: Offer awards, scholarships, free membership, swag, food, and fun.
 - These are standout successes:
 - Collaboration with AGC Massachusetts - Supports funding and assist with site visits.
 - Leverage extra credits on assignments – Student incentive for the classroom
 - Speaking at local AGC events – Networking and recognition opportunity
 - AGC of Kansas pays membership fees for freshmen – Student incentive for participation without having to worry about the cost to participate.
 - The most common piece of advice is strengthening connections with local AGC Chapters & Industry professionals.



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Strategies for Better Integration:

- Joint Events: Co-host events with local AGC chapters. This is a universal practice, with 100% of surveyed chapters reporting a partnership. A resounding 93% participate in joint events.
 - These are standout successes:
 - Clay shoots, Golf Tournaments, Pickleball Tournaments
 - AGC BBQ Annual Cook Off
 - Cost Estimating Competition
 - Quarterly Dinners
 - Student Social hosted by AGC Milwaukee
 - CLC Mock Meeting
 - AGC Massachusetts Student Summit
 - Build South Awards
- Industry Speaker Series: Invite AGC members to share insights. This is a cornerstone of engagement.
 - These are standout success statements:
 - “Having industry professionals come in and speak during our meetings... allows for networking and potential job opportunities.”
 - “Company Sponsorships & Partnerships: Secure funding for events in exchange for branding opportunities and student recruitment access.”

Supporting Leadership Development Within Student Chapters:

- Structured Officer Training: Outgoing leaders train successors. While only 23% of chapters have participated in formal leadership training, many have internal plans.
 - These are standout successes
 - Onboard training - prior to each semester for new officers
 - A detailed chapter officer plan - with assistant and associate roles to ensure continuity during co-op semesters.
 - Shadowing – Spring semester officers will allow younger members to shadow them to see what the position involves
 - Mentorship/Succession – Lower positions in the leadership group fill the executive positions.
 - Overlap – Executive board overlap at least two executive board members who will be returning every year to ensure consistency and continuation.
- Leadership Rotations: Many chapters offer various positions, from traditional President and VP roles to committee chairs and event coordinators.

Helping Students Transition into the Industry After Graduation:

- Resume & Interview Workshops: 77% of chapters already offer resume/portfolio workshops and 54% provide mock interviews.
- Internship & Job Boards: Partner with local AGC chapters to share openings. This is a key benefit, with 29% of chapters receiving job referrals from their local partner.
- Alumni Networks: Engage past student chapter members to mentor current students. Many chapters are active here:
 - These are standout successes:
 - Bring their companies for events
 - Guest Speakers & Presenters
 - Alumni Panel
 - Assistance with new class officers for transition periods and other advice
- A proven value is students who attend AGC meetings and volunteer at events are 3x more likely to get hired by construction firms.



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Building a Sustainable Student Chapter Long-Term:

- Strong Faculty & Industry Advisors ensure at least one dedicated faculty advisor and/or an AGC industry liaison facilitate in mentorship, providing network connections, and aid in a successful chapter.
 - These are standout successes:
 - Guidance and Knowledge of what tactics have worked in the past and continue looking for ways to constantly improve and grow as individuals and a chapter.
 - Leadership engagement with students, AGC of Kansas board of directors, and industry connections.
 - Supporting growth in the construction industry, goes above and beyond to ensure both officers and members are thriving in every aspect of the field by offering dedicated office hours, guidance, and opportunities for hands-on learning and professional development.
 - Contributing in all executive discussions within the organization and guide the chapter to increase its influence and reach.
 - Mentor, Facilitator, and Advisor by providing meaningful ideas, resources, connections, and encourage in student participation.
- Documented Processes: Keep records of past events, budgets, and contacts for future leaders.
 - These are standout successes:
 - Board succession plan - Making sure onboarding leadership is effective
 - Resources – Actively participating in successful reoccurring events and opportunities
 - Strategic Senior Leadership Turnover – Retaining senior leadership year to year to ensure continuity of ideas and personnel
- Consistent Recruitment: Tabling at orientations and social media outreach. 57% of chapters use social media campaigns, and 64% participate in university club fairs. (Examples previously provided)



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What's Working:

- Peer-to-Peer Recruitment: 86% of chapters cited word of mouth as a key recruitment method.
- Free Food: Universally mentioned as a top tactic for engagement and recruitment.
- Project-Based & Social Events: Hands-on activities like "Building homecoming float" and social events like "cornhole, kickball games" are highly successful for engagement and retention.
- Industry Integration: Chapters that deeply integrate with their local AGC chapter through joint events and sponsorships report greater stability and success. Don't hesitate to ask questions and take the initiative to visit and reach out to your local AGC.
- Consistency: Hold regular meetings, student incentives, job opportunities, etc. to keep students engaged.

What's Not Working:

- Inconsistent Engagement: The biggest challenge cited by 69% of participants is "Lack of student interest, often due to students being over committed with other activities and classes."
 - Inconsistent engagement remains a primary hurdle; to combat this chapters must prioritize a consistent calendar of high-value activities that students prioritize amidst their commitments.
- Over-Involvement or Under-Involvement of Faculty: While advisor support is key, student-driven chapters perform better. One chapter stated "Our department is kind of stealing our weekly meetings. We are having a hard time figuring out what to do now."
 - The ideal model strikes a careful balance, where faculty provide essential support and resources while empowering student leaders to maintain ownership and direction of the chapter.
- Lack of Clear Identity: Some chapters struggle with the "need for revitalization and a new identity/organization."
 - A clear and distinct chapter identity is crucial for attracting and retaining members. Without it, chapters risk blending into the background and struggling to articulate their unique value to potential members.

Conclusion & Call to Action

Engaged AGC student chapters are vital for developing the next generation of construction leaders. The survey data provides a clear roadmap: prioritize industry partnerships, hands-on events, strong leadership transitions, and consistent communication. By implementing these data-backed strategies, chapters can maximize their impact.

Next Steps for Student Chapters:

- Assess: Current engagement levels and identify gaps.
- Connect: 100% of surveyed chapters partner with a local AGC chapter. If you haven't, reach out to local AGC chapters for mentorship and event partnerships.
- Act: Implement 1-2 new initiatives per semester, such as a joint social event with industry or a structured officer transition plan and track the results.