

## Tips for Involvement in Professional Associations

### Benefits:

- Gain learning experiences different from those on one's campus
- Observe leadership styles in a different venue
- Connect with other professionals who share similar interests
- Develop new friendships, networks, and mentors
- Understand the underlying structure / organization of the association
- Learn about campus issues from different perspectives
- Access to cutting-edge research
- Access to broad perspectives on local, state, federal, and international student and higher education issues
- Establish a professional reputation beyond one's campus
- Influence the future of the profession

### At the home campus:

- Make sure your tasks are in good order on your home campus
- Be excellent at your job before getting involved in an association
- Seek permission and advice from your supervisor prior to getting involved
- Identify the type of support that may be available to you (e.g., time off work, financial support, office supplies, secretarial support)
- Talk with others to learn about opportunities for involvement

### At the regional or national conference:

- Attend the session designed for newcomers or first-time attendees
- Attend as many keynote speakers and interest sessions as possible
- Meet new people – Network!
- Attend business, task force, and committee meetings
- Enjoy the time away – spend time with new colleagues during meals or social activities
- Reflect on the experience – share information and handouts with colleagues; send a short follow-up note to the contacts you made at the conference

### Levels of Organizational Involvement:

- Being a passive member or consumer
  - Take advantage of technological services like joining a list serve
  - Consider joining a committee or knowledge community
  - Find ways to connect with others who have similar interests
- Becoming a contributor
  - Present an interest session or program
  - Write an article for the newsletter
  - Submit research results for publication
  - Seek feedback from experienced others on your contributions
- Serving as a coordinator
  - Plan, direct, or coordinate volunteers
  - Employ your skills in coordinating, budgeting, supervising
  - Demonstrate dependability, responsibility, and commitment
- Holding an officer position
  - Seek election or appointment to a leadership role
  - Be specific about what you have to offer and what you want to accomplish