

THE 123'S OF FEA

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[When asked by Erin Young, FEA director, to focus this article on "Top 10 Tips to Get Started," I turned to two experienced former FEA advisors for assistance – Pam Ferdinand and Judy Maxwell, co-coordinators of the Aurora University/FEA Network and advisor trainers for PDK. What follows should benefit both established and new chapters.]

1. Get building administrators and staff on board. Talk with your principal about ways you can raise the level of awareness of your club – daily announcements, flyers in staff mailboxes, display cases, etc. (Some of you may deal with the student activities director.) KNOW building and district policy for field trips and attending out-of-state conferences. Be sure to contact your association or union officers to let them know about possible ways your club can assist their members, and also how they can help you as program participants and with funding support.

2. Specific contacts: Counselors, coaches, and drama, band, and choral music faculty. Your members will benefit through your connection with the guidance department for scholarship information, higher education institutions with outstanding Colleges of Education, financial aid, applications, etc. Be aware that the sports, drama, and music programs are important activities for many of your members and you need a good working relationship with these staff members.

3. If just getting started, develop a core group of 5-6 interested students to help establish the format and generate ideas for your club. (An established chapter will have an executive board of officers, perhaps elected the previous spring, who do this.) Be looking for individuals who generate ideas and carry through or are willing to take leadership or responsibility for committees. These are your potential officers. They should be actively involved in recruiting new members and getting your FEA message out. Good followers become good leaders, and part of your role as advisor and facilitator/mentor is to help them become the ones who run the chapter.

4. Developing your yearly action plan. Be realistic. With input from your leaders and members, choose 2 program formats (panel of teachers and/or administrators, guest speaker), 2 building-level projects (Homecoming, Teacher Appreciation activity in November or May), and 1 service project (Read Across America activities, March 3). Your meeting time and day may be set by building policy. If not, realize that your club may be only one choice among many and pick a time, day of the week, and date that present the fewest conflicts. KNOW your building and district calendar. The quality of your programs and projects will help members choose to attend FEA meetings.

5. Your first goal: How to secure needed funds. Check with your principal or student activity director for available student fee funds for school clubs. Turn to your association, union, or PTA/PTO for start-up money. Stress that yours is the only club bringing young people into education-related careers – surely their groups' major focus, too. Look into getting funding from a district educational foundation, find out about past funded projects, and be on top of grant proposal deadlines. Find out if a local PDK chapter is a potential source of financial (and programmatic) support.

6. It's not too late! Go to the FEA website and click the link to PDK Walk for Education, Oct. 21. More information on the Walk follows.

7. Building membership: Recruitment ideas. Remember the "raising staff awareness" and "using counselors" mentioned earlier. Here are the eyes and ears for gaining members – they know of students who show an interest in being teachers, school psychologists or social workers, coaches, school nurses, or working in child care or preschool. Set up a sign-up table in the lunchroom or main hallway at the start of each semester, manned by FEA officers or active members who hand out flyers and a "candy connection" – catchy labels on sticks of gum, suckers, candy bars. Thanks to Morehouse University for the following adapted ideas: "CHEWS" Future Educators Association; Don't be a "Dum-Dum" – Join Future Educators Association; Don't SNICKER at your future-Join

FEA calendar

- Sept. 15** Deadline to submit a workshop session proposal for national conference, www.pdkintl.org/fea/proposal.htm.
- Sept. 21** Deadline to register a PDK Walk for Education team to receive T-shirts, www.pdkintl.org/walk06/walkhome.htm.
- Oct. 19** FEA advisor training in Washington, D.C. Register at www.pdkintl.org/pdkconf06/register.htm.
- Oct. 21** Third Annual PDK Walk for Education.
- Oct. 31** Deadline to return national FEA study to The Hoenny Center.
- Dec. 1** Deadline to turn in Walk for Education money to PDK.
- Dec. 4** Early bird registration deadline for national conference, www.pdkintl.org/fea/feaconf.htm.
- Dec. 18** Entry deadline for all competitions at the national conference, www.pdkintl.org/fea/compforms.htm.
- Jan. 10** Regular price registration deadline for national conference.
- Jan. 26** Reservation deadline at Manchester Grand Hyatt for national conference.
- Feb. 7** Late registration deadline for national conference.
- Feb. 16-18** 18th annual national FEA conference.

Future Educators Association. Encourage each member to bring a potential member to your meetings. Be a part of freshman orientation activities or talk to 8th graders in the spring.

8. Look for additional ways to keep FEA visible. Get FEA members to volunteer to do child care for PTA meetings, parent conferences and go-to-school nights – in-building and in-district. (Be sure they wear FEA T-shirts or have “child care receipts” with FEA logo and chapter info.) Get on school board and education foundation board meeting agendas when your club does something outstanding, especially if approved and funded by either entity.

9. Be sure you are a chartered FEA chapter. If you are already chartered, be sure to pay your annual dues fee to continue your affiliation. If not, go into the FEA website and fill out the appropriate form. Get information on the 2007 national FEA Conference in San Diego, and make plans to attend. Watch for advisor training workshops in your area (Oct. 19, Washington, D.C. – details follow). Contact FEA for a full list of benefits.

10. Use the Handbook for Chapter Advisors.

Everything contained in this article is included in the handbook, which is part of your charter kit when you become a chartered FEA chapter. Most of your questions and concerns are addressed, including getting started, selecting officers (this should NOT be a popularity contest!), conducting meetings, program and project ideas, and fundraising.

Have a great and successful FEA year!

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Each month, the FEA Communiqué will include a question. Send your response to fea@pdkintl.org by the 10th of the month. Selected responses will be published in the next month's newsletter.

What is your chapter's favorite teacher appreciation activity?

WALK FOR EDUCATION

The Third Annual Phi Delta Kappa International Walk for Education, the official FEA fundraiser, is a chance to raise money for your FEA chapter at the same time you raise awareness of the needs of your school. Sixty percent of the funds you raise can come back to your chapter. Every person who raises at least \$50 will receive a T-shirt. Most walks will be held Oct. 21. Register by Sept. 21. For details, go to www.pdkintl.org/walk06/walkhome.htm.

TEACHING IS AS VALUABLE AS GOLD ... SO DIG IT!

Registration information

That's the theme for the 2007 conference, which will be held February 16-18, 2007, at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego, California. Registration forms will be mailed to all chapters in early August and are available online. In November, online registration will be available for chapters paying with a credit card.

If your registration forms are incomplete (missing forms or without correct payment), we will send them back to you and you will need to resubmit them, so please

make sure you're including everything. The postmark or fax date of your complete form is the date that will determine your payment rate. We will mail out name tags and confirmation letters after your registration is processed.

Workshop session proposals due 9/15

There's still time for your chapter to submit a workshop session proposal. Go to www.pdkintl.org/fea/proposal.htm for details and a link to the online submission form.

National competitions

Competition information for the national conference is online at www.pdkintl.org/fea/compforms.htm. The deadline to enter all competitions is Dec. 18.

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Advisor training Oct. 19

An advisor training session will be held in conjunction with Phi Delta Kappa International's Summit on Public Education. The advisor training (\$40/person) will be held from 8 a.m. to noon Oct. 19 at the Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C. Go to www.pdkintl.org/pdkconf06/register.htm to read more details in the summit brochure and registration form, and then register online. Space is limited – don't delay!

Win \$200!

You will be receiving a survey from The University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL) in mid-September. With UMSL's and FEA's help, the Hoenny Center (www.hoennycenter.org) is conducting a national study of our work that will give us a good picture of the contributions FEA is making to the future of the teaching profession. But, this picture will only be as good as the information we provide. This means we need your input. Please take 15 minutes to fill out the survey and return it by Oct. 31. All chapters that meet this deadline will be eligible to win one of three \$200 prizes or FEA merchandise! A workshop session at the national conference will discuss the study's results.

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH – FEA DRAWSTRING BAG

Each month, the newsletter will feature one FEA product in bulk, offered at a special sale price only to FEA charter chapters. Buy red drawstring bags (item number FEABAG) for your chapter members and soon other students will be asking about FEA! Regular price is \$10. If you buy 10 bags or more, you pay only \$8 each, a savings of 20 percent. Orders must be placed by phone for you to receive the sale price. Call 800-766-1156 and ask for the Order Department.

SEEKING SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE TOPICS

What would you like to learn more about? Send your requests for future newsletter stories to fea@pdkintl.org. And, as always, send us your success stories! We like to feature clubs that excel, whether it's a special teacher recognition event that was implemented or a great idea for a fundraiser.