Chapter-Campus Toolkit

V.1

Created by the ASM Student Board of Trustee Members 2018-2019

Last Updated: August 2019
Dear ASM Chapter,

The success of ASM International depends on the cultivation of a diverse membership base. With the expansion of quality products, services and opportunities brought about by our active members and staff, we have developed a powerful value proposition that continues to maintain our organization as the world’s materials information society. However, we can only thrive by establishing a strong community within our chapters, comprising a balanced distribution of individuals at all stages of their careers. Doing so, perhaps most importantly, relies on the engagement of students -- the future leaders in our fields, and potentially our largest advocates.

Our society has no shortage in content that would appeal to prospective student members, including access to learning and development to remain technically current, advance their careers, improve materials performance and contribute to their growth in materials science and engineering. Yet, there is a prevailing disconnect between our society and students at colleges and universities worldwide. The surprising and unsettling truth is that the majority of students do not know what ASM is nor its value to them as professional members. The challenge, therefore, is to clearly communicate the benefits of ASM International membership to the students, and to maintain this communication into their early careers.

This cannot be achieved by simply creating more content and expecting students to find it and get involved. For example, it is unreasonable to attribute students’ minimal attendance at events and meetings on their disinterest or laziness. Rather, there must be a shift in the current paradigm to emphasize the necessity of fostering a personal connection with students as well as bringing ASM to the students, instead of the reverse. And this begins with efforts at the chapter level. Much can be accomplished with a mindset of planning student-centric programming at colleges and universities, promoting increased accessibility to off-campus meetings, and personally reaching out to the students and their professors. Through the dedication of chapters to encouraging student participation, given the multitude of students genuinely looking to connect with others in their field, we will make significant progress towards engaging more members and building our great community.

There are a large number of strong professional chapters in our society, and many have already taken important steps in the right direction. To assist this endeavour, we have prepared the following toolkit, filled with programming ideas and general tips aimed at attracting and supporting our student members. By working together, we can build lasting connections with students in our society and develop a stronger, better ASM International.

Sincerely,

Aadithya Jeyaranjan  
Kenna Ritter  
Eli Vandersluis

ASM Student Board of Trustees Members 2018-2019
# Table of Contents

1.0 Student Engagement Off-Campus 3  
   1.1 Increased Accessibility 3  
   1.2 Student-Centered Programming 3  
   1.3 Organized Tours 4  
   1.4 Inclusion in Chapter Leadership 5  

2.0 On-Campus Programming 6  
   2.1 Promoting ASM International Awareness 6  
   2.2. Integrating Student Work 6  
   2.3 Career Advising Sessions and Research Lab Tours 7  

3.0 Branding and Outreach 9  
   3.1 Swag and Scholarships 9  
   3.2 Recruitment via Professors and Staff 10  
   3.3 Social Media 11  

4.0 Future Directions 13  

5.0 Contact Us 13
1.0 Student Engagement Off-Campus

In this section we will focus on the types of programming that can occur off-campus, and how to make it desirable and accessible to students. While off-campus events can be difficult for students to attend, they will make an effort to participate if the events are sufficiently interesting and if their transportation is convenient.

1.1 Increased Accessibility

Many chapters that would like to increase student engagement encounter difficulties because of geographic or scheduling differences. One idea that is being tested by ASM chapters such as the Boston Chapter is to teleconference the chapter meetings. This can be done using any streaming service available online, such as Twitch®. Yet, certain considerations must be made before pursuing this: Do you have access to a consistent and high-quality internet connection at the meeting place? Do you have access to good-quality cameras and microphones? Improper equipment and/or internet connections will quickly frustrate students and deter their participation in the current and future meetings.

Moreover, even if a student wants to attend a chapter meeting and they are able to find time in their busy schedule, they might not have a consistent or reliable means of getting there. Depending on the university, students may or may not have cars on campus, and public transportation is often not an option for many chapters. This significantly impedes student engagement. Helping to provide and/or organize transportation to chapter meetings is another way to make meetings more accessible to students and foster a more inclusive atmosphere. If any regular chapter members live near a university, a carpool might be an option if all parties are comfortable with this.

If the chapter has the funds for it, providing funding directly to students or chapters for public transit, car rentals, car sharing, or ride sharing services can also be effective. For example, the company Zipcar® have special registration policies that allow drivers under the age of 21 to rent cars for blocks of time. There is a small, flat yearly fee to have access to the service, and then drivers pay $7-$12 per hour to drive the car (price range depends on the type of car rented). You can see if Zipcars are available in your area by visiting their website. And of course, services like Uber and Lyft can be relatively inexpensive especially if the cost is split between multiple students, or between the students and the chapter. For services like Uber, Lyft, and Zipcar, reservations can often be made the day of an event. Other, smaller car-sharing and ride-sharing services may be offered regionally. It is worth looking into such options to find what works best for your chapter and its student members.

1.2 Student-Centered Programming

Student-centered programming can include the more traditional events, such as resume preparation, job interview preparation, and networking mixers. Although these are still solid ideas for student events, there are many other ways chapters can get students involved in ASM International activities. For effective programming, chapters must determine the interests of their student members, and plan stimulating
events that entice these members. A good place to start is by actually speaking with your student members. You’ll be surprised to find out the many great ideas they have for engaging events.

On the topic of networking events: Networking can often leave a bad taste in the mouth of young professionals and students. The word can have negative connotations for students. They often see it as “fake” or “artificial” interactions. One way to improve attendance at ‘networking events’ is to just provide a nice social event to attend, such as a game night or brewery tour, and allow the networking to occur organically. If needed, icebreakers or talking points may be prepared by the chapter to encourage mingling amongst the members.

1.3 Organized Tours

Many chapters are already accustomed to organizing tours at companies and labs. ASM International chapters are filled with materials-related professionals in a given area, most of which come from different companies and backgrounds. Hence, there are many opportunities to leverage the chapter’s membership diversity to improve programming. Students really enjoy going off-campus to see what materials professionals really do, where they work, and what equipment they use. ASM International chapters have the connections to organize such tours, and they definitely should! For example, the ASM Hartford chapter (Connecticut, USA) is located near many materials-related companies, including Pratt & Whitney, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technologies, Collins Aerospace, and many more smaller companies!

Companies are usually more than happy to show members around their operations and discuss what they do with professionals and students alike. Many companies and labs may be connected to government work or proprietary projects, and although this may introduce an extra step in organizing a tour, it should not be a deterrent. When touring such companies, attendees may need to provide proof of citizenship. As a result, additional planning time is required during planning. Ideally, these tours should be planned at least a month in advance. This will give the chapter enough time to gather interest and complete any forms or documentation that might be needed.

A lot of chapters will often host dinner along with their technical programming, so be sure to plan ahead and either look for restaurants in close vicinity to the company or ask the company if they have some space at their own facilities that you could use for catering.

As mentioned in Section 1.1, students will be more likely to attend off-campus events if transportation is guaranteed or easily accessible. Therefore, accessibility must be considered if planning a tour of a company farther than a reasonable distance from the typical chapter meeting place.
1.4 Inclusion in Chapter Leadership

People tend to feel more inclined to remain involved in an organization where they are valued participants and contributors to the activities offered. One way to get students involved at a leadership level is to create a chapter Students Committee. Depending on how large your chapter and local Material Advantage (MA) student chapters are, you may choose to have 1-4 students form this committee to help the chapter design programming students will attend. The programs and ideas suggested in this document are a good starting point, but every chapter has a different demographic and/or geographic situation that prevents a one-idea-fits-all solution. Including students from your local materials science and engineering programs will help get a more specific perspective into the demographic you are trying to engage.

Alternatively, you can choose to have one student member join the chapter executive board/officers in order to represent student interests. For example, the ASM Hartford Chapter automatically appoints the Chapter Chair of the University of Connecticut MA chapter to be an officer on the board. This student officer/student liaison helps lead student-related programming, including student nights and outreach events that necessitate many volunteers that the local MA chapter can provide. If your chapter is involved in K-12 outreach events, then this is a great opportunity to involve students in the planning process. For either a single student representative or a student committee, it would be more convenient for the MA chapter to select these students during their elections. Some chapters hold their new officer elections in the early spring, or at the end of the school year. Contact your local MA chapter to see when they schedule their elections and ask if they would be interested in more leadership positions in your chapter.

Student leadership positions are especially beneficial if the local MA chapter is active and close by the regular meeting locations. However, connections can still be made online, if it is more difficult for students to attend regular in-person meetings.
2.0 On-Campus Programming

This section focuses on improving ASM programming on-campus to maximize student attendance. From our experience in hosting ASM events in various locations over the past several years, we have always noticed a much higher student turnout when the events are held on-campus. This is perhaps the most important advantage of programming right at the colleges and universities near your chapter. Accessibility, feelings of safety and geographic familiarity and convenience all contribute to the higher attendance rate. However, the specific presenter, event topic, date (close to exams week), branding, and other factors could also have a major impact. Given the generally low student attendance for off-campus events, it is only reasonable to move the meetings to an on-campus location in order to better entice students. Yet, student turnouts can nonetheless be affected by a lack of awareness, busy schedules and an overall lack of interest.

2.1 Promoting ASM International Awareness

Although many students may be familiar with the ASM society, they may not be fully aware of the benefits of being an ASM member and the career advantages that arise from attending ASM events and meetings. ASM awareness sessions or booths organized on-campus could help to close this gap and to stimulate a student’s interest with all the opportunities they have been missing. These sessions can be designed to convey the various advantages of attending chapter meetings, such as networking opportunities, exposure to real-world industry problems and a direct knowledge transfer from pioneers in the field. Try to express that attending meetings is a great way to meet new people who are working in similar areas as well as to form potential collaborations. In any case, just having a presence in a popular spot on campus will go a long way towards connecting with students. You can make it more personal by offering to exchange business cards, and following up with the student later about ASM initiatives and opportunities.

Student life is filled with deadlines and busy schedules and it is possible that students may miss out on events that they would potentially like to attend. A good way to overcome this issue would be to send department-generated emails (to specific courses or entire programs), flyers, and reminders before a meeting or an event. Most students have classes on-campus or stay on-campus to work. Hence, making use of this reminder system would help students keep track of on-campus meetings, and it would serve to promote more ASM awareness among students enrolled in the department. Speak to the departmental assistants or students involved with ASM on campus about the distribution of such emails.

2.2. Integrating Student Work

Students would be more interested in attending an event if they are a major part of that event. For example, collaborative events with student design teams provides an excellent opportunity for the team to showcase their work. Furthermore, organizing an ASM student poster symposium on campus would open a platform for students to present their research. Such a symposium would create a great opportunity for
the students to interact with their peers and receive feedback and new ideas for their chosen research topics, all under the ASM brand. This would generate student attention in the society, encourage participation, and stimulate interest to attend more ASM events and meetings. Provided it was properly planned with exams and other deadlines in mind, symposiums would generate large student turnouts, as it creates a platform for the students to showcase their strongest skills on a familiar topic, their own research. Additionally, the previous year student winners can be part of the judging process, where they assist the actual judges with their own contribution and feedback. This would not only allow the students to present their research, but it would also help them to develop their judging skills by working closely with more experienced professionals in the field. Yet, to ensure student participation, it is important to advertise enticing prizes for the winners.

Additionally, hosting local competitions would encourage student participation on a larger scale. Participating in a competition would help with improving ASM recognition and establishing a student’s identity within the society. Making the prize worth it and establishing credibility would drastically increase the number of student entries in the local competitions. With sufficient time and planning, a prestigious ASM competition like Domesday can be created similar to sports playoffs, where the winning teams of local events would get to compete against each other for the international championship.

Other challenges can include a metallography contest or a “Shark Tank” type of event, where students pitch their projects for ASM chapter funds, either to finance travel to conferences or to finance the project itself. These competitions would foster student interaction and team spirit, and it would help build a personal and meaningful connection with ASM. This sort of hands-on experience involving leadership and teamwork is the underlying foundation of every society.

2.3 Career Advising Sessions and Research Lab Tours

Given the diversity of the materials field, students may find it difficult to find a short-term or long-term career direction that best suits them. Younger students may not even be aware of the research progress in the various avenues in materials science, which may impact their confidence to fit in this field. ASM can help overcome this issue by organizing career advising sessions, where different ASM members from a certain industry can guide students about the do’s and don’ts of choosing a career path. These sessions can provide useful information regarding future career opportunities as well as the application process for jobs and internships. These sessions can also help provide different perspectives, for example an
academia-oriented career vs. an industry-based career. This will provide a wealth of information to students who can then go on to become an ASM member and help other students in a similar manner. Furthermore, since ASM already has several online services for job hunting, it would be beneficial to hold training sessions on campus about how to best take advantage of them.

For career advising sessions, professional development workshops, or any other related event it would best to encourage industry professionals to discuss internships and job positions with students. Students would be more receptive to these types of events if they could speak to someone and hear about specific opportunities available for them to apply to.

Furthermore, research lab tours can be organized on campus, which would help students meet the various research groups and choose a lab that best aligns with their own interests. Choosing the right lab is of utmost importance to a student interested in research, and ASM could aid in the facilitation. This would also provide a networking opportunity for students at all academic levels, including post-doctoral, graduate and undergraduate students in the research teams. These lab tours could also be a great way to meet different professors in their department, who could serve as a positive influence for students and impress upon them the importance and benefits of being part of ASM.
3.0 Branding and Outreach

Bringing ASM to the students will go a long way towards fostering a personal connection that can stem into a lifelong membership. This can include many of the items discussed in the preceding sections, including chapter visits, quality programming, and offering opportunities for inclusion in chapter leadership. Yet, during these efforts, it is important to portray the society as a great resource, and not just as a meeting place, in order to best entice potential members. For instance, many ASM chapters send out email newsletters periodically that advertise their monthly speaker/networking events. While these emails are great opportunities for outreach, the majority of students who receive them do not realize that the benefits of ASM extend far beyond such monthly meetings. In order to maximize student recruitment, we must strive to -- in some way -- present ASM’s value proposition during every interaction.

Without effective branding and outreach, even the best and most accessible content, both off- and on-campus, will go largely unnoticed. In this section, we will discuss some ways to better gain the attention of students and familiarize them with the Society. This includes the use of branded freebies, exploiting the potential of professors and staff on campus, and effective social media practices.

3.1 Swag and Scholarships

Students love free stuff. It really doesn’t matter what it is – if it’s free, students will jump at the chance to take it. Simple handouts, like pens, lanyards, highlighters branded with the ASM logo can all contribute to increased awareness of the Society among students. However, adding some creativity and uniqueness in the selection of your swag can increase the potential benefits exponentially. Unlike a pen that will easily be tossed after a few uses, handouts such as t-shirts, flash disks, shot glasses, mugs, callipers, figurines/models, etc. can all be very successful for reaching out to students and keeping ASM on their minds. ASM International has relationships with several vendors that can be used to help chapters with this. Please contact ASM Chapter Relations (chapter@asminternational.org) for assistance on ordering merchandise. After completing an order, you can distribute items for many years at your various events, either as handouts or prizes as applicable. Perhaps more effectively, you can even just send a collection of freebies to your local Material Advantage chapter. The students will appreciate them, and it will help separate ASM from the other materials science societies.

Branded scholarships are another terrific way to connect with students. Already, ASM International and several chapters do offer scholarships for students, albeit mostly for undergraduate students and not graduate students. Nonetheless, a member typically needs to intentionally search for these scholarships to know of their existence. In contrast, most university and college engineering departments include a list of both internal and external scholarships on their websites for which their students may be eligible. While this may be more complicated to organize, the inclusion of the ASM brand directly onto a campus’ scholarship website can go a long way to promote the objectives of the society. You can reach out to the university department/organization that solicits and invests funds for the university as a starting point.
3.2 Recruitment via Professors and Staff

Branding can come from many different types of interactions. Often, word of mouth and building personal, social connections can be among the most effective methods of engaging new members. The first professional contact students have with materials science is through their interactions with the professors and lab assistants at their university. These teachers serve as early mentors for many students, so it is important that these professionals know the value and importance of getting students involved in chapter activities. If ASM International is constantly portrayed as a positive group to interact with by their peers and role models, students will be more apt to participate in the society.

Many professors and staff are already ASM members. It would prove worthwhile for the chapters to reach out to these individuals and impress upon them their opportunities for engaging new student members. It is important to convey that they are vital in fostering a sense of community within the Society. By sharing their personal stories of involvement in ASM, their students will appreciate the benefits of membership for their careers, including networking, professional development, and a wealth of materials science resources. In contacting these professors and staff, chapters can request that they make short verbal or email announcements to their classes about ASM International, invite chapter volunteers for class visits, advertise chapter events and programs, or promote the use of ASM resources.

Some professors have had success with offering small amounts of extra credit on assignments by participating or attending an ASM International meeting on or off campus. Of course, these extra credit opportunities would need to be readily available to all students with an alternative option for students who cannot attend or participate. In addition, any financial barriers to the meeting such as paying for food must be eliminated. So, an ASM International meeting would be best to have on campus for this type of engagement to work.

If extra credit for event attendance is not something a professor is comfortable or interested in pursuing, still try to explore the possibility of doing a class visit. This doesn’t need to be for a full class session, college classes can range from 50 minutes to 3 hours in length. The local ASM International chapter could reach out to professors and ask if they could come speak about their organization directly to students with a professor's permission. This could be more impactful as you can reach students who won’t think to attend out-of-class events or meetings. Bringing swag and or food would also be fun touch to a classroom visit.

Furthermore, chapters can contact professors and department chairs who may not already be ASM members. This could be done in efforts to organize a department-sanctioned chapter event on campus, or
to advertise ASM events to the department. In addition to acting to engage students, this process may have the bonus result of actually recruiting professors and staff to ASM! There are many ways to approach universities and colleges, and it is usually preferred to do so through a pre-existing member of their departments. Yet, sometimes a cold email can go a long way in bridging a new connection with a department. These emails can take many forms, but it may be useful to include an introductory paragraph about ASM, such as the following:

"ASM International is the world’s leading association serving the materials industry. We connect students and professionals in materials science and engineering with the finest resources available to solve problems, improve materials performance, and support professional development. With over 25,000 individual members, ASM aims to engage and connect students with a global network of peers and provides access to trusted materials information through reference content and data, education courses, international events, and research."

3.3 Social Media

Social media is a fast, inexpensive and effective way to share content and engage a wide range of demographics, especially among students. In the current generation, everything revolves around social media. Using multiple platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter can be very successful at keeping people updated on what’s new at ASM, present our value proposition, and promote events. This is especially useful to reinforce any information already advertised in person or over email. With social media, it is incredibly easy to share information with a wider audience, and there is potential for attendees to share that information with others as well. Additionally, features such as evites on Facebook would allow students to see the attendance list. If they see a professor, student or a pioneer in the field whom they have been wanting to meet and interact with, this would be a perfect opportunity to do so. Moreover, posting event pictures would show the event’s success and turnout, which would further encourage students to be included.

Yet, while social media offers many potential benefits for outreach, ineffective use can actually be detrimental to an organization’s brand. For an organization like ASM, social media success relies on the portrayal of resourcefulness and authenticity. Users want to see clear benefits, whether via intellectual stimulation or entertainment, from following our posts. This can include posting pictures of meetings, events, and of members having a genuine good time in the Society. As well, this can include highlights of member accomplishments and notable events of the present day or through history relating to materials science. Given a large enough chapter, it may be interesting to produce a “Member of the Month” feature series. In any case, posts should be short, vibrant, and stimulating, and should come across as sharing an experience, as opposed to advertising a company.

Social media can be extremely effective, but only if someone in the chapter actually knows how to use it. For example, only posting memes (which, if you don’t know, are essentially a subset of jokes made on the internet that more than not have visual components to them) while completely understanding how they work will make the organization look authentic and relatable. This can be an excellent opportunity for recruiting a student member into the chapter leadership, as discussed above in this document. With the
right person or team running the social media platforms, ASM can increase their brand awareness, give the society a personal touch, stay relevant, build a positive reputation, promote content, boost sales and event attendance, and engage a larger membership demographic.
4.0 Future Directions

With the vast diversity present in materials, ASM must be up-to-date with dynamic research trends, and the society must be in a position to provide the necessary resources to students from all branches of the field. In order to implement this, student-led initiatives can be created at the university level to communicate their interests and needs for newer and developing areas in materials science. These student-led initiatives could directly report to ASM or work together with the corresponding committees at ASM. Additionally, with the increase in digital content available and required for material science, students can play a major role in the development of tools for easy storage, accessibility and analysis of data. All of this together would provide a complete package that would stimulate the students’ interest to join, be a part of and evolve with ASM.

5.0 Contact Us

We greatly appreciate your feedback, and we are always striving to improve this toolkit with new ideas. Please do not hesitate to contact us at StudentTrustees@asminternational.org and we will work to incorporate your suggestions into the next version of this document.

Thank you for your commitment to ASM International and your ongoing efforts towards enhancing student engagement!