ORGANIZING MANUAL

The Roosevelt Institution is a national student think tank created to connect students' ideas to the policy process and to train a new generation of leaders.

DEMAND

In recent years, we've seen the political process become more political. Candidates spend more time raising money and less making policy, appointments and roles that used to be apolitical are now involved in policy promotion, messaging has become centralized, and the compromising center has been eroded away to ideological extremes.

At the same time, an increasingly influential professional vision and policy apparatus has developed outside the formal policy process. As politicians have refocused on the day-to-day partisan battles, the job of developing long-term national policy has been outsourced to mostly nonprofit think tanks, to columnists, and to the academy.

This third-sector policymaking apparatus was realized at a time when the Democrats dominated the D.C. political process. The new think tank movement, accordingly, was dominated by policymakers in exile – those who had to come up with a long-term vision because they were shut out of the short-term decision-making. The think tanks were born conservative, espousing a radical right-wing anti-society individualism.

This could not have happened at a worse time for our country. As technology transforms our workplace and offers the opportunities and challenges of truly global competition, as the international arena poses new threats and offers a new chance to build a cooperative world of shared prosperity and peace, as we address issues in energy, climate change, bioethics, and science research that previous generations would have deemed fanciful – we need a government willing to think pragmatically and build institutions and systems to address these new problems.

We can't afford an intellectual landscape dominated by everyone for themselves at a time when it's more necessary than ever to work together.

Confronted by this problem, we looked to history. America has been confronted by new challenges in the past, and has always risen to the task. We looked in particular to three great leaders, Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Teddy saw a government that had not yet caught up with a new economic age, and so took the trusts to task, made laws to protect workers' right to unionize, and made the economy fair for everyone. He saw environmental degradation on a scale that wasn't previously imagined, and so established a new kind of environmental movement. And he saw that America's role in the world had changed, and that we could no longer afford to leave international affairs to the other great powers.

Franklin saw an economy ruined by the great depression and the need to get everyone back to work. He established Social Security to protect pensioners, the SEC to regulate the stock market, and the FDIC to protect bank deposits. And he mustered America's might to save the world from fascism.

Eleanor saw the dehumanizing scourge of total war and, serving as U.S. special delegate to the U.N. and chair of the Human Rights Commission authored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nationally, she worked towards the integration of public schools, opposed McCarthyism, and championed the underdog until the day she died.

These leaders represent the great bipartisan progressive tradition of America. While we don't agree with everything they did, we commend their spirit: each saw the new challenges our country faced and was determined to work together to confront them.

The Roosevelt Institution adopts this as our sole ideology: we believe that societies face collective challenges and that we can and should work together to confront them. When government is seen this way, we believe it can be a positive force to improve peoples' lives and make our country great. This spirit of hope and pragmatism is the essence, we believe, of America's progressive tradition and the core of our generation's political philosophy.

These leaders were successful because they built their politics on a foundation of good ideas. When they shared their convictions with the American people and made the case for new programs and a new direction, hope triumphed over fear. When others said that problems could not be confronted, they were ready with solutions, and the American people believed in their vision.

To provide the foundation for a new generation of progressive politics, America needs a group of progressives situated outside the day-to-day political process, developing new solutions for the new challenges facing our society.

SUPPLY

We believe such a group exists. America's fifteen million college students are a progressive think tank waiting to be identified, recognized, and organized.

As students, our job is to learn about the world. Through classes, theses and research projects, extracurricular activities, academic programs, and interaction with the university environment, we acquire intellectual capital. Our education is not only about absorbing facts but also identifying problems and developing solutions.

We are an ideal source of a new generation of progressive ideas. We're young and ideologically unburdened, we understand the changing nature of society, and we know we have a bigger stake than anybody else – we're talking about what sort of a world we want to

inherit. Other think tanks have Nobel laureates and former secretaries of state. We have future Nobel laureates and secretaries of state in training.

People will listen to our ideas.

We can offer our generation's perspective on the future of social security, on the job market, on education and job training. We can offer our campuses' academic strengths, for example in biotechnology and Internet research. We can offer personal insights – our perspective on progressive religious perspectives or what it means to be a feminist is just as valid as any other. On local issues, we can provide analysis that might otherwise be absent. And on any issue of national debate we can offer research and fact-checking skills equivalent to the research assistants and interns who would be putting together briefings on the Hill or for reporters.

We offer our collective perspective as young people, the academic strengths of our campuses, our own personal insights and experiences, our local grounding, and our research skills. Together, these advantages make our perspective valuable on almost anything.

We have not had trouble gaining access to grown-ups. Policymakers, experts, and politicians have without exception been excited about this project and eager to connect with us. They are eager to have young people involved, excited about our ideas, and enthusiastic to pass on their expertise and passion to a new generation.

But even if nobody listens, this project will still be worthwhile.

Our generation has been depoliticized. We volunteer more than any previous generation, we perform community service, we stay informed about current events. But we haven't typically been involved in the policy process. We'll tutor in failing schools, but we won't head to state capitols to lobby to get those schools back on track. We'll clean beaches, but we won't campaign for politicians who will tighten pollution standards. We'll organize blood drives, but we won't propose new healthcare legislation. We'll protest, but we won't vote.

As Thoreau observed, if you chop your own wood it warms you twice. The action of promoting our policy will make us better public citizens, more prepared to interact with the policy process in the future. The Roosevelt Institution will create networks both within our generation and between our generation and current policymakers, and will develop media, research, legislative, and communications skills that will serve our members into the future.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTION

The only remaining task is to connect this intellectual capital to the policymaking process. Most people who have access have developed it over years of creating networks, developing skills, and building a reputation. Because students are not in a position to accumulate long-standing ties, they need a long-standing and established organization to accrue and retain

these resources on their behalf. While policy insiders may publish an op-ed by sending it to their pal at the Washington Post op-ed page, students will need to send it to an organizational pal at the op-ed page. The organization must combine a collective rolodex, establish a reputation for quality, and build networks on behalf of fellows. Each generation of students will inherit this collective organizational network, and each will leave it stronger for next year's membership.

In order to achieve this organizational goal, campus chapters are divided into two sections, an administrative section and a policy section. The policy section is divided into between five and fifteen issue-focused centers, for example, the center on education, or the center on healthcare, or the center on international security. Each center has a broad-based student membership of between about fifteen and about a hundred students interested in that issue-area. As of March 2005, the largest center was Stanford's Center on International Democracy, Development, and Health, with just over eighty active members.

the policy research process

The core of the Roosevelt Institution model is the fellow doing policy research within a center. We have developed three research models.

The first is a fellow-driven model, in which a fellow comes in with significant course work, extracurricular work, or expertise in their chosen issue-area. In this case, the goal is simply to prepare the work for presentation as policy and put it on the right person's desk. While fellows participating in this research model are encouraged to attend meetings to discuss their research and comment on others' work, this is a good way for people to participate who don't have time for another weekly meeting.

The second research model is group-driven. The Roosevelt Institution brings together groups of people with similar interests but diverse backgrounds. When environmental engineers, conservation biologists, and environmental law students get together, we see new connections and the potential for group projects. Likewise, giving fellows access to a group and a discussion forum can allow us to see niches in the policy discourse that we can fill.

In the demand-driven third research model, fellows turn to outside experts for advice on policy papers that will be effective and will find a market in the outside world. Advocacy organizations, policymakers, and fellows at other think tanks will have a strong sense of high-salience issues that are not being addressed. These research proposals are adopted or not by the fellows based on their salience and interest. We are working with our lawyers to develop a formal process for accepting research proposals. It is worth noting that we have accepted research projects from organizations that don't endorse candidates, organizations that endorse mostly Republicans, and organizations that endorse mostly Democrats.

We expect that each center at each school will eventually participate in each of these types of research simultaneously, based on the interests of the center's membership. Groups composed mostly of underclassmen may lean toward the last two models, while groups with a high

number of grad students or seniors may lean toward the first model due to greater existing expertise, but the key is flexibility so that each fellow or potential fellow can contribute in the best way they are equipped to.

center organization

The centers are designed to facilitate the research process.

Centers will have very different resources, needs, and memberships available to them, and so a one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate. However, each center does have a similar set of functions it must fulfills for its members. As chapters organize, centers will be offered a menu of organizational ideas and options which they can adapt to best fit their needs. Each center has several functions:

- Centers recruit and maintain advisors within the specific issue-area of relevance. Advisors will typically be faculty members, though non-faculty specialist advisors from the community are also a great resource. Some centers which coordinate with multiple academic departments may wish to appoint liaison students within each major.

- Centers are responsible for member recruitment. Though each member should be an evangelical for the entire organization, centers should make recruitment plans and be in contact with related student groups, academic departments, graduate programs, and so on.

- Centers will play an active role in policy promotion by keeping track of the important media in the issue-area – for example, magazines, popular blogs, important columnists, prominent think tanks and institutions, etc., and by keeping track of resources that will be useful to fellows studying this issue area.

- Centers will coordinate fellow development activities with the rest of the chapter. Some things – workshops on "what is policy" and "how do you write a policy paper" – will probably be chapter-wide, but some will likely be more specific – "framing foreign policy for the American public."

- Centers will provide internal expertise to help guide student research. More senior center members may, for example, be organized into an initial advising board that will read draft policy proposals and steer more junior students toward resources they may not yet know about. This will also provide policy-promotion staff with a sense of where the work should be placed – an interesting reframing of a well-known debate should go in a campus publication or a popular blog, while a genuinely new policy idea should be steered toward policymakers themselves.

- Centers provide writing and research support, for example, peer editing or an audience for a presentation of student work.

- Centers can create subcommittees and working groups for group projects or specific interests. For example, the center on science and technology might start a bioethics subgroup that meets regularly to talk about those issues, or the center on progressive religious perspectives might start a working group on faith-based initiatives to develop a positive set of policy proposals in that issue area.

- Centers play a strong internal-education role. Educating different progressive constituency groups about each others' issues is a core goal. Centers may wish to produce collective backgrounders about the issues they are working on for the rest of the group to digest.

- Centers maintain their area of the website. Technical skills beyond basic computer literacy are not required, but centers should have a point person who is responsible for ensuring that the center's web space accurately reflects what is going on. While this may seem like a task that can be saved for later, having up-to-date web space can be a great tool for bringing in new members and getting them up to speed.

- Centers are responsible for their own leadership and succession planning. In addition to a director with general responsibility and a policy promotion representative to liaise with the communications part of the organization, centers should make sure to appoint other officers and distribute responsibility. The specific organizational needs of each center will differ, but each will benefit from broad buy-in, diffuse responsibility, and smooth succession in an environment where each individual is transient. Directors are elected by the center membership; other officers may be elected or appointed by the director at her or his discretion.

- Centers are responsible for proposing appropriate events to their campus events teams. For example, if a prominent policymaker is visiting campus or is local to the area, the center may wish to host an event with the speaker. Policymakers' time is a scarce resource and it's very important to use it as is best for the group. Rather than bringing the person to speak to a campus-public audience and have the group's name listed as the sponsor, better to have the fellows of one or two pertinent centers read the expert's work, put together a policy proposal, email it to her or him in advance, and then have a small-group discussion about the work.

In a typical center meeting, fellows might go around and talk about new projects they were thinking of working on, talk about what other campus groups and departments are up to (e.g. event announcements), see a brief presentation of ongoing research by an undergraduate, grad student, or faculty member and discuss it, bring in a news article or pertinent issue for the members to comment on, peer edit papers or coordinate group work, meet with an outside specialist or expert, have a discussion about some problem and talk about progressive positioning on the issue, or talk about unsolved niches in the field that the center might occupy. Depending on the relative composition of the three research models, some fellows may not need to come to meetings at all, whereas some will have meetings that are vital to coordinating ongoing group work. It's important to balance the meetings being useful to the fellows and the organization with making them not feel like another class the students are

taking. If the school allows it, making academic credit available for active participation and research (e.g. through student initiated courses) may make seminar-style work more palatable.

The directors of each center together form the leadership of the policy section of the chapter. They are assisted by a policy director or center development director. This person shares best-practices among the centers, helps ensure that centers always have successful leadership, coordinates projects that have interdisciplinary interest, helps plan fellow development activities, and helps coordinate center activities with the administrative section of the organization.

the administrative section

The administrative section serves the centers and helps them to fulfill their mission. Each chapter's administrative needs will be different, but there will be some commonalities. Administrative needs are fulfilled by committees, each led by a director – for example, an events committee and an events director. Here are each organization's potential administrative needs:

- *Events:* Chapters will need to plan two types of events: institution-driven events such as a launch event or a presentation about the organization to new or potential members, and center-driven events such as policy presentations or speaker events. In new chapters the former will be dominant, while in established chapters the latter will start to take over.

An events director should be above all a perfectionist who can keep a lot of balls in the air at one time. Events fail because one part of them fail – the speaker didn't get directions, the room reservation never got confirmed, the food arrived two hours late, the adapter for the projector wasn't compatible with the DVD player, not enough cars were available to get people to the site. It is absolutely critical to take photos at every event.

On many campuses, only one or two group members will be permitted to reserve space on campus. It is essential that this person be the events director, even if that means making the events director the nominal head of the organization as far as the university administration is concerned.

- *Finance:* Keeping the books, making sure the budget is balanced, authorizing expenditures, writing checks and coordinating reimbursements. This will typically be one hyper-anal, firm, and rule-oriented person.

- *Fundraising:* Chapter financial needs will typically be modest but significant. The main four sources of funding will be student-group money, faculty and community donations, traditional fundraising such as house parties, and grants from the national organization. Fundraising is important because it raises community awareness of your group and builds a base of supporters who have a vested interest. Financial support is an important byproduct of fundraising, but is certainly not the only goal.

The fundraising team will work with events to plan donor events and with communications to keep up relationships with supporters. Asking for checks is a very specialized skill and takes time to become comfortable with. If you can find someone with fundraising experience for this position, it will be to your advantage.

- *Development:* Ties to outside institutions such as local think tanks or well-respected advocacy groups can be very advantageous to your chapter. The development person or group makes the pitch to outside groups to develop ties useful to the organization. Besides being professional and making a good pitch, a good development person must be a clear organizational team player, who is clearly promoting the group rather than its development director and is eager to share contacts. Development and fundraising are at times indistinguishable tasks, but the group will want to develop some relationships that are primarily for money and some that are primarily for other things.

One of the main functions of this group will be to develop and maintain relations with the group's advisory board, locally-prominent individuals who have agreed to be helpful to the group and lend their public support and legitimacy. Good advisory board members include elected representatives from the campus area and prominent faculty members.

- *Institutionalization:* Campuses have many available administrative resources to organizations that can take advantage of them. Registering with the student government or the student activities office for funding, with a community service or public service or public policy school or center for access to photocopying, office space, and meeting space, with academic institutions for student-initiated courses, etc., can help empower the group dramatically. Typically this will be the responsibility of one or two people who can be counted on to give a really good pitch to an administrator.

- *Communications:* Communications will be one of the largest responsibilities of the organization. It can be divided into two tasks, institutional promotion and policy promotion.

Institutional promotion is important especially during the early stages, as the group establishes itself on campus and builds a name in the community. The institutional promotion group will write press releases, produce fliers and documents about the group, and attempt to legitimize the group itself in the media. The audiences for this group are threefold: the student body (potential members), faculty and community members (potential supporters), and the members of the group itself who will want to stay up-to-date on the exciting things the organization is doing – for example, through a weekly digest email.

The policy promotion administrative unit will work with the policy promotion representatives within each center to place center pieces in the media or policy world. As the group develops, this will become the largest administrative function the organization performs.

It is of absolute importance to maintain tight control of message. A typical strategy in other organizations is to fire someone on the spot if they talk to the press without talking to the

communications director. While we aren't like that, it's very important that there be one control-point for message.

In one case, a campus conservative publication asked dozens of members individually whether progressive was basically a synonym for liberal and Democrat, until the reporter got the answer he wanted. Subtle deviations from message can really hurt the organization, especially because press sources typically refer to past press coverage in writing their reports. What you say to your campus paper could end up in the New York Times.

Because of this tight control, a media or communications director will need above all to be a team player. The press contact is not the person who answers the questions and gets their name in the paper, but the person who coordinates media to make sure everyone shares the limelight and is on message.

This committee may also want to hold media trainings and bring in experts to help people learn how to be effective media spokespeople, and hold message sessions and collect talking points and answers to common questions to help spokespeople better promote the organization.

- *Design:* This will probably be just one or two people. The organization will need to produce attractive flyers, web documents, graphics, letterhead, t-shirts, etc.

- *Writing:* A writing team (e.g. English or Journalism majors) will edit documents for style once their content has been approved by the centers can improve the quality and professionalism of each chapter's products. Not all products will be written, by the way – thinking outside the box and to produce new types of products will help your group get extra access. Think video and radio pieces, exhibits and installations, cartoons, poems and songs.

- *Internal communication:* As a large group of transient folks, regular updates and good archives are key to organizational unity, continuity, and success. The internal coordination administrative unit will be the person or people who keep track of exactly what each part of the chapter is doing, and who sends everyone a weekly update. As your organization grows, it is important to make sure that it does not begin to spiral into several loosely connected groups, and to find ways for the promote synergy between the research committees.

This group will also keep the archives, make sure notes are taken at meetings, and make sure group membership is kept in a central database or spreadsheet in a way that is continuous and accessible. After a major organizational event – a big press hit, a successful donor pitch, a great launch event, or a failed speaker series – this person will make sure a "lessons learned" document is produced to keep that intellectual capital within the organization even after the people involved have left.

- *Technology:* The group will need someone to maintain the group's web space on rooseveltinstitution.org in coordination with the communications team. Basic HTML is the

only skill required, but it's very important since web presence is one of the main ways to promote the group.

- *Professional development:* A key purpose of the group is to expand fellows' knowledge and future efficacy in the policy process. Outside groups will often solicit interns or people for summer jobs or offer training courses. This person or group will coordinate that.

- *Publications:* Chapters may want to build a publication to showcase their work. We feel that it is typically stronger to publish campus-audience articles in existing publications rather than to run one in-house, but for an external audience (e.g. those interested in progressive policy at the state level), it might be worthwhile in the long term to put together an in-house publication team to coordinate the printing and distribution of such a document.

Chapters are probably best served by about five administrative committees, which means some different responsibilities will be grouped under one collection of people. The groupings will be different from campus to campus depending on needs and on individual strengths – for example, fundraising and finance might be a logical pair, but one chapter decided to put relations with the administration with finance instead because the chapter wanted the organized and professional finance folks to soothe prickly rule-oriented administrators at that school.

Each committee has a director elected by its members. These directors answer to an executive director, who is responsible for the function of the administrative portion of the organization as a whole. There will typically be overlap among the members of the administrative committees.

The directors of the administrative committees and the policy centers together form the group's board, which collectively has final decision-making power over that chapter. The board may meet weekly or less often. Day-to-day decision-making power is delegated to an executive committee named by the board, of typically three people, the policy/center development director, the administrative/executive director, and typically one other person. Some chapters have found it useful to have this person be a trusted go-between for administrative and policy parts; in some chapters this person is called president or campus coordinator and is basically a cheerleader for the organization as a whole, both on campus, off campus, and within the group. Each of these people is appointed by the board and serves at their pleasure.

In addition to formal decision-making, board meetings serve as an important way for the group to stay updated on each part's activities and to deliberate on organizational vision. Board meetings should therefore be open to the group's membership, with open participation and a norm of consensus where possible. People who show up at board meetings despite not having a role are typically potential leaders who have not yet been given a title.

a national network

Chapters are autonomous in their decision-making, but gain a lot from affiliation with the national network, which exists solely to serve their needs.

The student think tank is an idea shared by many. As we integrate with others who had the same or a similar idea at the same time, we expect that our organizational model will adapt to reflect the diversity of groups operating under the Roosevelt Institution banner, both in sharing best practices and in offering a broader menu of choices for center and chapter organization.

We believe that we are stronger united. This does not mean we intend to enforce national positions on issues. This means only that a national brand will be more successful in building the reputation, networks, and recognition that will make us successful than a collection of university groups could alone. The Roosevelt Institution currently represents students on 30 campuses from California to Maine to Illinois to Texas. We have established a strong and well-respected brand. On one day we got 1,000 hits to our website from Capitol Hill.

We do not expect the exact same model to work at private research universities, liberal arts colleges, big state schools, and commuter colleges, and so we're offering the model but not imposing it.

Beyond maintaining the national brand, some administrative functions are best fulfilled by the national organization:

- *Legal:* We are legally incorporated as a national 501c3 organization, and are a pro bono client of the law firm Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe. Chapters are automatically included under our 501c3 umbrella, which means they can use our tax ID to open bank accounts and receive tax-deductible donations, both of money for the group and of services and in-kind donations (for example food for events). In the long run, chapters may want to select a liaison to our legal representation to ensure they are compliance with 501c3 status.

- *Development:* The national organization is best positioned to contact national foundations and angel investors to provide sustainable resources for the organization and to help it grow. The development group will also work with the national advisory board to help place policy and provide legitimacy. These established networks will make it easier for campus chapters to start up.

- *Finance:* The national organization can help fund chapter-level activities through startup support and grants for special projects and chapter maintenance.

- *Technology:* Most of our technological needs are identical between chapters. The national organization can coordinate the development of a national website that can serve the needs of all the chapters.

- *Publications:* We're going to edit an annual and eventually quarterly publication, the *Roosevelt Review*, which will collect the best of our work and put in the hands of key policymakers at the national and state level.

- *Events:* Certain national organizations coordinate national speaker or event series. The national events network will partner with these groups to help bring more events to campus for Roosevelt.

- *Conferences:* Getting students together on a national level...

- *Organizing:* So far, our organizing strategy has been "answer the phone" – we haven't actually done any outreach because we wanted to focus on making our organization excellent rather than trying to mass-produce a product we hadn't yet perfected. In the coming months as the chapter model and national structure stabilize we expect to have a much stronger national organizing presence.

- *Best practices:* The national organization will include an officer similar to the center development director who will share best practices among the chapters and develop the refine the model with a menu of options suitable for a broad range of campuses.

- *Policy promotion coordination:* When we can coordinate on policy promotion, we believe this will be particularly effective. Introducing students in different parts of the country working on a similar project, and putting one joint document on the desks of Congress members, will make our voice more powerful. When presented with this opportunity, chapters have been eager to work on joint projects.

- *Communications:* As a national organization, we want national press. We are more likely to get this speaking as a national group, and we want the press to focus not just on the most-developed chapters but also up-and-coming efforts and on the organization's diversity.

Fundamentally, we are a service organization: the national administration exists to serve the chapters, which exist to serve the centers, which exist to serve their fellows. Our goal is to empower students to realize their ideas and develop themselves as policy agents.

Though we have national administrative committees with defined portfolios, we have not yet developed a formal national decision-making structure. We expect to formalize this at a national conference this summer.

the policy-promotion process

Quick overview of how an idea gets out into the world:

1. Students in the course of their studies accumulate intellectual capital
2. An idea is developed by a fellow or a center's working group

3. Center members offer commentary, resources, and support in developing a written product, and review the draft document
4. The writing team revises the document for style and presentation
5. Center faculty advisors or other experts are invited to comment on the document and further advise the author
6. The center's policy promotion representative, based on the advice of center members, recommends a type of outlet for the document (specialized blog, interest magazine, think tank or institution, campus media, local or student hometown media, state, local, or national policymaker)
7. The national policy-promotion contact for that policy area makes the author aware of other similar efforts where applicable
8. Communications or development at the chapter or national level leverage our network of contacts to gain trusted access the target audience
9. The design team puts together a final presentation of the document
10. The policy promotion contact lobbies for the idea and puts the student in contact with the relevant policymakers.

By the end of the process, the idea has been connected with the right audience and the world becomes a slightly better place; the student has access to a new network and new skills; and Roosevelt's reputation for a high-quality and innovative product has been reinforced.

ORGANIZING

The key to the organization's success is connecting existing intellectual capital to the policy process. The first step therefore must be identifying underutilized intellectual capital.

Get some folks together and make a list of all of the academic departments, student groups, faculty projects, senior thesis topics, big issues at policy or journalism schools, and hot stuff you think people would be interested in. Then make a list of every individual, group, department, or organization that you know is working on that issue. For example, on feminism we had people in the pro-choice group, the fem studies department, the vagina monologues cast, the women's international health group, and some people we knew personally. On international security we had two academic classes we wanted to recruit from, the political science and IR undergraduate and graduate programs, the Israel Alliance and the Muslim Student Awareness Network.

More topics will mean you can recruit a broader audience, but be prepared to merge issue-areas for the time being if recruitment seems to be going slowly. Keep the list of topics flexible – if someone asks why there isn't a center about some given topic, the best answer is "because you haven't put it together yet." Each center, in the end, will be the product of existing intellectual capital and entrepreneurship by a dedicated director or core group. A good idea is not enough – the potential membership has to exist, and someone has to recruit it.

The second step is putting together a general pitch and building an email list. It's important for prospective members to understand the organization's mission, how it operates, what the

group is asking from them, and what issues you hope to be working on. Sections of this document may probably be helpful, and there are more like it scattered around the website. A couple of points:

- The sort of students you're hoping to attract will typically be skeptical of new commitments: "I'm the busiest person on campus, I can't do anything else!" Our answer: "It's precisely because you're so busy that you're the perfect person for our group." We're not asking them to do what they don't already do, we're offering to help them put a multiplier effect behind the effectiveness of what they already do.

- The pitch has to be general. Don't just pitch the international security group to a Muslim group that's been active on Palestine issues – even if that's the focus, you can probably recruit people for immigration, for constitutional and liberty issues, or for progressive religious perspectives.

- We are not trying to take over the campus progressive or political scene. When you tell the leader of an environmental group that you believe every member of their group should be a member of your group, it sounds like you're trying to swallow them. You're not. The Roosevelt Institution is a niche organization that performs a service for students on campus. We're not replacing their functions, dictating policy on their behalf, or trying to control or steal their membership. We're trying to provide a service to them, a very specific service. It does not hurt an environmental group if every member is also a member of thefacebook.com. Likewise, the Roosevelt Institution poses no threat to existing progressive groups.

- People may not initially believe that the organization can be successful. In fact, we have never seen a closed door. If they don't believe it, have a look at our advisory board – we currently have access to every House of Representatives committee, to former defense secretaries and U.N. ambassadors, to statewide elected officials, and to leading think tanks. The New York Times credits our people with this byline: "Robert M. Pringle, Craig H. Segall and Benjamin B. Grant are members of the Committee on Environment and Energy at the Roosevelt Institution, Stanford University." It's already real. To our knowledge, the only person who has been critical of us is a Hoover Institution fellow urging us to stick to our studies. Incidentally, he also claims that Model UN has ruined a whole generation of American diplomats by convincing students that countries can work together.

- Will everything work? Will every essay written by a typical college sophomore turn into legislation? No, of course not. The right has been fighting social security for seventy years and is just now seeing results. Everything contributes to the debate, and you never know when you'll hit the tipping point. Every piece has an audience and the Roosevelt Institution can find the right audience – but it won't all become legislation, of course.

- Most people don't realize they do policy. It's not just public policy classes. Chemistry may have environmental implications. Business and communications are way relevant. Religious studies, yes. Ask people what they're passionate about, what makes them angry when they read the news, what they'd like to change.

- Do we want conservatives or Republicans? YES. It is likely that a majority of our membership may be Democrat-voting. We are a problem-solving organization, not a peddler of tired ideology. Debate helps us. If you identify unrepresented perspectives in the organization, try to recruit people to promote debate.

The third step is to circulate your pitch, either in person or by email, to build a list of interested people. It's absolutely important that you identify people with legitimacy in the communities. Someone who has started a group about gay marriage will have more legitimacy among those interested in the issue than someone who has never worked on it.

Likewise, there are certain highly-networked people who can be very helpful to you on campus. Look for people involved or formerly involved in leadership of student government or large and active political groups and ask them to refer a dozen heavy hitters to you. If you develop a pitch that convinces them, they will typically know a lot of people and be able to confer quick legitimacy. Also ask faculty to forward the pitch, if there are friendly faculty working on a policy-relevant issue.

Three easy ways to start to build lists of names are (1) pitches at organizational meetings, and passing around a sign-in sheet with issue areas, (2) forwarding widely an email with a pitch and a list of issue areas with a specific reply-to address, (3) asking well-networked heavy-hitters for lists of names. The end result will probably be a list of two to twenty people who say they are interested in each issue area. If people are interested "in everything" ask them what they actually work on and force them to choose only one or two. If people don't list a specific interest, bug them. If people say they are interested in something not on your list, (a) see if it's related to something on the list, or (b) ask them to be the first contact for a new center on that list and add it to your standard email.

After you've developed a list of topics, developed a standard pitch, and built a list of email addresses, your fourth objective is to start dividing up tasks. Ask people with policy interests for a quick bio or list of things they've been involved with, and find someone who's interested in taking on a leadership role, at least for the time being. Their main task is to further develop the list of potential recruits and track them all down. You should make sure these people are rock-solid on the pitch and are ready to take tough questions before you send them out into the world – a bad pitch can turn off a constituency as fast as a good one can bring them in. (By the way, soliciting bios is always a good idea, and will be useful for center directors as they take inventory of their members, select interim internal leadership, form working groups, and try to find initial policy papers and issues.)

It is important for you to stress that all of your appointments at this stage are interim. The first person to sign up will very likely not be the best person in the long run to administer the center. In the long run you want someone who is very knowledgeable about the field, can manage people well, is well networked in the student body, and is not about to graduate. In the short run, you want someone who knows a little bit about what they're talking about and is

willing to work. Most people will be more comfortable taking on an interim role anyway, and will grow into it or naturally step aside as someone with more experience comes along.

Appoint interim center directors first and get them started on recruiting, and then begin to develop an informal core group of administrative people. You've offered campus a service, and now is the time to get ready to perform it. Divide up first-round administrative tasks (registering the group, writing first press releases for the student newspaper and if applicable the town newspaper, developing web content, posting a first round of flyers to raise awareness of the group) and see who rises to them. There is plenty to do. One of the first things to make sure you have is a photographer at every event – it will make it much easier to promote the group in the long run.

Once you're past ten members, stop having general group meetings. This is not a campus group like all the rest, and if people are going to spend two hours a week on the group, it shouldn't be in a long discussion meeting. Have committee and center meetings and task-oriented meetings only. This will also have the advantage of forcing people to actually do the recruiting – otherwise they'll have nobody to meet with.

Centers should form email lists right away, but should wait for ten members at least before they go ahead and start meeting. Initial discussion will often be exciting, but it's important to have an agenda also. Ask people to come to first meetings with something – a paper they'd like to work on more, a report on an extracurricular group they're a part of, a news article they'd like to discuss, an issue they'd like to work on, a niche they'd like to see the group fill, etc. Of particular use are a few early already-written policy papers that can be promoted and then used as examples of the group's success.

While centers are growing, the administrative portion of the organization should be looking for early press hits about the new group on campus and starting to plan a launch or kickoff event. If done right, a kickoff can transform an 80-contributing-member organization into a 200-contributing-member organization. The purpose of the kickoff is to transform early buzz into a large group of people who are aware of the group's mission and understand their place in it. You don't need a high-profile speaker for the kickoff – you are presenting the Roosevelt Institution, the thing everyone is talking about. There are more detailed manuals for a kickoff event available.

A few tips on leading a successful startup group:

- You should be thinking about tasks rather than titles. Assigning pretentious titles too early will turn off good talent and lead to organizational stasis. Better to start a first meeting with "Hi, I'm ____, the one who sends out the emails," rather than "I'm _____, the president of this chapter." The more a team player you are and the less you protect your own position, incidentally, the fewer reasons you give people to try to replace you.

- Keeping titles to a minimum will allow you to shuffle people around as the organization's needs and membership change. This is particularly true with the first leaders of the

organization – the best natural leader in the group of twelve is unlikely to be the best natural leader among the next five hundred recruits.

- Because of the sort of talent the Roosevelt Institution typically recruits, many people will be in an organization with people as active, talented, and intelligent as them for the first time. Turf wars are inevitable. Everyone needs to take a big picture outlook. It is important for everyone to remember that no part of the organization is "theirs" – everyone fills a role.

- The main job of the top executives is creating a “go” culture – center and committee directors need to feel confident that their initiative will be valued. A single leader will not be able to build an organization like this alone. The more you inspire the confidence in others to recruit and lead themselves, the larger and more successful the organization will be. Members should consult not with their "superiors" but broadly with the whole group.

After the group's membership explodes, the three main goals are (1) to re-orient the administrative side from the engine of the organization to a service and support group for the centers, (2) to fill out every part of the centers' internal structure and broader administrative structure so there is a functional and regular conduit from the individual fellow to the policy process, and (3) build a sustainable organization that is adapted to your particular campus' needs.

The takeaway organizing principle: think bigger. We expect a dozen launch events in the fall and fifty active chapters by the end of the school year. Though campuses will have different capacities, there's no reason to shoot for less than 25% of campus or 1000 people as members. Our college campuses will look different when we're done. And so will America.