

Networking¹

**“Let it not be said that life was good to us, but, rather, that we were good to life.”
~ Rabbi Jacob P. Rudin**

It is important to work with other organizations on campus and in your community. There are three different types of relationships you can build with these organizations. Each type of relationship meets different needs and yields different rewards.

When thinking about **coalition building**, **partnerships**, and **co-sponsorship**, think strategically about a variety of organizations. Consider both the “usual suspects” and the “unusual suspects” or potential partners. Think about campus organizations, academic departments, and community groups.

The following are general definitions for **coalition building**, **partnerships**, and **co-sponsorship**. These terms may be used differently on your campus. It is important to use the language of your campus.

Coalition Building requires the most specific commitment. A coalition is a group of organizations who are able to work towards an agenda, or strengthen a specific mission by working together. Coalitions can span over a semester, a year, or longer. Coalitions are most successful when the organizations involved have clear communication, are cognizant of each other’s goals, and have clearly defined expectations for involvement in the coalition.

For example, it may be useful to form a coalition of organizations to work together on voter education, registration, and mobilization efforts. For instance, by forming a coalition with American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), the campus radio/tv station, and the College Democrats and College Republicans you have the opportunity to reach a wide scope of campus, get your message out, and each of the organizations is able to fulfill its goal of increasing student activism and encouraging civic participation.

**Remember:* Coalitions form around a common issue, therefore there may be times when a groups you have never worked with before may suddenly be a part of your coalition because of their interest in the issue.

Partnerships are another way of working together with one or more organizations. Generally, a partnership involves a small number of organizations who build strong interpersonal relations between the members of each organization. In doing so, they increase the communication between the membership which translates into increased participation at each other’s events.

¹ Hillel’s Guide to Social Justice Programming

For example, Hillel may have an on-going partnership with the Women's Resource Center. The advisors and professionals in Hillel and the Women's Resource Center are familiar with each other's resources, programming, upcoming opportunities, and the student leadership of each organization. There is likely an overlap in the students who are involved with both groups, which leads to the promotion and participation in each other's events.

Co-sponsorship is a third way to work together with a wide variety of campus organizations. This relationship is usually defined by a specific short-term commitment, like financial support, requiring a liaison to attend planning meetings, promising a certain percentage of student participation, publicity, or any other number of things. The terms for co-sponsorship are up to you and should be considered in light of your needs and the potential benefits for involving other specific organizations. You can target specific groups and ask them to co-sponsor an event or you can present the opportunity to the entire campus and see who responds.

For example, Hillel may ask the Women's Panhellenic Association and the Inter-Fraternity Council to co-sponsor a motivational speaker. Co-sponsorship is also beneficial for awareness weeks or conferences. For instance, Hillel may work with the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, Oxfam America, the Campus Y, and the campus ministries to plan events to raise awareness and action on issues related to hunger and homelessness the week before Thanksgiving. Each group may sponsor a different activity/program during the week.

Coalition Building²

Objective:

A group of organizations who are able to work towards an agenda, or strengthen a specific mission by working together.

Definition:

A coalition is a group of organizations that maintain their individual and unique identity and recognize that in working together they have the potential to be more successful in reaching a specific goal, broadcasting a specific message, or taking a specific action.

Remember:

- A coalition needs to be well-organized in order to be effective.
- A coalition needs a specific agenda and clearly defined set of expectations, obligations, and benefits.

Consider:

- Coalitions enlarge your resource base by bringing together a larger number of people, generating a greater amount of enthusiasm, and potentially providing you more funding.
- Coalitions attract a variety of student activists! When building coalitions, you will inevitably discover that partners provide a variety of leadership and programming skills.
- You and your message will gain credibility on campus when you build coalitions.

QUESTION & ANSWER:

- **How do you build a strong relationship?**
By consistently using clear communication; demonstrating that you are reliable; being respectful and trustworthy; exhibiting a strong organization; and by following-through on specific tasks and objectives. It takes time, hard work and a good rapport to build a strong relationship.
- **How do you build a strong coalition?**
By working with student leaders from well-organized organizations; meeting on a regular, scheduled, basis; working off of a clear and well-defined agenda that is focused on taking action.
- **Whose responsibility is it to build coalitions?**
Clearly, this varies for each campus and each situation; however, do not hesitate to take initiative. Within a specific context, this may mean contacting individual/s or an organization directly, discussing the idea with a student board, and sharing your interest with a Hillel professional, advisor, faculty member, or community partner.

² Ibid

- **How can you be strategic when forming coalitions?**

It is important that you build coalitions after you evaluate your needs and resources. You should not build coalitions with individuals or organizations just because you like them, it is convenient, or because in the past you have had a personal relationship with the individuals or organization.

Think about what you want and need to accomplish. Then, look in the right places. Which individuals or organization will best understand your needs, your target population, your goals, and your methodology for programming? Do your research. With whom do the individuals or organization partner? What are they doing? What can be learned from past experiences?

- **What should you look for in a coalition partner?**

Assess your resources and needs. Then, identify individuals and organizations with similar responsibilities. In addition, find out what the individuals or organizations is involved with, interested in, and hoping to achieve in the short and long-run. Next, consider the methodology that the individuals or organization utilizes; is it effective? Do the goals and/or resources of the individuals or organization help you attain your goals? How?

*Partnerships*³

Objective:

To have an on-going reliable relationship with an organization which you respect and whose leadership you trust.

Definition:

A partnership is an informal yet important interpersonal relationship between the members of a specific organization. Partnerships are formed because of mutual interests, social enjoyment, and recognition of the practical opportunities to work together on an on-going basis.

Remember:

- A partnership can form between the student leaders, professionals, and advisors.
- There are no real “rules” to a partnership; however, you should always be honest and reliable.
- Your partnership will be more successful and enjoyable when you are familiar with each other and each other’s organizations. Partnerships should not be burdensome.

Top Ten Reason To Form Partnerships

1. Partnering can lead to creative and innovative programs
2. Partner agencies offer Jewish and secular internships and career opportunities
3. Partnering can provide additional financial resources and grants
4. Partner agency representatives can be wonderful mentors for you
5. Partners have amazing volunteer programs locally, nationally and internationally
6. Partners offer incredible opportunities to study locally, nationally and internationally
7. Partner agencies can help you create memorable religious and cultural celebrations
8. Partnering adds credibility and strength to your messages
9. Partnering engages a diverse group of student activists
10. Partnering can dramatically increase your program offerings

QUESTION & ANSWER

- **Why should we create partnerships?**
Partnerships provide additional opportunities and resources for you and your peers. By creating partnerships, you are expanding the realm of programmatic possibilities.
- **How do you create a strong partnership?**
Partnerships require consistent and honest communication. The individuals involved need to get to know each other and each other’s organizations.

³ Ibid

- **How is a partnership different than a coalition?**

A partnership is a casual and ongoing relationship that is not necessarily focused around a specific agenda or action. Partnerships are based upon the important values of trust and respect, tangibles like shared resources, friendly relationships, and recognition of mutual interest.

- **Whose responsibility is it to create a partnership?**

Often, partnerships form naturally or are the result of an ongoing relationship between two or more individuals who either work together in another venue or are friendly.

*Co-sponsorship*⁴

Objective:

To add diversity, financial resources, and increase publicity for a program or event you are sponsoring.

Definition:

Co-sponsorship is the opportunity for an organization to endorse a specific program or event. The endorsement can be defined by a specific set of requirements, obligations, and benefits for both organizations.

Remember:

- Assess your needs. What are you looking to achieve? What do you still need? How can specific organizations help you meet those needs?
- Co-sponsorship often requires a financial commitment. Be realistic. Try and offer different levels of co-sponsorship or financial commitment in order to include a variety of groups.
- Do not hesitate to extend the commitment beyond money. Ask organizations to send a representative to a meeting before and/or after the event. Or you can ask organizations to provide publicity for the event. Be creative.

QUESTION & ANSWER:

- **How do we co-sponsor?**
Co-sponsorship may require a financial commitment, endorsing a mission statement, helping publicize an event or helping plan and execute a program.
- **How is co-sponsorship different than partnering?**
Co-sponsorship can be relied upon for one specific event or conference.
- **Why should we ask other organizations to co-sponsor our programs?**
Co-sponsorship has the potential to be rewarding for all organizations involved. First, it adds diversity- in terms of those involved with planning the program and those who attend the program. Second, it is a respected way of gathering additional resources. Further, when applying for grants from Hillel's International Center, your student government, or any other organization, you are demonstrating a certain degree of organization and commitment when other organizations are sponsoring your event. Third, each organization brings specific strengths, skills, and networks to the table. Another organization may be able to help secure a speaker or a venue for an event.

⁴ Ibid

- **Who should we ask to co-sponsor our programs?**

Anyone and everyone. When thinking about partnering, it is good to be practical and think of who else is interested in a specific topic or issue, which students would you like to engage, which organization already has unique resources or access to a fun opportunity. Find out which other campus organizations Jewish students are involved with and utilize the students who are involved with Jewish student life and these other organizations.

- **Should we always co-sponsor?**

The challenge is to balance your own programming. There are other Jewish organizations with which you can sponsor events. Also, there are many athletic, service, Greek, performing arts, and academic organizations with which you can work. On one hand, it is important, and fun, to work with a variety of campus groups throughout the year. On the other hand, it is also important that you maintain your identity as a Jewish organization. You do not need to co-sponsor every program. Keep in mind that you could co-sponsor a study break with just one organization as opposed to working with ten co-sponsors for a leadership event.

- **When should we co-sponsor a different organization's programs?**

If: you are interested in the program; you think other Jewish students are interested in the event; you think it is important for the Jewish community to add its voice and commitment; you want the opportunity to work with friends in different organizations; you want to learn more about working with a specific organization; you just want to do it for fun or to share your resources . . .then co-sponsor.