

The Leadership Challenge

The Leadership Challenge is a program intended to reward **Tier 1 Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs)** for their dedication and participation on campus. This program provides opportunities for organizations to invest in their leadership and organizational development through a series of tasks involving workshops, leadership training, campus events, and more.

The Leadership Challenge was created to ensure that student organization leaders are properly equipped to lead their organizations successfully and to utilize all available resources on campus. The goals of this program are to:

- Recognize and award student organizations for their involvement and outreach on campus,
- Help student organizations achieve their goals,
- Develop leadership skills and knowledge of students in the RSO community,
- Ensure that RSOs are aware of university policies, procedures, and resources,
- Promote responsibility, respect, and positive experiences through student organizations.

This program provides organization leaders with information on the policies and requirements associated with RSOs on campus, an in-depth overview of 'Cuse Activities, and effective strategies to succeed as a student leader at Syracuse University.

The Leadership Challenge will be open from August 24, 2025, to April 28, 2026, for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Points accumulated toward the Leadership Challenge can be tracked through the Blackboard Organization for Recognized Student Organizations. Only points recorded through this platform will be included in an organization's final point total. Only presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, or equivalent executive board members are eligible to earn credit toward their RSO for attending various workshops and events. While other RSO members are encouraged to attend, they cannot earn credit for the Leadership Challenge.

Competency-Based Leadership Challenge

Below is a list of suggested leadership competencies for all executive board members, along with specific competencies for each of the core for roles: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer/Fiscal Agent.

Tier 1 executive board members who opt into the challenge will receive a list of action item options for developing each competency through a 'Cuse Activities pathway. Participants can complete up to six action items each to earn incentives for their organization. See the list of competencies below.

General Executive Board Member Competencies

COMPETENCY #1: LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Guides the organization toward its mission and strategic goals.
- Recognizes and utilizes members' strengths effectively.
- Holds self and others accountable.
- Fosters an inclusive environment through teambuilding, collaboration, and strategic planning.
- Demonstrates the ability to influence and inspire others.
- Maintains continuous and productive relationships with the organization's faculty advisor and RSO consultant.

COMPETENCY #2: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

- Focuses energy on achieving key goals.
- Anticipates and mitigates emerging risks and opportunities.
- Aligns the organization's efforts across all levels.
- Facilitates course corrections as needed.
- Collaborates with others to define and refine goals.
- Attracts and retains talented and ambitious team members.

COMPETENCY #3: EVENT PLANNING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Applies effective programming and event planning practices.
- Manages personnel and financial resources responsibly.
- Communicates effectively to engage others in event planning and project management.
- Implements appropriate risk management strategies.
- Delegates tasks and ensures accountability among committee members.

President/General Manager/Editor-in-Chief Competencies

COMPETENCY #1: AMBITION AND FORWARD-THINKING

- Envisions the organization's potential growth and success.
- Identifies and addresses challenges to break the status quo.
- Encourages members to achieve their fullest potential.
- Develops long-term strategies for organizational sustainability.

COMPETENCY #2: DELEGATION AND FACILITATION

- Establishes committees and delegates tasks effectively.

- Recognizes team members' strengths and fosters active participation.
- Provides leadership development opportunities.
- Ensures the team has resources to achieve goals.
- Maintains a healthy work-life balance.

COMPETENCY #3: LEADERSHIP AND EXPERIENCE

- Makes informed decisions on organizational issues and initiatives.
- Oversees official communications and final decisions
- Leads executive board and general body meetings.
- Maintains strong communication with the Student Engagement office.
- Adheres to relevant policies and procedures.

Vice-President Competencies

COMPETENCY #1: COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

- Maintains regular communication with the president and the rest of the executive board.
- Remains informed about all organizational activities and communications.
- Manages communication related to organizational elections and transition procedures.
- Demonstrates strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Effectively mediates conflicts.

COMPETENCY #2: LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC THINKING

- Leads active committees and reports updates at board meetings.
- Provides support and collaboration to the president.
- Demonstrates visionary thinking and sound decision-making skills

COMPETENCY #3: ENGAGEMENT AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT

- Encourages and motivates team members.
- Supports leadership development within the organization.
- Promotes inclusive and active participation.
- Facilitates productive group discussions.

Secretary Competencies

COMPETENCY #1: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

- Documents meeting minutes, decisions, and action items accurately and thoroughly.
- Maintains organized records of bylaws, documents, and correspondence.
- Manages tasks efficiently, including agenda preparation, scheduling, and communication.

COMPETENCY #2: COMMUNICATION AND FACILITATION

- Drafts clear and professional correspondence.
- Relays important information to members, officers, and stakeholders.
- Captures and distributes key meeting points, ensuring follow-ups are completed.

COMPETENCY #3: COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK

- Works closely with the executive board to ensure smooth internal operations.
- Keeps members informed and engaged through regular updates.
- Mediates misunderstandings and ensures clarity in written communications.

Treasurer/Fiscal Agent Competencies

COMPETENCY #1: BUDGETING AND FORECASTING

- Develops and maintains an accurate budget aligned with organizational goals.
- Anticipates financial needs for future events and initiatives.
- Justifies financial decisions and transactions.
- Collaborates efficiently and effectively with the Student Engagement office for purchasing and payments.

COMPETENCY #2: COMPLIANCE AND EXPERIENCE

- Adheres to financial policies and regulations.
- Guides executive board members through financial planning and decisions.
- Utilizes spreadsheets and 'Cuse Activities budget request tools proficiently.
- Protects sensitive information and handles finances responsibly and ethically.

COMPETENCY #3: DATA MANAGEMENT

- Monitors expenses to ensure responsible financial management.
- Maintains accurate financial records, including receipts, invoices, and reports.
- Presents financial statements as needed.
- Uses appropriate tools to track and report expenses effectively.