

*The
Transhumanist Student Network*



Student Advocate Guide

A joint project with the



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Message from TSN Chair Ben Hyink

Dear Future Leader,

As a student you have significant opportunities to enrich your educational experience, work toward a career you love and help change the culture around you. It doesn't matter where you are or what kind of institution you attend – your activities can positively impact our effort and the TSN is prepared to help you.

The projects to which you will contribute are without exaggeration some of the most important of our time. The stakes involved could hardly be higher.

You have the opportunity help create a future with greatly extended opportunities and capacities for everyone through emerging technologies. In order to make it happen, we will need to work to prevent oppressive and irresponsible uses of technology while also resisting short-sighted bans that will create black-market environments in which such abuses are more likely to occur. Some of the potential dangers of malevolent or irresponsible application of new knowledge are proportionate to “existential threats.”

While the primary objective of the TSN is to foster the development of new student clubs and help sustain them, in this guide we also suggest several other means by which anyone can contribute to our broad efforts to *educate*, *agitate*, and *organize*. Please avail yourself of this resource and help people better understand and contribute to the realization of an attractive, inclusive and sustainable future.

In hope, in love, in reason,

Benjamin Patrick Hyink
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(We regret that this edition is only available in English at present and welcome any assistance in translating this guide into other languages. Until that time, please encourage your non-English speaking friends to read it using “Babelfish” at <http://world.altavista.com>, or other translation sites.)

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Here and Now!

The need for a network of active transhumanist students and clubs has never been greater. Transhumanist students – no matter what specific variant they describe themselves as or what areas capture their attention – live in a world in which a great many people are still not ready to accept them or their goals and concerns because of ignorance of the issues and possibilities, myopic visions, and out-dated dogmas. A few examples:

- Recent history: For 18 years between 1978-1996 neo-luddite terrorist Theodore Kaczynski a.k.a. “The Unabomber” targeted people and institutions associated with the development of advanced technologies, killing 3, injuring and maiming 23, and failing to crash a Boeing 747.
- A more nuanced and nonviolent challenge to tech development was the 1998 *Wingspread Statement*, issued by a diverse group articulating the “*precautionary principle*” (popularly coined in 1988). The position can roughly be divided into a *strong* and *weak* application (*Betterhumans.com*), the first overriding any other considerations and shutting down dialog (bioluddism) while the second includes public debate over whether and how the principle applies to any given controversy. In February 2004 the Extropy Institute “Vital Progress Summit” defined a “*proactionary principle*” to consider the harms of undo restrictions and evaluating degree, likelihood, and proximity of risk when considering whether restrictions are at all warranted (e.g. lives lost due to stagnation of a technology). In his article that same month, “The Need for Fair Risk,” tech-progressive Dale Carrico advocated incorporation of the *weak* application as a necessary democratizing force in risk assessment and fairer distribution of choice to all stakeholders. The debate continues within our movement.
- In 2000 Bill Joy, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, publishes “Why the future doesn’t need us” in *Wired Magazine*, arguing for a neo-luddite position to relinquish robotics, genetic engineering and nanotechnology because of their potential threat to the human species.
- In 2002 conservative political economist Francis Fukayama argues in his book *Our Posthuman Future* that it is wrong to change the “natural” state of humankind.
- On July 12th 2002 the U.S. President’s Council on Bioethics, headed by Leon Kass, author of yuck-factor essay, “The Wisdom of Repugnance,” recommended a ban on reproductive cloning and a 4-year moratorium on therapeutic cloning. *Two panel members in disagreement on the stem cell research moratorium are later removed by Kass*. In October 2003 the council releases its report “Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness.”
- In the July, 2003 TransVision debate held at Yale, George Annas faced Gregory Stock on the question, “Should Humans Accept or Reject the Genetic Path to the Post-Human?” In the debate, Annas (rejecting) argued on behalf of his proposal for a U.N. outlawing germline alterations to the genome and banning human augmentation. He even suggested that perhaps someday transhumanists could augment themselves on another planet but never return to earth. Aside from the false dichotomy between therapy and augmentation,

it will be difficult to treat people suffering from inherited genetic diseases without also affecting their gametes. Should we refuse these people treatment? Concern for equality and opportunity is warranted, but can be addressed best without bans that create unregulated black markets available only to the wealthy and unscrupulous.

- The September, 2004 “TechnoSapians” conference sounds the alarm for the Christian Right on Transhumanism. Former Left-winger turned Right-wing bioconservative Wesley J. Smith helps provoke this fear through his book, *Consumer’s Guide to a Brave New World*. Smith tries to make the case that all Christians should be morally opposed to the Transhumanism. Many religious transhumanists and their antecedents back to Quaker Statesman Benjamin Franklin (cryonics) and Catholic Theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (humanity approaching godliness) would object to his stance.
- While several nations took steps toward recognizing full citizenship of the LGBT community, the November 2004 U.S. elections saw a wave of bigoted anti-gay marriage amendments passed at state level.
- In February 2005 the Vatican responds to the emergence of the Italian Transhumanist Association by condemning the “religion of health.” How many life/health-extending operations did Pope John Paul II have using the latest medical technology? This came in the wake of recent condemnations of contraceptives, homosexuality, feminism, fertility treatment and stem-cell research.
- A global U.N cloning ban failed on 11/19/04, but 3/10/05 a divided General Assembly approved a nonbinding statement against all forms of human cloning, both therapeutic and reproductive. While Britain opposed the statement, the U.S. strongly endorsed it, despite a 10/19/04 Gallup poll that showed majorities in both countries consider therapeutic cloning morally acceptable.

We at the *Transhumanist Student Network* would like to change the prevailing reactionary trend. The underlying purpose of the TSN is to bring about a society in which is open and responsive to the dramatic changes that emerging technologies bring, which respects morphological freedom, and in which ethics based on the interests of persons flourish. Whereas other organizations already exist to spread these values to adult populations, the TSN focuses on fostering these values among college and high school students.

The *Transhumanist Student Network* is a student-led effort dedicated to promoting freedom through knowledge, organized under the *World Transhumanist Association*, a democratic, international, membership organization. Our mission is to organize, unite, educate and serve students and student groups that promote the ideals of open responsiveness, freedom, and person-based ethics. We do this by:

- **Providing logistical advice and assistance to campus groups**
- **Opening lines of communication between student group leaders and advocates throughout the world via online resources, discussion lists, and annual *TransVision* conferences**
- **Educating students about the rest of the movement and their own opportunities**

TSN Mission and Vision

TSN Mission and Vision

The **Mission** of the TSN is to cultivate the abilities of transhumanist student advocates, assist them in their efforts, and work to grow the broad-based community that is supportive of transhumanist positions and perspectives, primarily through the work of campus groups. We offer advice and internships to help our students pursue creative and rewarding careers that continue to advance the transhumanist effort in their field of interest.

The **Vision** of the TSN is to galvanize students to strive to enlighten their communities about real opportunities and perils, work for the continual expansion of our knowledge and experience and make unprecedented opportunities available for the benefit of all.

Only in an atmosphere of tolerance and reason can responsible research and development proceed, and only in an atmosphere of hope and compassion will benefits be distributed.

Your Mission and Vision

We are more concerned about effecting positive outcomes than “identity” protection. Frankly, we cannot afford to be exclusive if we want to realize reasonable public policies. Instead, we should pursue our advocacy as an **open dialogue**, always seeking out new parties for participation. A major part of our effort is making people aware of the very existence of transhumanist issues and perspectives.

Please consider this aim when you create the mission and vision of your campus club. You have the option of affiliating your group with other organizations for additional support, but the affiliations must be compatible with the **TSN Minimum Statement**.

Campus Groups are the Path to Greatness

“What is so great about campus groups?,” you may ask.

Broadly considered, the benefits can be reduced to three areas:

1. education
2. activism
3. community

At the same time that our movement gains strength in those three areas, student leaders become more capable of performing those tasks and more competent for leadership roles in transhumanist organizations or groups working on behalf of transhumanist interests.

Through a campus group, you can reach many impressionable young minds and several established academics and researchers. You may even have the opportunity to reach the surrounding community through speaker or debater events (which you can pay for through student activities funds or by departmental support). If lead and organized well, campus groups can serve as beacons of enlightenment for many years.

Additionally, campus groups provide people with a learning process that offers more room for error and less severe consequences. As a student, it is hard to find the same opportunities to exercise creative leadership anywhere else.

Certainly there are other ways of serving as a student advocate and leader in the transhumanist movement, some of which are mentioned later in this guide. Of course you are encouraged to pursue several forms of advocacy, but we hope you will at least make a concerted attempt to form a campus group because of the scale and duration of its impact.

Please notify the TSN as soon as you plan to establish a club at your institution.

Define Your Goals

Write down what you want to do. This will help when responding to inquiries from interested students and staff, and provide direction when thinking about the type of meetings and events you want to hold.

The first thing you need to ask yourself is: “Why do you want to start a group?”

In terms of community...?

In terms of activism...?

In terms of education...?

Start simple!

Long-term Goals

Keep your goals clear and have in mind what actual work is required to achieve those ends. If you get your hopes up on goals beyond you and your volunteers’ time constraints you will suffer disappointments and burnout quickly. If you plan carefully, you may have an amazing group on your hands in no time.

What do you hope your group will eventually be able to do?

- Have a membership over 60, with 10 or more people attending meetings each week?
- Introduce hundreds of new students to the transhumanist movement each year?
- Hold debates and other events with big name speakers that draw audiences of over 600 people?

- Become a universally-known presence on your campus?
- Regularly publish op-ed pieces in the campus paper that champion responsible development and use of emerging technologies through personhood ethics?
- Send representatives to annual conferences at the national or transnational level?

Once you have a clear vision of what you want your group to become it is easier to stay motivated and inspire future leaders and volunteers that will keep your group alive long after you have graduated.

Realize that the existence of a plan does not mean things will always go according to plan. There are going to be surprises. However, having a plan will help you deal with those surprises much more elegantly and quickly than not having one.

Structural Organizing

Become a legitimate, registered group at your institution if at all possible. In order to have access to the many resources your campus provides – meeting space, grants, office space, travel funds, A/V equipment, training, travel assistance, and likely a whole lot of other benefits – you must be recognized by your school’s student activities center. Additionally, many schools only allow official student groups to post flyers.

Start by visiting your student activities center (or find them online) and learn about your school’s policies regarding campus groups. Most campuses require a group name, a faculty adviser, names and contact information of the officers, and a constitution and bylaws.

*** Defining Documents**

“Constitution/Bylaws,” “Operating Documents,” whatever your institution calls them, they are a necessity in the process of an establishing your club. These documents both define your club and how it is to be run, including how someone qualifies for membership, what the leadership roles are, how money is dealt with, etc.

Your school should offer sample copies of a constitution **but the TSN also offers a sample set**. In conflicts of operation or format, make your documents conform to what your institution expects to see.

If you experience any serious difficulties in forming your campus group (such as obstruction by the student activities office), ask the TSN leaders for help.*

As soon as possible, establish a website and listserve *or* a yahoo group (*more on this under “Use Technology”*).

* Names

The name you choose for your group will have a significant effect on how effective it is and how it will be judged. It should reflect your club's mission and vision.

Our movement is not yet mainstream, and it may take a while for that to happen. First and foremost, remember that we are dedicated to *educating* people about our perspective. There is a victory in even spreading awareness of the term "transhumanist," as long as you explain it in a responsible manner.

One example is the "Stanford Transhumanist Association." Another is the "New Humanists of N.U." The second is less directly recognizable, but integrates a Humanist base on campus. Acronyms can also be effective, but avoid unintended ones that just make you look absurd. Logos can be fun too, but the same considerations apply.

* Advisors

Most institutions require faculty advisors for recognition, but they are invaluable supporters regardless of the policy. Find at least one. They lend greater credibility to your organization and many advisors become active participants, attending meetings and being featured as speakers.

If you don't already have people in mind, it is a good idea to start asking people in the following departments: Philosophy, Biology, Computer Science, Sociology, Neuroscience, Psychology, Engineering, Anthropology, and disciplines related to these topics, such as Genetics, Materials Science, or Gender Studies. Getting at least one supporter is crucial, but getting an additional network of supporters on campus is ideal (they also make great speakers). Find faculty on your school website to check out their bios and publications. Then make an appointment to **visit compatible ones in person.**

You should always come to potential advisors with:

- A mission statement or explanation of purpose
- Contact information for yourself and other officers
- A WTA brochure, to show them you are part of an international movement
- A smile and a cheery tone of voice

Make the purpose of the group and the expected duties as advisor clear. If you would like the advisor to show up to a meeting once a term, say so. Some advisors just sign the occasional form while others attend every meeting. Your group can succeed with either arrangement.

All else being equal, try to pick a professor who has tenure. Better yet, try to find a professor emeritus. The more senior ranked the professor, the less risk they have to take in being the advisor to your group, but more importantly, the more time they are likely to have available to help you and get involved.

Don't worry about the professor being too involved. This is almost never a problem. However, make sure it is understood that this is a student group and students should have a very large say in what it does.

Keep your advisor in the loop! If you have a regular E-mail update, on your club's activities, put the advisor on it. If you don't yet have such a list (and you really should), at least send a personal E-mail update.

Dear Adviser John...

Sometimes your adviser may not be able to provide you the help you need. Student groups are rarely an adviser's first priority and sometimes your group may slip wholly off the radar.

It is important that you let your adviser know if you are not happy with the relationship and what specific things the adviser can do to better serve your group. Recall (or ask **politely**) what the adviser agreed to when first approached for the position. When they have agreed to make contributions they are not providing, odds are they will try to improve their behavior. Also be sure to ask if there is anything you can do to make it easier for the adviser to help you.

If you've done this and the adviser is still not living up to your expectations, you may want to ask your adviser if he/she/ze knows of anyone else who might have more time to advise your group. They may have a legitimate suggestion or it might get them to fall in line. You can consult your student activities board if you have a problem of this sort.

Once you start shopping for another adviser, you should let the old adviser know as soon as possible and be as clear as possible why you are doing it. As tempting as it is, burning bridges is almost always a bad idea. Be sure to be as polite with the old adviser as possible at all times and to paint the problem in terms of an **external condition** (i.e. "We know you are exceptionally busy") rather than a character flaw or natural condition (i.e. "You are too irresponsible/lazy/stupid/batty/rude to be an adviser to our group, you so and so!")

*** Leadership**

All student organizations require a structured administration. While the executive council should be elected (**see constitution template for possible election procedures**), we suggest groups not become overly-concerned with avoiding a "top-down" hierarchy (co-presidencies in particular can cause unnecessary confusion and resentment). There really is not much power to wield in a student group and officer positions usually say more about who is responsible for getting tasks completed than who has control.

Simple version:

President

Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

Some possible extras – *only* if you have enough people:

Events Coordinator
Web Page Administrator
Publicity Coordinator
Graphics Designer

Perhaps more than most groups, our movement lends itself to idea exploration and discussion (either open-ended on a broad topic or concentrated on a very specific issue or problem with background material). Still, if the club is to succeed in having any significant impact on the institution and outlasting its founders, projects need to be undertaken.

Delegation is absolutely necessary for a group to remain healthy and sustainable. Pursue task delegation at every opportunity, it is an acquired habit. Delegation allows a group to do more, provides skill training for new officers, and prevents the President and VP from becoming overloaded with work. The best practice is to allocate time at the end of meetings to give new members the opportunity to get involved by taking on tasks.

All tasks must be specific, clear, and include a precise due date, and one unambiguous responsible party.

You don't need to explain everything that is going on to newbies, just consider your group's needs and find out if they bring any particular interests or skills that match what you need now or in the future. Then explain *exactly what* you want them to do, *by when*, and answer any questions they might have regarding *how* (leaving room for their own creativity/innovation), *where*, *why*, and *with whom* they will work.

Continually involving others in the club is the only effective, secure way to “pass on the torch.” Keep an eye out for freshmen who are still looking for social groups. To make your organization charismatic, draw out the contributions of the members and guide the organization based on their feedback. In order to make yourself a charismatic leader rather than just a manager, as you are delegating tasks be sure people can see that you are taking care of a couple select tasks as well. Witnessing your full investment will help inspire members to “lead from where they are” and it avoids their resentment.

Other delegation hints:

- Before you can hope to organize others, you must organize yourself. Make sure you understand what your group is doing and how it is doing it before you start barking orders.
- Occasionally you are going to have to delegate to people who are not as skilled as you at a particular task. It is important to let go and let them do it.

- However, don't lower your standards. If a volunteer has done something so poorly that the group cannot use it, you need to tell them. Be as constructive and specific in your criticism as possible and offer to show them how to do it better (if you have time).
- If you have to delegate information gathering tasks, pick your brightest volunteer to do it. It can be difficult to check the work of an information gatherer, and on-the-fly thinking is often needed.

Another way to get things done is to have a meeting just for officers, *either* immediately following the general meeting *or* at the time and day which is most convenient for the core leadership. Make them as quick and painless as possible – jokes and food are fine, but stick to the agenda. You might even restrict these to once a month or quarter.

An example of an Administrative Meeting Agenda:

*Ivory Tower U. Transhumanist Association
Executive Council Meeting – 8PM, Wed. April 28th, 2004
Location: Edward Bellamy Memorial Hall, room 123*

- 1) *Business from last meeting (review progress, answer questions – limit 10 min)*
 - a) *Status of article Jane was writing for school newspaper*
 - b) *Thanks to Joe for arranging Dr. Logic to speak to our group on 5/17*
 - c) *Who has the tape/staplers from the last flyering?*
- 2) *Brainstorming events for fall quarter (20 min)*
- 3) *Update on advertising efforts for the major Stock/Fukayama debate (5min)*
- 4) *Status of ordering a banner with the group and logo for tabling (5minutes)*
- 5) *Creating a newsletter – do we have the resources and sufficient interest? Would a blog be better? (20 min)*
- 6) *New business/general comments (limit 20 min)*

Meeting time max: 1hr 20min

Though the meeting is only for officers and volunteers, make sure everyone in the group knows when the meetings are and that they are welcome to attend. They might just decide to get more involved.

The Challenge: Having More Ideas than “Manpower”

Student groups are run by students: relatively young, generally creative and optimistic people. While this is truly wonderful, it takes more than sunny brilliance to yield a decent crop. It can be frustrating when you end up with plenty of idea people, but no volunteers willing and able to do the work. As leaders, you must challenge potential volunteers to put their money, time, and effort “where their mouths are.”

Here is an example of a typical exchange that could take place when business is being discussed:

PRESIDENT: Does anyone else have something to say about how we could improve and expand the website?

GENE: Yeah I do. You know it would be really neat to have some more educational resources about transhumanist issues on it. Something that helps students relate to our interests and concerns and see them as relevant in their own lives and reasonable perspectives. Maybe we could even describe some of the different organizations.

PRESIDENT: Neat idea Gene. So, by what deadline can you gather all the information and put it together so Bukola can just upload it to the website?

GENE: Er, uh, I can't do most of that myself. I mean, I'm in the middle of my honors research project and I already dedicate a couple hours a week to this group.

PRESIDENT: Bummer, because it was a good idea. Well, let's keep it in mind next year when we'll hopefully have more volunteers or not so much on our plate.

Burnout

burn·out: *exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration (m-w.com)*

Especially when a group is in its first year, a lot of responsibility can be put onto the shoulders of very few people. The combination of running a group, staying awake in class, and then partying (or studying) until dawn can overwhelm and burnout even the most dedicated leader or volunteer.

Avoid Burnout in Yourself:

- **Don't** try to do everything yourself. Ask for help.
- **Ask.** When you don't know how to do something, find someone who does and ask for advice.
- **Take breaks,** socialize, etc.

Avoid Burnout in Others:

- **Recognize** when members are too tired or too busy and don't ask them to do more than they can handle. Remember that many people have trouble saying "no."
- **Pat people on the back** every time they do a job well done, especially in public. For example, at the end of every academic term you could hand out certificates of appreciation.
- **Reward.** If your group can afford it, reward good volunteers by taking them out or having them over for a meal, or giving them a small gift certificate to a bookstore, etc.
- **Don't nag.** Instead, keep on people to do their work with friendly reminders.
- **Never** be harshly critical. Remember these are unpaid volunteers. At the same time, if someone is doing something that is seriously detrimental to the group, stop the person. Just try to be friendly in the manner in which you do it.

You can find more leadership techniques and theory toward the end of this guide.

Advertising/Growth Strategies

Advertising is a critical aspect of keeping your group alive. The best way to get people to your events is to let them know what you are doing. You can't just assume people who came to the last meeting will automatically come to the next.

*** Use Technology**

Use the Internet! You know what century it is; get with it! Your group needs a website and an E-mail address, period. It is a heck of a lot more comfortable for new members to check you out on the web rather than just showing up at a meeting to find out what you're about.

Get an online presence. Create a link on your institution's web site to your club site.

Most institutions have a web site section for student clubs and organizations. Get your club listed, with a link to your club's web page or site as soon as possible. Sometimes you can do this before you are an officially recognized club, so find out!

On all your flyers and institution-specific materials, try to list your club website.

Try to create a site that can be passed down from one manager to another over the years. Many schools offer groups a web page and announcement listserv that can be run by different managers over time.

If your school does not offer that, or your group is still getting the status to apply for it, create a yahoo group site (you are walked through the steps to set it up):

<http://groups.yahoo.com>

Load a non-copy righted image that harmonizes well with your group (or a WTA logo), and add relevant links – such as the WTA and TSN homepages, etc. Here is the simple hotlink format for yahoo groups:

```
<a href = "http://www.transhumanism.org">World Transhumanist Association</A>
```

When you send a link to your club website to the TSN leader, a hotlink will be added to the TSN homepage connecting students directly to your site. This can help a transhumanist student entering your institution find your club.

Consider posting power point presentations on your club website – they show potential members some of the interesting ideas you discuss.

Technical Support

Ideally, you want to have one or more officers or volunteers whose sole responsibilities are the upkeep of your website, listserves and databases. Many groups find that keeping their web sites up-to-date is more difficult than creating the sites in the first place.

If you don't have anyone with that knowledge or dedication:

- Keep your eyes open for someone permanent on your campus who can do the job.
- See if your institution or someone in a tech-related department is willing to help.

Web Site

Once you have someone who knows what they are doing from a technical point of view, build a website and keep it updated! Primarily,

- What events are coming up?
- What is their contact info?
- Who are your leaders + what is their contact info?

Of course, you also want to make your group easy to surf with a professional and appealing design, but those things are secondary to keeping it updated week by week.

Announcements and Contact Information

Make sure that someone is in charge of keeping contact information of students who have signed up on info sign-up sheets (**explained under “Tabling”**) during meetings or tabling as well as members, and that regular announcements are being sent to them about events.

Listerves

Ideally, there are three kinds of important listerves are ideal to have – (1) an announcement one, (2) a planning one (helps relieve the need for many business meetings), and (3) an open discussion one (just don't let this siphon off all interest in the actual meetings and events).

Your planning list (2) should have officers and any volunteers who contribute on a regular basis. This is an incredible asset in keeping lots of people “in the loop.” The yahoo groups system is basically a listserve with a small home page and extra features that allow members to contact each other. In order to avoid spammers on yahoo groups, you may have to restrict access in certain ways through the “manage” feature (play with the system to figure it out).

*** Tables**

Tabling: What is it?

- **Table:** An article of furniture supported by one or more vertical legs and having a flat surface.
- **Tabling:** A group display, often at an event such as a student involvement fair, in which you have an opportunity to promote your organization to the student community.

Tables are an extraordinarily powerful way to reach out to your fellow students. If you have been attending college for longer than the past twenty minutes, you are probably aware of tabling. Academic clubs, athletic clubs, and annoying credit card merchants all employ the almighty *table* as part of their marketing tactics.

Goals of a table

- **Recruiting** new members
- **Educating** the community about the ethos of transhumanism
- **Recruiting** more group members
- **Networking** opportunities with other groups at neighboring tables
- **Finding** students who might want to join your group
- **Meeting** faculty members who are sympathetic to your cause
- **Gathering** contact information on people who are interested in your transhumanist group

Using a tabling event to attract new members is of paramount importance

You may run across people who want to argue the merits of your worldview. Feel free to engage them in a friendly spirited debate, but remember that many bystanders who may be experiencing their first and only encounter with a transhumanist organization will view your discussions. Many of these people will go on to become politicians, teachers, business leaders, voters, etc. The image they develop of your group that day may affect the way they one day will vote on, legislate, or influence issues relating to the rights of secularists. Your public relations demeanor should always be in the back of your head during a tabling event.

Keep in mind that while tabling you have tremendous power to either do a great deal of damage or a great deal of good to the transhumanist movement.

The good news is that it isn't that hard to make a good impression. Simply don't lose your cool. Don't get emotionally involved in arguments with outraged opponents fired up for a debate. No matter how well you articulate your opinions it is unlikely you are going to "convert" people so strongly committed to their beliefs to argue with you in public. However, they and other passersby might at least remember that the transhumanist student behind the table was very friendly, respectful and willing to listen.

Where to have it

Tabling opportunities vary with the specific policies of each university. Some may allow students to set up shop any time they wish in student union facilities or in public outdoor areas. Other schools have strict limits on when and where tabling events may occur. Politely work within the regulations the school administration sets forth. If you are unsure if your chosen location is kosher, ask. The last thing you want to do is make a bad impression of your group and consequently, transhumanist perspectives.

If you have several options as to where to place your table, the more people that pass by your location the better. Try to locate next to high traffic areas (pedestrian, not vehicular).

One thing practically all universities have in common is a **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT FAIR**. These events have many names, but the theme and characteristics are all nearly the same. They tend to take place during the beginning of the academic school year (early autumn in either hemisphere). They are intended specifically for student groups, and are generally well-attended by freshman and sophomores who are looking to become active in campus activities. These events are critical for student organizations looking to increase the size of their roster and maintain an ongoing existence.

Find out when your school's "Student Involvement Fair" is and sign up!

Some schools also have winter involvement fairs. Check it out!

What sort of material should you include at your table?

- A sign-up sheet for your online discussion listserve
- A sign-up sheet for periodic E-mail group updates (events and activities)
- A brochure (preferably many) describing your group and the WTA
- Information on when and where your meetings are held
- ALWAYS have your web URL on these materials
- Literature on issues of current interest to the transhumanist community. Print out interesting JET papers, Betterhumans.com articles, any related publications you might have, transhumanist books (buy a couple), etc. Try to keep the table neat and attractive.
- A folding "science fair style" poster about your group.
- Your inviting and smiling face.
- Also, try to have more than one person at the table if possible. One person can look lonely.

(Tip: eye contact makes people much more likely to come up and talk to you.)

*** Flyers and Chalk**

Flyering is an effective and inexpensive way for transhumanist groups to garner some publicity. Properly done, flyering can do wonders to increase your group's visibility on campus. **Flyering is especially important during formative stages**, as you work to attract interested students and faculty.

Content for your flyer

The content of your flyer should be considered with two goals in mind:

- Catching someone's attention
- Communicating a message in as few words as possible

One way to grab someone's attention is through *sophomoric means* such as emphasizing controversial or taboo words. Examples:

Does **SEX** generally determine a person's aptitudes? Student Transhumanists of XYU will discuss this issue and others this Wednesday...

Professor Smith believes that **EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS AREN'T PEOPLE**. Come find out why this Tuesday...

This approach may attract a number of eyes to your flier, but it is best to use it sparingly as it can have unintended consequences. In trying to attract attention you may inadvertently create a negative image of your group because that attention-getting aspect of your flyer "overpowers" the message that you are trying to get across. Instead of students thinking to themselves, "Gee that meeting on the ethical considerations of cloning sounds interesting" they may instead muse, "Man, those transhumanists sure are a conceited bunch of arrogant jerks."

There exist many other methods for getting your flyer noticed that are not as uncouth as the previous examples. The simplest is using creative quotes and phrases presented in a large font that engages the mind as well as the eyes, which can often draw welcomed attention. These fliers spark people's interest and compel them to read further to satisfy their curiosity.

"Important historical events usually surprise those to whom they happen."

– J. B. S. Haldane

"I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess."

–Donna J. Haraway

"I want to change the world in which I live so that natural selection no longer applies."

– Richard Dawkins

The TSN will compile useful quotes for flyers on its web page. Feel free to send in suggestions or brief quotes you have used on your materials.

What's your point?

Now that you have someone's attention, what else are you going to communicate to him or her? You only have a split second before your audience's attention is drawn elsewhere. You need to be brief and specific about:

- WHO are you and **include your group's website**
- WHAT your event is about
- WHERE your event is located
- WHEN your event is happening

Oftentimes the simplest additional bit of information can make a huge difference in the success of your flier campaign.

PICTURES of speakers, etc. can also help catch people's eyes. If you are using colored paper, only use bright colors that make your text pop out.

You want your message to be so straightforward and so clear that an inebriated capuchin monkey could understand the point of the flier and take the suggested course of action. Keep in mind; the average sleep-deprived student walking around in a haze from an exam he or she just got out of often has a mental acuity equal to that of our capuchin friend.

Make it a rule of thumb: if your flier doesn't pass the "drunken monkey" test, go back to the drawing board.

Where to flier

Just think of all the different locations on campus you've been to in the past couple of weeks. How many of them had spaces just crying out for the company of one (or twenty) of your fliers? The following suggested locations only scratch the surface:

- Outdoor kiosks
- Bulletin boards inside buildings
- Bathrooms
- Large lecture halls (it will give students something to look at during long boring lectures on the merits of neo-post modern animal husbandry techniques)
- Above chalkboards in classrooms
- Inside retail establishments on campus that allow public postings
- Dorm building hallways
- On the backs of unsuspecting friends

Quarter Sheets

The **day of an event**, you might have a volunteer **pass out** ¼ sheet flyers to passersby in a high-traffic area during heavy-traffic times, such as when most people are going to and from classes. Quarter-sized sheets only cost 25% what you would pay otherwise, and you can still fit critical info on them with a picture or concise blurb.

Behold the power of chalk

No flyering adventure can be complete without its ever colorful and eye-catching buddy, Sidewalk Chalk. Those cigar-sized sticks of chalk you may have used to scribble on your driveway when you were a kid can now be used for much more than writing that your big sister Jenny is a stinky-head. They can do more for your group than you might realize.

Imagine the average student on your campus strolling to their first class of the day in the Computer Science building, looking down and seeing a message like this:

"Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended."

– Vernor Vinge, *Science Fiction Author*

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TranshumanistsofWYSIWYGU>

Chalk it Big! Chalk it Proud!

Concentration v. Distribution

So you and your fellow transhumanists now find yourselves with a bunch of flyers and sidewalk chalk. The campus is your canvas. Where to post/draw your message? There is one golden secret to effective flyering and chalking that groups usually learn over the years: **concentrating your message in a few specific areas is more effective** than sparsely distributing it over a large area.

Think of all the competing messages that assault your senses on a daily basis. Placing just a couple flyers in the surrounding “noise” will mute your message. Instead, pick a handful of high traffic (and appropriate) areas and cover them with flyers and chalk as if your life depended on it. You want to elicit a “whoa!” reaction from passersby.

Warning:

Be ready for controversy if you use bold phrases, and don’t allow members to tarnish your group’s good name with bigotry. An example might be an intolerant, anti-religious phrase.

Also, make sure to check up on the rules for flyering and chalking at your institution. Not following them will detract from your group’s credibility.

Flyering and Chalking should be fun!

Make flyering and chalking social activities. At meetings announce that afterwards you’ll be flyering and then going out for pizza for the local coffee house. You’ll cover more territory and make friends. Not to mention that these people will likely become future leaders of your group. Do not plan to cover the same amount of territory with 3 volunteers as you would with 15. You want to keep your volunteers engaged, not exhaust them.

* Publications

Brochures: A simple, easy brochure is the tri-fold. You can write your own from scratch or you can use the WTA ones as templates. Heck, pass the WTA ones out alongside your club-specific brochures. Always bring some to tabling events and meetings.

Business Cards: If your group has a good web site, you may be able to get away with having a business card instead of a brochure. They are easier and cheaper to make, use less paper, and it is much more convenient to carry some in your pocket than brochures.

Newsletter: ONLY moderate-sized, thriving student groups with at least a couple talented and reliable writers, an editor, and a graphic designer should bother with a newsletter. **We recommend you wait to start a newsletter until your group is at least two years old and has at least thirty-five active members.**

It may seem like a great idea, but newsletters are TONS of work. You must:

- Gather interesting, readable articles that will represent your student group for every issue
- Develop a format (using proper software)
- Edit all articles
- Research how to publish your newsletter
- Pay for the costs of printing
- Do the footwork of distributing the newsletter at local venues

If you are dead set on publishing a newsletter for your student group, it is advisable to first publish an online version and see how manageable that is before mass-producing a hard copy.

* Member Tracking

- How someone becomes a member should be defined in your constitution or bylaws
- Put all members on an E-mail list and keep them informed of upcoming events
- Keep track of members with a database
- Profile willing members on your website (Don't forget to ask them if it is OK)
- Create a suggested membership fee for students, and perhaps a mandatory one for non-student members
- If you have the time and means, create membership cards and other incentives
- Have a responsible officer or volunteer be in charge of tracking membership. Otherwise it is doomed to become outdated and disorganized.

* Advanced Techniques

These techniques of promotion would be used for a major special event such as a debate, speaker, or panel discussion. This is in addition to early, high-concentration flyering and chalking.

- Think of your target audience. If someone is coming to talk about nanotechnology or artificial intelligence, your target audience may be wider than your average meeting. Aim for something that has wide appeal in the university community, and then also directly target those groups that you think would be interested.
- Take out a newspaper ad in your student or community newspaper 2-3 days before the event
- Send press releases to your local newspapers
- E-mail the leaders of groups/departments that you think may be interested in your speaker. For example, if Aubrey de Grey is stopping at your institution to speak on negligible cell senescence, send flyers and E-mails to, *and personally visit*, the Biology department (also contact all related departments and clubs). If James Hughes is coming, do likewise for the sociology department, etcetera.

Interacting with the media

Building good relationships with the media can be the key to having successful large events and PR campaigns. Find out who the local journalists are and how to contact them. Give them background and build rapport. Always be respectful of differences of opinion, but try to get fair coverage and positive editorials.

Press releases

- Make sure to send out a press release far enough ahead of time so that the press has a chance to decide what to do with it. Make them short and to the point, including the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, why – maybe some “how” if it fits and is needed). **They should never be more than one page.**
- Find out how journalists prefer to receive press releases. Fax is very popular with journalists, but many also like press releases in the body of E-mail messages. **Never send E-mail attachments!**

All else being equal, the best way to send press releases is to fax them.

Activities and Events, or “Keeping Their Interest”

*** General Meetings**

Stay focused

- Write up an agenda beforehand
- Make copies of the agenda available
- Stick to the agenda
- Have someone (group secretary or historian) keep minutes and type them up for the group.

When?

The first meeting should be held in the first week or two of an academic term. Get the interests of new students right away, before the best potential leaders become involved in extracurricular activities. You want to be able to harness the energy generated during the first meeting.

Most groups either meeting weekly or biweekly. If you want to keep continuous interest you should probably have your group meet at least that often. When groups *really* get cranking, they will often meet two (or more) times a week. Most of these groups find it useful to have at least one of these meetings be purely social.

Once you advertise a time, stick to it. You can wait a couple minutes to start the meeting if people are still trickling in. However, don't let the meeting start more than five minutes after the advertised time. People have studying and drinking to do. Don't waste their time sitting around waiting for your meeting to start.

Where?

You want to hold your meetings in a centrally located building so that it is easily accessible to as many students as possible. The size of the room should also be a consideration. Too big and it will make your group look small, too small and people will not have enough space to be comfortable.

Basic supplies

In addition to having agendas, you're likely to want some of the following as well.

- Nametags (the silly red or blue kind with "Hello my name is..." on them)
- Pens to fill out the nametags (and maybe markers or stickers to decorate them)
- **An attendance sheet** (an excellent way to collect people's E-mail addresses for the weekly announcement list)
- Some **yummy munchies**
- Some well organized transhumanist materials for people to inspect and ideally take home

Have stuff people can take home (sometimes you can even sell it!)

What to do?

General meetings serve three main purposes: to **educate, socialize, and activate**. However, the most important thing to keep in mind is: **keep the interest of the audience/participants**. If you bore them, they will not likely be back.

- **If you feed them, they will come.** Even if it is just potato chips, having some munchies at all your general meetings really does increase attendance. Remember to have a vegetarian alternative.

- The President should welcome everyone quickly and **state the name of the group and agenda** and make announcements of the future events.
- Most groups conduct **personal introductions**. A typical introduction could include: Name, major or occupation, philosophical label and a random silly question that changes every meeting such as:

“If you could have a superpower, what would it be?”

“What color underwear are you wearing?”

“What’s the least you’ve worn in public?”

“If you had to eat the cooking of one person you know for the rest of your life, who would it be (or what restaurant)?”

“Crunchy or creamy?”

“What mystery of the natural world would you most like to know the answer to?”

“If you could know the exact time and manner of your death, would you want to know?”

“If your house caught on fire, all people and pets were outside, and you could only grab one object, what would it be?”

“What is the subject of the best picture you’ve ever taken?”

Make sure the President states that all questions are optional so that nobody feels uncomfortable about being put on the spot.

- Do your very best to keep the meetings under an hour and a half. Even reduce it to one hour if possible. If formal meetings run longer than 90 minutes, people can feel trapped. You can always hang out informally as long as you want after the formal meeting.

We have heard reports that movie-watching meetings tend to be poorly attended, so we suggest you reserve movies for independent socials and never have them at meetings.

Topics

Now that the preliminary stuff is out of the way you can get to the meat of your meeting topic. This could be in the form of a speaker, panel discussion, or entire group discussion.

- **Speakers:**
 - **Professors:** Take advantage of what you have! When you think of a topic that you might like to have discussed at your next meeting, resources at your institution can probably cover anything from Astronomy to Zoology. The departments of Philosophy, Biology, Computer Science, Sociology, Physics, Engineering, Neuroscience, History, Communications, etc. are great places to start looking for someone to speak at your meeting. Many faculty members have **web pages** that list their areas of interest or curriculum vitae. Also, think of professors that you have had, or ask friends if they have had professors who would make excellent speakers for your group. If you don’t have at least two professors

from your school speak per academic term, you are doing something wrong.

- **Local Chapters:** You can invite leaders from local transhumanist chapters to speak on a topic
 - **Special Interest:** You can invite special interest organizations to talk at your meetings, such as having an animal rights activist talk about the ethics of eating meat, an scientist speak on behalf of the use of animals in medical experiments, or having a representative from a civil rights organization talk about freedom of speech, reproductive freedom or equal opportunity policy. It doesn't have to be a topic everyone agrees on – in fact, civil disagreement makes for more interesting discussion! There are many versions of these organizations right on your campus.
 - **Students:** Often student members themselves may want to do presentations. Be sure they're up to doing proper research and have adequate public speaking skills.
- **Joint Meetings:** Contact a student organization you either have something in common agreement or conflict with and have a formal or informal joint meeting together. One of the most powerful tools transhumanists have to gain respect is letting other communities know we are friendly, reasonable, honest people who basically what the same things out of life as they do, only for a longer duration and with greater possibilities of personal growth. They might just come around to our perspective eventually. These are great for socials too.
- **Panel Discussion:** Get a bunch of experts on something and put them in a room together. For instance, during big elections you could gather together student representatives from several different political groups on campus to express their views on various political issues – particularly ones of interest to the transhumanist community. These meetings can be a good deal of work (you are dealing with several speakers, not just one). However, if you can properly set them up, panel discussions are often fantastic.
- **Talent show:** While transhumanist groups spend a lot of time sitting around and talking, transhumanists have all kinds of other interests and talents. Let members sign up a few weeks in advance and devote a meeting to letting them show their stuff. This gives some extra incentive to valuable artistic members of your club!
- **Entire Group Discussion:** These can be very successful meetings that are fairly simple to set up, since you need not arrange an outside speaker. You simply come up with an interesting enough topic, such as “The Ethics of Sex and Dating” or “Should (Country Name) End the ‘Drug War’?” and then prepare several specific questions about that topic. It's a good idea to print out several copies of the questions. It can also be effective to...(have/realize) the following:
- Small meetings (about 12 people or less) can simply sit in a circle and discuss the questions about the topic one by one.

- Large meetings of people can split up into small circles and discuss different questions – later going back into one big circle and telling the whole group what their question was and how they answered it.
- If you have more than 35 people or so, you are going to need a pretty large room or two separate rooms. It is going to get too noisy otherwise.
- People are not going to stay on topic. Don't worry about it. The point is more to get people talking than getting them to talk about anything in particular.

We encourage you to make use of the materials compiled by the STA (with attribution): <http://www.stanford.edu/group/transhumanism/materials.htm>

* Speakers

Approaching a Professor, Transhumanist or Special Interest Group Leader

- **People love to talk about their work.** Most professors and activist group leaders are happy to come and speak for student groups, without much regard for their particular affiliations. Contact the potential speaker by phone or in person if at all possible. E-mail may be a good way to make first contact, but it should be followed up by a phone call to confirm if a reply is not received in twenty-four hours. Despite the fact that it is the 21st century, some people have still not made E-mail a part of their daily lives. Ask speakers how they prefer to keep in touch.
- Before contacting a speaker, keep the following in mind: several options for dates, and a general idea of a topic which you would like the speaker to address.
- Be clear about your group and your group's purpose. Answer any questions he/she/ze may have for you honestly, and try to be flexible with the speaker's schedule. Describe the general flow of your meeting. For example, if your meeting only begins after fifteen minutes of announcements, let the person know that.
- One week before the person is scheduled to speak, call or E-mail to make sure everything is still on track for the presentation. In the morning on the day before the presentation, verify this again. Speakers sometimes forget or have so many things come up that so overwhelm them that they forget to tell you they can't make it. At the same time, you have the responsibility to come up with an alternative meeting if the speaker doesn't show.
- Most importantly, after someone has come to your group, send a follow up thank you E-mail or card. The impression that your group makes on him/her/zer may influence other people's decisions to come speak to your group, and your group's public image in general. They'll tell their colleges what a wonderful bunch of eccentrics you are.

The Big Event

If your group is highly successful you are going to want to bring in big name speakers. Speaker honorariums, travel expenses, larger meeting spaces and special advertising costs can become extremely expensive and take time to arrange. Here are some pointers:

- **Plan:** Whom would you like to come speak? How much will it cost? How much time will your group have to put into this event? What are the advertising options? How big will the lecture space you need have to be, and how do you reserve it? Does it cost anything? Consider your budget. How much money does your group have to spend on the event? ***How much money can your group get through the university?*** How much money can your group get from local/national groups?
- **Apply** well in advance for grants from your institution and national/international organizations. Ask for donations from alumni or local transhumanist groups.
- **Contact** the TSN or the speaker's organization directly. Contact information is usually listed on their website. Be polite, direct, and willing to be flexible with their schedule. Have several dates in mind that you would like them to come to your university.
- **Give yourself time.** Plan on inviting big name speakers at least six months ahead of time if possible. They are busy and you will need that time to get the event facilities, travel, accommodations, and advertising in order. Advertising is key, because you want a lot of people to show up to an event for which your group is shelling out a ton of money.
- **Ask** for advice and check out the advertising section of this manual. You do not want to work hard to get a big name speaker only to have a poor audience turnout because you failed to advertise enough. Some groups have a policy of reserving 20% of their budget for advertising big name speakers.

Get a group photo with a big name speaker if you can.

- **Admission:** Many groups think that the best way to offset the costs of a speaker is to charge admission for the event. If you decide to charge admission, set the rate and advertise it along with the event. Have people at the door to take money, and be prepared to make change. If you don't wish to have a set price, it is OK to encourage voluntary contributions from those willing to donate. Make sure the "donation box" is highly visible. Also, **be aware of your institution's rules and regulations about charging for an event** – simply asking for money from attendees can make an otherwise free room cost money! Be sure that you keep good records of how much money you collect.
- **Dinner:** Taking a speaker out to dinner before or after the event is an excellent way to say "Thanks!" This also offers a chance to unwind and have informal conversations and get advice. Be sure to send a card saying thanks afterwards as well.
- **Introducing a speaker:** Keep it simple! Ask for biographical information beforehand and write up a brief introduction for the speaker early. Mention yourself and your group. Mention a few people who played a key roll in making the event happen. Mention the people and organization that gave significant amounts of money to the event. Practice it. If there are names you don't know how to pronounce, as the people, particularly the speaker, when they arrive. The speaker would much rather you ask and say the name correctly than not ask and butcher it.

- **Show off:** Make sure you provide printed information about your group and that all attendees have easy access to that information. **Make sure people know when and where your next general meeting will be.** You might want to make the next general meeting a discussion of the ideas presented at the talk.
- **Keep in mind:**
 - Arrive early to make sure any A/V equipment is set up or to set it up and test it yourself
 - Dress nicely – you will have to make a (good) first impression on a lot of people this night.
 - Have fun! Kick back and enjoy all the fruits of your labor!

Check out <http://cherrycommunications.com/tips.htm> to read *The 7 Biggest Mistakes in Special Event Planning and How to Avoid Them* as well as other useful tips.

* Debates

People love a good fight. Because of this debates can bring people out to events about topics they would otherwise never come out to see. Debates are likely to be the largest events you run.

Many group leaders shy away from debates precisely because they are fights. Some worry that transhumanists and bio/technoluddites are already too divided and that debates are only going to make things worse.

These are legitimate worries, but far from the whole picture. First off, debates *aren't really* fights. They have a competitive element, but no one in a public debate without formal judges really wins or loses. At the end of the debate, the debaters are going to shake hands, and maybe even force a smile for each other. Hell, they might even go out to dinner afterwards. Also, how wonderful would it be if all disagreements were settled with words rather than blows? The world is full of competition – we might as well model nonviolent competition.

Debates are really about raising interest and breeding familiarity

Few people that come to the debate will change their view – at least not simply because of the debate itself. The debate will encourage many people who attended to take more interest in the subject at hand. Competition makes people passionate, and when people get passionate they tend to listen, talk, read, and write more. This is a good thing. Hopefully the debate will at least let everyone who attends know some of the major arguments on each side and be able to explore the topic with more perspective than before.

Also, people will actually get to see other people they don't agree with at the debate. Some folks have never met someone openly transhumanistic before. This could be their first chance to do so. It also is quite likely that transhumanists in the audience might learn

a bit about people who have very different perspectives from them. Even though we don't all agree, we do have to share the same world – spending time in the same room together is a good start.

To cosponsor or not

Many transhumanist groups just starting out have limited resources. By comparison, many of the groups with agendas in direct opposition to transhumanist positions have huge budgets and resources available to them. Sometimes poorer groups approach wealthier groups about cosponsoring an event. Both groups can then split the cost of debate facilities and are responsible for bringing in the debater to their “side.” This approach also lends a great deal of credibility to the debate. **You should cosponsor unless you have a very good reason not to do so.**

Topic

Now that you and your group have decided to have a debate, what should the topic be? If you are cosponsoring with another campus group, then obviously the other group will have input into the topic. Many debates are related to the question of what is meant by the term “natural” and whether it is a fallacy to hold that what is designated “natural” is necessarily good and what is designated “unnatural” is necessarily bad, but don't limit yourself to just that – there are a terrific number of possibilities. At the very least, try to expand the dialog beyond just “naturalistic imperative” versus “naturalistic fallacy” rhetoric. The world is much more complex than that, try to represent that in your debates.

Debaters

There are lots of sources for debaters. Academic departments are an okay source. However, beware because knowing a lot about a topic does not necessarily translate into being a good debater. Excellent public speaking skills are required, along with an ability to think on one's feet. Debate experience is critical. **Rule of thumb: only send out people to debate your side of an issue who you think would be as capable as the opponent or more capable.** If you aren't sure, ask your potential debater to let you know whether they have adequate experience and feel confident in the match-up.

There are a handful of people who are happy to debate on the side of a transhumanist point of view. Bigger names will tend to cost more, but don't agree to any debates in which your side is not represented by a competitive debater. If you are ready to promote and support a debate, but you are having trouble finding people, contact the TSN.

*** Fundraising**

Most schools will offer their student groups a small annual budget. They will usually also provide space and equipment for websites, meetings, debates and presentations. However, most group leaders find these funds to be inadequate in covering all their costs,

especially if they have ambitious goals. Fundraising is necessary if you are going to avoid paying for extra expenses out of pocket.

We do not discourage spending a bit of your own money. Many a neophyte student leader has thrown down a few bucks for nametags, some flyers, and a bag of chips. It can be some of the most rewarding \$20 you'll ever spend.

That said, it can really add up and if your going to put on big events, you're going to need others to help. Asking for money is a very emotionally charged issue. Many seasoned activists refuse to do it. That said, it is amazing how many people want to give you money – you only have to give them the opportunity.

Do not be afraid to ask for money. Believe in your cause and you can get others, richer than you, to believe in it too.

There are three big categories to think about: institutional donors (your school, local and transnational transhumanist organizations – and other groups if you have additional, acceptable affiliations), individuals that give you less than \$100 a year, and individual donors who give you more than \$100 a year. The \$100 line is arbitrary, but useful all the same.

Institutional Donors

Your school

The most important institutional donor to you is very likely going to be your school.

There are sometimes separate offices for student organizations and student activities they are both very likely to give you money if you ask for it. They likely will have forms, requirements for receipts and deadlines. Take all of them seriously and odds are they will keep cutting you checks eventually cut bigger checks as they get to know and trust your organization.

The campus institution that helps student organizations may give you money for operating funds – things like food, pens, paper, nametags, printing, chalk, etc. You may not even have to tell them exactly what you're going to use the money on. They may also be willing to kick in even more money for specific events. You should also think of them as your primary resource for learning about other funding opportunities on your campus.

The student activities institution is more likely to fund specific events than operating expenses. Their mission is to entertain and enrich the student body. You are going to want to ask them for money for events that have the whole student body as a target audience.

Another set of institutions that is likely to help fund events is ***individual departments*** (think philosophy, biology, computer science, engineering, sociology, etc.). Specifically, they are interested in bringing their colleagues in to talk. It is not hard to find topics in

these areas that are right along the educational lines of your group's mission, which the professors really want to speak about.

Off-campus

In addition to your school, there are a surprising number of other organizations that would like to give you money. The TSN may one day be one of those organizations, so keep asking us for money (we will record the requests and provide numbers to the WTA Board). Like other student organizations, we may eventually give away grants for project ideas in the fall and spring.

Depending on your project, there are several transhumanist organizations that may at least consider requests for funding from you. Check out the WTA affiliates page for ideas.

Also there are local or national off-campus transhumanist chapters that may help you with fundraising. It is very important to get in touch with any local off campus transhumanist groups in your area and build alliances with them. Their members will be excited and happy to know that local students are spreading awareness at a nearby campuses or a campus within the country, and they are likely to give you a bit of cash. Let them know what your needs are and they are likely to help you meet them.

Another approach is to include a fundraising appeal for your group in its member E-mail updates. You may even convince them to fill in a blank on their membership form for an extra donation.

Small Individual Donors (under \$100 a year)

These donors usually don't give their whole gift at once. They might throw a few bucks in a food jar at a meeting, or pay \$5 for a yearly membership in your group, or chip in a few bucks for gas on a road trip. Here are some great ideas on getting money from this kind of donor:

- **Collect!** A collection jar conspicuously presented during all regular meetings – you have to mention it and you have to seed it (put some money in). It's best to seed it while people are watching.
- **Annual membership fee.** It could be a suggested fee for students, and only mandatory for non student members. Decide what is best for your group.
- **T-shirt sale.** If you are going to do this, research for the cheapest investment, have a marketable idea and a reasonable price. You don't want to lose money.
- **Sell other products** from the transhumanist movement, such as bumper stickers from the "resources" section. (Some leaders report this has been a limited success, but it can be fun if you have others maintain it.)
- **Hold an auction** where members of your group bid on each other's souls. This is actually a kind of sale of service. People agree to perform some task to "reclaim

their soul.” Not all universities allow the sale of services, so check with your student organization office first.

- **Keep track** of your alumni and send them a letter that tells them what you’re doing and asks them for money. It’s important to actually ask.

There are lots of other ways, be creative. Always say “thank you.”

Large Individual Donors (over \$100 a year)

This is usually the most difficult category for student groups. These donors were often once small individual donors, but were cultivated over a year or four. Cultivate them by keeping them informed as to what you are doing and by saying thank you.

The other sources for these kinds of donors are local/national off-campus transhumanist groups. Sometimes these groups have people that are quite wealthy and really want to see the student movement succeed. After you’ve developed some trust with the leadership of an off-campus group, you might want to ask the leadership who to court.

Know what you are asking for!

The most important part to doing any kind of fundraising is to know what you want to spend the money on. You should always have a rough budget for the project you’re trying to get funded and it is not a bad idea to have a budget for your whole organization (for a million reasons in addition to funding). **The more specific a picture you can paint in a potential donor’s mind, the more likely they are to fund you.**

Any student group should have a steady small pot of funds for everyday expenses such as advertising. These costs might include munchies for meetings, publications, poster board, markers, and neat ideas that pop up at the last minute. For example, you might rent out a costume to get people to come to your group table (a gorilla, a robot, a hypercube...).

Saying Thank You

Whoever gives the money, say thank you. If it’s more than a few dollars, it is not a bad idea to write them a little note saying what the money was actually spent on and how the event turned out. **Failing to say thank you is one of the surest ways not to be given money in the future.**

Further Fundraising Reading

Notwithstanding its insulting title, one of the best books for non-profit fundraising is *Fundraising for Dummies* by John Mutz and Katherine Murray (ISBNL 0764552201).

*** Road trips**

What's college without a road trip? From visiting transhumanist students at a neighboring campus (nearby groups are a fantastic resource), to cultural oddities, to national conferences (even transnational too if you can drive or afford airline tickets), there are a million excuses to go on a road trip. There are several transhumanist organizations that hold annual conferences. Some of them offer reduced admission fees and even grants for students with presentations. Odds are that your school might offer some travel money as well. Conferences are a fantastic way to get to know transhumanists from all over in different walks of life.

* **Activism and Demonstrations**

The transhumanist movement is and must be an activist movement. We “advocate the moral right of those who so wish to use technology to extend their mental and physical (including reproductive) capacities and to improve their control over their own lives.” We also insist on the “need to create forums where people can rationally debate what needs to be done, and a social order where responsible decisions can be implemented” and “advocate the well-being of all sentience” (Transhumanist Declaration).

Transhumanists have already formed public policy groups that make appeals to the public and their governments. We have united to speak out for pressing causes, all which we share with others. Continue and expand this tradition and you will expand and strengthen our base of support and deepen our impact in public policy struggles that have direct effects on the choices and opportunities that will be available to people.

There is no reason why transhumanists cannot have demonstrations. Even tiny groups of people can take stands, and resourceful ones can usually find groups with shared concerns to take stands with them. This is why transhumanists should show commitment to common causes with other groups by demonstrating with them. **Get to know the organizers, tell them your motivations, and say it loud and proud with your sign.**

Your group can even make visiting such events a part of a road trip, or can stage local events in cooperation with groups advocating specific interests that overlap with those of the broad transhumanist movement.

It may be asked, “What are the positions we ought to take?” While this author has his opinions, in the urgent interests of bringing our perspective to people from all walks of life and making it an enduring element in mainstream dialogue, you are encouraged to weave away into the public fabric, with certain universal reservations that will be mentioned below. It is important to keep your group motivated and share a vision of a common cause, without excluding potential supporters, whole or partial.

Here are some pretty significant ones:

- ***Everyone*** should have their basic human rights and civil liberties respected.

- Authoritarian forms of rule – economically right or left – crush human rights and civil liberties, and must be opposed.
- Civil liberties should extend into body modification or “morphological freedom.”
- Transgender individuals should be free to alter their bodies and identities and should continue to enjoy police protection and retain basic opportunities.
- Adults should be free to have *truly* consensual sex any way they want in privacy.

Notice that even in these, there is still much room for interpretation. That is okay. We can be fairly sure that none of us has “all the answers.” That’s where forums for rational dialog come in, as does legal deliberation and political contest.

Here is a slightly more controversial position, but one important to mention:

- Personhood status should be dependent on basic mental capacities or intelligent sentience, not on biology or substrate.

This need not threaten the considerations we give now to groups like infants, children and people suffering from severe retardation or senile dementia. It does however extend the considerations to other highly intelligent sentient beings like great apes, cetaceans, and eventually human-level sentient artificial intelligences and humans who become highly modified. It also challenges society to consider whether any sentience can really be ascribed to cells not organized into a functioning central nervous system, as in the case of stem cells.

While this is not the only ethical system possible, and like any system it has its gray areas, it serves to protect sentient intelligence, which is what our conception of humanity tends suggest as our essential abstract characteristics, though biological features could be employed as a means of distinguishing homo sapiens from other beings. We are in part a civil rights movement committed to covering beings in our ethical considerations who can only be described as equivalent to people based on their capacities.

Some other requirements

The WTA has issued statements that delineate certain boundaries of the transhumanist movement in order to avoid ties to groups that advocate the oppression of sentient intelligent beings or whose activities are judged irresponsible and detrimental to the efforts of transhumanists to establish a respected. Examples include groups advocating doctrines of racial superiority/inferiority and UFO cults.

For position statements of the WTA, visit the following URL:

<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/statements>

We reserve the right to suspend or rescind affiliation status with groups based on inappropriate affiliations. If you think an affiliation is questionable, please ask the WTA Executive Director before taking action.

Here are some groups that are almost always safe for formal affiliation (they may provide you with useful resources as well):

Humanist groups, LGBT groups, school-sponsored groups focusing on science or technologies

*** Socials**

What better way to kick back and relax than with your fellow transhumanists? Social events offer group members the opportunity to get to know each other and chat outside the normal structured meeting. Many groups, from the very small to the very large, enjoy informal social gatherings. Social events can be as simple as an occasional evening out, or can become regular events.

“Run of the Mill”

- Go out for food/coffee. Pick a low cost, centrally-located place that can handle your group size. Calling ahead never hurts!
- See a film, play, art exposition, dance recital, poetry reading, or other event. Make sure to note if advanced tickets are needed and tell your group ahead of time.
- Movie Marathon. Spend an afternoon or evening at a member’s apartment, or a dorm common area, with your favorite flicks and food.
- See a local band. Check location for admission rules based on drinking age, etc.

Seasonal Events

- Picnic
- Camping trip
- Haunted houses
- Water balloon fights
- Fun with snow/ fun with monsoons/fun with sand storms
- (You get the drift)

***Service**

The TSN strongly encourages its affiliates to engage in community service. The benefits to groups that engage in service include:

- A stronger bond among those who participate
- A deeper understanding of people who’s very lives may be very far removed from the setting of the academy
- People outside the institution getting a face to put with a (presently) underrepresented worldview
- Networking and community-building with other organizations

Almost all campuses have a student organization in charge of finding worthwhile service projects for other student groups. If you don’t already know what organization this is on

your campus, ask your campus office of student organizations. They will be happy to point you in the right direction.

If your group is still young, exercise some caution during your first few service events. Try to participate in an event where your group is not the whole show. Odds are that at least a couple people who tell you they are going to be there are going to bail out on you. Make sure that your event does not turn into a disaster because of it. Another tactic is simply to assign someone from your group to research individual service opportunities and present a short list at meetings.

Pay particular attention to service opportunities involving the use, education in and availability of technologies that empower people. Examples include programs to help bridge the “digital divide” for people living in economically disadvantaged areas, fundraising assistance for programs that donate money for artificial limbs and glasses, HIV prevention programs, research funding efforts, water sanitation efforts, etc. Aside from these being worthy things to do, they will help many people who may never buy into the most far-sighted transhumanist projects appreciate our movement’s basic ethos and become more open to listening to perspectives that come from within it.

Passing the Torch ***(important enough to elaborate)***

“Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still.”

– Chinese Proverb

There’s a popular story about Sigmund Freud. It says that some of his admirers asked him if there was any hope for humanity. Could humanity rise out of barbarism, or would superstition, nationalism, and humanity’s love of simple, emotional solutions always reign supreme? He answered that, “The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing.”

The biggest key to the success of your group and our movement is in persistence. Yes, we must be brilliant too. But it often turns out that it is more difficult to persist than be brilliant. Being brilliant, after all, is a much better rush.

Built to last...

You may be completely revved up to start a legitimate group at your school. You may have what it takes to create a vibrant community of (relatively) young transhumanists at your school. You may even have what it takes to become an active leader in our movement at the transnational level. But eventually, **you** are going to graduate.

Generally, it is easier to start a group than it is to maintain it in the long-term. Two important things to keep in mind if you want your group to last are:

- Pace yourself. If you are starting out with just a few dedicated leaders keep it simple until you have the “manpower” to grow. And don’t be too disappointed if your group remains small. Transhumanists are a minority after all. Not every school has the potential for a transhumanist community approaching a hundred members, but in the big picture small groups make a difference to the movement and can be extremely gratifying to the people who run them.
- Make friends! Volunteer work is much more gratifying when it is tied to meaningful personal relationships. Many people join student groups because they want to meet like-minded peers.

Keep a look out for newbies

Any new members are potential leaders. You should approach people who frequent meetings and socials and ask them about doing small tasks. Find out what people are good at and then attempt to utilize those talents.

Don’t hoard power and responsibility. The motto, ***If you want something done right, do it yourself*** does **NOT** apply if you want your student group to thrive after you are gone. ***Instead***, live by the motto, ***if you want something done right, learn how to do it yourself and then teach others.***

Transition and Communication

Ideally, it is good to make transitions ***gradual*** with ***clearly marked boundaries*** of authority. Seek a middle ground that offers ***advice and support*** while also offering ***freedom of expression and democratic direction*** for the new leaders (especially the new president).

The following saying is often true: ***“People will forget what you did and forget what said, but they will remember how you made them feel.”***

While we cannot anticipate all misinterpretations and occasionally genuine conflicts cannot be ignored – even for the sake of a club – we should work proactively to avoid unnecessary negative drama whenever possible.

Good communication is ***essential*** to successful transitions. Here are some pointers for the “old guard” to introduce the vanguard to club leadership:

- **Show new leaders respect** – especially in front of other group members.
- ***If you think something being done (or not being done) is problematic, try to speak with the leader(s) directly and *in private.**** E-mails can be misconstrued, so try to speak face-to-face. ***Remember that you want the new leaders to know you wish them success, and success in their own style, and you are just concerned that they may not be considering ___(blank)___ (for example, democratic decision-making processes, or encouraging discussion that includes a diversity of perspectives).***

- **Hold elections around the *middle* of the school year.** This allows people to get to know a bit each other before voting for new officers and allows the new officers to start performing their roles while they have experienced student leaders to help them.
- **If an officer is considered by many to be truly unfit for a position** (e.g. lazy/uncommitted, abuses his or her authority, etc.) **and is not interested in leaving, the general membership can always vote to remove that officer.** Try to avoid this when possible by: **(1)** having competitive (but friendly) elections where voters can compare platform statements and credentials/experience, or **(2)** having a special meeting before a removal vote is considered (with the faculty/staff adviser if possible) to discuss the problem(s) and how it(they) might be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone.
- **Negative atmospheres kill student clubs.** Try to maintain interpersonal harmony while allowing for differences in personality styles, political opinions, etc. Stick to the core message of the WTA (Transhumanist Declaration). Even people who have major disagreements can make for interesting group discussions. If you fear there is a “hostile takeover” going on, alert the TSN Chair and the issues will be addressed (by disaffiliation if absolutely necessary).
- **Be prepared to step back and let others lead.** Tell the new leaders upfront that they should feel free to tell you their concerns if they feel you are being in any way overbearing, or alternatively if they desire more information and support than they think you are giving. Try to understand their perspective and be flexible. You both want the club to continue on.
- **Write out a transition timeline** – make explicit each step of the process in which authority is transferred. Most authority should be transferred at the same meeting, but you might want to retain rights on club materials for a couple months just in case (see below).

On Donated Materials

Donated materials – be they books, magazines, or pamphlets – cost sponsor organizations real money and our sponsor organizations (transhumanist, humanist, etc.) tend not to have money to spare. The purpose of donated materials is to promote the ideas and ideals of their movements, so sponsor organizations want the materials to be used and/or distributed, *but not wasted*. For example, use a “library check-out list” for club books that are borrowed during the year or over the summer.

If a club dissolves, the donated materials should be passed on to nearby chapters for the Transhumanist, Humanist, or other movements if at all possible.

Remember, hoarding donated materials intended to promote movements for one’s own personal use (when any alternatives are available) is embezzlement. Though it is at a small scale now, acts have a way becoming habits, and habits part of one’s character.

End thoughts...

“In my humble opinion...the true enemy is war itself.”

– Lt. Commander Hunter, *Crimson Tide*

TSN members believe that by educating our communities and ourselves we create opportunities that can lead to a better society – a society grounded in reason and science, and oriented toward ethics based on the interests of sentient, intelligent persons.

There are many who hold we are locked in a culture war. One would be hard-pressed to deny that cultural clashes are occurring. But if we stay focused on the metaphor of war, our efforts are doomed to failure. Wars imply force used to control others. Force of persuasion is perhaps replacing the force of violence, but the essence of war is a lack of informed *consent*. We must not wage war upon those who seek to control us with force. Rather, we must build a society where their tools of coercion are impotent. Reason, education, and alliance building are our best tools. There may be times and places when force is called for; however, we must remember that the use of force is always a sign that something has gone wrong.

We must also remember that the vast majority of those who fear and oppose transhumanists and tech-progressives do so out of ignorance. Many of them are already our personal friends, we just need to let them know who we are, what we think, and why. It is by engaging in dialog with them and building off of mutual respect that we will become most likely to achieve our goals. ***Now get to it!***

Further Organizational Reading

We hope that your group will change the world for the better. We hope that this manual sets you off in the right direction, but we know it really only scratches the surface. There are four very good books that you might find useful in making your organization truly exceptional. They are aimed at people who are trying to take on the world, not just (just!) run a student group. Don't get caught in the trap of believing you have to do everything in them to have a great group. If you do 1% of what is suggested in them, you'll be doing fantastic.

Managing a Nonprofit Organization in the Twenty-first Century by Thomas Wolf and Barbra Carter

The Tipping Point: How little Things Can Make a Big Difference by Malcolm Gladwell

Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies by Jim Collins and Jerry I. Porras

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't by Jim Collins

Additional Support from the Movement

TSN is eager to help you out!

Keep in touch with the TSN leadership. Talk to them if you are interested in serving on the transnational level (campus organizing experience strongly favored).

One of your best resources is WTA-Campus on yahoo groups. On the list you are put in touch with TSN leaders and advocates from around the world. While there are many TSN lists on other networking sites like Orkut, Tribe, and MySpace, but they are primarily intended to lure students to the homepage and main list (do join them all the same).

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WTA-Campus>

Share your ideas and materials! Send them to the TSN leaders and they may post them on the homepage. Better yet, post them on the main list first!

There are many experienced transhumanist activists who will go out of their way to help the new generations learn to lead and become effective advocates. Don't be afraid to reach out to people throughout the transhumanist movement, and don't be shy about asking for assistance from local/national chapters and organizations (remember how to sell your projects – see the Fundraising and Adviser sections for hints).

Working Groups

Some campus groups, like the Stanford Transhumanist Association, choose to operate as a working group. **The aim of the working group is tailored toward spreading awareness of transhumanist ideas and themes.**

➤ STA founder and President *Michael Yin Jin*:

“I have two, not mutually exclusive, suggestions for organizing one:

1) The first and more structured way is **to plan a class**. At Stanford for instance, there is a student-initiated course option.

2) The second way is **to directly organize public lectures on transhumanist topics**. *Here there is not much of a sense of who are club members unless the lectures have a returning audience (even if it tends to be a small group).*

In the second case, a working group should build as large a returning audience as possible. **It should also maintain a smaller planning committee, which should become a sort of group within a group.** This planning group will have the really

dedicated members, usually transhumanists. In addition to the planning committee there should be a group of geographically distributed volunteers for handling *flyering* for instance.

Some ideas I have for working group activities are:

1) **Panel discussions** - Easiest thing here would be to **get local professors**. This is a good way to get in a lot of *audience participation*.

2) **Big name speakers** - *Piggybacking* is very effective and cuts costs. If the speaker is already **in the area for another conference**, they probably would speak for a student group at low prices. *If the speaker is a transhumanist, he or she might do it for free!*

[*Of course, you should always *try* to collect an honorarium (a payment) for your speaker— either through departments, the student activities office, or other sources.]

3) **Authors** - Coordinating with the **campus bookstore** can help.

4) **Debates** - When done well they are very effective. It takes some skill to find the right pairings and getting the speakers to clash effectively. Probably for more experienced event planners.

In general, I think **collaboration** really helps, **especially for new groups**. Reach out to **humanist groups, student think tanks** (like Roosevelt Institution), and **science magazines** especially.”

Remember, if you want your group to last, be sure to **effectively advertise your group!** *See the Advertising/Growth Strategies section.* (Consider advertising through *tables, departmental flyers, professor recommendations to their classes and *speaker events* that you sponsor or endorse, and through which you can educate students about what you do.*)

Similar considerations apply in establishing a working group as in founding a club, so *read the early sections on organizing a general club.*

Some differences you might encounter in working groups:

- **More academic orientation** (which, depending on your temperament, may not be unwelcome). A good working group is *intellectually challenging*. While this beats a truly lame general meeting any day, realize that it also demands **extra preparation time** and **leader discipline**.
- **Expect a more disciplined schedule** with more adviser influence to ensure quality presentation content.
- **Possibly a smaller active member size**. Ten people plus an adviser is very healthy, but remember you need to find and bring in “newbies” to compensate for the students who are graduating.

- A working group **may be a long-term commitment for several professors and researchers**, so it will be a greater commitment than a club, but hopefully compensated by a greater return in focused, serious discussion. If the topics are of interest to the professors, they may be more excited about the opportunity to engage in serious exploration with committed students and interested colleagues.

Scheduling

Meeting every two weeks makes sense for a working group – it gives people time to read materials and prepare PowerPoint slides for the next topic. Remember, the student organizers (and to a lesser extent the adviser) have to come up with **reading materials**.

Find the best time for the advisers and officers **and stick to it** the whole year (make adjustments only if absolutely necessary). Have your first meeting within the first or second week of the autumn quarter – after having an **info-sign up table present at the new student activities day (with a name and E-mail list – see main section)**.

In a single academic period, you will only meet four times, maybe even three. When taking on a large topic, like “fundamentals of evolutionary psychology,” you may need two meetings to cover what you want to discuss.

Meeting Presentations

Every meeting should cover a certain subject and someone should give a presentation (typically PowerPoint presentations – which can be posted on your website) on that subject before open discussion. Try to give everyone who wants the opportunity to give a presentation, but insist they prepare far in advance and ask the person to be ready or nearly so by the meeting two weeks before – you really don’t want a meeting to fall apart on you (members may lose interest in your group).

You can choose the length of the presentations and discussions, but it is suggested the presentations not last much longer than 10 minutes – 20 at the absolute maximum. Official discussion and debate can ensue for the next 40-50 minutes. If people want to carry on conversations over a meal, or on your web list (yahoo groups is easy to use – see main section), they have that option, but you can usually only reserve a room space for a limited time.

Lastly, do try to make meetings *fun* in addition to being informative and thought-provoking. There are plenty of zany suggestions in the **“Activities and Events/Keeping Their Interest”** section.

We encourage you to make use of the materials compiled by the STA (with attribution):
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/transhumanism/materials.htm>

Internships

Internships are becoming increasingly important, especially for anyone who plans to work outside of academia. Regardless of one's ultimate career(s), they provide valuable experience in different lines of work and their inclusion to one's resume can open doors.

Keeping your GPA up is also important, but internship experience can be decisive in admittance to grad programs and your general career options. If you want to keep graduate school open as an option, you should maintain a **3.5 GPA or better**. Otherwise, 3.0 and above is a good GPA (U.S. standards – others may be different), assuming you are doing internships. **We encourage students to strive for academic achievement and practical experience in career/volunteer paths.**

Note: many non-professional doctoral graduate programs are free or nearly so.

* IEET Internships

The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies (IEET) offers unpaid internship opportunities to qualified undergraduate and graduate students during the summer and the academic year. Interns work with senior staff, fellows and board members on individual research, writing or outreach projects in specific program areas.

General Internship Information

Internships are available during the school year (September-December, January intersession, and February-May), and part-time or full-time during the summer (June-August). (*Schedule is based on Northern Hemisphere schedules.*)

Because all internships are unpaid, IEET is flexible with internship schedules. Interns are required to participate in frequent long-distance correspondence via E-mail, IM, phones and snail mail, aside from attendance at conferences. The IEET will aim to develop the intern's writing, organizational and public advocacy skills as they relate to the intern's area of interest. **Independent initiative and goal-setting is essential.**

Programs of Activity:

- (1) Global Health;
- (2) Relationships, Community, and Technology;
- (3) Consequences and Ethics of Emerging Technologies;
- (4) Self-Determination and Human Rights;
- (5) Longer, Better Lives; and,
- (6) Visions of Utopia and Dystopia.

Additionally, areas like Foundation Development (finances), Journal of Evolution and Technology (JET) Editorial Assistance, and Internship Coordination are offered.

Applying for an Internship Position

1. If you are interested in the IEET internship program please contact the internship coordinator Ben Hyink: **ben_hyink9 – at – yahoo.com**.
2. To apply, please send the IEET Director:
 - A. Cover letter detailing why you are interested in an internship with IEET, which particular internship you are interested in, what you hope to achieve during your internship, the time frame (and approximate hours per week) you have available for an internship, and any other relevant information. If you are applying for a Program Internship, please indicate if you have a particular area of interest.
 - B. Current resume, with academic and professional experience
 - C. Short writing sample (2-3 pages) on any topic that reflects your writing ability and style.

Mail to: IEET Internship Program
c/o James Hughes Ph.D.
Public Policy Studies
Trinity College
300 Summit St.
Hartford CT 06106

or: **director – at – ieet.org**

For more information, check out the IEET website at <http://www.ieet.org>

*** Strategy**

One of the most important characteristics of internships is that they provide special access to a **hidden network** to career positions and institution admittance. This access is created based on your connections to **people** who recognize your talents and the contributions you could make wherever you intend to go. It also is fostered by the projects you have undertaken or assistance you provided, which you should concisely describe in your resume and applications.

When you are pursuing your **first internship**, apply to attractive ones but don't automatically reject an internship that is somewhat different than your area of interest or is offered by a group that lacks a recognizable name. You just need to show that you are a dependable worker, are willing to learn new skills, and can get along with your boss and co-workers. You don't have to stay for a long time in the first one unless it is perfect for you, but stick to the terms of your commitment.

For the *second internship* you should aim higher – try to get one that relates to your interest and/or has more prestige attached to the company or group.

“3” tends to be the magic number. By a third internship, you should be admitted to a very cool internship that relates directly to your interest, has some prestige or which you deem of significant importance or attractiveness within your field of greatest interest.

How do you know what career is right for you? What if your interests are diverse?

- **SAMPLE DIFFERENT AREAS!** Broaden your experience so you don't leap into a career you quickly come to detest. Sample through classes and internships.
- **Do the “Free 'Zine Test.”** If you could get *one* free subscription to a magazine on any subject at all, what would it be? Seriously, what subject **could interest you enough** that you would read every issue of this publication cover to cover and savor the knowledge and perspectives gained. You should start pursuing that subject area because it is a good candidate for your *life's passion*. For more on this, read up on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's work on creativity and “flow psychology.”
- What **issues, problems, or goals** do you find **most meaningful/significant**? This is a deeper question you'll have to answer for yourself. **How can you connect your passions and apply your talents to these areas?**
- **Stay open to new possibilities.** We live in times of great transition. Empower yourself by gaining the skills that will allow you to take on different roles.
- **Don't get too caught up on income.** *Figure out what fascinates you and what you care about.* If you invest yourself in your work, your passion may turn out to be lucrative, but if it doesn't, you can still enjoy a great life; however, the same cannot be said when passions are voluntarily sacrificed in the *attempt* to secure money. People who make their choices primarily on considerations of income often get stuck in positions that don't make as much as they had hoped for because they act in risk-averse ways and don't invest themselves in their work. Try to make a habit of saving 10% of your income, but be prepared to take risks when necessary, and hold out for your dreams.

“Major In Success”

For great tips to help you navigate opportunities and obstacles, and live a passionate, challenging, rewarding life, there are few books as useful as:

Major In Success: Make College Easier, Fire up Your Dreams, and Get a Very Cool Job – by Patrick Combs

You can find a copy online at:

<http://goodthink.com/store/books.cfm>

* **Other Transhumanist and H+ Related Options**

In addition to IEET and the WTA, transhumanist and related groups you might consider assisting or interning with are listed on the WTA Affiliates page:

<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/affiliates>

Speeches and Conferences

* **Speech Tips**

Speaking skills are extremely valuable for transhumanist advocates. These are *skills*, so you need to practice them in order to become proficient. Opportunities abound: local groups, big conferences (e.g. TransVision), and media of all sorts.

It is not easy to find decent speech-making tips online that are not copyrighted. So instead of listing the tips here, we will provide you with some links to excellent free online tutorials and a highly recommended book.

If you have time and interest, you might also try to hone your skills through your college forensics/speech club or toastmasters international. You should also practice giving talks on subjects of interest to small groups in your area, like working groups at your educational institution, Humanist chapters, or other local organizations.

So You Wanna Deliver an Effective Speech (EXCELLENT guide)

<http://www.soyouwanna.com/site/syws/speaking/speaking3.html>

How to give a great speech (10 Tips)

http://nyny.essortment.com/howtogiveas_rdm.htm

Three Keys to Great Speechmaking (Preparation, Presentation and Feedback)

http://www.barkscomm.com/sa_3keys.asp

Toastmasters International Recommends:

HOW TO WRITE AND GIVE A SPEECH – By Joan Detz

<http://www.franklin.com/estore/details.aspx?ID=BBS0312709293DLDA>

<http://www.toastmasters.org/store/item.asp?Category=&SubCategoryID=81&GroupID=&SKU=B7>

* PowerPoint Tips

Respect your audience. Use power point as a supplement for the content of your presentation, not as a flashy substitute for content. You still need to prepare for your speech!

That said, PowerPoint is expected for many speeches. We suggest you take Einstein's advice: make your PowerPoint content "as simple as possible – but no simpler!" If you can't fit everything into your time limits, consider further restricting your speech topic.

- **Organize** your speech structure and make your slides reflect that organization
- **Avoid** long sections of text on your slides – whittle down text to the essentials.
- **Change** slides as you move through the sections and sub-sections of your topic.
- **Keep** slides up for as long as it takes the typical audience member to read them while listening to you – especially if what you say is different from what they are reading. Still, don't leave too much "dead air" time by not speaking.
- **Pictures** make great additions to your slides, and you should integrate at least a few, *but focus on speech content first*. You can find plenty of non-copyrighted pictures on Google.com through "image" searches.

User tips; check out the "Frequently Asked Questions" hotlink

<http://www.bitbetter.com/powertips.htm>

"PowerPoint Is Evil" – by Edward Tufte (Perspective)

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt2.html>

"Learning to Love PowerPoint" – by David Byrne (Food for Thought for Artists)

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt1.html>

* Conferences

Conferences are fantastic opportunities to:

- **have "peak experiences"** – i.e. great experiences you will always remember
- **enjoy camaraderie** with other passionate people, many of whom have quite fascinating perspectives to share
- you *might* even **network** a bit or get **media coverage**

There are annual WTA TransVision conferences that occur throughout the world. Students get discounts and there is work underway on the development of a charity fund that will pay the expenses of students who come with a talk to present. We strongly suggest you try to save up enough money to travel to TransVision conferences.

Keep an eye out for local events relevant to the transhumanist movement and offer your help to the organizers if you have enough time – the people you get to know might even be able to offer you a discount or free admission.

Columns and Letters to the Editor

[For English language style, we recommend, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, by Michael Harvey and, *On Writing Well*, by William Zinsser. We also recommend Anthony Weston's, *A Rulebook for Arguments* (87 pages). For *papers*, we also recommend Gordon Harney's, *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students* (60 pages). Also, a wonderful guide to any effective science writing is Scott L. Montgomery's, *The Chicago Guide to Communicating Science*.]

* Letters to the Editor (LTEs)

Sending LTEs is, in the opinion of many, one of the most effective efforts an activist can make on behalf of a cause. We can send them from anywhere in the world. More than 90% of the publications that publish LTEs can send them by E-mail. LTEs have more readership than ads in any publication, so their value is higher. Ads are expensive and do not provide the same “voice of the people” legitimacy. **Always notify us when you submit an LTE to a publication, and send us a copy!**

Editors have the right to edit your letters. Ideally, this should not alter the intent of your letter, but if they do there is not much you can do about it until after the fact. Do politely notify the editor and TSN leadership if this happens to you (if it becomes a pattern we can discourage people from supporting the publication).

To minimize the risk of edits to your letter and to maximize the likelihood your letter will appear in print, follow these tips:

- **Select your targets**, if you are writing about something that was already printed. Editorial page editors select the letters they will print. They seem to love letters about their editorials, or about columns written by their own staff. Next in importance are feature stories, last in importance are newswires. (Not to say that anything is an impossible target, but more letters and care in writing make be required to achieve publication for some targets.)
- **Study what that publication has printed** and match your letter to those samples. Note the length of letters, length of the paragraphs and the level of English (adapt this advice to the language that is used).
- **Most** published letters in newspapers are **less than 200 words long**. Local papers may print longer ones.
- **Rewrite your letter**. Most published authors go through at least a few drafts trying to trim down and sharpen their letters. Then they sleep on it and look at their draft again before sending it out.
- **Ask others** to check for errors and make suggestions!
- **Use a style guide**, it will improve your writing (Here is one online: <http://www.mapinc.org/resource>; again, use the conventions considered best in your language or culture)

- **Local tie-ins can be used to your advantage.** If some event happens locally that relates to your issue, and you submit an editorial to a local paper, you may be given more space than usual.
- **Always be polite, and strive to be as inviting as possible.** We need to *persuade* people, so be careful refrain from personal attacks and combative tones in your writing.

While publication is the goal, unpublished letters also send a message about reader interest. **All LTEs matter.** Moreover, the WTA may even post your letter on its website.

Lastly the more we frequently we all advocate our views, the greater the likelihood becomes that our LTEs will be published. *Happy writing!*

Source:

<http://www.csdp.org/active/LTEHOWTO.PDF>

* Columns

As of today, *Betterhumans.com* is probably the only place you can write on transhumanist or tech-relevant subjects *all the time*. It is also nice because it has flexible submission deadlines, which are not weekly. All considered, Betterhumans is a fantastic place to get started if you have a writing talent. *It is also great place to express your views (to a popular, receptive audience) if you are a researcher or policy advocate.*

However, if you have a gift for writing and would like to pursue it in your school paper or even professionally, you can gain a small bully pulpit that can be used for effective advocacy. *Don't forget you can write guest columns in many school or local papers (or special-interest magazines)!*

Here is some advice from a great online resource (FREE, but copyrighted):

“To get started, do not worry about where your column will be published. Write it for yourself and look for publishers in parallel to your first several weeks of writing. If you have never written a column before, I recommend you do not try to sell one until you have produced a weekly piece on time for at least three months. If you cannot come up with a fresh idea every week, write about it in less than 700 words, and meet the deadline for turning in the final copy, you are not column material. And, I suspect you won't be able to tackle any significant writing project that takes daily work, thought, and study.”

Self-Syndicating Your Weekly Column, by Elizabeth Laden

The Entire Series:

[Part 1: Writing a Weekly Column: Just Do It!](#)

[Part 2: Picking a Topic](#)

[Part 3: Naming Your Baby and Setting Your Schedule](#)

[Part 4: Arm's Length Essentials](#)

Part 5: You and Your Readers

Part 6: Time out for an Important Q and A

Part 7: Becoming a Professional Columnist With an Amateur's Heart

<http://www.writing-world.com/freelance/columns/column1.shtml>

Here is a decent book on the subject (there must be others *somewhere*):

You Can Write a Column (You Can Write It!)

by Monica McCabe-Cardoza

Publisher: Writer's Digest Books; 1st ed edition (April 1, 2000)

Paperback: 120 pages

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0898799244/102-2622553-9631343?v=glance>

Some general advice for columns (by no means a comprehensive list!!):

- Clearly articulate the issue or thesis statement
- Make each topic sentence clear, concise, and to the point.
- Do sufficient research and keep systematic track of your sources.
- Make your paper follow a logical structure, with no obvious gaps.
- Maintain the active voice throughout (when in English).
- Try to be sure your reader will understand your meaning.
- Read over each section for typos not caught by spell-check or words left out.
- Double-check by reading backwards, out loud, or with a ruler.

Annual JBS Haldane Award for Best Undergraduate Transhumanist Paper

The Haldane award is given to **the student paper that best advances transhumanist thought, analysis or applications**. Please submit complete papers to James Hughes Ph.D. [james.hughes - at - trincoll.edu](mailto:james.hughes@trincoll.edu) by **March 15, 2005** for consideration for the 2005 Haldane award.

Eligibility criteria:

1. authors must be students enrolled at a high school, college or university, who have not received their baccalaureate degree by January 1, 2004
2. authors must be members in good standing of the World Transhumanist Association

The award ceremony is held during the annual Transvision conference (date and venue not yet decided). Attendance at the TV04 conference is not a criteria for eligibility for the award, but we encourage those who can attend to submit their papers for consideration as

conference presentations. The awardee will receive \$250, and the paper will be considered for publication in the *Journal of Evolution and Technology*.

For more information:

<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/more/bioethicsgradstudiesfortranshumanists>

TSN Transnational Leadership

TSN currently offers the following leadership positions at the transnational level:

TSN Board of Directors:

Chair: the presiding officer and chief liaison to the WTA and cooperating organizations. Manages decision-making list and coordinates tasks for TSN projects.

Executive Director: the chief field organizer and secretary. Advises and assists campus groups, manages information of student groups, and contacts student WTA members to suggest ways for them to help grow the movement.

Outreach Directors: assistants to the Executive Director and Chair. They also can pursue work on special projects.

Finance Director: entrusted with responsibility for any independent TSN funds and assists the WTA in planning and managing funds intended for student benefit (e.g. a student subsidy fund for TransVision conferences).

Webmaster: updates web page with new resources and manages page content.

These positions are collapsible, but more can be achieved through the coordinated efforts of several transnational leaders. Please consider serving as a TSN transnational leader. All positions are elected once every two years.

TSN Recognition of WTA Policy

In terms of policy, TSN falls under the positions articulated by the WTA. TSN does not have any minimum statement or codified values above and beyond those articulated by the WTA in the *Transhumanist Declaration* and *Statements of the WTA* (this includes the exclusion certain groups and agendas).

<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/declaration>

<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/statements>

For greater elaboration on transhumanist issues and ideas, we suggest people refer to the **F.A.Q.** section of the WTA website: <http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/faq>

Places for Graduate Students to Pursue Graduate Studies in Bioethics

(<http://www.transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/more/bioethicsgradstudiesfortranshumanists>)

Occasionally transhumanist students ask us what professors, departments or programs are interested in or conducive to research on transhumanism.

Since transhumanism is quite interdisciplinary, the answer is that many people in academe are interested in or sympathetic to one aspect or another of the transhumanist agenda, if not to “transhumanism.”

For instance, departments of computer science are very tolerant of investigations of artificial intelligence and neuroprosthetics, while many departments of biological sciences would be congenial for research on aging mechanisms or cognitive function. Although scientists are often anxious not to be perceived as “kooky” or as advocating pseudoscience, there is probably much less resistance or hostility to someone having transhumanist views in the natural sciences than in the social sciences and humanities.

Even the transhumanist pursuing a graduate degree in engineering or the information or biological sciences, however, will eventually want to engage with their school’s bioethicists, philosophers and health policy scholars. There, the reception to “transhumanism,” or even discussion of “human enhancement,” can often be dismissive.

Here are some of our initial thoughts about where to find scholars and programs in bioethics and philosophy that are supportive of transhumanist enquiries, even if they aren’t explicitly transhumanist. Of course, transhumanists can also learn a lot in programs that are hostile to transhumanism, so long as the scholars are talking about the issues and willing to support student work in the topic. There is no school or department I know of in which transhumanists are the majority. You might as well find the rare scholar(s) with some sympathies for transhumanism to work with since you will be able to find bioconservative critics without much effort.

- James J. Hughes Ph.D., Executive Director, WTA

IN THE UNITED STATES

Center for Bioethics & Dept of Medical Ethics University of Pennsylvania

<http://www.bioethics.upenn.edu>

Arthur Caplan is probably the leading U.S. bioethicist, and is relatively open to human enhancement for a bioethicist. His large, prominent program at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia is central to American bioethics.

**Interdisciplinary Bioethics Project
Yale University**

<http://www.yale.edu/bioethics>

Yale University has a very active set of bioethics working groups, many of which are of interest to transhumanists, all of which are tolerant of transhumanists, and one of which is the Ethics and Technology group, led by transhumanist Bonnie Kaplan and with James Hughes, the WTA Director, as a participant.

**Program on Medicine, Technology, and Society
University of California Los Angeles**

<http://research.arc2.ucla.edu/pmts>

The transhumanist Gregory Stock, author of *Redesigning Humans*, runs this program at UCLA. Write to Dr. Stock to find out what kind of research possibilities you might have under its auspices.

**Department of Bioethics
Case Western Reserve University**

<http://www.cwru.edu/med/bioethics/faculty.htm>

This is a large collection of influential bioethicists, among them Maxwell Mehlman, author of a book on human enhancement; Eric T. Juengst, who has written extensively and relatively sympathetically about human enhancement; Stuart Youngner, one of the leading scholars of brain death and personhood; and Dena Davis, a leading scholar of genetic and reproductive technology.

**Department of Philosophy
University of Alabama**

<http://www.uab.edu/philosophy/faculty/pence>

Greg Pence is one of the leading transhumanist-inclined bioethicists. He has written in defense of reproductive cloning and human enhancement.

**Department of Philosophy
Brown University**

<http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Philosophy/brock.html>

Dan Brock, at Brown, is a very prestigious bioethicist, and co-author of the very important transhumanist-leaning text *From Chance to Choice*.

**Department of Population and Int. Health
Harvard School of Public Health**

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/facres/pihindx.html>

Daniel Wikler and Norman Daniels are very prestigious bioethicists at Harvard, and co-authors of the very important transhumanist-leaning text *From Chance to Choice*.

**Center for Human Values
Princeton University**

<http://www.princeton.edu/~uchv>

Peter Singer

<http://www.princeton.edu/~psinger>

Peter Singer is one of the most influential philosophers among transhumanists, and he is a defender of access to human enhancement (among many other controversial views.) He also teaches half-time in Australia. At Princeton he is part of their Center for Human Values.

UNITED KINGDOM

Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics
Oxford University

<http://www.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk>

WTA Chair Nick Bostrom and transhumanist-sympathizing bioethicist Julian Savulescu are both in the Uehiro Ethics center at Oxford University. This is the place for transhumanist philosophy, if you can get there.

Centre for Social Ethics and Policy
University of Manchester

<http://www.law.manchester.ac.uk/research/csep.htm>

John Harris, a transhumanist-inclined bioethicist who wrote the pioneering pro-enhancement *Superman and Wonderwoman* and the more recent defense of reproductive cloning *On Cloning*, runs this Centre.

CANADA

Centre for Bioethics
University of Toronto

<http://www.utoronto.ca/jcb>

This center has been pursuing great and exciting stuff, from a generally pro-tech point of view, under director Peter Singer (who is not the Australian/Princeton Peter Singer). They have some transhumanists among their students and associates.

Department of Philosophy
Dalhousie University

<http://philosophy.dal.ca>

Jason Scott Robert and Francoise Baylis are transhumanist-inclined bioethicists who teach in the philosophy program at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia.

<http://bioethics.medicine.dal.ca>

AUSTRALIA

Centre for Bioethics
Monash University

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/bioethics>

Russell Blackford

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/phil/postgraduate/blackford>

Russell Blackford is a transhumanist-sympathizing philosopher, and a Fellow of the

IEET, who lectures in Monash's bioethics program while he is finishing a doctorate on human enhancement. Peter Singer is also at Monash half the year.

Transhumanist Science and Technology Majors

While there is no particular group in the WTA for Science and Technology majors and grad students, we can suggest some excellent materials, particularly for writing, that will help you persuade audiences of the merits of your work and eventually help you become an effective advocate of the transhumanist cause:

- (1) Gopen and Swan's *short* paper, "**The Science of Scientific Writing**," <http://www.americanscientist.org/template/AssetDetail/assetid/23947?fulltext=true&print=yes&print=yes>
- (2) Scott L. Montgomery's, *The Chicago Guide to Communicating Science*" (excellent).
- (3) For arguments: Anthony Weston's, *A Rulebook for Arguments* (87 pages).
- (4) Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

Other good sources include: *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, by Michael Harvey and, *On Writing Well*, by William Zinsser.

Belonging to a **professional association** – no matter what your career – can be very helpful for networking and job searches. Please suggest significant transnational science associations we should highlight in updates of this document to the current TSN Chair.

Of course, be sure to get **technical competence** for the field you intend to pursue, and **find a lab to work in to obtain background experience and recommendations**. **Doctorates** may or may not be necessary for your field, but they tend to help one achieve greater career status, and the social recognition can translate into greater career flexibility. **Masters degrees** are usually the minimum educational requirement for paying jobs in research, though some teaching positions (especially at the high school level) are also open and **highly technical fields may ignore degrees if technical competence is demonstrated** through other credentials such as work experience (internships are the quickest route to impressive resumes) or products (be sure to secure your legal rights).

Something many undergraduates are unaware of is that **graduate school in research is compensated by stipends for housing and living expenses**, so that the overall cost is comparatively low (though you may need to find additional work). This contrasts with medical school, which like law and business school is quite expensive since the professions can be highly lucrative depending on the areas that are pursued.

Lastly, as you work toward your goals, keep in mind the broader picture of which we are all a part. Science and technology will be the means of actualizing our visions, but it won't be possible without collaboration with future-friendly people in all various other fields. This is true before funding is granted, in the midst of controversy, and in the post-development applications of new technologies (e.g. marketing, safety regulation, etc.). *Science is in large part about selling your ideas to others.*

Transhumanist Law Network

(<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/law>)

The **Transhumanist Law Network** seeks to build an international network of transhumanist attorneys, judges, law scholars **and law students** to promote the goals of the Transhumanist Declaration. In particular we seek to promote discussion of the law as it relates to emerging technologies, and defend the rights of individuals in free and democratic societies to use technologies that expand human capacities. We are working to expand and deepen the understanding of human rights to focus on the rights all sentient persons.

Towards these goals we

- have established the WTA-law list and WTA-law blog for discussion of transhumanist law topics
- are building a syllabus on transhumanist law and a collection of relevant case law and treaties from around the world
- have begun our "Self-Determination and Human Rights" program to deepen and extend the global movement for human rights to include rights to "technological self-determination"

Transhumanist Artists, Writers, Musicians, and Filmmakers

(<http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/arts>)

The WTA has worked closely with its affiliate Transhumanist Arts and Culture to promote transhumanist artists, writers, musicians and filmmakers, and to encourage the critical evaluation of art and culture from a transhumanist perspective. In particular through our program on "Visions of Utopia and Dystopia" we are focusing on the systematic collection and discussion of images of posthumanity and non-human intelligence in literature, television and film.

If you are a member of the WTA and an artist, musician, filmmaker, author, culture critic or art scholar let us know so that we can promote your work. Contact Lanfranco Aceti [lanfranco(at-sign)communart.com], the curator of our online Transhumanist Art Gallery (coming soon).

You can also join the WTA-Arts list which we use to disseminate arts and culture news of interest to transhumanists. Also, try to join us at Transvision 2004 this summer, the theme of which is Transhumanist Art and Culture. The deadline for submissions of papers, performances, videos and readings is June 1.

Transhumanist Declaration

(1) Humanity will be radically changed by technology in the future. We foresee the feasibility of redesigning the human condition, including such parameters as the inevitability of aging, limitations on human and artificial intellects, unchosen psychology, suffering, and our confinement to the planet earth.

(2) Systematic research should be put into understanding these coming developments and their long-term consequences.

(3) Transhumanists think that by being generally open and embracing of new technology we have a better chance of turning it to our advantage than if we try to ban or prohibit it.

(4) Transhumanists advocate the moral right for those who so wish to use technology to extend their mental and physical (including reproductive) capacities and to improve their control over their own lives. We seek personal growth beyond our current biological limitations.

(5) In planning for the future, it is mandatory to take into account the prospect of dramatic progress in technological capabilities. It would be tragic if the potential benefits failed to materialize because of technophobia and unnecessary prohibitions. On the other hand, it would also be tragic if intelligent life went extinct because of some disaster or war involving advanced technologies.

(6) We need to create forums where people can rationally debate what needs to be done, and a social order where responsible decisions can be implemented.

(7) Transhumanism advocates the well-being of all sentience (whether in artificial intellects, humans, posthumans, or non-human animals) and encompasses many principles of modern humanism.

**The following group was never fully established at N.U.,
but it's defining document offers a decent *template* for
any student club constitution:**

New Humanists Northwestern University



PREAMBLE

We, the members of the New Humanists of Northwestern, hereby establish this constitution to outline the goals, regulations, details, and by-laws of the New Humanists student organization. New Humanists shall serve as cultural student organization for Humanists and Transhumanists at Northwestern University. Be it hereby known that the New Humanists intend to abide by the established policies of Northwestern University and promote a civil atmosphere.

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The full title of this group is “New Humanists” (abbreviated as “NH”).

We call ourselves “New” because we are dedicated to an open, rational assessment of new ideas and perspectives, including topics involving the ethical use of emerging technologies for the betterment of life.

We call ourselves “Humanists” because we are part of the historical tradition of Humanism, which seeks to apply science, reason and free inquiry in all areas of human endeavor and act with compassion toward others.

ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP

-Section 1

NH does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, national origin or status as a veteran.

-Section 2

Full membership in NH shall be open to all undergraduate NU students, and all others shall be associate members. Full members must have attended at least two of the last four meetings prior to a vote. Only full members are eligible to vote.

-Section 3

Anyone may attend discussions, meetings, activities, events, and members may withdraw their memberships on a voluntary basis. No dues are required at this time.

ARTICLE 3: OFFICERS and ADVISORS

Officers shall be enrolled full-time as undergraduate students of Northwestern University.

1.) Presidential duties (*required*):

- a. **Moderating, scheduling, and ensuring the quality of meetings;**
- b. Acting as the **primary spokesperson;**
- c. **Setting up events w/ VP and Treasurer;**
- d. Working with the Center for Student Involvement, the ASG, and other supportive groups and individuals (community outreach);
- e. *Acting as Secretary in the officer's absence*
- f. *Acting as Social Chair in the officer's absence.*
- g. Informing NH members about area events.

2.) Vice Presidential duties:

- a. General planning and coordination for NH events & activities;
- b. *Perform the duties of the president when necessary or requested;*
- c. *Acting as Treasurer in the officer's absence; and,*
- d. *Acting as Secretary in the officer's absence.*

3.) Treasurer duties (*required*):

- a. Financial affairs of NH, namely **account management** and fundraising.

4.) Secretary duties:

- a. Taking minutes;
- b. Building and maintaining Internet sites and message boards;
- c. Counting secret ballots with a randomly chosen member.

5.) Social Chair duties:

- a. Promotion (flyers) direction, student outreach.

On any non-amendment-related club decision necessitating a vote, all full members present at a meeting shall decide by majority vote.

The ADVISORS shall:

- 1) Be an NU faculty or staff member – until such time as B-status is attained;
- 2) Sign off on documents as the advisor of NH;
- 3) Be welcome at meetings, discussions and events of NH;
- 4) Advise the officers on fulfilling objectives when asked for suggestions.

ELECTIONS

Officers are elected by secret ballot of all official NU student members of NH who are in good judicial standing and present at the election meeting. Elections are held in November, and terms of office are for one year starting the day after the elections. There is no re-election limit. Any full member of the NH is eligible to serve.

- The election begins with a vote for the President and continues through the other positions in the order in which they are listed above.
- Defeated candidates may continue to run for the subsequent positions.

ARTICLE 4: REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

Officers may be removed if the members feel that the officer is not performing her/his duties at a level that best upholds the constitution of NH. Complaints must be submitted to the advisors in writing. Petitioning members must then consult with their advisors and their student activities liaison to ensure a fair removal process is enacted.

- After hearing a plea of guilt or innocence to the charges by the officer in question, and an explanation for actions taken, a 2/3rds majority vote of full members of NH present at a meeting is required to remove an officer.
- If a position is left vacant for any reason, the present NH members should elect a new officer at the next meeting.
- If necessary, the President may appoint a member of the organization to fill the office until an election can take place

ARTICLE 5: DISCUSSION and MEETING PROCEDURE

- *The President reserves the right to reschedule the time and day of meetings to meet the needs of most active members.*
- *A topic of general interest that relates to NH should be discussed at each meeting, which should nearly weekly during the academic year when classes are in session.*
- *Everyone's input and ideas are welcome.*
- *One person has the floor at a time. Refrain from personal attacks.*

*The President shall chair brief business meetings following discussions. Roberts Rules of Order, employed through the informal small board rules unless greater formality is deemed necessary, shall govern and arbitrate disputes in procedure. Quorum shall be called; minutes of the last meeting read and amended; officer reports presented; old business covered; new business addressed; and the meeting shall be called to a close. Quorum shall consist of at least two officers, and one must either be the President or VP. Full members are included in votes regarding elections, removal of officers (*see Article 4), and any decisions for which the President or VP acting in such capacity deems the guidance of full members proper (the majority prevails).*

ARTICLE 6: AMENDMENTS

Any official member of the organization may propose amendments to the NH constitution. Amendments will be read aloud by an officer, and debates may take place in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order. ANYONE may participate in the debate, but only NU students who are NH members before the gathering may vote. Amendments are passed by a 2/3rds majority vote of the NU student members of the NH present at the meeting (including officers). Voting is by secret ballot.

- All amendments to the constitution must be approved by the ASG Executive Vice President before they are considered valid.

ARTICLE 7: ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

First site and message board: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NewHumanistsNU>

- Officers may affiliate the club with organizations of their choosing, if a motion is passed by a 2/3rds officer vote and the ASG Exec. V.P. (see Article 5: Amendments).

Current Affiliations:

- 1.) ***Transhumanist Student Network (TSN)***
and the World Transhumanist Association (WTA)
- 2.) ***CFI-OnCampus and the Center for Inquiry (CFI)***
- 3.) ***Secular Student Alliance (SSA)***
- 4.) ***International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organization (IHEYO)***
- 5.) ***Chicago Transhumanist Chapter (CTC)***
- 6.) ***Secular Humanist Society of Chicago (SHSC)***
- 7.) ***Ethical Humanist Society of Greater Chicagoland***
- 8.) ***Humanists of West Suburban Chicagoland***