



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS

# Making the Most Out of Your Student Leader Experience

Congratulations! You are now one of nearly 200 NASP Student Leaders from across the country. This is an exciting time to join NASP leadership. As a new Student Leader (SL), you may have questions about your role and how to make the most out of your experience. This fact sheet is designed to help answer those questions and better prepare you for your role and responsibilities. Step-by-step examples of how you can increase and maximize your involvement in the NASP SL Program are included.

## **What Is the NASP Student Leader Program?**

Each year NASP recruits select graduate students to serve as Student Leaders from school psychology training programs across the country. As an SL, you are nominated by your own program's Faculty Sponsor (FS). Under the direction of the Student Development Workgroup (SDW), SLs create the NASP Student Leader Program.

## **Student Development Workgroup**

The SDW falls under the umbrella of the Professional Development Program within NASP leadership and is made up of a chair, co-chair, and two additional workgroup members. All SDW members are students or professionals in the field who volunteer their time. The SDW's primary role is to oversee the SL Program and support SL initiatives. Additional tasks include, but are not limited to, developing student panel presentations for convention, overseeing the mentoring program, developing student resources, advocating for student needs at the NASP Delegate Assembly, and moderating the online [NASP Communities](#) for graduate students and Student Leaders.

## **The Role and Responsibilities of a Student Leader**

The SL term begins on July 1st and continues until June 30th of the following year. Many SLs also decide to pursue a second term. At the beginning of your term, you will receive a welcome e-mail from NASP headquarters containing helpful materials, resources, and links to help you get started. Included will be an outline of your role and responsibilities as an SL. In brief, your role is to help facilitate communication between graduate students and NASP, expand student resources, and support existing or new local student organizations. Additional leadership opportunities are often available for those who seek them out. Below is a list of responsibilities that will help you succeed as an SL.

### ***Maintain an SL Binder.***

Throughout the year, we ask that all SLs maintain an SL Binder. At the beginning of your term you will inherit this binder from the previous SL, and then, at the end of your term, you will pass the binder down to the incoming SL for your program. The purpose of the SL Binder is to help new SLs transition into their roles as well as serve as a resource for future projects.

As you begin the year, some of you may find yourself without an SL Binder, while others will have a well-established one, which contains helpful information. To continue this tradition, review the list below of resources you will need to begin collecting. Many of these resources can be found on the [Student Leader Tools](#) page.

- [Description of the Student Development Workgroup](#)
- [Leadership Presentations](#)
- Convention information (activity handouts)
- [Annual SL meeting minutes](#) (convention)
- Handouts on activity suggestions for [School Psychology Awareness Week activities](#) and advocacy activities
- Current [SL Monthly Updates](#) (received via e-mail from SDW)
- Membership presentation
- Information regarding your own School Psychology Awareness Week and advocacy activities
- Selected [fact sheets](#) of your choice
- List of current SLs, including your own contact information

### ***Serve as a Liaison Between NASP and Your Graduate Program.***

As an SL, you have access to a number of resources created just for you! Some of those resources are listed on the NASP website under [Student Leader Tools](#) and can only be accessed by SLs (*login required*). Resources include downloadable links to previous SL Updates as well as copies of Annual SL Meeting agendas and minutes from previous conventions. In addition, there are reference materials that can be used for planning SL initiatives, such as School Psychology Awareness Week and advocacy outreach activities. Other resources include NASP presentations, handouts, and membership lists that can be used for membership recruitment and retention projects.

### ***Send Regular E-mail Updates to Fellow Students in Your Program About Important NASP Initiatives.***

Perhaps your most important responsibility as an SL is to send regular e-mail updates to fellow students in your program about important NASP initiatives. The SDW will send these updates to you on or about the first of the month (September to June). After receiving the e-mail updates, you are expected to forward them to fellow students in your program.

The first section of the updates will contain information just for SLs, such as details on volunteer and presentation opportunities as well as a list of monthly tasks for you to complete. The second section of the updates includes information about important NASP initiatives, such as information on convention and membership. The text is formatted for you to cut, paste, and

insert your own program-specific information, such as program activities or announcements. Visit the Student Leader page to view examples of previous [SL updates](#).

***Develop and Participate in School Psychology Awareness Week Activities in the Fall.***

Each SL is responsible for carrying out a School Psychology Awareness Week activity during the second week of November. These activities are intended to help promote and show appreciation for the field of school psychology. A number of resources, such as the [School Psychology Awareness Week \(SPAW\) Activities](#) handout, have been developed to help support project planning. Example activities include, but are not limited to, the following *local* and *regional* activities:

*Local Activities: Activities that require collaboration with students and faculty in your program.*

- Present the [School Psychology: A Career That Makes A Difference](#) PowerPoint presentation to high school and undergraduate students in your area.
- Distribute [School Psychology: A Career That Makes A Difference](#) brochures to your local high school, university, or community career center.
- Organize a School Psychology Awareness Week get together, such as a pot-luck dinner, with all the students in your program.

*Regional Activities: Activities that require collaboration with students and faculty in your program as well as your state delegate and/or local or state association.*

- Host a fundraiser (e.g., t-shirt sale, 5K walk, party) to be held during a local association conference to raise money for a school-based mental health organization.
- Organize a School Psychology Awareness Week get together for students and state leaders from your local and state association during a conference or annual meeting.
- Host a panel of state leaders to speak about how students can get involved in leadership at the local, state, and national level. The leadership panel can be held during a campus event or local and state association meeting.

After you complete your activity, post a description of your program's participation in the [NASP Student Leader Community](#). These postings will be reviewed, and a summary of your participation will be printed in the Student Connections column of the *Communiqué*. Also, your participation is reviewed and considered for an Annual SL Award presented during the Annual SL Meeting at convention!

***Develop and Participate in a School Psychology Advocacy Activity in the Spring.***

In the spring, SLs shift their focus to annual advocacy outreach projects. You are responsible for organizing and carrying out one advocacy outreach project with the students and faculty in your program. You have access to a number of resources to assist you with planning your own [advocacy outreach activities](#), such as a sample delegate letter provided in the September SL Update which can also be found in your [Student Leader Tools](#). You may also choose to review the [Legislative Advocacy for Graduate Students: Tips for Getting Involved During Your Training](#) fact sheet that is available under the student link on the NASP website. Example activities include:

- Develop a presentation on a general mental health issue and present that information during a local university forum, club or organization meeting, or annual meeting of your local or state association;
- Host a “hot topic” discussion in a NASP Student Online Community that provides graduate students with the opportunity to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and review issues that impact the field of school psychology; or
- Contact your local representative by e-mail or phone to discuss current legislation and other issues in education and mental health.

Following the completion of your activity, post a description of your program’s participation in the [NASP Student Leader Community](#).

***Present the NASP Student Membership Presentation to Fellow Students and Encourage Them to Join NASP.***

The beginning of the academic year is a great time to let your fellow students know about the [benefits of joining NASP](#)! All SLs are responsible for presenting the “NASP Student Membership” PowerPoint *at least once* during their term to assist with the recruitment and retention efforts of NASP. Downloadable presentations are available in the [Student Leader Tools](#) online and can be modified to meet the needs of your audience. Here are some simple ways to fulfill this responsibility:

- Give the presentation to students in your program during a new student orientation or first year seminar class.
- Incorporate the presentation into one of your School Psychology Awareness Week or advocacy outreach projects.
- Team up with the [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CLD\) Recruitment Ambassadors](#) and help recruit interested undergraduate students into the field of school psychology.

***Serve as Potential Contributors to NASP Student Resources, Including the Student Connections Column in the Communiqué, Fact Sheets, Podcasts, Blogs, and Webinars.***

NASP and the SDW are always looking for potential contributors to further expand NASP student resources. As a SL, you serve as a key player in this initiative. There are many benefits to getting involved with resource development, such as being published and networking with other NASP leaders. Here are just a couple of ways that you can expand your experience as a NASP SL!

- Submit an article for the [Student Connections](#) column in *Communiqué*.
- Develop a [student fact sheet](#) that can be used by other graduate students to help guide their own student initiatives and professional development.
- Write a blog in the [NASP Communities](#)!

***Engage in Reflective and Ongoing Communication With Regional Leaders, Committee Members, NASP Staff, or the Student Development Workgroup as Needed (e.g., Outreach Efforts, Requests for Information for Fact Sheets, and Involvement in Committee Projects).***

You are now part of the NASP leadership! NASP leaders are often asked to engage in and support the initiatives of fellow NASP leaders. Below are some examples of how you can further your involvement.

- Invite members of [NASP leadership](#), such as state delegates, to speak during a local student organization meeting. Take that opportunity to understand their initiatives and identify ways in which you can provide support. In return, recruit their assistance with future program activities, such as School Psychology Awareness Week activities.
- Participate in a [NASP Interest Group](#). The information you gain through your involvement can be shared with other students as well as provide ideas for future program projects that align with the goals of the Interest Group.
- Join your [state association](#) and ask about ways in which you can become more involved. For example, join a committee and help support state association projects and events.

***Participate in Conversations or Moderate Discussions in the NASP Graduate Student Community.***

Though not required, you have the opportunity to serve as an online [NASP Communities](#) moderator for the NASP Graduate Student Community. This is a great way to meet other students in the field and discuss important student-related issues. Responsibilities include:

- Moderate a conversation in the [NASP Graduate Student Community](#) through discussion with other student members. Contact [students@naspweb.org](mailto:students@naspweb.org) if you are interested.
- Host one “Hot Topic” of your choice under the NASP Graduate Student Community. “Hot Topics” are discussion topics that are of interest to you and would be to other student members.
- Time Requirement: Approximately 3 hours a month (dependent upon discussion activity).

If you are interested in serving in this exciting role, please review your September SL Update or contact a member of the SDW for more information.

***Initiate and/or Participate in Projects Specific to Local and State Needs (Identified by Student Leaders Within Regions).***

You are in a position to play a key role in projects that are specific to your local and state needs. The benefits are endless, as you will likely develop strong relationships with program faculty as well as local and state leaders. Here are just a couple of ways you can get the most out of your SL experience!

- Start a [local student organization](#) (LSO). This is a great way to help strengthen relationships among your fellow students as well as support program initiatives.
- Encourage your LSO to develop a philanthropy project that supports the mental health needs of community members. For example, organize a fundraiser and/or gather resources that may be used by a local community organization.
- Collaborate with your NASP state delegate and other state leaders to identify an area of need at the state level. For example, join a state task force that aims to increase the number of mental health service providers in schools.

***Attend the Student Leader Meeting at NASP's Annual Convention (Encouraged but Not Required).***

One of the many benefits to serving as an SL is the opportunity to take part in the Annual Student Leader Meeting at NASP's annual convention. This meeting is an opportunity for you to celebrate your successes as a SL and share your experiences with others. In addition, this is a great time to inquire about other ways in which you can continue your leadership service in the association after your term is completed.

During the meeting, the SDW presents Student Leader Awards to outstanding SLs for their participation in SL activities. In addition, you receive information that you will pass down to the next SL for your program. Prior to convention, you will receive details in your SL Update regarding this meeting.

**Final Thoughts**

Serving as an SL can be both an exciting and rewarding opportunity for you. While you may feel overwhelmed by the number of opportunities you will encounter, do not despair! You have a whole year to fulfill your responsibilities and truly make the most out of your experiences. Your time commitment to the program is variable and dependent on your level of involvement in current initiatives. At minimum, a commitment of one hour per week to read and respond to NASP-initiated e-mails and communicate with students and faculty in your program is generally required. As expected, the more involved you become in the leadership opportunities discussed above, the more time is required. In hopes of sparking your leadership potential, we leave you with quotes from previous SLs:

*"Not only does being a Student Leader look great on a vitae or a résumé, but it shows others that you take your job seriously and are committed to advancing the field."*

Elise Robeson, MA, University of Missouri–Columbia

*"Being a Student Leader has introduced me to more school psychologists in the state, through my state association and conferences."*

Laura Schussler, University of Maryland–College Park

*"The Student Leader program gives me the opportunity to take a leadership role on events and cultivate new ways to promote the field."*

Liz Vail, Northeastern University

*This fact sheet was developed by Janeann M. Lineman, NCSP, of the NASP Student Development Workgroup (SDW). It was reviewed by NASP staff and Anna Pena, SDW chair; Arlene Silva, Early Career Workgroup chair; and Karen Nuijens, Early Career Workgroup co-chair.*