

# Leading the FFA Chapter

**M**ANY GROUPS, including FFA chapters, seem to be very organized and accomplish a great deal throughout the year. Other groups find themselves adrift, wondering what they ought to do next, if anything. What are the differences between these groups? Often, effective leadership is what is missing from the groups that are floating aimlessly. Effective leadership from FFA chapter officers creates a successful organization that can accomplish the goals it sets out to reach.



## Objective:



Describe the duties, responsibilities, and characteristics of chapter FFA officers.

## Key Terms:



advisor

reporter

treasurer

official dress

secretary

vice president

president

sentinel

## FFA Officers and the Advisor— Setting the Tone for the Chapter

Leadership can sometimes be defined not by what you accomplish for yourself but by what you help others achieve for the good of the group. Serving as an FFA officer is not about individual accomplishment or reward but about teamwork to achieve the purposes of the local chapter. Serving as an officer is a big responsibility and should not be taken lightly. Officers are looked upon by all members, especially the younger members, as role models and experienced leaders. With that responsibility comes great opportunity to create positive experiences for your chapter members and your community!

FFA officers must function together for the benefit of the chapter if quality programming is to be conducted. Officers must depend on each other to accomplish the goals set forth for the year. Additionally, each officer has specific responsibilities that must be carried out for the team to function properly. An effective officer team needs a balance of people who are willing to play the roles expected of them so that all the work gets done and the team operates effectively! At its beginning, the FFA organization adopted symbols that characterize the roles and responsibilities of the officers, conveying the importance and symbolism of the part each officer plays on the team.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICERS

### President

Each officer team is led by the **president**, who is stationed at the rising sun. As the sun lights the way, the president is charged with guiding the officer team and chapter into each new day with the vision and clarity that the sun provides. Many people incorrectly think the president's responsibility is to make all the decisions. This is not true. In fact, the president is not to vote on issues unless to break a tie. The role of the president is to provide leadership to the officer team, coordinating activities and meetings, evaluating the progress of the Program of Activities, and representing the chapter at school and community functions. The president should be an effective communicator who can make sure that all members of the group feel their views are valued.

### Vice President

The **vice president** is stationed at the plow, which symbolizes labor and tillage of the soil. The vice president is responsible for the Program of Activities, which is the chapter's roadmap for the year. The vice president is also responsible for all committee work done by chapter members and presides over the chapter in the absence of the president.

### Secretary

The **secretary** is stationed by the ear of corn, which symbolizes the national scope of the FFA organization. The secretary is responsible for prepar-

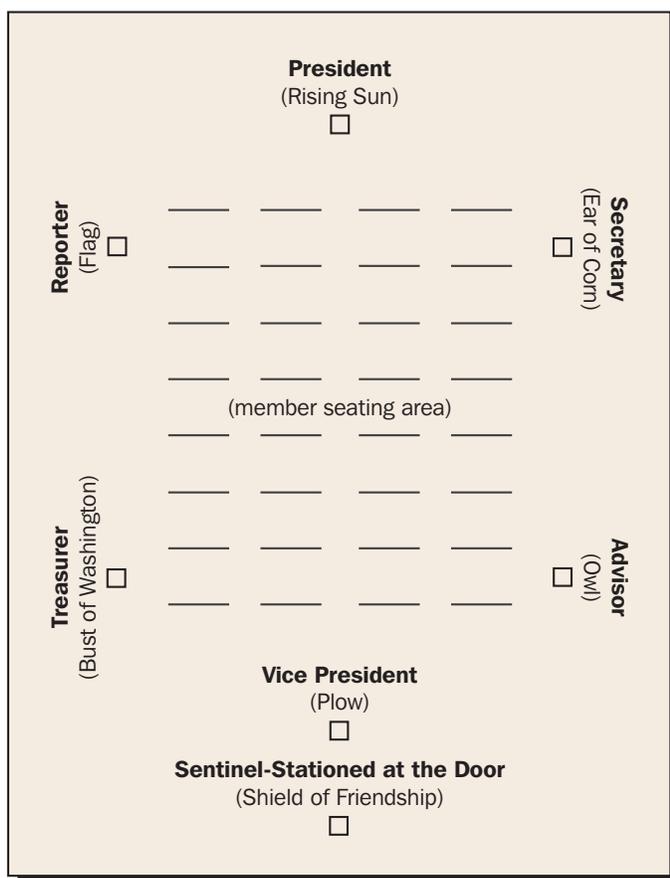


FIGURE 1. The proper arrangement of an FFA meeting room.

ing and distributing the meeting agenda and minutes, maintaining records of member activities, preparing all materials for each meeting, and maintaining the chapter's correspondence with supporters and others. The secretary is responsible for all communications generated by the chapter.

### **Treasurer**

The chapter **treasurer** is symbolized by the bust of George Washington, the father of our country. It is known that Washington was a farmer who carefully and accurately accounted for his financial activities. The treasurer accounts for the financial activities of the chapter and gives reports at each chapter meeting. The treasurer is responsible for receiving and disbursing all funds of the chapter, for collecting chapter dues, and for submitting the membership roster.

### **Reporter**

The **reporter** is stationed by the American flag, representing the fact that FFA is a national organization. He or she is responsible for telling everyone the story of what the FFA chapter is accomplishing. The reporter provides stories to the local media for newspaper, radio, and TV coverage, serves as the chapter photographer, and is responsible for the chapter's scrapbook. The reporter submits articles to regional and state FFA reporters and may also develop a chapter newsletter for members and supporters. An FFA reporter may be responsible for the content of an FFA chapter Web site to promote the activities of the chapter. The reporter's job is to market the FFA chapter wherever it is appropriate to do so.

### **Sentinel**

The **sentinel** is symbolized by the shield of friendship and is responsible for assisting the president with the details of running a meeting. Maintaining a comfortable environment, making sure there is enough seating, and helping with the distribution of handouts are just a few of the sentinel's activities. The sentinel is responsible for greeting guests and making sure everyone feels welcome.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISOR**

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The **advisor** is the agriculture teacher of the local chapter, symbolized by the owl, a time-honored symbol of knowledge and wisdom. The advisor's role is to help guide the officer team and make sure it keeps on track. The advisor may suggest a direction, but it is the responsibility of the officer team and chapter members to carry out the work of the chapter.

## **LEADING BY EXAMPLE—QUALITIES OF CHAPTER OFFICERS**

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### **Proper Conduct**

Chapter officers often set the tone for the way the business is conducted within an FFA chapter. If officers treat each other and their fellow members with friendliness and respect, the



## ON THE JOB...

### CAREER CONNECTION: Agriculture Teacher / FFA Advisor

Being an FFA advisor is part of the job description of an agricultural education teacher. An FFA advisor plays an important role in the development of a complete agricultural education program by assisting students with their supervised agricultural experience programs, training career development event teams, and advising students as they begin to select career paths and make educational plans.

An advisor provides direction to the officers and members of a chapter while serving as a resource to the community. A passion for making a difference in the lives of young people and a love for agriculture are ingredients in the recipe for a successful agriculture teacher / FFA advisor. An agriculture teacher / FFA advisor has a bachelor's degree in agricultural education.

chapter will function the same way. Officers should encourage respectful differences of opinion and assure everyone that his or her opinion is valuable. By being prepared to conduct business at chapter meetings, officers convey that they are prepared and ready to move forward with business.

Officers set examples outside of FFA chapter activities as well. By conducting themselves appropriately in all situations, officers show respect for their positions as officers. Misconduct outside school can be grounds for removal from office, as the conduct of officers is influential to fellow members. By respecting the rules set forth in the FFA constitution and the school's student handbook, officers can assure that they are setting examples worth following.

### Official Dress

Another way chapter officers can lead by example is by wearing proper official dress. **Official dress** is the accepted uniform of the FFA organization. For a young man, official dress involves black slacks, black socks, and black shoes, with a white shirt, an official FFA tie, and an FFA jacket zipped to the top. For a young woman, black slacks or a black skirt, black shoes, a white blouse, an FFA scarf, and an FFA jacket zipped to the top constitute official dress. FFA jackets should always



FIGURE 2. These FFA members are wearing official dress.

be neat and clean and worn with respect, as they represent the proud tradition that goes with the FFA organization.

## Summary:

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It is an honor and a privilege to serve as an officer of your local FFA chapter! Each officer has unique responsibilities to carry out, but most important, each must work as part of a team to achieve the goals set for the chapter. Officers have an opportunity to serve as role models and examples for their fellow members, both in and out of the classroom. FFA official dress is a tradition of the FFA organization that is to be respected.

## Checking Your Knowledge:

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1. List the six major chapter offices and the symbol that goes with each office.
2. Which officer is responsible for overseeing the Program of Activities?
3. What are the responsibilities of the sentinel?
4. List the parts of FFA official dress for both young men and young women.

## Expanding Your Knowledge:

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Research other FFA chapters to see if they have any other officer positions besides the required six. If they do, find out what those additional positions are and what their responsibilities are. Do you think your chapter needs those positions? Why or why not?

## Web Links:

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### **National FFA—Chapter Officer Responsibilities**

[http://www.ffa.org/index.cfm?method=c\\_students.ChapterOfficers](http://www.ffa.org/index.cfm?method=c_students.ChapterOfficers)

### **National FFA—Official Dress Guidelines**

[http://www.ffa.org/index.cfm?method=c\\_students.OfficialDress](http://www.ffa.org/index.cfm?method=c_students.OfficialDress)