

STARTER KIT: *A guide to creating your local PsySSR chapter*

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Basic Requirements for Setting up your Chapter

- **Chapter Name:** The chapter will be called: Psychology Students for Social Responsibility at _____ (name of institution) and abbreviated as PsySSR-____ (acronym or name), as in PsySSR-UVa or PsySSR-Baylor.
- **Chapter Size:** Any group of 5 or more students enrolled at a university or college may organize a chapter of Psychology Students for Social Responsibility.
- **Chapter Affiliation:** The chapter will be a separate organization from the national organization and is not covered by the non-profit tax exempt status of the national organization.

Structuring your Chapter

- **Faculty Advisors:** The chapter will select a **faculty advisor**, who is also invited to join PsySR. The faculty advisor will attend all meetings of the chapter and participate in its development and activities.
- **Elections:** The chapter will elect a **president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer** according to rules provided by the student association of the host university. Chapters will also comply with all procedures for becoming and remaining a recognized student group.
- **Induction:** Some chapters include induction ceremonies for their new members. Below is the text of the pledge written by University of the District of Columbia students for the induction of their chapter members:

We, the Psychology Students for Social Responsibility at the University of the District of Columbia, strive to serve our communities, uphold social justice, and be morally responsible for promoting peace within our communities and around the world. We strive for positive freedom and productive orientation, whereby through positive activities, people can solve their basic dilemma, which is to unite with the world and with others while retaining uniqueness and individuality. We long to transcend discrimination and poverty, and to build a global village. In striving for success, we move beyond all personal goals and work for the success of all mankind.

- **Collecting Dues:**

For the local chapter: The chapter may collect local dues, to be handled by the treasurer, according to local school rules. As a separate organization, the PsySSR chapter is solely responsible for the administration of its funds.

For the central PsySR office: The Student Chapter will collect a \$20 check made out to PsySR from each student upon first joining and mail the checks to the National Office. This will keep the student in good standing as a member of the national PsySR organization during that academic year.

The National Office will handle renewals of membership annually and individually. Alternatively, chapters may establish a system for paying the \$20 dues per student annually to the central PsySR office in accordance with local school rules. For example, if the student association gives student clubs funds to pay dues to national associations, payment may be made in bulk (e.g., \$200). If no school funds are available, students may pay chapter members' PsySR dues through fundraising activities. *However, a student should never be turned away because they are unable to pay dues. The National Office should be informed of any instance in which a waiver of dues is needed to prevent that.*

In either case, the chapter is responsible for sending full name, mailing address, and email address of members to the National Office.

Upon becoming members, the PsySR Central Office will: (1) List the chapter on the PsySR website, and provide a link to the chapter website, if there is one; (2) Help link the chapter with resources such as speakers and nearby PsySR members; (3) Provide coordination and support to the chapter in their efforts to network with other aspects of the PsySR community such as facilitating the submission of proposals to Action Committees and participation in national and regional conferences.

Planning Events for your Chapter

Check out the “Suggested Events for PsySSR Chapters” page of this Starter-Kit for some ideas.

- **Number of events:** The chapter will hold at least one fall and one spring event.
- **Collaborating with other groups:**
 - The chapter will maintain good relations with local Psi Chi or other psychology student groups and may co-sponsor activities with them.
 - The chapter may join in coalition with other campus groups working for peace and social justice, given the consensus of its members.
- **Listserv:** The chapter may establish a listserv for discussion and communication among its members.
- **Public Positions:** If the chapter takes any public positions on either national or local issues, the chapter must make it clear that the position taken is the responsibility of the chapter alone, and not necessarily the position of the national organization.

The chapter may also refer to and circulate official PsySR statements approved by the PsySR Steering Committee. The chapter may also submit a proposal on any issue to the appropriate national PsySR Action Committee by working with the PsySR central office to do so.

Suggested Events

The purpose of PsySSR events are to foster learning and dialogue.

We urge each chapter to plan at least one event for each semester.

Some suggestions before getting started:

- Ask the students in your chapter what they would be interested in exploring.
- Create a listserv so that way updates on important events can be sent out to everyone.
- Involve other social justice groups on campus by inviting them and/or asking for their help with planning.

1. Speakers

- a. University Professors
- b. Authors
- c. Documentary Directors/Producers/etc.
- d. Staff members at local nonprofits and NGOs that specialize in a topic of interest.
- e. Chapters can contact the PsySR Administrative Coordinator (psysr.ac@gmail.com) if they want to locate local PsySR members to speak at their event.

2. Field trips

3. Films/Documentaries

- a. Open discussions afterwards
- b. Invite other professionals or experts to share their insights.

4. Discussions

- a. Use literature on the PsySR website (www.psysr.org) or the PsySR Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/PsySR>) to foster discussions.
- b. Use current events to motivate discussions.
- c. Use member experiences and actions (related to PsySR's mission) to inspire discussions.

5. Debates

- a. Bringing together two opposing sides on an important issue is a good way to draw in more people and liven things up.

6. Writing sessions to local and national newspapers, with a focus on a specific concern.

7. Discuss local community needs and the possibility of fundraising or spreading awareness for this topic.

8. Reach out to other socially active groups on campus by coming together on a common cause.

Graduation Pledge

All students are invited to participate in and disseminate the Graduation Pledge:

"I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work."

To start a Pledge campaign at your school, visit www.graduationpledge.org or contact:

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We encourage you to let us know how many have signed the pledge at your school!