



Building Successful Medical Student Organizations by Optimizing Leadership Transitions

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Background

- Medical student organizations provide students with the opportunity to gain experiential learning in their first year along with hands-on leadership training over all four years, according to each student's interests
- Leadership transitions**, while essential to student group success, have been particularly challenging due to the new curriculum causing scheduling difficulties
- This CFI project aimed to analyze this problem and create a best practices model for future groups

Methods/Approach

- Student group leaders were surveyed through informal conversation and formal open-ended surveys in order to best understand their experiences with leadership transitions
- Due to the small sample size, statistical significance could not be obtained, so common themes were interpreted through qualitative analysis

Results

5 leaders

reported that the new curriculum made transitions more difficult

8 leaders

reported that planning months ahead improved transitions

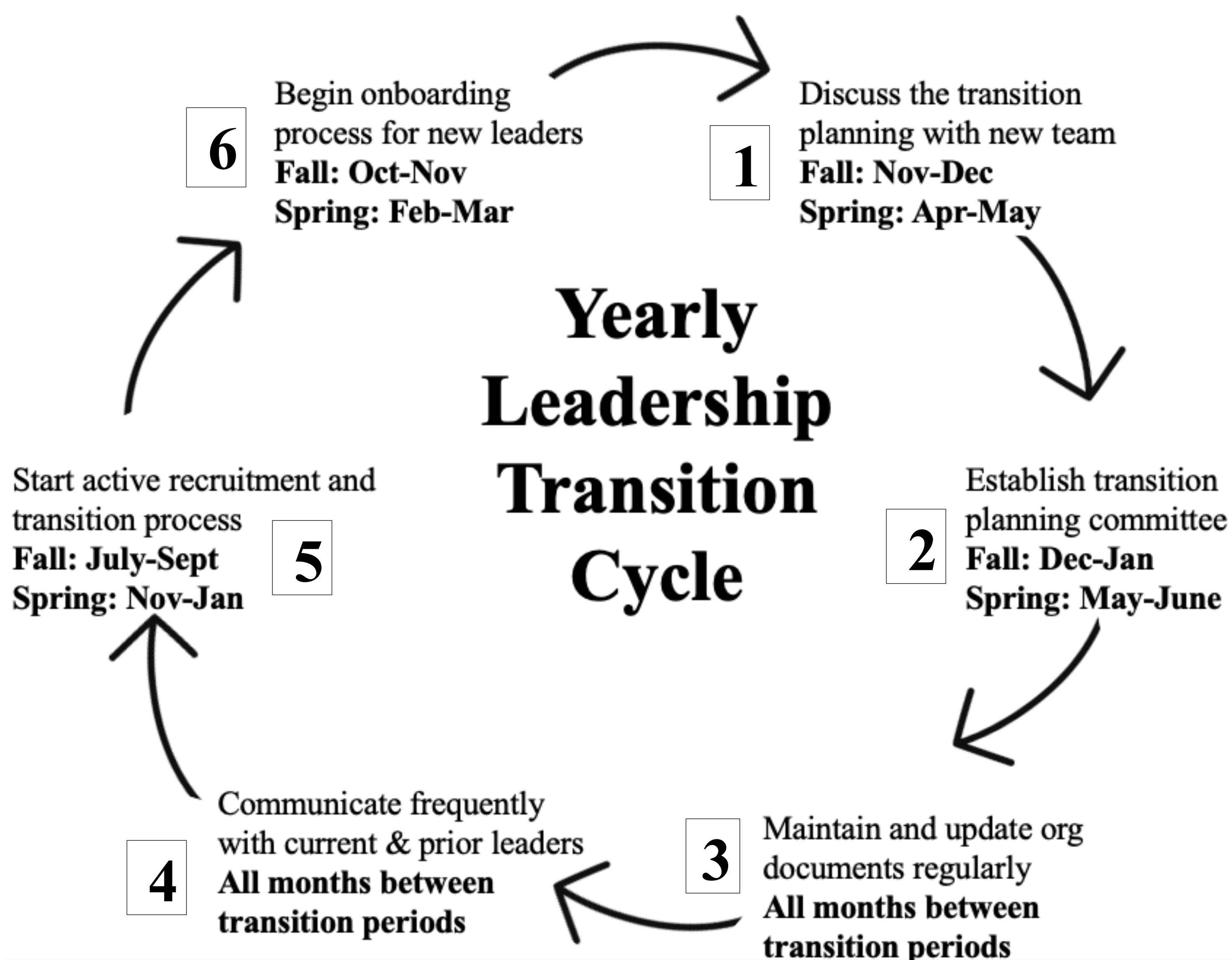
- Student organization leaders reported that transitions were essential to the health and effectiveness of their student groups
- Common themes were identified, including planning ahead, reaching out to prior leaders for assistance, holding multiple recruitment and transition times if possible, and having multiple class years represented on the leadership team
- Nearly all students surveyed believed that improving transitions would improve other aspects of the group

Discussion

- Student group leaders recognize the importance of transitions, and the implementation of the new curriculum seemed to have some impact on when they occur and their effectiveness
- Guidance could be given to future student group leaders based on these survey results as well as best practices from the field of business and management

Conclusions/Implications

- From the survey/interviews and best practices, the Yearly Leadership Transition Cycle and Sample Transition Calendar (both below) were created to help students transition leadership roles from year-to-year
- Future student groups and student group leaders can utilize, modify, or create their own transition plans based on the unforeseen needs of future classes
- Leadership transitions are essential to groups and must be seriously considered for long-term success



September	October	November	December	January	February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Recruitment and transition process formally begins Spring: Prior leadership should have all transition documents ready and organized in shareable online folder Both: Actively discuss transition process and perform group check-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: New leaders selected + begin onboarding; create leadership transition committee Spring: Transition committee should hold a monthly meeting in order to discuss Both: Perform group check-in to make sure everyone is invested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Send email to prior leadership team members to assistance Spring: Start finalizing recruitment timeline and documents needed for transition process Both: Review culture and expectations are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Hold first meeting of transition team and create benchmarks for the new year + how to measure outcomes Spring: Start sending out recruitment documents and hold transition meeting to finalize onboarding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Following break period, leaders should have a formal check-in with their leadership team Spring: Begin formal review and interview process for new leaders + prior leaders interested in returning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Leadership team should check-in on organization documents, especially regarding transition Spring: Continue interview process for applicants; be sure to clearly convey organization culture and values at this time
March	April	May	June	July	August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Hold a meeting of the leadership transition committee to set benchmarks Spring: New leaders selected + begin onboarding; create leadership transition committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Start finalizing recruitment timeline and documents needed for transition process Spring: Send email to prior leadership team members to assistance Both: Review culture and expectations are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both: Major programs likely occurring in May or June This is a busy time for organizations, but transition teams should still try to meet once this month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both: Major programs likely occurring in May or June This is a busy time for organizations, but transition teams should still try to meet once this month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both: Perform review of previous year's org performance Fall: Start sending out recruitment documents and hold transition meeting Spring: Hold a meeting of the leadership transition committee to set benchmarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall: Start sending out recruitment documents and hold transition meeting to finalize onboarding process Spring: Hold transition committee meeting to discuss benchmarks and onboarding planning