The State of Club Running



The State of Club Running 2019 Development Guide

The State of Club Running was established in 2019 to assess the development of collegiate club running within the United States.

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Introduction

Running clubs in the United States are continually gaining a stronger foothold in collegiate athletics and recreation. Running clubs provide a unique opportunity for students to compete in running, jumping, and field events without the stresses of a varsity sport, as well as an environment that promotes a healthy relationship with exercise. But the process of starting a running club, sustaining the club, and further developing it for many years can be difficult and unclear.

In this development guide, we provide a framework for initiating and maintaining a running club, broken into three stages of development: **Commencement**, **Growth**, and **Maturation**. Within each developmental stage, we provide action items on four key aspects: a club's **Finances**, **Membership**, **Leadership**, and **Competition**.

We purposefully do not make explicit years or necessary milestones between the stages of development, because each club's journey will look different. And clubs may disagree on their ultimate goals. So take these stages as our best attempt at grouping developmental milestones together: but understand that your club's development will not precisely follow this linear evolution. We made this guide to help your club develop into a stronger and healthier one. However, the wide range of clubs and circumstances prevents us from making a guide that perfectly applies to everyone. Your school's policies, community's outlook on running, club structure, and members' interests are key variables distinguishing your running club from others. For these reasons, we ask that you consider what advice is most applicable to your club, and tailor those recommendations appropriately.

Finally, we encourage you to consult the larger collegiate running club community for guidance: while this guide can be a helpful resource for ideas, the current leaders of other running clubs can be allies in your efforts to improve your club. If you are looking for even more written advice beyond this development guide, consider reading the *State of Club Running 2019 Report*.

Stage 1 Commence

This stage reflects clubs who are either newly conceived or on their way to becoming a club at their school. Starting a club takes a lot of commitment from first few sets of leaders, but it's a really rewarding process!

1.1 Getting off the Ground

If you are interested in starting a running club at your school, you should first research how to make it happen. A simple Google search like "[School name] club sports" can lead you to resources about any existing club sports at your school, as well as links towards applying to become one. Your school is likely to make a distinction between normal clubs and club sports, with many possible perks associated with becoming a club sport, such as:

- Financial support and other specific funds
- Liability coverage for competitions
- Access to facilities like tracks or fields
- Access to trademarked school logos

- Special recruiting events
- Access to transportation services
- School staff dedicated to helping your club
- Existing relationships with vendors

Becoming a club sport can involve (many) more hoops for you to jump through, but these perks make it a worthwhile process. It is important to talk with the people involved with student organizations and club sports during this process, as they will be aware of many of the steps involved in getting your club off the ground.

Action Items — Commence your Club

- Research clubs and club sports at your school.
- Set up a meeting with student organization and club sports staff.
- Reach out to student leaders of other club sports at your school for advice.

1.2 Finances

It is vital that you find enough money in order to begin your club and participate in at least a few competitive events throughout the year. As a club or club sport, you will likely find that there are many opportunities to request money from your school. Your school's campus recreation staff, other club leaders, student government, or general student affairs staff will be aware of many of these funds. Some funds may require small presentations, or may be very limited in their scope. Such funds could include:

- Your campus recreation department may provide allocation each year to subsidize vital club expenses.
- Your student government may redirect students' tuition to benefit student organizations.
- Your school may match any donations or fundraising you do for your club.
- Your school may reward any community service with financial compensations.
- Your campus recreation department or student government may offer funds that subsidize facility use (especially useful for renting tracks or cross country courses).

What are some vital club expenses that you should anticipate during your first year? Here are some possibilities:

- Facilities like indoor/outdoor tracks may cost money to rent or use.
- Race registrations.
- Team merchandise like t-shirts and uniforms.
- Travel expenses like gas reimbursements and vehicle rentals.
- Lodging costs if planning on staying at hotels.
- Reimbursing social events like pasta parties or team dinners.

Another way to generate funds for your club more directly is through membership dues. A majority of existing running clubs require members to pay some sort dues per year or semester that can cover things like competitions, travel, uniforms, team shirts, or team dinners. Membership is not really affected by cheap dues (say, maybe \$25), but prohibitively expensive dues (say, over \$150) could have a negative effect on gaining new members. Ideally, dues will cover opportunities and items that are accessible to everyone, not just a few members. Work with your club leaders to draft a dues structure that fits your club.

Action Items — Commence your Finances

- Identify and apply for funding opportunities at your school.
- Identify and try to minimize future costs to your club.
- Draft a dues structure for your club.
- Select a competent member to be your club's first Treasurer.

1.3. MEMBERSHIP

1.3 Membership

When initiating your club, you will likely be asked to prove that at least ten or so students plan to join in the beginning. If you are struggling to find enough interested students, try advertising the club to your friends, in public spaces with flyers, or to any runners you find outside or on treadmills.

Once your club has been created, use the existing recruitment events at your school to gain membership. Some easy methods for recruitment during this early stage include:

- Tabling at Involvement Fairs, including events for specific subpopulations of students like first-year, graduate, international, or honors students.
- Meeting and running on-campus for visibility.
- Asking current members to tell their classmates and friends.
- Hanging flyers or posters around campus (dining commons, recreation buildings, residence halls, educational buildings, bathrooms) or even on public transportation.
- Holding a general, introductory meeting at the beginning of the year.

At an involvement fair, be sure to have a handout and pitch ready for anyone that walks by. Your pitch should be flexible depending on if this prospective member is interested in intensely competing or casually running.

One of the best qualities of young or small running clubs is their charm and tight-knit community. Try to offer events outside of practice like team dinners, group hikes and long-runs, game nights, or other social events that establish a strong team atmosphere. Additionally, set up some way to inform all members of upcoming events, deadlines, and news with some sort of group like GroupMe, Facebook, a listserve, or similar.

Gaining membership during this early stage in your club's development is key towards moving onto further stages. Having more members will help your club afford more travel and competitive opportunities, establish some stability from year to year by having more returning members, and offer more personalities to your growing club atmosphere.

Action Items — Commence your Membership

- Obtain enough interest to justify your new running club.
- Embrace recruitment strategies like tabling and hanging flyers.
- Prepare a pitch for new members.
- Offer social events to all members for team bonding.

1.4 Leadership

When initiating your club, you will likely be asked to identify members who will fill certain leadership positions. You and the other leaders should collaborate on the groundwork of the club, such as:

- Create a club constitution that outlines leadership positions, team policies, leadership selections (for the future), and membership requirements.
- Discuss your overarching goals for the club, including how competitive, how welcoming, and how active you want your club to be.
- Establish the location, time, and structure of practices.
- Develop expectations for each leader beyond their roles, including attendance and conduct.
- Brainstorm social events, competitions, and recruitment strategies for the upcoming year.

We highly recommend you consider implementing a democratic election process to select the next set of club leaders, and outline the exact details in your club's official constitution. At practices and social events, your club leadership should do its best to represent the club well, and to be inviting and friendly to all members. The way your club leaders interact with members has a large influence on your club's recruitment and member retention.

You and the other club leaders should each try to establish a strong relationship with the staff responsible for overseeing your running club. campus recreation staff are particularly well-suited to guide you through your initial steps as a running club, and can settle many tough situations that you may not know how to solve yourselves.

Overall, club leadership matters a lot during this early stage of development, and it will take a great amount of personal sacrifice to follow all of the necessary steps to commence and grow your club. As long as your club leadership can work together as a team to accomplish all of its goals, your process will work out in the end, and you will get to enjoy leading a brand new running club! Do not worry if you have not totally settled all details about your club, because you will quickly discover what does or does not work. Plus, future generations of leaders and members will be able to use their hindsight to make improvements to your original structure.

Action Items — Commence your Leadership

- Find students willing to comprise your club's first set of leaders.
- Work with all your club's leaders to lay the groundwork for your running club.
- Build a strong relationship with your campus recreation staff.
- Establish leader expectations to promote a positive team atmosphere.

1.5 Competition

Before you create your club, try to identify what types of competitions in which you would like to participate. Local 5Ks? Half Marathons? Cross Country? Track? Field events? Joining NIRCA to compete against other running clubs? Setting your competitive direction will help to move your planning forward and attract new members who want to continue or start competing.

1.5. COMPETITION

NIRCA is the national league for collegiate running clubs, and currently over 165 clubs participate in NIRCA across the United States. NIRCA competitions are really fun and offer a wide range of ability levels. At the top: there are athletes who could probably pass for varsity athletes. Beyond those top runners, any speed and ability level is welcomed and represented. Depending on your location in the country, there may be NIRCA competitions nearby that can comprise much of your competitive schedule. This is particularly true in the midwest, northeast, and mid-Atlantic regions of the country. You can learn more about NIRCA on their website: ClubRunning.org. If you wish to join NIRCA, visit their About/Join page. Keep in mind that the first year of NIRCA dues is free.

Regardless of how your club plans to compete, you will need a plan for your practices. We recommend:

- Have a central meeting location.
- Have a consistent meeting time most weekdays.
- Have a plan for what to run or do at practice before practice begins.
- Use the beginning of practice as a time to make announcements.

If you plan to participate in any track & field events, you will likely have to talk to staff about using your school's facilities. Some clubs are lucky to never experience a problem accessing their tracks, while others have to continually vouch for their use. Consult your campus recreation and facilities staff to confirm that whatever spaces you will need for practice are available.

Action Items — Commence your Competitions

- Decide what kinds of competitions your club will pursue.
- Decide whether a membership in NIRCA is worthwhile for your club.
- Create a plan for practices and clear it with your school.
- Design a uniform to wear at competitions.

Stage 2 Grow

The first few years of your club can be summarized by one word: growth. By this stage of development, your club should now be established and have experienced its first few seasons, but still looking to grow in many regards. During this time, your club will benefit from investing in its members and recruitment.

2.1 Finances

As you club grows, so will both your income and your expenses. In order to best help your club develop, you should start keeping records of your club finances now so future leaders may learn from previous years. The following two subsections discuss two primary sources of income during this stage of development.

2.1.1 Dues

Your dues structure serves multiple purposes: most importantly, dues provide base level funds in the beginning of the year for your club to afford many of its early expenses. But dues structures can vary on two key characteristics:

- 1. Whether or not to charge per-meet, or to just have a one-time fee.
- 2. Whether to charge competitive and non-competitive members equally.

Your dues structure should fit your team values. Charging per meet might make sense if your club has only a few members wanting to, or able to, compete in each meet. But having a one-time fee encourages more people to participate freely in each competition, and can be less stressful in terms of paying and collecting money throughout the year. Your dues should also be able to supplement your other incomes to lead to a financially comfortable year. Deciding the prices of upfront dues, meet entries, lodging, and more will take some projecting. Erring on the side of caution is a good practice to follow, but always keep the best interests of your members in mind: members will expect their dues to be going towards vital team functions, and to be benefiting everyone equitably.

2.1.2 Fundraising

Beyond using your school's various funds to earn some easy money, there are a number of fundraising opportunities that you can look to take advantage of. We encourage you to find one or two opportunities

2.2. MEMBERSHIP

that can significantly raise funds for your club per year. Two pillars of fundraising for growing clubs include services that require a few hours of work, and campaigns that attract donations and partnerships. We have compiled some ideas for both types of fundraising methods below:

Services

- Selling concessions at a sporting event.
- Cleaning up a stadium after a sporting event.
- Staffing local high school or open races.
- Staffing security or ushering at music concerts.
- Cleaning facilities or drying tennis courts.

- Campaigns
- Events to encourage alumni to return and reinvest in the club.
- Restaurants: obtain a portion of all sales.
- Donation campaigns with a monetary goal and social media coverage.
- Local business sponsorships/donations.

When reaching out to potential donors, it helps to present your club, its mission, its quirks, and its need for funds. You can create a format for your members to utilize to send to their families, friends, and alumni. Try to identify a fundraising goal, as well as how those funds will directly affect your members. For example, your pitch could read: "We are trying to raise \$5,000 so that we can cover half of the cost of attending Nationals for our 35 athletes." Because your club is young, your pool of alumni may be small, but it will be increasingly useful to have a list of alumni and their contact information in order to reach out to them in the future.

Businesses respond well to meeting in person and creating personal connections. Businesses can offer discounts, donations, free equipment for events, or other perks in exchange for advertisement or other types of support from your club.

Action Items — Grow your Finances

- Track all incomes and expenses in a spreadsheet that can be shared with future leaders.
- Refine your dues structure to reflect your team values and generate ample funds for your club.
- Pursue one or two service fundraisers throughout the year.
- Keep track of alumni contacts for future campaigns.
- Reach out to businesses for possible sponsorships, partnerships, or deals.

2.2 Membership

Membership is more than just your club's roster size: it involves how your club engages with its new and returning members throughout the year. The following two subsections cover two important aspects of membership: recruitment and retention.

2.2.1 Recruitment

Having more members allows for better financial stability, more friendships, improved competitiveness, and better chances of recruiting more members in the future.

One factor that is often overlooked for its ability to recruit new members is *having a team website*. Incoming students researching the running opportunities at your school can find your club website and hopefully be inspired to check out your club. Below are five features to your website that will be important towards attracting prospective members:

- A mission statement: to understand the purpose and goals of your club.
- Leadership contact information: to contact particular leaders with any questions.
- Leadership personality blurbs: to get a sense of the culture of your club.
- Running routes: to get excited about learning the area with your team.
- **Registration information**: to understand the process for becoming a member.

Now that your club has been around for at least a year, you can start to utilize some additional strategies for recruitment beyond what we covered in Stage 1:

- Create a team website.
- Have members tell their old high school teams about your club.
- Create a social media presence on multiple platforms like Instagram and Facebook.
- Wear team merchandise around campus.

2.2.2 Retention

It is natural for many students to try out a running club in the beginning of the year only to never return again. But there are many simple strategies you can follow to maximize your club's ability to retain new members. And these strategies can really be summarized by one sentiment: *engage your members throughout the year*. Simply offering practice a few times a week might not be enough to keep most members interested in the club; that is why team bonding events, competitions, trips, and workouts are vital to offer regularly. Here are some simple ideas to improve your club's retention:

- Two seasons of competitions in the Fall and Spring.
- Special workouts a few times per week.
- Themed holiday runs during practice.
- Intrasquad meets with funny events.
- Practice or workouts at alternative times.

- Pasta parties and team dinners.
- Banquets or formal events.
- Dinners at dining halls after practice.
- Attend sporting events together.
- Bow-making before races.
- Movie and game nights.

Your team is full of club runners, so we expect you all are some interesting and unique people who enjoy quirky events! Embrace organic and creative events that promote inclusivity and team bonding.

Action Items — Grow your Membership

- Create a team website.
- Design and sell team merchandise.
- Continue to attend involvement fairs and advertise your club.
- Offer more social bonding events to your members.

2.3 Leadership

It takes a competent, representative, cohesive, collaborative group of leaders to successfully lead a running club. Having well-defined positions is an important step towards achieving a strong group of leaders. Below is a short list of example positions and responsibilities associated to them that represent a typical running club:

1. President

- Oversee club leadership and meetings
- Main contact to school departments
- NIRCA relations and eligibility

2. President Vice-President/Co-President

- Share responsibilities with President
- Coordinate trips and lodging
- Register athletes for meets
- 3. Treasurer
 - Keep financial records for the club
 - Apply for funding opportunities
 - Lead fundraising efforts
 - Project the feasibility of trips and activities

4. Secretary/Communications

- Communications with all club members
- Manage club merchandise sales
- Take meeting notes
- Maintain club websites or groups

5. Training Chair/Coach

- Create and enact training plans for members
- Offer cross-training or injury prevention
- Lead workouts, long-runs, etc.

6. Social Chair

- Assist Secretary with club social media
- Plan social events like pasta parties or banquets
- Promote a positive team atmosphere

The above distribution of positions and responsibilities is not the only way to successfully run a club, and there is a lot of potential to incorporate different leaders, share responsibilities, or leave some jobs up to the general members without an explicit position. Moreover, your club leaders should share in the ultimate responsibility of welcoming in new members, promoting a positive team atmosphere, and allowing members to get what they want out of the club.

Action Items — Grow your Leadership

- Define updated positions and responsibilities for club leadership.
- Hold elections for new leaders.
- Have old leaders train new leaders in their roles.

2.4 Competition

Part of your club's efforts to improve member retention involves your competition schedule. Members will be most engaged with a consistent schedule of competitions that accommodate their athletic interests. Your club can also become more united under the shared goal of performing well. Three main forms of competition available to the average running club include:

- **NIRCA Competitions**: open to any NIRCA member club, hosted either by another running club or NIRCA staff.
- NCAA DII/DIII Competitions: usually willing to allow club teams to enter and race along with other varsity programs.
- Local Races: like 5Ks and Half Marathons, they can be cheap ways to offer more competitions to your members without much traveling or lodging.

Competitions can be expensive: your club must cover meet entries, travel, and lodging, which can quickly become hundreds or thousands of dollars for each competition. So it is in your club's best interest to minimize these costs. In your early years, it may be best to avoid far trips or booking hotels. Try to rely on nearby meets or staying at members' houses, and personal vehicles rather than rental vehicles or buses. Look for deals, such as *team caps* (maximum price of registering members from any one team). If a team cap is set at, say, \$300, and each athlete costs \$10 to register, then the team cap will be useful if you plan to bring more than 30 members. This shows that as your club grows, registration costs should drop, fortunately.

Use this period of growth to judge whether or not your club would benefit from having a non-student coach. Many running clubs choose not to have a coach because they wish to achieve a less intense atmosphere than high school or varsity programs. But other clubs enjoy having a coach to provide a training opportunity to interested members. Student coaching is free and easy to replicate with a continual flow of new members, and has the highest potential to be more personable; while non-student coaching might heavily depend on the availability of a handful of qualified adults yet could achieve greater results. Discuss between your leaders and members how training and coaching should look on your club, or consult the *State of Club Running 2019 Report section on Coaching* for more testimonies on coaching from both perspectives.

Action Items — Grow your Competitions

- Create meet schedules year-round that cater to your members.
- Search for local open races.
- Contact nearby DII/DIII programs about participating in their invitationals.
- Keep track of competition expenses to avoid spending more than your club can afford.
- Appoint either a coach or member (or multiple) to lead your training efforts.

Stage 3 Mature

As your club develops over the years, you may find that growth has become less important than embracing the members you already have, and improving the events you already offer. Maturing your running club is a nuanced process that requires some particularly committed leaders and passionate members.

3.1 Finances

Hopefully by now, your club has found some reliable ways to generate funds through its member dues, and possible service fundraisers, campaigns, and school funding opportunities. Another pillar of generating funds is through hosting events of your own. One obvious option is to host your own local race or invitational. Obviously, the more registrants you have, the greater your income will be from the event. But in order to maximize your profit, you want to find a balance between a quality experience for your participants and an inexpensive setup. Unfortunately, the success of your event may depend heavily on extraneous circumstances. But if you believe hosting an event would make sense for your club, then give it your best shot, and prepare your successors to host an even better version of the event next time. Be sure to start planning events far in advance, because they will almost always require a lot of work. And take inspiration from events that you and your other members have enjoyed: talk to organizers of other club and local races for guidance.

The role of your club's Treasurer will become increasingly vital, because as your club continually offers more competitive and social opportunities for its members, the amount of money moving into and out of the club will balloon accordingly. Your club's Treasurer should be expected to keep accurate records of club finances, think towards the future financial well-being of the club for years to come, and deliver swift service to members needing reimbursements or club merchandise. Finally, the Treasurer should be advising club leadership on the financial viability of pursuing various competitions or trips.

Assuming your club is a member club within NIRCA, it is vital that you choose the correct NIRCA Dues & Entry Fees option each year. The particular prices may change over the years, but it is up to you and your club's Treasurer to estimate how many of your members will want to participate in the each of the NIRCA championship events, compute the costs of each dues & entry fees option with those estimates, and choose the cheapest option. In the SCR 2019 Report, we show that choosing only the second cheapest NIRCA Dues & Entry Fees option (rather than the cheapest) is a costly mistake for large clubs: it can cost around \$5.00 per competing athlete per year.

Action Items — Mature your Finances

- Edit your club dues structure to fit your club values and finances.
- Continually improve on your existing campaigns and other fundraisers.
- Consider hosting a race of your own to raise funds.
- Bolster your club's Treasurer role.
- Choose the cheapest NIRCA Dues & Entry Fees option for your club.

3.2 Membership

While your club may be able to attract many new members each year, it may struggle to engage them consistently throughout the year. How well your club can retain its members depends on the kinds of opportunities being provided to them. If you are on a club that wishes to welcome members of any ability or competitiveness, then there may be two competing (but not mutually exclusive) interests between your members: *athletic* and *social*. Beyond those mentioned in Stage 2, below are some strategies towards catering to both the athletic and social interests of your members:

- Destination long runs.
- Team hikes, climbing, swimming, basketball, frisbee, etc.
- Food-related races.
- Community service activities together.

- Retreats/running camps during the summer.
- Spirit weeks with daily themes.
- Scavenger hunts during practice.
- Social media takeovers or spotlights.

Every club will have its own way of catering to its members, so take some time to identify the elements that make your club worth returning to, and then build more opportunities for your members using those elements.

Your club's outlook on its members will evolve as your club matures. It may become increasingly valuable to promote inclusivity, fairness, merit, and representation over seniority, recruitment, or popularity. And your club's leadership may desire to bridge the gaps between any existing cliques within the club. As leaders of your club, you should use every opportunity to engage with all members, spark relationships across friend groups, and dismantle unhealthy biases that favor only certain groups of members.

We encourage you to invest in diversity and inclusion. There are a number of opportunities to incorporate honor codes and anti-hazing clauses into your official team constitution and website. You could also spend time discussing women's participation in your club, which, for the average running club, is significantly less than men's participation. You are welcome to consult the *State of Club Running 2019 Report chapter on Diversity and Growth* for a larger discussion on this topic.

Action Items — Mature your Membership

- Identify the athletic and social interests of your members.
- Embrace old and new events that cater to your members' athletic and social interests.
- Favor inclusivity over favoritism in all club events and decisions.
- Investigate how your club can better support all of its members and be equal-opportunity.

3.3 Leadership

With a larger and more committed club, your leadership can afford to grow and specialize. You can split some of the roles discussed in Stage 2 into positions with fewer responsibilities, because each responsibility will take more time and attention. You can also choose to have multiple leaders fulfilling the same positions, or add some other positions listed below:

- 1. **Community Service Chair**: to handle any community service requirements and find new opportunities to volunteer.
- 2. Merchandise Chair: to handle all apparel purchases and sales.
- 3. Alumni Relations/Fundraising Chair: to find more fundraising opportunities and engage with alumni or parents for campaigns.
- 4. **Webmaster**: to continually update the club website and/or social media accounts for a greater online presence.
- 5. **Underclassman Chair**: to particularly engage with younger members and help them bond early in the year.

To be clear, these positions are summaries of real positions found on existing running clubs, but it is up to your club to decide what positions might be most applicable or beneficial.

Assuming you have constructed a board that you believe fits your maturing club well, there is still a lot of work to do with maintaining a healthy relationship between club leaders. In order to maintain strong communication and accountability, it is important for your club's leaders to meet on a regular basis. For most clubs, we would recommend meeting weekly. As you deliberate and converse, make sure that everyone involved has shared their thoughts and ultimately consents to the final decision.

A leadership structure that depends on the President or some other leader to do a majority of the work without much hope of delegation is neither healthy nor fair. Each leader should be able to freely request help from their concurrent leaders, and each leader should conversely be willing to reciprocate that kind of help when needed. We suggest your club's leaders consider themselves as a team rather than a hierarchy, and their roles as processes rather than positions. Such a symbiotic relationship thrives when your club leadership has established a sense of common purpose and responsibility toward serving the club. You can read more about leadership dynamics in the *State of Club Running 2019 Report section on Leadership Structure*.

3.4. COMPETITION

Finally, we want to encourage you to embrace failure. No leader will be perfect, and no decision will be without negative consequences or reactions. Recognizing failure helps to steer future decisions away from the same failures, and will teach future leaders what not to do later. Moreover, encouraging constructive criticism by being open to discussing club decisions, or even having an anonymous suggestion form, can help you understand more of negative reactions or consequences that can result from your decisions than you may have anticipated. So long as you are honest about your mistakes and demonstrate your best intentions, you will be respected and appreciated by your club members.

Action Items — Mature your Leadership

- Consider editing your leadership structure to specialize responsibilities.
- Establish a common goal and shared expectations between club leaders.
- Promote open delegation between leaders.
- Embrace failure and constructive criticism.

3.4 Competition

It is likely that you have dozens of members interested in competing near and far, so it is vital that you construct a reliable and interesting meet schedule during each semester to engage your competing members. If NIRCA competitions are not frequent or close enough to fill your schedule, continue to look towards varsity invitationals, open road races, USATF events, trail relays, or triathlons.

So long as you can afford the trip, NIRCA championship events like Regionals (XC) and Nationals (XC, Track & Field, and Road Half Marathon) are fantastic events to attend. Performing against some of the nation's best club runners can have an awesome effect on your team morale, and push your club to compete at a higher level. It is especially fun to pursue placing on the podium at Nationals!

Until now, your relationship with other running clubs may have only been on a competitive level. But there are many more ways you can impact the club running community beyond attending and hosting meets. As a maturing club, you have a lot of knowledge to offer to other developing clubs. And you can influence decisions about the future of club running at the NIRCA Winter Conference. Use your experience and successes to push club running to new heights and advocate for other clubs!

Action Items — Mature your Competitions

- Fill your competitive schedule each season.
- Consider attending NIRCA championship events.
- Attend the NIRCA Winter Conference.
- Use your influence to better nearby clubs and the entire running club community.

Conclusion

Whether you are a student still in their first steps of enacting your vision of a new running club at your school, or a leader of a small but growing club looking to make a bigger impact in the club running community, or the leader of an established club that wishes to better serve its many members and interests, we believe in you! You took time out of your life to read through the recommendations on how to be a better leader and grow a better running club, so it is obvious that you care.

The path your club will follow in its development can be hazy and trying, and not all clubs escape their early stages of development. But we hope this document gives you a little more knowledge and confidence to make the next step towards achieving a club that can better provide for its members.

We encourage you to share this document with the leaders of other running clubs, especially to students at schools without running clubs. We hope the collegiate club running community can grow and prosper throughout the next many years, and it will take the help of many existing and rising club runners to make that happen.

