

Establishing a Postsecondary/Collegiate Chapter

By the University of St. Thomas, HOSA Collegiate Chapter

The journey of establishing a HOSA collegiate chapter at the University of St. Thomas involves not only the dedication of the co-founders but also the support of our entire school's community. In the earliest stages of developing a HOSA chapter at St. Thomas we found out that there have been many attempts in creating a HOSA already, this discouraged us a bit, but did not stop us from trying to fight for our goal to become a reality. In the summer of 2008, our first course of action was to contact the National and Texas HOSA about starting a postsecondary/collegiate chapter. After speaking to the directors we were on our mission to find an advisor at the university. We knew this task would be hard because this is where the others had a road block in successfully establishing a HOSA. We contacted a few Professors at the University, and successfully Professor Ly Phan, a psychology professor, expressed great interest in our cause. We then met with her, explained what HOSA was all about, and outlined her duties as advisor. She gladly accepted, and since then, she has been very supportive every step of the way.

Throughout the process, we were faced with two major obstacles. The first was to prove to the Pre-Health Professions Society (PHPS) advisor that HOSA can co-exist in harmony. Because UST already has a health professions club, there was a misconception that HOSA would not be any different. However, we were able to show that not only did we have major support from students, especially from those who were affiliated with HOSA in high school, but we were also different enough from PHPS that our students would benefit from having both of the health organizations on campus available to them. Also we use the argument HOSA is national organization and includes competition whereas PHPS does not fall under either category. After we explained our reasons to PHPS and their advisor, they accepted us with open arms and offered their guidance and assistance.

Our final hurdle was to be accepted by UST's Council of Clubs (COC) so that we could establish ourselves as an official school organization. The COC is made up of every represented from each of the different clubs that our campus has to offer. In preparation of presenting to COC, we had to write a Constitution, appoint officers, and attend risk management training. After those tasks were completed, we presented our case at the COC meeting in front of all of the representatives of other clubs, just as we did with the PHPS advisor. We also pointed out that we would be the only postsecondary/collegiate HOSA chapter in the Houston area and one of only a handful in the entire state of Texas, which would add to the university's appeal to prospective students in their search for postsecondary education. Furthermore, we wanted to make use of the proximity of our campus to the Medical Center in forming relationships with physicians, hospitals, and schools. Out of the 25 representatives we obtained the majority of the votes to give us a green light to institute HOSA at St. Thomas.

Thus far, our journey has been, at times, difficult but rewarding. Unfortunately, since we are a new chapter and have many internal structural organization to stabilize; we felt that this year is not the right time for us to compete. We hope to be ready full force for the upcoming years. We are always working to expand our club and its duties and bring it towards our ultimate goal of becoming the best postsecondary/collegiate chapter in Texas.

