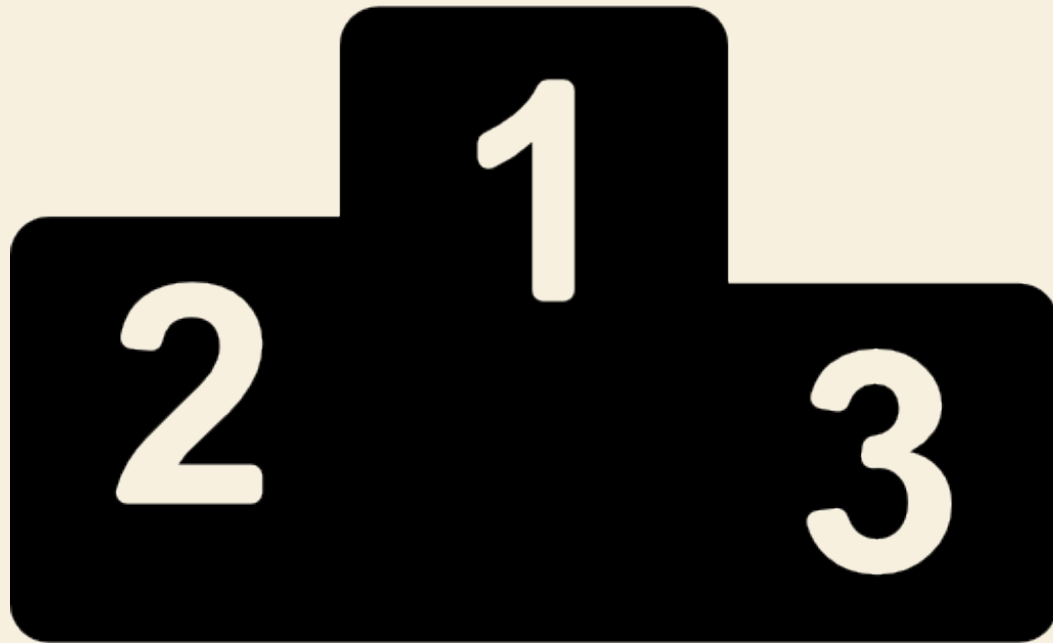


Credit to *Motivating the Middle* by TJ Sullivan!

# MOTIVATING YOUR MEMBERS

STUDENT ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP RETREAT  
APRIL 16, 2016



## THE RULE OF THIRDS

EVERY college student organization is divided into thirds.

The top third does all of the work.

Bottom third members drive bottom third members crazy.

Where do top third members focus their time and energy?

THEY MIGHT HAVE SERVED IN SOME MINOR LEADERSHIP CAPACITY.

THEIR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT MIGHT HAVE CHANGED FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

THEY MIGHT BE A STUDENT OF COLOR.

THEY MIGHT BE AVOIDING A PARTY ATMOSPHERE.

THEY MIGHT BE WORKING A LOT OF CAMPUS.

THEY MIGHT HAVE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AT HOME.

**But, they show up.**

**WHO IS THE MIDDLE THIRD?**



# HOW DO WE MISS THEM?

- Their identity isn't directly or critically linked to their involvement.
- They don't automatically volunteer for leadership roles.
- They don't seek recognition, praise, or attention.
- They don't offer a ton of opinions, but also don't criticize.
- They identify with some – but not all – aspects of our organizations.
  - They may love playing intramurals, but hate the meetings.
  - They may like volunteering, but dislike large group events.
- They have to balance their priorities. So, sometimes your organization is going to lose.

- Surprises

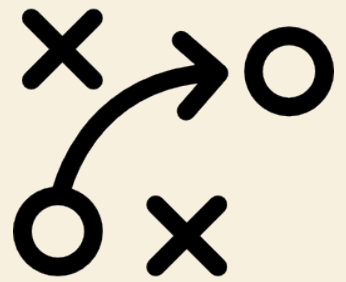
- Drama

- Vagueness

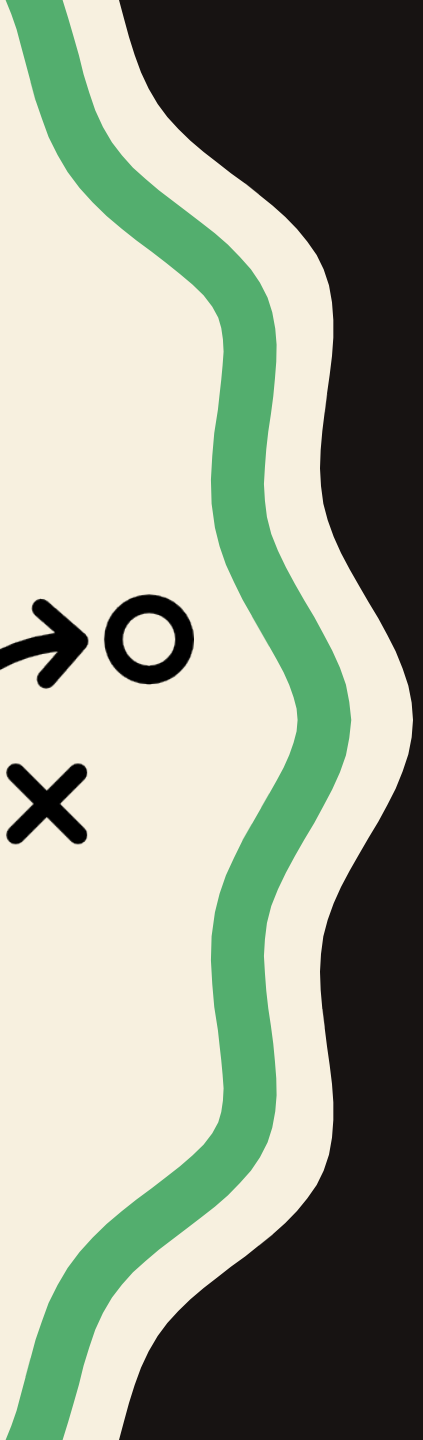
**NOT ASKING.**

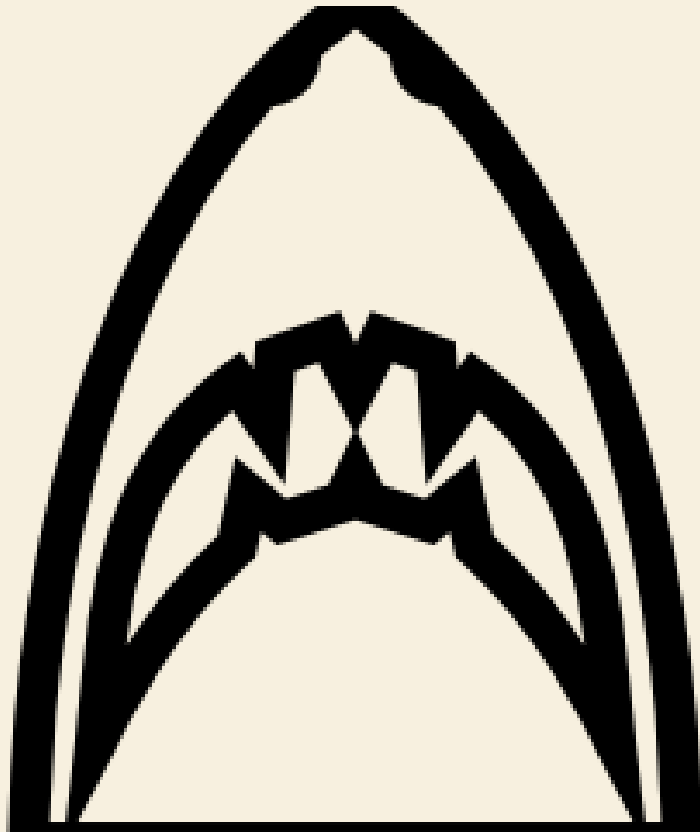
**HOW DO  
WE DRIVE  
THEM  
AWAY?**





# THE MIDDLE THIRD STRATEGY



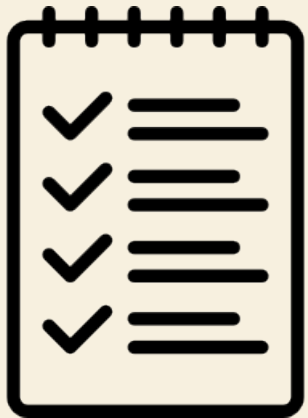


**LET'S  
TALK  
ABOUT  
THE  
BOTTOM  
THIRD.**



**LET IT GOOOOOO**





# THE BOTTOM THIRD STRATEGY



**NEXT STEPS**

1. Take a list of your current members and divide it into thirds.
  - Who are the most engaged and do a ton of work?
  - Who are the bottom third who demonstrate weak commitment?
  - Who falls in the middle?
2. Look at each name you've marked as a middle third member. Ask:
  - What are some positive ways this member contributes?
  - What other priorities does this person have in their life?
  - What are some creative ways you can reduce the stress your middle member feels when the priorities conflict?
3. Identify the parts of the organization that each middle members seems to enjoy or love. Look for ways to give them more of what they love and less of what they don't like.
4. What is a chronic issue that faces your group? How could you approach that issue in a new way using the Middle Third Strategy?
5. What are some specific tasks that would appear to middle third members?

1. What can the officers/top-third members do to more effectively solicit feedback, involvement and buy-in?
2. Analyze the tension that exists between the top third and the bottom third. What is the most common source of negativity?
3. What 5 -7 minimum standards could you make part of your Good Enough Member list?
4. When a new member joins your group, how can you best determine whether they will become a top, middle, or bottom third?
  - Is there a certain group whose commitment level drops? Why is this happening?
5. How do you make your top third members feel appreciated for the work they do?
6. How do your meetings currently play to the worst impulses of your top third members? Are there things you could do differently to appear to middle third?



**KATY LAUNIUS**  
**KLAUNIUS@RSU.EDU**