

Considerations in Selecting Education Topics and Programs

Before committing to any program, regardless of its nature, there are always basic elements of information that should be considered. The following paragraphs present some key questions to ask when planning an education program.

Goals

This is probably the most important consideration in the decision to have an education program. When making decisions on educational programming, the goals of the program should be considered in the context of how it will assist the chapter in meeting its goals. The following questions will help isolate and develop the goals of the education program and provide a starting point for the program's design.

- What organizational goal is driving this program?
- Why are we conducting this program?
- What will the benefit be to the participants?
- What are the skills or competencies the program should teach?
- What educational gaps, as listed in the Professional Development Resource (PDR) will this education fill? (The PDR is located at <http://www.gcsaa.org/learn/pdi/pdiwelcome.asp>).

Target Population

The number one concern in planning any education program is the target population. Often, educational programs do not realize their attendance potential because the wrong audience is targeted with the wrong topic. Identifying and understanding the target population is critical to having a well-attended and successful education program.

- Who will be educated?
- What are their needs according to the competencies listed in the Professional Development Resource?
- What is the estimated class size?

Type of Education or Training

The best learning takes place when the delivery method is matched to the topic to enable a transfer of knowledge or skill. Education programs are often pure lecture events with topics far too complicated or complex to be comprehended through listening alone. Many people may attend, but very little knowledge leaves the room.

- What type of program is being proposed?
- What are the media and equipment requirements?
- How many classes and how long?
- Are there knowledge prerequisites?

Program Planning

Thorough planning is the key to success in any program. Key elements of any program plan include:

- **Estimated budget:** Budgeting is fundamental to any program plan. An effective education program does not have to be expensive. The GCSAA education department can help locate low-cost, highly effective educators in your region and provide recommendations on ways to keep costs low without impacting on the quality of education. See sample chapter education program budgets on pages 9 – 12.
- **Personnel or resources required:** A well-run education program requires the necessary resources for registration, classroom setup, audio-visual, and more. See the program planning checklist list on pages 13 – 14.