ANY GROUPS, such as FFA chapters, are very organized and accomplish a great deal throughout the year. Other groups find themselves adrift, wondering what, if anything, they ought to do next. What are the differences between these groups? Often, effective leadership is missing from the groups that are floating aimlessly. Effective leadership from FFA chapter officers creates a successful organization that can accomplish the goals it sets out to reach.

Objective:
Describe the duties and responsibilities of FFA chapter officers and the various POA committees.

Key Terms:
- advisor
- Building Communities chaplain
- closing ceremony committee
- Growing Leaders historian
- Model of Excellence opening ceremony parliamentarian president
- Program of Activities (POA) reporter
- secretary
- sentinel
- Strengthening Agriculture treasurer
- vice president

Leading the FFA Chapter

Leadership can sometimes be defined not by what you accomplish for yourself but by what you help others achieve for the good of the group. Serving as an FFA officer is not about individual accomplishment or reward but about teamwork to achieve the purposes of the local chapter. Serving as an officer is a big responsibility and should not be taken lightly. Officers are looked upon by all members, especially the younger members, as role models and experienced
leaders. With that responsibility comes great opportunity to create positive experiences for your chapter members and your community!

FFA officers must function together for the benefit of the chapter if quality programming is to be conducted. Officers must depend on each other to accomplish the goals set forth for the year. Additionally, each officer has specific responsibilities that must be carried out for the team to function properly. An effective officer team needs a balance of people who are willing to play the roles expected of them so that all the work gets done and the team operates effectively! At its beginning, the FFA organization adopted symbols that characterize the roles and responsibilities of the officers, conveying the importance and symbolism of the part each officer plays on the team.

**FFA CHAPTER OFFICERS**

Chapter officers serve a vital function in the FFA organization. The FFA chapter relies on the dedication and teamwork of its officers to be successful. Each officer should strive to set an example for the other members by always being encouraging, helpful, and professional. The duties of each officer position differ so that the team can work successfully together.

**President**

The **president** is the officer symbolized by the rising sun, representing a new era in agriculture. Each officer team is led by its president. As the sun lights the way, the president is charged with guiding the officer team and chapter into each new day with the vision and clarity that the sun provides. Many people incorrectly think the president’s responsibility is to make all the decisions. This is not true. In fact, the president is not to vote on issues unless to break a tie. The president is charged with:

- Leading the officer term
- Appointing committees and serving on them as an ex-officio member
- Organizing chapter activities
- Reviewing the progress of committees
- Evaluating the progress of the Program of Activities
- Representing the chapter in official and public activities
- Presiding over meetings and following proper parliamentary procedure

The president should be an effective communicator who can make sure that all members of the group feel their views are valued.
**Vice President**

The *vice president* is the officer symbolized by the plow, representing labor and tillage of the soil. The vice president is responsible for:

- Assuming all duties of the president in his or her absence
- Heading creation of the chapter Program of Activities and serving as an ex-officio member of all committees
- Coordinating work among the committees and directing the progress of the committees
- Establishing and maintaining the chapter resource file
- Working closely with the chapter president and advisor to track progress of chapter goals

**Secretary**

The *secretary* is the officer symbolized by the ear of corn, representing the nationwide scope of the FFA organization. The secretary’s duties include:

- Preparing and posting meeting agendas
- Preparing and presenting meeting minutes
- Placing all committee reports in the designated area
- Being responsible for chapter correspondence
- Maintaining member attendance and activity records
- Preparing materials for each meeting

**Treasurer**

The *treasurer* is the officer symbolized by the bust of George Washington, the “Father of Our Country” and a farmer who carefully and accurately accounted for his financial activities. This officer’s duties include:

- Receiving, recording, and depositing FFA funds
- Presenting monthly treasurer’s reports at meetings
- Collecting dues
- Maintaining a neat and accurate treasurer’s book
- Preparing and submitting a membership roster
- Serving as chairperson of the Finance Committee

**Reporter**

The reporter is the officer symbolized by the United States flag, representing the fact that FFA is a national organization. The reporter is responsible for telling everyone what the FFA chapter is accomplishing by:

- Planning public information programs with radio, TV, and news media
- Sending news releases to local and regional media
- Publishing a chapter newsletter
- Providing content for the FFA chapter website
- Preparing and maintaining the chapter scrapbook
- Sending stories to area, district, and state FFA reporters
- Serving as chapter photographer

**Sentinel**

The sentinel is the officer symbolized by the shield of friendship. This officer’s responsibilities include:

- Assisting the president in maintaining order
- Keeping the meeting room, chapter equipment, and supplies in proper condition
- Greeting guests and visitors
- Assuring adequate seating
- Keeping the meeting room comfortable
- Helping with the distribution of handouts
- Taking charge of candidates for degree ceremonies
- Assisting with special features and refreshments

**Advisor**

The advisor is usually the agriculture teacher, symbolized by the owl, a time-honored figure of knowledge and wisdom. The advisor’s role is to help guide the officer team and make sure it keeps on track. He or she may suggest a direction, but the officer team and chapter members have the responsibility to carry out the work of the chapter. The advisor’s duties include:

- Supervising chapter activities
Informing prospective students and their parents about FFA
- Instructing students in leadership and personal development
- Building school and community support
- Encouraging member involvement
- Preparing students for events and activities

### TABLE 1. The Symbols That Represent the FFA Officer Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFA Officer Position</th>
<th>Symbol Representing the Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Rising sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice president</td>
<td>Plow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ear of corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Bust of George Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>U.S. flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentinel</td>
<td>Shield of friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>Owl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other FFA Officers

Other officers also serve the FFA chapter. These may or may not be elected positions. Every officer team should consist of at least six parliamentary offices.

The **historian** is the officer who assists the reporter in compiling the chapter scrapbook. The **parliamentarian** is the officer who rules on questions of parliamentary procedure. The **chaplain** is the officer who presents the invocation at chapter functions.

### OFFICIAL FFA CEREMONIES

Ceremonies are performed by the FFA officer team at the beginning and end of every official FFA meeting. These procedures are set in place by the National FFA Organization and can be found in the *Official FFA Manual*. All members should be familiar with these procedures. By following the official ceremonies, FFA members are also learning to carry themselves in a professional manner and to properly conduct official meetings under the rules of parliamentary procedure.

**Opening Ceremony**

The **opening ceremony** is the ceremony performed by the FFA officer team at the beginning of each meeting. Once the set meeting time arrives, the president will use the gavel to rap for attention and proceed as indicated in the *Official FFA Manual*. The other officers rise as called upon by the vice president and remain standing until seated by the president.
**Closing Ceremony**

The closing ceremony is the ceremony performed by the FFA officer team at the end of each meeting. When all business has been concluded or the time of closing has come, the procedure outlined in the *Official FFA Manual* should be followed.

**FFA COMMITTEES AND THE PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES**

A committee is a group of people appointed for a specific function. In FFA, many committees help a chapter execute its activities. Most of the time, the committees are formed as a part of developing and carrying out the chapter Program of Activities. The Program of Activities (POA) is a road map to guide an FFA chapter toward its annual goals.

To accomplish goals, we need to have them clearly identified. We need to know who oversees each step and how to tell if we’ve achieved our goals. This is all done within the Program of Activities. The POA is developed by the chapter officers and headed by the chapter vice president.

Having a Program of Activities is important to an FFA chapter because it gives ownership of the organization to the students and makes sure their needs and interests are addressed. Developing the Program of Activities is an excellent way for students to obtain planning and leadership experience while gaining a sense of school and community pride. A well-developed Program of Activities gives continuity to an FFA chapter from year to year. POAs from years past should be reviewed while developing the document for the current year.

The Program of Activities has three major divisions—Growing Leaders, Building Communities, and Strengthening Agriculture. Along with goals and action steps, the POA identifies the budget for each activity to help the chapter plan for its financial needs. The POA also serves as a document that the chapter can use with students, teachers, FFA Alumni, administration, and supporters to show the direction and plans of the FFA chapter. Within each of the divisions, five quality standards and their definitions help guide a student committee for each standard to plan, prepare, and deliver activities. The definitions and further information can be found in the *Program of Activities Resource Guide*.
Growing Leaders

Growing Leaders is the division of the POA that seeks to further develop, improve, and 
enrich the skills and talents of each student. The committees and quality standards relating to 
Growing Leaders are:

- Leadership
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Scholarship
- Personal Growth
- Career Success

Committees in this division will seek to plan activities that will guide the chapter members’ 
overall quality of life, personal growth, and career success.

Building Communities

Building Communities is the division of the POA that strives to develop economic, envi-
ronmental, and human resources; citizenship; and finance. Committees and quality standards 
of the Building Communities division of the POA are:

- Environmental
- Health Resources
- Citizenship
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Economic Development

An FFA chapter is a valuable asset to a community because of its efforts to make the commu-
nity a better place for all who live there. Activities in this division encourage students to envis-
jon themselves as a part of the community in which they live by becoming active and working 
to preserve and improve their environment.

Strengthening Agriculture

Strengthening Agriculture is the division of the POA that focuses on agricultural 
awareness and literacy within the community, FFA chapter recruitment, safety, public rela-
tions, support groups, participation in state and national FFA, and other organizational activi-
ties. Committees and quality standards of the Strengthening Agriculture division of the POA 
are:

- Support Group
- Chapter Recruitment
Safety
Agricultural Literacy
Agricultural Advocacy

This division encourages students to work together for the improvement of their FFA chapter and for agricultural awareness and safety awareness within the community.

**Model of Excellence**

All chapters can compete in the National Chapter Award program, which rewards chapters for their accomplishments throughout the year. Each state chooses its top chapters to compete at the national level. The **Model of Excellence** award is given each year at the National FFA Convention to the chapter whose FFA Program of Activities is rated the highest in the nation.

**Summary:**

Serving as an officer of your local FFA chapter is an honor and a privilege! Each officer has unique responsibilities to carry out, but more important, each must work as part of a team to achieve the goals set for the chapter. Officers have an opportunity to serve as role models and examples for their fellow members, both in and out of the classroom. Officers get to take part first hand in many traditions, such as performing opening and closing ceremonies at meetings.

The FFA Program of Activities serves as a road map for planning and conducting the activities of the FFA chapter throughout the year. It helps members set goals, guides them as they plan how to achieve those goals, and sets a budget for chapter activities. The National Chapter Award program rewards FFA chapters for conducting outstanding programs of activities that live out FFA’s mission.

**Checking Your Knowledge:**

1. What are the seven major officer positions, and what symbols represent those positions?
2. What are three optional officer positions?
3. Explain the role of the advisor in FFA.
4. What are the three divisions that make up the chapter Program of Activities?
5. What is the purpose of committees within FFA?
6. Name three possible committees within an FFA chapter.
Expanding Your Knowledge:

Identify two activities your chapter could conduct for each division of the Program of Activities. Compare your ideas with those of your classmates. In groups of three to five students, develop the goals and action steps associated with those activities.

Web Links:

National FFA Organization
https://www.ffa.org/

National Chapter
https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/national-chapter

National FFA Officer Team
https://www.ffa.org/about/what-is-ffa/ffa-structure/national-ffa-officer-team

Official FFA Manual