

## Organizational Development & Tuckman's Theory

When groups or organizations come together, either for the first time or after a break, the groups generally do not perform at their highest potential. Team development and formation takes time and intention. Often times, teams go through recognizable stages as they move from a collection of students to a united organization working towards common goals and values. These stages of group development are often referred to as "Tuckman's Theory of Group Development," named after developer Bruce Tuckman in 1965. Tuckman describes five stages in his theory: **Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning**. Here is each stage in more detail:

### Forming

In this stage, students will act positive and polite to one another as they become acquainted with the group. Typically this is the time when everyone is trying to determine and establish their role in the group. This stage of group development can last for a while with in a group, especially if the group does not show an effort to get to know one another or set expectations for members to move the organization forward.

### Norming

Gradually, the team moves into the norming stage. This is when people figure out the routine and start to come together as a cohesive unit. Now that members know each other, they are able to create a closer and stronger working relationship (including giving and receiving feedback). During this time, members also develop a stronger commitment to the organization's overall mission/goals and begin to make progress towards achieving these steps.

### Storming

Storming is the stage where students will begin to push limits with one another. Storming often starts when there is a conflict between team members' natural working styles. People may work in different ways for all sorts of reasons, but if differing working styles cause unforeseen problems, they may become frustrated. This frustration and rough patch is essential for groups to move onto the next stages of group development. While storming may feel like the end of the world to the students at the time, help guide the students through these conflicts. The storming period can last for an undetermined amount of time, and can ebb and flow as membership changes over. It's up to the students to decide how to resolve this conflict and continue moving forward with their organization.

### Performing

As the team reaches the performing stage, you will notice that they are able to complete their work without friction or conflict in pursuit of the organization's vision or goal. Organizations in this category are well structured and organized. Leaders should be able to delegate much of the work and concentrate on developing individual members of the organization as well as advance the organization as a whole. Teams at this stage have an "easy" working relationship with each other, but be aware as groups can easily dip back into the storming phase (and this is okay).

### Adjourning

Most organizations eventually reach this stage. This is the ending of an organization (or the graduation of members). Students may have difficulty with this stage, especially if their organization held routine, identity or meaningful relationships to them. This stage can also be difficult for members, especially if the future looks uncertain. Establishing a solid transition plan can help groups work through this stage so that they return to a "performing" mindset.