

# SikhSocs.com

## University Sikh society - Annual Report guidance notes

Even though University societies aren't required to produce an annual report like registered companies or charities are, most Punjabi and Sikh students are beginning to recognise the value of producing one. An annual report can help you demonstrate your accomplishments to current and future members, cultivate new partnerships and recognise the contribution of officers.

But since an annual report isn't legally required, students often struggle with what should be included and what should be left out. The following points will help you craft an outstanding annual report for your University society.

- **Focus on accomplishments, not activities in your annual report**

We want to know what you did, but more importantly, we want to know why you did it. What were the results? Why did you spend your time and money the way you did? What difference did it make? Connect the everyday activities of your organisation to your mission statement. Don't assume that readers will automatically understand how your activities help you achieve your mission - connect the dots for them.

- **Jettison the administrative details to get the most impact**

Getting a designer to create a logo and purchasing software may be big accomplishments from where you sit, but they have nothing to do with your mission. Inspire members and sponsors with accomplishments related to your mission in your annual report and leave all the administrative items for the financial section of your report.

- **Don't over-emphasise fundraising accomplishments**

Donors expect you to raise money, but fundraising accomplishments should not be celebrated in your annual report on the same level as your mission-related accomplishments. Readers are more interested in what you did with the money than how you raised it. While it is appropriate to include information on how well your fundraising efforts are going, it's best to place this information in the financial section of your report, rather than front and centre.

- **Include photos in the annual report**

Yes, photos really are worth a thousand words. Many of the people reading your annual report won't actually read it. Show them what you've been doing with photos. If you don't have a digital camera, get one now. Make sure to get permission from people who are featured in photos that illustrate a point that might be contentious.

- **Write captions that tell your story**

Now that you've got them looking at the photos, tell a story with your captions. Don't just state what's in the photo; connect the photo to an accomplishment. If people read nothing but the captions in your annual report, they should still get a sense for the good work you did last year.

- **Include personal profiles in the annual report**

Readers will be more impressed with real stories about real people than general summaries of your work. Explain what you have accomplished overall, then humanise your statistics with some personal profiles. Highlight how your work helped a specific individual. Share a volunteer's story of how they made a positive difference.

- **Explain your financials**

Many members and sponsors won't know how to read a financial statement or won't take the time to read it. Include a paragraph or two that explains in plain English what the figures say. Where does your money come from and how do you spend it? What are your main fundraising strategies? Did you implement any cost-savings measures this year?

- **Tell potential sponsors how they can help**

Never leave a potential supporter hanging, wondering how they can help you. Once you've inspired them with the good works in your annual report, guarantee their support by telling them how they can help you do more. How can they support you with their money or time? Will you accept gifts of products? Be clear about the best ways to help.



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