

**The Benefits and Challenges of Serving as Dean
AGO Webinar — Friday, October 30, 2020
Skye Matthew Hart, AGO West Regional Councilor
Past Dean, Central Arizona Chapter (Phoenix, Ariz.)**

Useful strategies for being a successful Dean, Sub-Dean, or Chapter Leader.

- When in doubt...**collaborate!**
 1. Think outside of your Chapter.
 2. Team up with groups that overlap with AGO for events, workshops, and educational programs (choral music associations, handbells, etc).
 3. Co-sponsor organ related concerts with other established concert series. This is a great way to bring in fantastic artists and bring their work to a larger audience. A Chapter budget may not be able to support eight concert artists per season, but when combined with another series, it definitely can!
 4. Benefits of collaboration: more resources are available (time, money, advertising) and you reach a wider audience. Some of these audience members are prime candidates for AGO membership!

- Start 'em while they're young...**Chapter Scholarship Programs**
 1. Youth are the future of the organ and this art that we love so much. Without organ students, there will be no AGO.
 2. If your Chapter does not have a scholarship fund, start one! Offering talented budding musicians organ scholarships is the best way to get them involved in your chapter. The scholarship also makes use of some of the excellent organ teachers in your chapter.
 3. Host a POE or offer scholarships to students to attend one in your region! So many of our brightest young organ students fell in love with the organ at one of these events. Hosting a POE in my Chapter was one of the most gratifying things I did while I was Dean.
 4. "But, wait! It's 2020 and we can't do in-person events. What do we do?" Go digital. A virtual organ demonstration, organ crawls, organ instruction is all possible now. Distance is no longer an obstacle! If you have an excellent presenter from the other side of the country, now is a great time to use online technology to use them to help engage the youth.
 5. Host Chapter programs to help raise money and awareness for scholarships. Get everyone involved! Members' recitals are great for this.

- Power in numbers...**Membership Development!**
 1. Use every event as an opportunity to recruit! This can be done "officially" through having AGO literature available at concerts, giving a brief "Who We Are" statement at the beginning of a concert; and also "unofficially" through one on one networking.
 2. Many people are simply waiting to be asked. It's important to make everyone feel **valued!** Because, indeed they are. Everyone has specific gifts and skill sets to offer to make your chapter more vital and effective. Often it just takes that one phone call to get someone on board either to join or to renew their membership.
 3. Offer complimentary membership to the Chapter scholarship students (POE does this as well for participants).

4. Communicate the value of the AGO. I often hear the question, “What does the AGO do for me?” The answer is, “a lot!” We are still the largest platform for the organ in the world! We are: a community of people with shared interests; a vehicle for bringing the best in our art to the world; we help foster concert artists, educators, organ builders, composers, and music publishers; we host concerts, educational events, and conventions; and we provide an invaluable opportunity for networking and fellowship for organists that does not exist elsewhere!
5. Offer AGO sponsored workshops to the larger community. Beginning service playing, registration, hymn playing, improvisation — these have all been very popular topics and a great way to recruit new members. This is also a great time to promote AGO certificate exams!