

Why is There a Need for Campus Girl Scouts?

The following questions have often been asked about Campus Girl Scouts (CGS): “Why do we need to have a special group for these members?”, “Why can’t they just participate as leaders within their Council?” There are several reasons why Campus Girl Scout groups are important in keeping these young adults involved in Girl Scouting.

The transition from being a “girl” to being an “adult” can be a daunting one in life, as well as in Girl Scouting. It generally comes at the same time as other transitions, such as leaving home and/or starting college. Going off to college is a challenging experience to begin with, and CGS can help make it an easier one - simply by providing a group of people with similar interests and values as “instant new friends”. For most, it is easiest to get involved in Girl Scouting in a new community through the social environment provided by CGS, and this may provide a transition to becoming a leader afterwards.

This time period is also well recognized as a distinct developmental stage in the human life cycle. According to Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, there is a separate “young adult” stage coming between “adolescence” and “middle adulthood”, and main task of this stage is the achievement of intimacy (in contrast to isolation). Obviously, the time frame for these stages will vary from individual to individual, but for the most part, CGS members (usually 18-25 years of age) have different priorities than those who are older. They will be exploring educational and career options as part of developing their autonomy and personal identity. They will be learning to manage and maintain their own residence. There is a need for continued participation in social groups, as well as establishing intimate relationships such as marriage.

As a result, their interests and objectives as participants in Girl Scouting may differ from those of other leaders. They are likely to be interested in helping the organization as a whole, rather than specifically “their daughter’s troop”, because they probably don’t have any kids. They are interested in peer group activities as they find their way in adult life. And they may have different sorts of commitments preventing a regular weekly commitment to a troop – but still have lots of time to help Girl Scouting in other ways. Older leaders may be busy with a career, house, spouse, and family – CGS members are busy with school first and foremost, and their Girl Scout involvements have to fit around exams, term papers, and summer jobs.

Flexibility is important when looking at the contributions that Campus Girl Scout groups can make to Girl Scouting overall. Planning events for girls as a team several times per year should be viewed as just as valuable as a regular weekly commitment to a troop, and this should be encouraged when offered. The main point is that CGS members are remaining involved in Girl Scouting - if we keep them involved, they will be the leaders of tomorrow.

References:

1. Rice FP. *Human Development – A Life-Span Approach*, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992, pp 330-332
2. Zimbardo PG. *Psychology and Life*, 12th ed., Scott, Foresman and Co., 1988, pp 97-98

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