



ISSUE 05

WORKING WITH AN ADVISOR LEADERNOTES

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All undergraduate students are assigned an advisor. This person is usually a faculty member or a professor (for major specific organizations). You should keep in touch with your advisor regularly. We recommend your advisor attend organization meetings, and, whenever possible, organization run events, social activities, and service projects. We hope that your advisor takes charge of keeping informed, but it is YOUR charge to keep them informed either way. Email, stop by their office, or call them with new information and updates. Your advisor is not meant to lead the organization, its meetings, or its events; they are meant to assist the organization's members as a respected member on campus with experience and can be used as a go-between between yourself and the school boards.

The Advisor/Advisee Relationship

- Your advisor is **NOT** a "parent" or "enforcer" of policies
- Your advisor **IS** a collaborator & mentor
- Your advisor **IS** the first point of contact for any problem, question or need
- Your advisor **IS** a resource person and may refer you to other campus support systems

Working With Your Advisor

- At the beginning of their tenure, the organization's executive officers should meet with the advisor to determine their roles and expectations for each other. It is helpful for the advisor to work with the executive officers to develop realistic goals for the upcoming academic year.
- Learn from your advisor. The most important reason for having an advisor is to enhance the learning opportunities associated with student involvement. Any consultation with your advisor can be useful whether it is in regards to organization matters or otherwise.
- Include your advisor in the group. Relations with your advisor can remain positive by introducing him/her to the group and by providing the advisor time to address the organization.

- It is the responsibility of the organization to communicate its needs to the advisor. Advisors should be willing to get involved with the organization, but don't make him/her guess what you need.
- Allow the advisor to say "No" when needed.
- Maintain contact with your advisor. Establish and maintain lines of communication with your advisor. Consider meeting with your advisor prior to scheduled meetings to discuss agenda items or how to effectively conduct the meeting. If the advisor is unable to attend an organization meeting, the chief student officer or another officer should brief the advisor soon after the meeting.
- Make sure that you give your advisor copies of all important documents so they can be kept on file.
- Use your advisor as an observer if things in your organization seem to be stuck.

A Faculty/Staff Advisor Can:

- Play devil's advocate when needed.
- Help with problem solving as an impartial third party who assists you with working through problems and conflict.
- Act as a sounding board. If you want to discuss a new idea with an impartial third party before proposing it to the entire group, try it out on your advisor.
- Provide advice on activities that might be of interest to the students or enhance organizational development.
- Assist in evaluating the Organization. Use your advisor as a resource to help determine what you should be evaluating and when.
- Help the organization set up future schedules.
- Provide knowledge and advice about University policies.
- Stay abreast of things happening on campus that may be of particular interest to your organization (e.g., field trips, special programs, speakers, etc.).
- Inform the organization about financial opportunities (e.g., grants, scholarships, etc.)
- Work cooperatively with the organization, answering questions objectively.
- Provide networking opportunities for members of your organization to interact with people in the field or area of interest which helps the members develop new contacts.

Advisors provide three main functions of responsibility for the organization.

These are:

- Maintenance Functions—includes those activities that help maintain the group and minimize difficulties it encounters. The advisor serves as a link to the past, interprets university policies and helps the group maintain a positive image.
- Group Growth and Leadership Functions—designed to aid the group in improving its effectiveness in operations and to help it progress towards its goals. This could involve teaching techniques of leadership, helping officers understand the principle of organization and administration, helping the group develop self-discipline, stimulating activities and helping the group focus on its goals.
- Program Content and Coordination Functions—an expansion of the group growth functions. The advisor can play an active role in the organization by introducing new program ideas and helping the group do more than just maintain itself. The advisor can provide expert knowledge that helps urge members to develop programs and to put into action classroom and learned skills.

MAKE SURE YOU THANK AND RECOGNIZE YOUR ADVISOR FOR THEIR TIME, INPUT, COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT.