



# Student Organization Adviser Manual

2018-2019



Developed August 2013; Edited August 2017

Dear Student Organization Adviser,

This handbook has been developed by the Center for Student Involvement to assist faculty and staff advisers at Agnes Scott College. In this handbook, you will find guidelines and tips on being an effective adviser and policies and procedures relevant to our student organizations.

Agnes Scott College and the Center Student Involvement (CSI) create and sustain a vibrant campus experience for students that fosters personal and intellectual growth inside and outside of the classroom. CSI empowers students to become positive change agents in their community by promoting personal leadership development and active engagement.

As a student organization adviser we challenge you to help your student organization develop programs that foster their commitment to academic excellence and their growth as a well-rounded, engaged citizen.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to working with our student organizations. We look forward to working with you!

# Center for Student Involvement

## Contact Information

141 E. College Ave  
Alston Campus Center- Suite 200  
Decatur, GA 30030  
404.471.5879

## Staff Members

### **Karissa Tedesco**

Assistant Dean for Student Development  
[kmerkel@agnesscott.edu](mailto:kmerkel@agnesscott.edu)

### **LeAnna Rensi Casey**

Director for Student Involvement  
[lrensicasey@agnesscott.edu](mailto:lrensicasey@agnesscott.edu)

### **Jennifer Duncan**

Assistant Director for Student Involvement  
[jduncan@agnesscott.edu](mailto:jduncan@agnesscott.edu)

### **Carolyn Corneliuson**

Assistant Director for Recreation and Intramurals  
[ccorneliuson@agnesscott.edu](mailto:ccorneliuson@agnesscott.edu)

## About the Center for Student Involvement

The Center for Student Involvement (CSI) creates and sustains a vibrant campus experience for students' that fosters personal and intellectual growth inside and outside of the classroom. CSI promotes personal leadership development and active engagement on campus.

# Purpose of Advising

A student organization adviser is a faculty or staff member who provides support and guidance to officers and members of a student organization. The adviser not only serves as a representative of the group in an official capacity, but also as an advocate for the student organization. An adviser is one who gives ideas, shares insight, provides a different perspective, and encourages organization members.

## Benefits of Advising

Advising a student organization can be a very rewarding experience. Working with students outside of the classroom and formal settings allows faculty and staff the ability to share information and resources and encourage development in the student. This close interaction with students allows advisers the opportunity to promote skills such as leadership development, ethics, teamwork, appreciation of diversity, self-discovery that are invaluable to students when they leave Agnes Scott College.

## Adviser Responsibilities

Each adviser perceives his/her relation to a student organization differently. Some advisers play very active roles while others maintain a more distant relationship to the organization. **It is expected that each adviser will maintain regular contact with his/her organization.** An adviser accepts responsibility for keeping informed about activities of the organization and for advising officers of the organization on the appropriateness and general merits of policies and activities.

The responsibilities of the adviser can be divided into three main categories:

- Responsibility to the organization
- Responsibility to the individual members
- Responsibility to the college

### **Responsibilities to the Organization**

The adviser should:

- Develop clear expectations about his/her role and relationship to the organization
- Guide the group in setting realistic goals & objectives, that include educational & personal development
- Help the organization justify expenditures of students' time, abilities, energy, and funds
- Be well informed about plans and activities of the group
- Discourage domination of the group by any individual or group of members
- Assist in promoting group interest by evaluating programs
- Assist the group in submitting the proper paperwork to the Center for Student Involvement
- Assist officers with procedural matters
- Participate in the review of official correspondence before it is sent

- Be knowledgeable of and help members adhere to the organization's history, purpose and constitution
- Be visible and establish an attendance schedule for organizational meetings
- Be available, especially in emergency situations
- Be consistent with actions in serving as a mentor and mediator of conflict

### **Responsibilities to the Individual Members**

The adviser should:

- Assist students in maintaining balance between academic and co-curricular commitments
- Encourage each to participate in and plan group events
- Encourage students to accept responsibility for specific parts of programs
- Foster the leadership skill development of members, particularly the executive board
- Be aware of the goals and directions of the organization and help members evaluate progress
- Develop a strong working relationship with all the officers
- Maintain or have access to an officer & membership list with addresses and phone numbers

### **Responsibilities to the College**

The adviser should:

- Encourage students to plan programs that are beneficial to students and inclusive
- Be familiar with and ensure that policies and procedures pertinent to student organizations are followed
- Understand, and comply with federal, state and local laws and ordinances, as well as campus policies
- Recommend group to cancel any activities that are inadequately planned, violate policies or are unsafe

## **Adviser Roles**

As mentioned in the previous section, each adviser perceives his/her relation to a student organization differently. The purpose of this section is to outline basic roles of an Adviser. As groups vary in their expectations and needs, it is important that you, as an Adviser, develop an understanding with the organization you are to represent as to the nature of your involvement. The Adviser and group should agree on a set of expectations of one another from the onset and should write this list down as a contract between the group and the Adviser.

Following are some of the roles you may assume as an adviser:

### **Mentor**

Many students will come to see their adviser as a mentor and the success of these relationships can last many years and be rewarding for both the student and the adviser. If the student is seeking an education and a career in your field, you may be asked to assist in his/her professional development. You may be approached to review resumes, to connect students with community resources, or to be a sounding board for their ideas of what they want to accomplish in the field.

At times, students will seek out someone to assist with their personal development. In this capacity, a mentor will have a basic understanding of student needs and perspectives, a desire to challenge students intellectually and emotionally while providing support to meet the challenge, and the ability to listen to students' verbal and nonverbal communication. Students may want to talk to you about family or relationship issues, conflicts they are having with other students, or to have conversations about their ideas and thoughts on different subjects.

### **Team Builder**

When new officers are elected or new members join the organization, you may need to take the initiative in turning the students from individuals with separate goals and expectations into a team. Team building is important because it enhances the relationships of the students between one another and the adviser. Positive relationships help the organization succeed and to work through conflicts and difficult times.

As the adviser, you may consider working with the student officers to develop a teambuilding session or retreat and have the students implement it. Training students in effective techniques for team building will keep students invested in the organization and give them the opportunity to learn what it takes to build a team.

### **Conflict Mediator**

Inevitably, students are going to join the organization with different agendas, goals, and ideas about how things should function and the direction they should be taking. When working with students who have come in to conflict, it may be necessary to meet with them and have them discuss their issues with each other. Ask them how they think they can work together, point out the organization's mission, and ask how their conduct is helping the group achieve its mission. Sometimes, one student may be causing problems with other students. In many cases this student may not realize that his/her actions are causing a problem. In this case, speaking with the student individually could be helpful. Chances are that no one has met with the student previously and discussed how his/her attitudes are impacting other people and how those attitudes or actions can be changed to make everyone feel better. In many cases, the student will appreciate honest feedback.

### **Reflective Agent**

One of the most essential components to learning in "out of classroom" activities is providing time for students to reflect on how and what they are doing. As an adviser, you will want your officers to talk to you about how they think they are performing, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on their performance. Then be honest with them. Let them know when you agree with their self-perceptions and in a tactful manner let them know when you disagree. Remember, any criticism you provide students should be constructive and you will want to provide concrete examples of actions the student took that seem to contradict their self-perceptions. When students discuss their weaknesses, ask them how they can improve those areas and how you can help them. Students usually have the answer to what they need; they just don't like to ask for help. Remember to have students reflect on their successes and failures.

**Educator**

As an adviser, your role of educator will often come through the role modeling of behavior, guiding the student in reflection of their actions, and being there to answer questions. One of the most difficult actions to take as an adviser is to do nothing, but sometimes this can be the most important action of all. Allow the students to make their decisions even if they do not agree with your ideas. Sometimes, students will succeed; other times, they may fail. The key is to return to the role of the reflective agent and give the students a safe place to reflect on their experiences.

**Motivator**

As an adviser, you may have to motivate students to excel and to carry out their plans and achieve their goals. Some students are easily discouraged and at the first sign of difficulty they may want to quit. You will need to be their “cheerleader” to keep them excited about all of the potential successes they will experience. You can motivate students through the recognition of their efforts, appealing to their desire to create change, and to connecting their experiences here at the University to the experiences they will have in the community.

**Policy Interpreter**

Student organizations operate under policies, procedures, and rules. At times, students may not be aware of these policies and they will do things in an inappropriate manner. The more you know about these policies the better advising you can give to the students on their plans.

As an adviser you will assume numerous roles and all possible roles are not mentioned here. A key idea to remember is that you are an adviser not the leader. You provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students as they work on projects, but you should not be doing the work. Students will learn if they are engaged. Be careful of being challenged into doing the work for a student project. The students make the decisions, and they are accountable for those decisions, and for the successes and failures of their groups.



## **Advising Styles and Skills**

Situational advising allows you to change your advising style to match the development needs of the individual or organization you advise. Your advising style is the way you advise when you work with someone. It is how you conduct yourself, over time, when you are trying to influence the performance of others.

### **Advising Styles**

You will need to vary these based on your assessment of the students/groups readiness level.

*Directing:* The adviser provides specific instructions and closely supervises task accomplishments. Use this style with students/groups that are at a low level of readiness.

*Coaching:* The adviser continues to direct and closely supervise task accomplishment, but also explains decisions, solicits suggestions, and supports progress. Use this style with groups that have a few leaders that are at a higher readiness level who will need your support with the rest of the group to get things accomplished.

*Supporting:* The adviser facilitates and supports the efforts toward task accomplishments and shares responsibilities for decision making with the students. Use this style with students/groups that are just starting to understand the concepts that will lead to success - the group is just starting to “get it”.

*Delegating:* The adviser empowers the students to conduct their own decision making, problem solving, and delegating. Use this style with students/groups that are at a high level of readiness.

### **Advising Skills**

*Flexibility:* You must be able to move from one style to another in order to meet the needs of the different types of students and multiple circumstances you will encounter.

*Diagnosis:* You have to learn how to diagnose the needs of the students you advise. Determining what is needed as opposed to what is wanted is sometimes a difficult task. It is also important to note that what is needed is not always the thing that will get the most positive response - it is what will lead the student through a problem, set the standard for the future, or help to teach the student a valuable life lesson.

*Contracting:* You have to learn how to come to some agreements with students. It can be helpful to work together to reach an agreement as to which advising style they seek from you. This is a valuable lesson for assisting students with understanding the rules of engagement and interaction that will be carried forth as they mature.

### Advising Do's and Don'ts

Each adviser and organization leadership should openly discuss what kind of role the adviser should play with the organization.

Some organizations have a pool of advisers to assist them with different aspects of the organization. Some advisers have a high level of involvement with every aspect of the organization; others have a very limited role. It is up to the organization and the adviser to set the parameters of involvement.

<b>Advising Do's</b>	<b>Advising Don'ts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Assist officers with procedural matters</li><li>● Be knowledgeable of organization's purpose and constitution</li><li>● Comply with federal, state and local laws and ordinances, as well as campus policies</li><li>● Empower students to take action and satisfaction in seeing the organization succeed</li><li>● Allow group to succeed; allow group to fail</li><li>● Develop clear expectations about role of adviser</li><li>● Get to know members on an individual level</li><li>● Develop strong working relationship with officers</li><li>● Establish as needed meetings with individual members of the organization</li><li>● Discuss concerns with officers in private and praise them in public</li><li>● Meet with the officers and help them set goals</li><li>● Help to resolve intragroup conflict</li><li>● Help to develop leadership potential in the group</li><li>● Be visible and choose to attend group meetings and events while knowing your limits</li><li>● Help students find balance between activities and academic responsibilities</li><li>● Serve as a resource person</li><li>● Be available in emergency situations</li><li>● Learn the strengths and weaknesses of the group</li><li>● Encourage feedback and the evaluation process</li><li>● Guide and assist students in becoming responsible leaders</li><li>● Let the group work out its problems, but be prepared to step in when called upon to assist</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Know it all</li><li>● Be the leader or "run" the meeting</li><li>● Say I told you so</li><li>● Impose your own bias</li><li>● Manipulate the group, impose, or force your opinions</li><li>● Close communications</li><li>● Tell the group what to do, or do the work of the president or other members of the executive board</li><li>● Take everything so seriously</li><li>● Take ownership for the group, be the "parent," or the smothering administrator</li><li>● Be afraid to let the group try new ideas</li><li>● Become such an advocate that you lose an objective viewpoint</li><li>● Allow the organization to become a one-person organization</li><li>● Be laissez-faire or autocratic</li><li>● Assume the group handles everything okay and doesn't need you</li><li>● Assume the organization's attitudes, needs</li></ul>

## Questions you may want to ask the student Organization

- How much involvement is expected or needed?
- How often does the group meet?
- How many major activities does the group plan per semester?
- How experienced are the student leaders?
- How do your skills match the needs of the organization?
- What are some of the problem areas that your organization specifically needs advisory assistance in dealing with? Ask for past examples.
- What are some of the ways the Adviser can be more helpful to the group?
- Will the Adviser be a silent observer at meetings or an active participant?
- Should you interrupt during meetings if you think the group is getting off track? How? When?
- If things get unruly, should you interrupt or remain silent?
- Is the Adviser expected to give feedback? How? When?
- Are there areas of the organization that are “hands off” to the adviser?

### **Best Practices of Advisers**

Advisers work collaboratively with students sharing responsibility for the organization and its events. Provide suggestions and feedback to your student organization, as your knowledge and experience will help in exploring solutions and implementing organizational procedures. Discuss your expectations for each other, and set up regular meetings about the organization's activities and events. Here are some additional points about the role and practices of student organization advisers:

- Advisers are trained and knowledgeable about the student rules related to student organizations, and are great resources about policies and procedures.
- Advisers should have access to the guiding documents and policies for the student organization. Make sure your adviser has an updated copy of your constitution and operations manual.
- Advisers are trained to report and follow up on any discipline issues for the organization and/or its members.
- Advisers are here to support and guide your organization, empowering you to make fair, intelligent, and reasonable decisions based on the information and guiding boundaries at your disposal.

### **Principles and Practices of an Effective Adviser**

- Develop leaders by challenging the students to strive for excellence.
- Encourage and assist the student organization in setting and reaching goals.
- Promote diversity within the organization and campus involvement.
- Establish a consistent working relationship leaders and members.

- Guide officers in principles of good organizational and administrative skills.
- Provide continuity to the organization's policies, programs, and traditions.
- Advise organization's officers on finances and spending.
- Ensure officer transition and orientation of new members.

### **Motivating Students**

Some students perceive an intrinsic value, while others perceive extrinsic value in being involved. Understanding what motivates each student will help you enable him/her to take on responsibilities and become involved in the organization.

**What are motives?** Needs, wants, drives, or impulses that are directed toward goals. Motives may be conscious or unconscious. Of course, each individual is motivated by different things, and students join an organization for a variety of reasons. There is no one right answer, but an adviser should be tuned in to the variety of factors that affect motivation so that he/she may better predict what will work and what may not.

**What motivates?** A student may be motivated by a variety of factors, and no form of motivation will be 100% effective. The following is a list of different forms of motivation. Some of the examples are extrinsic others are intrinsic.

- **Recognition**: Advisers use recognition frequently. Recognize a member's contribution verbally or in print, in front of the organization or alone. This is an easy and effective way to motivate someone - almost everybody appreciates a "Thank you!" or recognition of a job well done.
- **Achievement**: A student motivated by the need for achievement may have a tendency to overcome obstacles, to exercise power, or to strive to do something difficult as well and as quickly as possible. Achievement is often tied to positive recognition from outside sources. There can be an internal desire for achievement, so the person would be satisfied by completing a task to the best of his/her ability.
- **Desire**: Some students are interested in becoming members of organizations or organizations that will lead to a desirable outcome.
- **Value**: If the student perceives value in participation, he/she may be more motivated to participate (friendship, professional goals, personal interests, etc.).
- **Peer Approval**: A student can perceive approval, and may be more likely to participate if provided with appropriate recognition. Caution: There are many students that join organizations to gain approval/acceptance from their peers to cover up personal issues. Watch for students who are struggling with self confidence or that stop showing up. Follow-up with students who leave to make sure they are doing okay, and ask them back if appropriate.

## **Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution**

The following lists are provided so that as an adviser, you have a better idea of the types of problems you may face with your organization. This list is not all inclusive, but hopefully the suggestions can serve as a guide. Under each listed problem are suggestions for addressing and fixing the problem.

### ***Leadership Problems***

- The leader does not consult with the organization before making significant decisions
  - Discuss the importance of consensus building and developing ownership in members by letting them be part of the decision making process
- The leader appears incompetent because he/she does not have self-confidence, is non-assertive, and lacks interest in the organization
  - Try to work closely with the leader to develop his/her skills and confidence
  - If the leader lacks interest in his/her position, ask why he/she is in the position and help him/her to see how he/she is affecting the organization
- A rivalry exists between leaders in the organization
  - Depending on the situation, the adviser can meet with the leaders to talk through how things are working within the organization and lead the conversation to the leadership of the organization and have them reflect on their roles and effectiveness as leaders.
  - Highlight some of the issues within the organization and ask each of them how they can help to resolve what is going on. Let them take ownership of their actions.
- The leader is overloaded with work, and has too many time conflicts
  - Many student leaders take on too much. When you see that a leader is overloaded, talk about it and see how you can help, but don't take on the student's responsibilities for him/her. Teach him/her about the importance of delegation or time management, or selecting the most important things to be a part of...even if it means you'll lose him/her as the leader of the group.

### ***Membership Problems***

- Low attendance at meetings
  - Reasons why attendance at meetings are consistently low include: the organization has not recruited many members, the meetings are not well run or the members do not feel a vested interest in the organization because they have not helped to produce or do anything. It could also be a combination of these things.
  - Identify what is, or is not, happening, and determine how the organization can fix the problem
- Members have low satisfaction and morale, are bored, do not communicate well, feel left out, are apathetic, or appear to be incompetent.

- Start with the leaders because these are the students that the other members look to for morale and motivation. Discuss with them what is going on and how they can improve things
- Hold a social function in place of a meeting...this will re-energize members.
- Work with the officers to structure meetings to include a team building activity or mixer for students to be active and involved
- Members compete for attention
  - Find a way to recognize each member for the work they do, but focus more on the group process and success.
- An individual member's goals differ from those of the organization
  - Have a mission and goal-setting meeting. It is important for the organization and individual member's goals to match for the group to move forward. In this process, the group should change or reaffirm its goals, or students could lose interest and leave.
- There exists a lack of trust among members
  - Do an exercise for team building
- Programs fail
  - If a program fails, reflect with the organization on why it happened and what can be learned
- Program succeeds, but only a few members do the work
  - This is a common situation, and it is not necessarily a problem. Some events/activities only require the support of a few members. Problems arise when the whole organization needs to pull together to produce an event and members do not pull their weight or let the team down.
  - Following up with the individuals that did not pull their weight to see what went wrong.
  - During that conversation, and at a general body meeting, highlight the importance of teamwork and being dependable, as well as the negative effects of not being a team player.
  - Understanding consequences is an important step of personal development.
- There is a lack of ideas.
  - Lack of ideas comes when members are not interested or they do not feel their ideas are valued. Help them feel valued and interested.
  - The brainstorming process is a delicate one. There is no bad idea in the brainstorming process, so treat this process as a safe zone for ideas.

### ***Organizational Problems***

- Meetings are disorganized or too long
  - Assist the leader in creating an agenda and delegating tasks effectively during the meeting

- There is no continuity from one year to the next.
  - Work with the current leaders to recruit and cultivate new members and leaders who will take over the next year, and ensure that each officer/leader creates a transition manual/binder
- There is a failure to complete the organization's administrative tasks.
  - Review duties with each officer so they know what their responsibilities are, and if they do not choose to fulfill those responsibilities, find another member who can.
- The organization has no "plan of action."
  - It is a good idea to have a goal-setting meeting at the beginning of each semester.
  - There should also be a few reassessment/evaluation meetings to modify or create new goals.

### ***Adviser Problems***

- Organization members avoid the adviser.
  - Do not take it personally. Find a student or two whom you can connect with and slowly work to integrate yourself into the organization.
- Organization members do not pay attention to the adviser's advice.
  - The members will not always listen to the adviser. As long as the decision the students make is not against organizational, institutional or governmental policies/laws, continue to support the group and challenge when necessary
  - Sometimes students need to learn from their mistakes
  - If the students are always disregarding your advice, reflect on how you are offering your words
  - Are you trying to run the organization or are you looking into the best interest of the organization and offering your thoughts at appropriate times?
- The adviser is overwhelmed by the responsibility.
  - The adviser's job is not to run the organization
  - Work with the students to balance tasks and responsibilities.
- The adviser assumes a leadership function.
  - Advisers are a part of a student organization to advise, not to assume leadership functions/positions.

### **When to Intervene...**

This is an area where there is rarely one correct answer. Advisers should be as transparent as possible with the leaders of an organization they work with. By doing so, you leave the reigns of the organization in their hands, make your intentions clear, and clarify roles. However, there may come a time when you'll have to be the voice of reason, resolution, or experience as well as the shield that steps in to protect the students, and the institution.

It is not always easy to know when to speak up or intervene. Most of the time, students will resent an adviser who is ‘overly involved’ in aspects of the organization. But there are times when they will wish they had help or find themselves over their heads.

It is OK to allow students to fail. As advisers, you can only offer advice, additional points of consideration, play the ‘Devil’s Advocate’ and help the students accept the current, and future, consequences of their decisions. The final decision should always lie with the student leadership. This can be difficult to do, especially if you personally disagree with a decision that the group has come to.

Below, you will find a chart meant to make answering the question of “When to intervene?” easier. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list but a general guide.

<i>When to step in?</i> Please step in if the answer is <i>YES</i> to any of the following questions.	
<b>Programmatic Disagreement</b>	<b>Interpersonal Conflict</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a task does not get done exactly as I’ve instructed, will the end result be impacted in a negative way?</li> <li>• Will this hurt the student(s)/end result? If so, how? Is the effect recoverable?</li> <li>• Is what they want to do unethical?</li> <li>• Is what the student group wants to do illegal?</li> <li>• Could someone get injured as a result of this decision?</li> <li>• What’s the next logical outcome of this decision?</li> <li>• Could the end result involve alienation of any segment of the Oxford community?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the overall group morale being affected?</li> <li>• Are an increasing number of people being drawn into the conflict?</li> <li>• Is the disagreement getting personal (as opposed to being about a procedure, task, opinion, philosophy, etc.)?</li> <li>• Is the conflict impeding the progress of an event? Is the conflict impeding the ability for teamwork to take place? Is the conflict creating an uncomfortable or tense environment?</li> <li>• Have they directly or indirectly asked you for help? Have they shared that something troubling is going on within the organization?</li> </ul>

**When in doubt... ask questions!**

Help your student leaders consider ‘the other side’ of the argument, seeing a situation from multiple points of view, and also considering alternative solutions that can accomplish the same overall goals.



### **Top Ten Tips for Effective Advisers...from other advisers**

1. The most important thing you can do to help them is gain their trust. If you've done that, almost everything else will take care of itself.
2. Do what you say you will do.
3. Read what they ask you to sign before you sign it!
4. When they tell you they've thought of everything, keep asking them questions.
5. Don't expect a thank you note after everything you do to help the students out. Not expecting it will make it that much sweeter when it does come.
6. You don't have to be an expert on everything. Just use your best judgment. No one is a perfect adviser.
7. Be an encourager. Take the opportunity to praise the good things they're doing.
8. Choose your battles. Sometimes I have to challenge my students to keep them from making the gravest of mistakes, but other times I know that confronting them on something trivial could be far more damaging than letting them fail. Encourage students to take initiative and don't give all the answers.
9. Don't let them forget to take care of themselves and their studies.
10. Stay involved, be available, and attend meetings as often as possible.

### **Top Ten Tips for Effective Advisers...from student leaders**

1. The best adviser I ever had made me feel like she always had time for me, even though I know how busy she was.
2. Remember that this is our student organization experience, and while we want you be part of it, we don't want you to control it...even if that means letting us mess up.
3. Use your connections to help us get things done.
4. Get to know us on a personal level. Every once in awhile, it's okay to ask us questions about things other than the organization.
5. Sometimes we need help with things that have nothing to do with the club, and it's good to know that you're willing to be there for that.
6. Return my calls and e-mails as soon as you can. As bad as this sounds, sometimes I haven't exactly planned a whole lot of time for waiting to hear back.
7. If you're going to tell us something won't work, please help us figure out how it *can* work instead of leaving it at that.
8. We like to see you at our events sometimes...not just the meetings.
9. Be a friend.
10. Don't be afraid to bring some snacks with you to our meetings!

## **Adviser Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who is eligible to be an adviser?**

Any full-time or part-time member of the Agnes Scott College faculty or staff may serve as an adviser to an organization. Students are not eligible to advise organizations.

### **What is the time commitment for being an adviser?**

The time commitment is what you make of it. It would be helpful to the organization if you attended their weekly or monthly meetings, which could range anywhere from 1 to 4 hours per month on average. You may also want to attend other events the group is hosting or allow students to stop by your office for questions. This commitment is really up to you.

### **Is it important that I be at every event?**

Often groups have many events during a semester. It is not necessary for you to be at every event. Work with the student leaders to set up a reasonable schedule for the events you know you can attend. The students may then want to ask another faculty or staff member if they would like to stop by the events you cannot attend.

### **What are the responsibilities associated with being an adviser?**

We want advisers to strive to be more than just a name on a paper. However, it is up to you and the organization to discuss what the organization needs in an adviser. It is important that as an adviser you help the students to understand University policies, resolve any potential conflicts, and transition and train officers.

### **What are the benefits to being an adviser?**

Being an adviser will give you the opportunity to meet students that you may not have the chance to interact with on a regular basis. We hope you find the position rewarding as you help leaders grow and develop. This position will also give you a stronger connection with the university as you impact the lives of a greater number of students!

### **Can I be paid to serve as an adviser?**

The College does not pay advisers for this role.

### **My organization is not performing as well as I think they should be. What should I do?**

Remember that this is a student run organization. It is okay to let students fail sometimes. Encourage your students to accomplish the goals that they have set out to do, but don't do those for them. Allow them to struggle for a while and aid where needed.

## Who should I contact for questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact the Center for Student Involvement with any questions or support. We can be reached by phone at 404-471-5879 or by coming to 216 Alston Campus Center.

<b>Frequently Called Numbers Department</b>	<b>Phone Numbers</b>
Main Number	404-471-6000
Public Safety (non-emergency)	404-471-6355
Campus Emergency	404-471-6400
Severe Weather Closing Information	404-471-5100
Directions to Campus	404-471-5411
Agnes Scott "Main" Hall	404-471-6416
Alston Campus Center	404-471-6430
Athletics	404-471-6471
Bookstore	404-471-6350
Center for Global Diversity and Inclusion	404-471-6118
Center for Student Involvement	404-471-5879
Center for Writing and Speaking	404-471-5201
Chaplain	404-471-6437
Custodial Services	404-471-6149
Counseling and Psychological Services	404-471-7100
Dana Fine Arts Building	404-471-6367
Dean of the College/Academic Affairs	404-471-6361
Dean of Students/Student Life	404-471-6391
Dining Services	404-471-6293
Facilities	404-471-6098
Financial Aid	404-471-6395
Human Resources	404-471-6307
Library	404-471-6337
Media Services	404-471-5468
Office Services	404-471-6317
Post Office	404-471-6349
President's Office	404-471-6080
Registrar	404-471-6137
Religious Life	404-471-6207
Special Events and Community Relations	404-471-6035
Sponsored Programs	404-471-6950
Student Information Desk	404-471-6430
Voicemail System	404-471-5000
Woodruff Physical Activities Center	404-471-6495

## Event Planning and Risk Management

As an adviser of a student organization, you are the university's representative regarding the organization's activities. As such, you are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to your organization about such things as programs, use of facilities and operational procedures. If you have reason to question an action taken by the organization, express your concern directly to the organization in writing, including the date, a suggested alternative to the questionable action, a warning, etc.

It is important to remember that, in general, while we need to be concerned about liability, we can seriously damage the educational process by being paranoid about it. Just as there is no specific statement that explains faculty liability for every possible classroom incident, there is none that covers all the possible situations student organizations might encounter. If you have concerns about a situation unique to your organization or to a specific event sponsored by the organization you advise, please contact someone from the university staff who is knowledgeable about liability and risk management.

Although there is no way to completely eliminate risk and legal liability associated with a program or event, there are ways to reduce risk and provide a safer environment for program participants. Here are a few things that your organization can do to identify and reduce risk:

Identify risks involved in the event. These could include physical risks (such as an event with physical activity) and liability risks (such as events involving alcohol, minors, or travel).

- ◆ Identify options for reducing risks by including, but not limited to:
  - Hiring a third party vendor or contractor
  - Purchasing additional liability insurance
  - Preparing liability waivers, if necessary.
  - Providing advanced training
  - Assuming a 'worst case scenario' and preparing for it in order to reduce likelihood of it occurring
  - Utilizing waivers that outline the specific nature and risk associated with the event.
  - Canceling the event if the conditions are dangerous or the group is not prepared to assume full responsibility for the risk involved
- ◆ Assess the capability of the group to manage risk.
- ◆ Identify the challenges in managing risk, as well as resources to assist in your planning.
- ◆ Develop a plan of action in reducing risk.
- ◆ Communicate with everyone involved (officers, members, advisers, participants, facilities, staff)

This section offers a checklist in order to mitigate potential risks for your organization when planning events.

**External Activities:**

- Are you contracting with a service from a non-university entity?
- Is this an open event? (Open to general public, students from other universities, etc.)
- Have you checked other campus calendars to make sure there are no conflicting events?

**Food:**

Will you be serving or handling any type of food product at your event?

- Make sure you have the appropriate food handling licenses

**Location/Venue:**

- Are there any restrictions for the space? (Food policy, closed after a certain time, etc.)
- Is the space accessible to everyone?
  - Consider attendees that may need special accommodations

**Safety:**

- Does your event involve any type of physical activity?
- Are you using an assumption of risk/waiver, medical release, and emergency contact form?
- Is anyone under the age of 18 involved with your event? If so, what age(s) and why?
  - Explore what considerations need to be made for minors (parental approval on waivers, exclusion from certain activities, etc.)
- Does your organization have liability insurance?
- Do you know where the nearest hospital is located? Are you prepared to provide medical care if someone needs it?

**Transportation:**

- Will your event involve any transportation or travel?
- Will your event require the assistance of Parking, Traffic, and Transportation Services for parking and traffic control?
- Does this event constitute using a college vehicle?
- If driving a college vehicle, are all potential drivers officially van certified?

**Institutional Guidelines:**

- Have you reviewed your budget and purchasing guidelines as it relates to this event/activity?
- Are you using a university logo or trademark in association with your event?
- Does your event involve the sale/distribution of items on campus?

Resources:

Posting Policy

Advisor Contract

EMS Guidelines

Alcohol Policy

Allocations Process

Spending Allocated Funds

Purchase Card Policy