



## **Role of Student Organization Advisor**

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As a student organization with competent and capable leadership, you might wonder why student organizations would want or need a faculty or staff advisor. Consider the following:

- Do you sometimes wish your group had more support from related academic or service departments?
- Could your organization benefit from some "connections" with university policy-makers?
- And even though you are doing a super job now, will your group have to start again from scratch next year?

A faculty or staff adviser could help alleviate these and other problems **WITHOUT TAKING OVER** the leadership of your organization. Advisers play an important role in the development of the student organization by providing support and guidance.

### **The Role Of An Advisor:**

- Serve as a "sounding board" off which you can bounce off new ideas
- Support your group
- Intervene in conflicts between group members and/or officers
- Be knowledgeable of policies that may impact on your organization's decisions, programs, etc.
- Provide continuity and stability as student leadership changes
- Provide your group with connections
- Serve as mediator during an organizational crisis
- Give honest feedback to group members
- Point out new perspectives and directions to the group and introduce new program

### **ideas**

The organization/adviser relationship benefits the adviser too. Being involved with a student organization offers the faculty or staff member unique opportunities to:

- Get to know and work with students outside the classroom or office
- Informally share knowledge and expertise on relevant topics
- An opportunity to feel satisfaction and accomplishment through making a special contribution to a particular group of students
- Inform the transfer of knowledge and skills learned from the co-curricular experience
- Serves as a resource and support person as well as facilitator of creativity and innovation for the group

### **The Responsibilities Of Group Members To Their Advisor:**

Discuss your expectations of the adviser's role with your adviser from the beginning. This

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information should be from all of the students with whom the adviser will work - officers, chairs, etc.

- Notify the adviser of all meetings.
- Send the adviser a copy of all minutes and other information. Too much information is probably better than too little!
- The President/Committee Chair/Executive Board should meet regularly with the adviser to discuss organizational matters and to relay and update information.
- Consult with the adviser before any changes in the structure or policies of the organization (committee) are made and before major projects are undertaken.
- Remember that the responsibility for the success or failure of a group project rests ultimately with the group, not the adviser.
- Conduct annual adviser and organization evaluations, this allows for developing an ongoing and effective adviser relationship.

Do you know how much your organization and potential adviser can benefit from one another? You probably want to know how to find this adviser? There are at least two things your organization should do. First, develop a clear statement of group goals and a clear statement of expectations of the adviser, both in terms of role and time commitment. It would also be helpful to outline what the adviser could fairly expect of the group. With this information in hand, you will be ready to approach potential advisers and discuss with them their interest and ability for advising your group. The most suitable adviser is one who shares a common interest with your organization.

Poll your group members for the names of professors or staff members who they have found helpful and interested in student life. Approach potential advisers with confidence and a positive attitude. Remember to be clear about the purpose and activities of your organization, your expectations of the adviser and all benefits the adviser will enjoy.

Once your adviser begins to serve, keep him/her well-informed, clarify expectations and roles when needed and draw on his/her expertise. Occasionally, thank you notes and acknowledgments are a good idea - if you have organization t-shirts, for example, make sure your adviser has one too! Enjoy what can be an extremely rewarding and mutually beneficial relationship.