

WORKING WITH A STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR

Selecting an Advisor

When selecting an advisor, find a faculty or staff member who will have the time to devote to your organization. Make sure that this person will take the role willingly and seriously and find someone who has knowledge or skills related to the mission/purpose of the organization. If possible, choose someone who shares some of the same interests as the organization, and who has previously interacted with the leadership of the organization.

Make certain that he or she has a clear understanding of the organization's purpose. Discuss with the potential advisor what is required of them, their duties, and the time commitment involved. Be open and honest with the potential advisor about the types of activities in which the organization may participate. Allow the person a reasonable length of time to consider their decision.

The Organization's Responsibilities to the Advisor

Keep in mind that the advisor is voluntarily associated with the organization. It is the organization's responsibility to inform the advisor on the activities of the organization.

- Notify the advisor of all meetings and events.
- Consult your advisor in the planning of all activities.
- Consult them before any changes in the structure of the organization, or in the policies of the organization are made, and before major projects are undertaken.
- Understand that although the advisor has no vote, they should have speaking privileges.
- Remember that the responsibility for the success or failure of the organization project rests ultimately with the group, not the advisor.
- Talk over any problems or concerns with the advisor.
- Acknowledge that the advisor's time and energy are donated and express appreciation.
- Be clear and open about your expectations for your advisor's role.
- At the end of each semester, evaluate your advisor and give appropriate feedback.

The Role of the Advisor

By sharing both knowledge about the university and personal experiences, the advisor can assist the organization in the conduct of its activities. It is important that the advisor and the organization communicate their expectations to each other. Of course, the expectations will vary according to the needs of the organization and the advisor. Sponsored Student Organizations are bound by *Institutional Rules* and sponsoring department specific policies that may influence the role of an advisor. Some advisor roles could include:

- The advisor recognizes and supports participation in student organizations for its contributions to the educational and personal development of students.
- The advisor should be well informed about the plans and activities of the organization. The expectation is that the advisor will attend some meetings and will consult frequently with the organization's officers.
- The advisor should know the goals and direction of the organization and should help the organization evaluate its progress.
- The advisor should be aware of the constitution and bylaws of the organization and help with interpretation, if applicable.
- The advisor should be familiar with university policies and procedures and help the organization comply with them.
- The advisor should help in training new officers and help them develop their leadership skills.