

Advisor Roles

Each advisor perceives his/her relation with a student organization differently. Some Advisors play very active roles, attending meetings, working with student officers, and assisting in program planning and development. Others maintain a more distant relationship to the organization. It is our hope that each advisor will maintain some regular contact with his/her organizations.

The purpose of this section is to outline basic roles of an advisor. AS groups vary in their experience and needs, it is important to you, as an advisor, to develop an understanding with the organization you level of involvement. The advisor and group should agree on a set of expectations of one another from the onset and should write this list down a contract between the advisor and organization.

Following are some roles you may assume as an advisor:

Mentor

Many students will come to see their advisor as a mentor and the success of these relationships can last many years and be very rewarding for both student and advisor. To be effective in this capacity, you will need knowledge of their academic program and profession, a genuine interest in personal and professional development of new professionals, and a willingness to connect students to a network of professionals.

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. To accomplish the goal of creating an effective team, it is necessary to conduct a workshop or retreat. Training students in effective team building techniques will keep students invested in the organization.

Conflict Mediator

Inevitably, students are going to join the organization with different agendas, goals and ideas about how things should function the direction they should be taking. When working with students who have come in conflict, it may be necessary to meet with them and have them discuss their issues with each other. In some cases, it requires honest feedback from the advisor to the students.

Reflective Agent

One of the most essential components to learning in “out of classroom” activities are providing time for students to reflect on how and what they are doing. As an advisor, you will want your officers to talk to you about they think they are performing, their strengths and their weaknesses. Give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on their performance. In this role, students look to advisors for constructive and honest feedback.

Educator

As an advisor, your role of educator will often come through the roles of modeling behavior, guiding the student in reflection of their action and being there to answer questions. One of the most difficult action to take as an advisor is to do nothing, but sometimes this is the most important.

Policy Interpreter

Student organizations operate under policies, procedure and rules. At times, student 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.