



Student Organization Advisor Handbook



Revised August 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) student life recognizes the importance of student organizations to promote leadership, encourage teamwork, and build civic engagement on and off campus. Your role as an advisor is very important to the growth and development of students on campus. FSW is appreciative to you for your active role on campus and has provided a series of guidelines for you to follow in this handbook.

FSW requires that every recognized or sponsored student organization have a faculty or staff advisor. Primarily, the advisor serves as a resource person for the organization. Advisors counsel and advise student organizations by acting as a facilitator and guide, assisting students through their thinking process, and challenging the organization to go beyond the status quo. Advisors also provide continuity for an organization by passing along valuable information regarding the organization's history, traditions, and past accomplishments. An active advisor improves the effectiveness of an organization while also assisting in the positive development of its student members.



CRITERIA FOR BECOMING AN ADVISOR:

Here are some general eligibility requirements:

- Advisors must be a full-time faculty/staff member of the college.
- Prospective advisors must secure the consent of his/her direct supervisor to serve as an advisor.
- Advisors must have the willingness and time to serve his/her respective organization to the best of his/her abilities.

The Role of an Advisor

Advisors for student organizations have four main functions:

1. To help with the growth and development of students.
2. To add to the continuity of the group as members graduate. Advisors can provide consistency and communicate the goals, legacy and history to future generations of members.
3. To assist in the area of program content and purpose.
4. To provide leadership in the area of purchasing and travel.

Advisor Roles & Responsibilities

The role of an advisor varies, but it is always an important one. The scope of an organization's activities, the effectiveness of its officers, the time commitments of the advisor and several other factors determine the level of involvement the advisor will have with the group.

The pattern of teamwork between an advisor and the organization must be individually tailored to the personalities and needs of both parties. Some guidance is necessary in developing such a relationship. The following functions and responsibilities should direct the advisor toward appropriate behaviors and roles within the group.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STUDENT ORGANIZATION:

(The following is adapted from the resource & policy manual, Virginia Commonwealth College)

1. The advisor should assist the group in developing realistic goals for the academic year.
2. The advisor should be aware of all plans and activities of the group and inform the group of institutional policies that may affect these plans.
3. The advisor should discourage dominance of the group by any one individual and should encourage quieter students to take initiative.
4. The advisor may need to refer students to counseling.
5. The advisor should provide continuity within the group and should be familiar with the group's history and constitution.
6. The advisor should offer ideas for projects and events.
7. The advisor should assist the group in evaluation.

Responsibilities to Individual Group Members

1. The advisor should help the students find a balance between their academics and their co-curricular activities.
2. The advisor should encourage each individual to participate in, and plan, group events.
3. The advisor should encourage students to accept responsibility for specific roles within the group.

Responsibilities to the College

1. The advisor should work with the group, but not direct its activities.
2. Occasionally, an advisor can help an organization during an emergency.

HOW STUDENT ORGANIZATION MEMBERS CAN UNDERSTAND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ADVISOR:

The organization has some definite responsibilities to its advisor. Discussing the advisor's role and responsibilities with the group members may be the best way to achieve mutual understanding. Here are some tips to guide you in your capacity as an advisor.

1. Establish a clear understanding between yourself and the organization as to the advisor's role and function.
2. It is the responsibility of the organization to communicate its needs to the advisor.
3. Establish lines of communication.
4. It's ok to say NO
5. The advisor should let the organization know what type of talents he or she can offer.
6. An advisor is an integral part of the organization but not a member.



TWENTY TIPS FOR ADVISORS TO INCREASE GROUP PRODUCTIVITY:

1. Know what the students expect of you as an advisor.
2. Let the group and individual members know what you expect of them.
3. Express a sincere interest in the group and its mission.
4. Assist the group in setting realistic, attainable goals.
5. Have the goals or objectives of the group firmly in mind.
6. Assist each member in meeting his or her needs.
7. Know and understand the students with whom you are working. Different groups require different approaches.
8. Assist the group in determining the needs of the people the group is serving.
9. Express a sincere interest in each member.
10. Encourage everyone to be responsible
11. Assist the group in developing a system by which they can evaluate their progress.
12. Use a reward and recognition system for work well done.
13. Develop a style that balances active and passive group membership.
14. Do not allow yourself to be placed in the position of the chairperson
15. Be aware of the institutional power structure – both formal and informal.
16. Provide continuity for the group from semester to semester
17. Challenge the group to grow and develop.
18. Be creative and innovative.



ADVISOR EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Listed below are some expectations leaders have of their advisor. This form is designed to help advisors and student officers arrive at a clear and mutually agreed upon role of the advisor in club affairs.

Directions: The advisor and each officer should respond to the following items and meet to compare answers and “iron out” any differences. For some items, which are determined not to be the responsibility of the advisor, it would be valuable to clarify which officer will assume that responsibility for each of the following statements, respond on a scale of 1-5 how important this function is:

- Essential for advisor to do
- Helpful for the advisor to do
- Nice but they don't have to
- Would prefer they do not
- Absolutely not an advisor's role

- ___ 1. Attend all general meetings
- ___ 2. Attend all executive board meetings
- ___ 3. Call meetings of executive board when he/she
- ___ 4. Explain college policy when relevant to the discussion
- ___ 5. Help president prepare agenda
- ___ 6. Serve as parliamentarian for the group
- ___ 7. Always agree with groups' decisions
- ___ 8. Speak up during discussions when he /she has relevant information
- ___ 9. Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon
- ___ 10. Attend all group activities
- ___ 11. Be part of the group, except for voting and holding office
- ___ 12. Initiate ideas for discussion when he/she believes they will help the group

SUMMARY

"The best advisors, helpers and friends, always are not those who tell us how to act in special cases, but who give us, out of themselves, the ardent spirit and desire to act right, and leave us then, even through many blunders, to find out what our own form of right action is." -**Phillip Brooks**

Your dedication and contributions to your role as a student organization advisor are greatly appreciated as you are making significant contributions to the involved students' educational and personal development.

Using this Student Organization Advisor handbook can help ensure both advisor and student organization success. If you have questions regarding your role and responsibilities as an advisor, or if you need further clarification on Florida SouthWestern State College's policies and procedures for all student organizations, please contact the Student Life Department on your campus; we are here to help you!

The Student Life Department would like to wish you much success in this role, and we sincerely thank you for serving as a leader, teacher, and mentor to our students

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Hendry/Glades Center

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Offices open from 8:30am to 6pm each weekday*

*excluding holidays and campus/center closures



