

Student Organization Advisor Manual

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Roles and Responsibilities of Advisors

Serving as a club or organization advisor is an important community building role on campus. Advisors decide to work closely with students who have specific interests or feel passionate for a topic, social role or area of study. Their willingness to assist the organizations to help carry out the mission of their group is a wonderful way to contribute to their development as well as the growth of the WVU Tech campus community.

Benefits of being an Advisor

- Opportunity to work closely with and know students outside of the office or classroom
- Chance to share knowledge and experience in specific areas of interest
- Reward of watching a group develop to its potential
- Feel satisfaction and proud to assist students carry out the mission of their group; meaningful contribution to the WVU Tech community
- Serve the University community in a meaningful way

Advisor Roles

Each advisor perceives his/her relation to 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 hoped that each Advisor will maintain some regular contact with his/her organization. An Advisor 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. However, Advisors are not responsible for the actions or policies of student organizations; students are solely responsible. Advisors should be both accessible and interested and should provide whatever counsel a group or its members might seek. Given the myriad of purposes, activities, and objectives of various student groups, the role of the Advisor will vary in some degree between groups. The purpose of this section is to outline basic roles of an Advisor. As groups vary in their expectations and needs, it is important that the Advisor develop an understanding with the organization they are to represent as to the nature of their involvement. The Advisor 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 Advisor.

Following are some of the roles the Advisor may assume:

Mentor

Many students will come to see their advisor as a mentor and the success of these relationships can last many years and be rewarding for both the student and the advisor. If the student is seeking an education and a career in the Advisor's field, the advisor may be asked to assist in his/her professional development. To be effective in this capacity, they will need knowledge of their academic program and profession, a genuine interest in the personal and professional development of new professionals, and a willingness to connect students to a network of professionals. The advisor may be approached to review resumes, to connect students with community/university 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 the Advisor 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, the Advisor 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 advisor. Positive relationships help the organization succeed and work through conflicts and difficult times. To accomplish the goal of creating an effective team, it is necessary to conduct a workshop (if all parties have the time, a full-scale retreat encompassing team building and goal setting could be planned) to engage students in this process. The advisor may consider working with the student officers to develop a plan and to 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 into conflict, it may be necessary for the Advisor to meet with them and have them discuss their issues with each other. In many cases, it may be necessary to remind them that they both want what is in the best interest of the organization. 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 affecting 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. An Advisor may have their officers to talk to them about, how they think they are performing, their strengths, and their weaknesses. If this happens, give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on their performance. Then be honest with them. The Advisor should let them know when they agree with their self-perceptions and in a tactful manner and let them know when they disagree. Any criticism provided to students should be constructive and 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 they need help. Students usually have the answer to what they need; they just do not like to ask for help. Remember to have students reflect on their successes and failures.

Educator

As an Advisor, the role of an 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 advisor is to do nothing, but sometimes this can be the most important action of all. Allow students to make their decisions. 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

An Advisor, 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. They will need to be the student's "cheerleader" to keep them excited about all of the potential successes they will experience. An Advisor can motivate students through the recognition of their efforts, appealing to their desire to create change, and to connecting their experiences here at WVU Tech to the experiences they will have in the greater 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 the Advisor knows about these policies the better advising can be given to the students on their plans. An Advisor will assume numerous roles and all possible roles are not mentioned here. A key idea to remember is that the Advisor is not the leader. They provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students as they work on projects, but 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.

Source: Advisor Manual from the ACPA Commission for Student Involvement

Advising Do's and Don'ts

Each advisor and organization leadership should openly discuss what kind of role the advisor should play with the organization. Some organizations have a pool of advisors to assist them with different aspects of the organization (financial, scholarship, programming, etc.) Some advisors 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 advisor to set the parameters of involvement. With those thoughts in mind, the following list is a guideline to the “dos” and “don'ts” of student organization advising:

Advising Do's

- ✓ Assist officers with procedural matters. Be knowledgeable of the organization's purpose and constitution and help the general membership adhere to them.
- ✓ Be knowledgeable about, and comply with federal, state and local laws and ordinances, as well as campus policies. Inform the group of pertinent policies.
- ✓ Empower students to take action and to take satisfaction in seeing the student organization succeed.
- ✓ Allow the group to succeed, and allow the group to fail. Learn when to speak when not to speak. Remember to let the students make the decisions while you provide guidance and advice.
- ✓ Represent the group and its interests in staff and faculty meetings. Reach out to other advisors or departments (i.e. Student Organizations) for assistance.
- ✓ At the beginning, develop clear expectations about the role of the advisor and your relationship to the organization.
- ✓ Read the group's constitution.
- ✓ Get to know all of the members on an individual level. Learn what they want to get out of the organization. Maintain a complete officer and membership list with addresses and phone numbers (or know where to easily find one).
- ✓ Develop a strong working relationship with all the officers. Establish as needed meetings with individual members of the organization who need additional guidance in their officer or committee positions.
- ✓ Discuss concerns with officers in private and praise them in public.
- ✓ Meet with the officers and help them set goals. Encourage the Executive Board to disseminate reports (such as financial reports) to the general membership on a regular basis.
- ✓ Orient new officers and members to the history and purpose of the group and help them to build upon it. Help members look toward the future by developing long-term goals and communicating those plans to future members.
- ✓ Help to resolve intragroup conflict.
- ✓ Enjoy the impact you can have on the students' development. Help to develop the leadership potential within the group.

- ✓ Be visible and choose to attend group meetings and events. At the same time, know your limits. Establish an attendance schedule at organization meetings, which is mutually agreed upon by the advisor and the student organization.
- ✓ Know your group's limits. Help students find a balance between activities and their academic responsibilities.
- ✓ Keep your sense of humor and enthusiasm. Share creative suggestions and provide feedback for activities planned by students.
- ✓ Serve as a resource person. The advisor does not set the policy of the group, but should take an active part in its formulation through interaction with the members of the group. Since members and officers in any organization are ordinarily active only as long as they are students, the advisor can serve as a continuity factor for the group.
- ✓ Be consistent with your actions. Model good communication skills and listening skills. Develop good rapport.
- ✓ Be available in emergencies.
- ✓ Head off situations that might give rise to poor public relations for the student group or University.
- ✓ Introduce new program ideas with educational flavor; point out new perspectives and directions to the group; and supply the knowledge and the insight of experience.
- ✓ Carefully review monthly financial reports from the organization treasurer or business manager. Familiarize yourself with the group's financial structure, from where the treasury is derived (dues, fundraising), for what the money is used, how money is allocated, and how the money is budgeted; assist in budget development and execution.
- ✓ Learn the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Offer support when necessary; but also allow people to make their own mistakes and learn from them.
- ✓ Encourage feedback and the evaluation process.
- ✓ Plan and encourage attendance at leadership training.
- ✓ Do things right and to do the right things. Guide and assist students in becoming responsible leaders.
- ✓ Provide support. Give the group autonomy but offer feedback, even when it is not solicited. Let the group work out its problems, but be prepared to step in when called upon to assist.

Advising Don'ts

- ✗ Know it all.
- ✗ Be the leader or "run" the meeting.
- ✗ Say I told you so.
- ✗ Impose your own bias.
- ✗ Manipulate the group, impose, or force your opinions.
- ✗ Close communications.
- ✗ Tell the group what to do, or do the work of the president or other members of the executive board.
- ✗ Take everything so seriously.
- ✗ Take ownership for the group, be the "parent," or the smothering administrator.
- ✗ Miss group meetings or functions.
- ✗ Be afraid to let the group try new ideas.
- ✗ Become such an advocate that you lose an objective viewpoint.
- ✗ Allow the organization to become a one-person organization.
- ✗ Be laissez-faire or autocratic.
- ✗ Assume the group handles everything okay and does not need you.
- ✗ Assume the organization's attitudes, needs and personalities will remain the same year to year.

*Some information adapted from Schreiber, V. and Pfliegerhaer,
E. "Supervising vs. Advising", UMR-ACUHO, 1999*

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. Many times, advisors may struggle with students because they believe that they need a higher level of interaction or direction when the student is actually able to accept more of a delegating style and vice versa.

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

*Information provided by Jon Kapell, Associate Director of Campus Activities,
Drexell University*

Use of P-Card and Purchasing Student Organization Items

Student Government Association (SGA), Student Activities Board, and Student Organizations are funded by student activity fees that students pay as part of their Tuition and Fees. The amount of these funds may differ from year to year but will be announced at the beginning of every academic year. Student organizations must have a representative at every SGA meeting. Failure to have a representative may result in the loss of funding.

- First absence will result in a written warning to the campus president and advisor.
- Second absence will result in the inability to request mini-grants for the remainder of the academic year.

- Third absence will result in the loss of Startup Funds for the remainder of the academic year.

Payment for items using SGA funds must be done with a State P-Card. Only WVU Tech staff and faculty members are eligible to receive a P-Card. **Students are NOT eligible to receive a P-Card** and so must have their advisor or any staff/faculty member make payments for them.

Guidelines For Startup Funds

Student organizations must be registered each year with WVU Tech and have a Constitution on file with the Office of Student Programs and Organizations, prior to receiving any funds from the SGA.

Start-up funds are available each year for registered student organizations. These funds are allocated only after the Office of Student Programs and Organizations have received confirmation of an organization's registration. The President of the organization will be notified by email once these funds are available for the organization's use. Organizations also have the ability to request a further \$150 in start-up funds should they be able to show need.

Under no circumstances is an organization allowed to spend this money until they have been notified that it has authorization to do so.

If the funding stream is needed for SGA expenses, please contact the Office of Student Programs and Organizations. In addition to the itemized receipt, P-Card holders must attach the registration confirmation (emailed to the organization President), if using Startup Funds or a copy of the emailed mini-grant approval if using mini-grant funds. Once the expenditures have been reconciled, they will be approved by the Dean of Students Office before being sent to the business office. A more in depth process is available in the Student Organization Advisor Manual

Unauthorized purchases will not be expensed from the SGA account and will be the financial responsibility of the P-Card holder.

Please remember, any time state funds, including SGA money, are spent, state law and university policies and procedures must be followed.

Start-up funds must be spent in a manner that will further the mission and goals of an organization and the quality of campus life for WVU Tech and its students.

Examples include:

- Events open to entire student body
- Registrations to conferences
- Events held on or off campus events open to all students.
- Rental vehicle rentals to be used for club purposes.
- Items that will further your organization at Tech.

This will not include:

- Closed events within the organization*
- Any event with alcohol
- Rental vehicles for personal purposes

*Events that provide food/decorations purchased with club funds must be open to entire student body.

Guidelines For Mini-Grants

Organizations may apply for mini-grants at an SGA Budget Proposal Meeting which occur every other Tuesdays when regular SGA meetings do not. No mini-grants requests will be considered unless an organization has registered to submit a mini-grant prior to the Budget Proposal Meeting.

For more information on mini-grants, please see the Student Organization Manual in the Resources section of the [Student Organization website](#)

Guidelines For Purchases

The SGA Executive Board and the Office of Student Programs and Organizations will not approve the unauthorized/inappropriate expenditure of SGA funds (including funds that were not approved by the executive board and funds expended not in accordance with state regulations regarding the use of P-Cards). Inappropriate expenditures will be the financial responsibility of the P-Card holder.

Please remember any time state funds, including the SGA funds, are spent, the following rules and other pertinent state laws and regulations must be followed.

T-shirts purchased with SGA funds will bear the “Sponsored by Your SGA” somewhere on the shirt itself. Any design with this statement must be approved through the Student Government Association

If an organization wishes to use the WVU Tech name or logo, proper authorization must be obtained from the Office of Relations and Communication. In addition, an approved university vendor must be employed to affix the WVU Tech logo to any item.

West Virginia University Procurement Rules: <http://pcps.wvu.edu/r/download/50217>

Procurement, Contracting, and Payment Services Policies: <http://adminfin.wvu.edu/policies/finance/pcps>

West Virginia University State PCard Implementation & Compliance Guide:
<http://pcps.wvu.edu/r/download/97290>

Creating a Bank Account for Your Organization

The University does not provide student organizations with bank accounts. If your student organization needs a bank account, it is up to the organizational leaders to establish an account. When establishing a bank account, we recommend the following guidelines:

1. Student organizations should use their own EIN (Employer Identification Number) when establishing a bank account. Applying for an EIN may be completed on-line through the Internal Revenue Service at: [Apply for an Employer Identification Number \(EIN\) Online | Internal Revenue Service \(irs.gov\)](#)
2. Use of WVU's EIN is prohibited.
3. Student organizational funds should not be housed with the WVU Foundation.
4. It is not recommended that student organizations use the Social Security number of an organizational leader, member, faculty member, or other WVU employee when establishing a bank account. Use of an individual's Social Security number should not be utilized on a student organization's bank account as the funds in the account may be treated by the IRS as part of that individual's assets and any earnings on the account will be deemed earnings of the individual for income tax purposes.

Advisor's Agreement Worksheet

This worksheet can be a means of communicating expectations of the organization-advisor relationship. Both the advisor and officers of your organization should review each item. Organization members check off what you expect from the advisor in the "Org" column. Organization advisor(s) should check off those items he/she feels are appropriate for him/her to fulfill in the "Adv" column. From this, both parties can come to agreement.

The Advisor agrees to...	Org	Adv	Agree
Attend all general meetings of the organization			
Attend all officer meetings			
Explain University policies where appropriate			
Call meetings of the officers when deemed necessary			
Explain University policy to the membership once a year Help the president prepare the agenda before each meeting Serve as parliamentarian to the group			
Speak up during discussion when you feel the group is about to make a poor decision			
Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon			
Provide resources and ideas to the group			
Take an active part in formulating goals for the group			
Act as a member of the group, except in voting and holding office Receive a copy of all correspondence			
Request the treasurer's books at the end of each semester			
Keep the official files in her/his office			
Let the group work out its problems, including making mistakes			
Request a written evaluation at the end of each semester			
Cancel any activities that you believe have been inadequately planned			
Approve all candidates for office in terms of scholastic standing; periodically check their GPAs			
Represent the group in any conflict with members of the University staff			
Mediate conflicts as they arise			
Veto a decision when it violates a by-law or constitution			
Keep the group aware of its stated goals, purpose and objectives			

Source: Advisor Manual from the ACPA Commission for Student Involvement

Advisor Agreement

Every student organization on WVU Tech Campus must have an advisor who is a full-time faculty or staff member of the institution.

Among the duties are the following

1. The ADVISOR should confer with the officers and members in planning programs that will be adequate and suited to the needs of the group.
2. The ADVISOR should help in the solution of organizational problems
3. The ADVOSOR should attend meetings of the group.
4. The ADVISOR should cooperate with the instructions' administration by answering requests for information as promptly as clearly as possible.
5. The ADVISOR should be familiar with the organization's programs, goals, and constitution.
6. The ADVISOR should monitor social events sponsored by the group.
7. The ADVISOR should aid the organization in conforming to institutional regulations.

Please return the lower portion to the Dean of Students Office. Retain the upper for your records.

Agreement of Advisor

I am willing to accept the advisor of _____
for the _____ academic year.

I have read and understand the duties as outlined above and familiar with the social policies of WVU Tech as outlined in the student handbook, the *Bearfacts*.

Date

Advisor

E-mail address/phone number