Advising Styles and Skills

Styles: There are four different styles advisors may adopt in approaching the students they work with.

Directing: the level of Student Development is low:

- Provide specific instructions
- Organizational activities are closely supervised
- Advisor is looked to for help in leading the organization
- Organizational tasks are told directly to students

Coaching: the level of Student Development is low/medium - some leaders exhibit a higher level of development:

- Advisor continues to direct and closely supervise task accomplishments
- Explain reasoning behind decisions and organizational procedures
- Active seeking of suggestions from the organization
- Organization's progress is supported and encouraged

Supporting: the level of Student Development is medium - students are beginning to understand concepts leading to success:

- Movement towards facilitating and supporting the organization's efforts
- Responsibility for decision making moves towards the leaders of the organization
- Encourage and provide information as seen fit

Delegating: the Level of Student Development is high:

- Empower student made decisions
- Facilitate problem solving as needed or asked
- Students control delegation and task assignments
- Students have full ownership over the organization, its accomplishments, failures, and successes

For more information go to www.bgsu.edu/getinvolved or stop by the Office of Campus Activities in 401 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.
Skills: As an organization develops, changes, and moves forward, the advisor will employ different skill sets

Flexibility - Each student will have a different set of needs, which will be influenced by a variety of situations and circumstances. Effective advisors are able to adjust their style of advising as their student interactions vary.

Diagnosis - Advisors should think of themselves as a medical doctor. What the student or organization needs must be determined; many times what is needed will not align with what the student wants. Be prepared for negative responses with the understanding that learning will take place. A lesson now will help the student and organization in the future and as they move through life. Approach the new situation as a supporter, help them through the problem.

Contracting - Organizations choose their advisors for a reason and have a certain set of expectations. As the organizational leadership changes, it may be helpful to discuss their preferred advising style. Making this agreement in advance will help both the student and advisor understand the expectations of the relationship for future interactions.

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