

# Advising Student Organizations

**What is an advisor?** A person who gives advice or makes a recommendation as to a decision or course of action.

This is the most practical application of the term. In a university setting this definition is expanded to often include a role model, teacher, confidant, resource person and more.

## The common ground shared by advisors includes:

1. Not having decision making authority.
2. Not having control over the selection of members.
3. Not sharing in the limelight of the group.
4. Rewards are generally intrinsic in nature and depend upon the accomplishments/personal growth of the group.
5. Keep personal opinions removed when advising the group.
6. Non voting members of the group.
7. Normally are assigned to the group by a third party.

The role of the advisor will vary from student organization to student organization and is often dependent upon the very nature of the personalities involved. Primarily, the role of the advisor is not parental. He/She needs to establish a good working relationship with the group based on respect and genuine caring. Appropriate intervention, sound guidance and an objective perspective are all ingredients necessary for good advising.

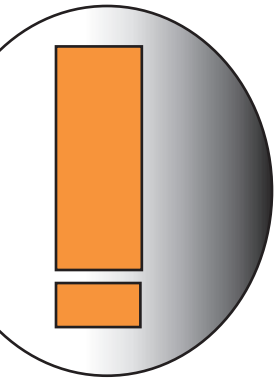
## Positive and Negative Roles of the Advisor:

### POSITIVE

Ally	Mediator	Communicator
Diplomat	Motivator	Confronter
Conscience	Processor	Teacher
Sage	Encourager	Listener
Devil's Advocate	Goal Setter	Innovator

### NEGATIVE

Parent	Worry Wart	Nag
Follower	Critic	Guest Speaker
Stagnator	Manipulator	Bore
Pseudo-Intellectual	Boss	Titan
Prom Queen	Egotist	Warden
Hot Head	Tourist	Preacher



### Ten Guidelines for Effective Advising:

1. Be an educator/a challenger (realize the components of group dynamics and the decision making process).
2. Know or help develop the goals of the group.
3. Know the members of the organization and their needs.
4. Be sincerely committed to the organization.
5. Be available and approachable to the members.
6. Provide appropriate feedback.
7. Guide the group to success - share in their successes/failures.
8. Be open to learning yourself.
9. Know resources available.
10. Have fun.

### An advisor of a student organization...

#### SHOULD

1. Develop a good rapport with the student group
2. Suggest
3. Work with the executive board
4. Help insure the group examines all other executive board members sides of an issue.
5. Help develop team spirit and cooperation
6. Be their assertive self
7. Have a relationship with the group that allows growth and development administrator
8. Attend their meetings and programs
9. Treat members as individuals
10. Serve as a resource
11. Be available in emergency situations
12. Be consistent with your actions
13. Be visible
14. Know your limits
15. Know your group's limits
16. Learn to speak/when not to speak
17. Keep your sense of humor

#### SHOULD NOT

1. Become such an advocate that you lose your objective point of view
2. Impose
3. Do the work of the president
4. Be a bleeding heart
5. Allow the organization to become a one person operation
6. Be laissez faire or autocratic
7. Be the parent or smothering
8. Assume they handle everything ok and do not need you
9. Assume the organization's attitudes, needs, and personalities will remain the same every year
10. Take ownership of the group
11. Just sign papers for the group
12. Miss group meetings or functions
13. Say, "I told you so..."
14. Manipulate the group
15. Tell the group what to do
16. Take everything so seriously
17. Be afraid to let the group try new ideas

# Advisor's Checklist

This form is designed to help advisors and officers determine the role of the advisor(s) in your student organizations. **Directions:** The advisor and each officer should respond to the following items, then meet to compare answers and discuss any differences. For any items that are felt not to be the responsibility of the advisor, it would be valuable to clarify which officer will assume that responsibility. For each statement, respond according to the following scale:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A. Essential for the advisor</b>           | <b>D. Would prefer they not do</b>         |
| <b>B. Helpful for the advisor to do</b>       | <b>E. Absolutely not an advisor's role</b> |
| <b>C. Nice, but they do not have to do it</b> |  |

## The Advisor Is Expected To:

- \_\_\_ 1. Attend all general meetings.
- \_\_\_ 2. Attend all executive committee meetings.
- \_\_\_ 3. Attend all other organizational activities.
- \_\_\_ 4. Explain University policy when relevant to the discussion.
- \_\_\_ 5. Help the president prepare the agenda before each meeting.
- \_\_\_ 6. Serve as a parliamentarian for the group.
- \_\_\_ 7. Speak up during discussions with relevant information or when the group is likely to make a poor decision
- \_\_\_ 8. Attend conferences with the students in the organization.
- \_\_\_ 9. Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon.
- \_\_\_ 10. Assist organization by signing forms that require your signature.
- \_\_\_ 11. Attend advisor workshops sponsored by the Office of Campus Activities.
- \_\_\_ 12. Take an active part in the formulation of the group's goals.
- \_\_\_ 13. Initiate ideas for discussion when he/she believes they will help the group.
- \_\_\_ 14. Be one of the group except for voting and holding office.
- \_\_\_ 15. Require the treasurer to clear all expenditures with you before making financial commitment.
- \_\_\_ 16. Request to see the treasurer's books at the end of each semester.
- \_\_\_ 17. Have regular one-on-ones with president.
- \_\_\_ 18. Attend organization's social events.
- \_\_\_ 19. Check the secretary's minutes before they are distributed.
- \_\_\_ 20. Receive a copy of all official correspondence.
- \_\_\_ 21. Store all group paraphernalia during the summer and between changeover of officers.
- \_\_\_ 22. Keep the official files in his/her office.
- \_\_\_ 23. Inform the group of infractions of its bylaws, codes, and standing rules.
- \_\_\_ 24. Keep the group aware of its stated objectives when planning events.
- \_\_\_ 25. Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise.
- \_\_\_ 26. Be responsible for planning a leadership skill workshop.
- \_\_\_ 27. State perceptions of his/her role as advisor at the beginning of the year.
- \_\_\_ 28. Let the group work out its problems, including making mistakes and "doing it the hard way."
- \_\_\_ 29. Insist on an evaluation of each activity by those students responsible for planning it.
- \_\_\_ 30. Take the initiative in creating teamwork and cooperation among officers.
- \_\_\_ 31. Let the group thrive or decline on its merits; do not interfere unless requested to do so.
- \_\_\_ 32. Represent the group in any conflicts with members of the University staff.
- \_\_\_ 33. Be familiar with University facilities, services, and procedures.
- \_\_\_ 34. Recommend programs, speakers, etc.
- \_\_\_ 35. Take an active part in the orderly transition of responsibilities between old and new officers.
- \_\_\_ 36. Meet with treasurer monthly to reconcile financial statements.
- \_\_\_ 37. Plan organization retreats.

# Guidelines for Organization Advisors

**There are many benefits associated with becoming an advisor to a student organization. They include the following:**

- Satisfaction of seeing and helping students learn and develop new skills.
- Watching a group come together to share common interests and work toward common goals and an understanding of differences.
- Developing a personal relationship with students.
- Furthering personal goals or interests by choosing to work with an organization that reflect ones' interests.
- Sharing one's knowledge with others.

## **Student Handbook Guidelines for Advisors**

1. All student organizations are required to have an advisor who is a full-time staff or faculty member at BGSU.
2. Within the context of the broader mission and policies of the University, advisors shall share insights and directions that allow student organizations to further their objectives and enhance the meaningfulness of organization membership.
3. Specific responsibilities of the advisor shall be to: regularly attend general and executive board meetings; provide guidance to officers; receive all financial statements and oversee all financial transactions of the organization; ensure that officers meet the minimum requirements for holding office as established by the University and the organization's constitution and by-laws; provide consultation concerning membership selection procedures, and responsibilities; review and sign the organization's annual report.
4. Because of the involvement of some student organizations in University governance, their advisors are appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs with consultation from the organization's student officers and other interested parties.

*Student Handbook, Bowling Green State University, 2007-2008, pg. 67.*

## **ADVISING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The specific roles and responsibilities of an advisor will vary from organization to organization and from advisor to advisor, but the following presents a list of general responsibilities: Leadership Development - through personal interaction and program development, the advisor can play a significant role in furthering leadership development and personal growth of members, as well as identifying new leaders for the organization. Some specific developmental areas that the advisor may enhance are interpersonal communication skills, planning skills, and organizational skills. The advisor should be available to assist with organization retreats and workshops. Consultation - The advisor should meet regularly with officers/chairpersons concerning activities and should be aware of what projects and events are being planned. Through continued open interaction where ideas can be expressed freely, the advisor serves as a resource person to point out new perspectives and guide the group toward activities and individual performance worthy of a major university.

*Adapted from THUNDARBOLTS, North Dakota State University*