



# Advisors

## Eligibility, Roles, Functions, and Responsibilities

### Who can be an advisor?

All student organizations are required to have an approved advisor, either a faculty or staff member. Students, teaching assistants and graduate assistants are ineligible to serve as advisors. 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 nature of an advisor's involvement with the group, however, advisors should never be just a signatory on registration forms. Be sure to have a conversation between new officers and the advisor to establish expectations for the coming year.

Based on their expertise and experience, advisors can offer significant insights on group matters such as goal setting, program ideas, conflict resolution, and group growth. This is especially true on a commuter campus, where the turnover of officers is high and spare time is limited. It is often the advisor who can aid in maintaining an organization by providing continuity and serving as an information source. In short, a good advisor can help nurture an organization's success while better connecting to the University community.

For the advisor, there are many intrinsic rewards that come with advising a student organization. Advisors get to see students develop confidence and leadership skills through organizational programming and watch the organization as it strives to work toward its goals. Being an advisor is a great way to connect with the University community and to witness first-hand how student leaders build character, trust, self-confidence, and responsibility. It is important to note that there are many different ways to advise, and some advisors choose to be more hands-on than others. It is our request when you decide to become an advisor that you follow some basic expectations; however, if you so choose to become an "Above & Beyond" advisor please take a look at some additionally recommended guidelines to achieve this goal.



## How can an advisor assist an organization?

**MAINTENANCE:** Advisory activities that maintain the existence of the student organization by providing continuity with past history and traditions, consulting on University policy, serving as a role model, arbitrating group conflicts and keeping files on past organizational functions.

**GROUP GROWTH:** Advisory activities that improve the operation and effectiveness of the group and help it progress toward its goals. Such activities might include teaching the techniques of good leadership and fellowship, coaching the officers in the principles of good organizational and administrative practice, developing self-discipline and responsibility among members, teaching the elements of effective group operation, developing plans and procedures for action, keeping the group focused on its goals, and stimulating or even initiating activities and programs.

**PROGRAM CONTENT:** Advisory activities that question the educational rationale for the organization's existence and lead its members into activities that will contribute to their intellectual development while enriching campus life. Such activities might include introducing new program ideas, helping group members practice skills and concepts learned in the classroom, pointing out new perspectives and directions, and supplying expert knowledge and insights.

**NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:** The advisor can help provide opportunities for members of the organization to interact with different people in the field or in that area of interest, helping them to develop new contacts. Opportunities to network might include guest speaking, field trips or site visits, or attending conferences related to their area of interest.

## What are the university's expectations for an advisor?

Consult with the Center for Student Involvement regarding policies relevant to student organizations and communicate these to the organization's leadership.

Read relevant emails and websites relevant to student organizations and communicate these to the organization's leadership.

Support the organization's planning and events to make every effort to ensure these activities are in line with University policies, as well as federal, state, and local laws.

If the plans or events are contrary to University policy and/or any federal, state, or local laws, assist the organization's leadership with developing alternative strategies that are in line with policies and laws.

- Be aware of important deadlines and paperwork the organization needs to submit to the Center for Student Involvement.
- Attend SAFC funded events your organization is hosting.



- Serve as a liaison to CONNECT the organization with campus and community resources.
- Communicate regularly with the Student Organization Resources team and when appropriate with other members of the Center for Student Involvement staff.
- Provide advice and counsel by sharing expertise, insights, and ideas, and make recommendations when appropriate to help the organization reach their goals.
- Discuss and establish expectations of both the advisor and the student organization membership.
- Take an active part in helping the student organization form bylaws, guiding principles and/or constitutional updates.
- Meet regularly with the organization's president/leadership to discuss organizational matters and to relay and update information.
- Approve any designs to be used on any organization merchandise.
- Ensure those designs are within compliance with University standards and consult with the Center for Student Involvement.
- Be abreast of all paid and unpaid contracts for performance or service agreements.

***We ask advisors to refrain from filling out documents and forms on behalf of student organizations. Please utilize these opportunities as leadership developmental and teaching moments for our students.***

## **Above and beyond expectations**

- Assist in the development of leadership skills among members by providing guidance in issues regarding time management, budgeting, and assertiveness.
- Support the development of the organization's communications with University representatives including the Center for Student Involvement.
- Nominate qualifying student leaders and the student organization for various recognition awards.
- Encourage all members of the organization to be involved.
- Work with students to help them discover their strengths and talents and find ways to put those talents into action.
- Attend meetings of the group when possible.
- Provide continuity and stability over time and help the organization communicate consistent goals and organizational values.



## What are the limitations for an advisor?

Advisors may not have access to student organization funds in their COF accounts. Although advisors may sometimes supervise organization finances, **they may not engage in any financial transactions on behalf of the organization.**

Advisors **may not request services, supplies, space, or equipment in the name of an authorized officer OR the organization.** Advisors may, however, request services, supplies, space, or equipment through their home department absorbing the cost for the department.

## What is the legal liability for advisors?

The University of Illinois has a Liability Self-Insurance Plan (SIP), and **faculty and staff working within the scope of their university duties are covered for all damages** the Plan covers. The Plan **does not insure the liability of the student organization itself but will defend and protect the faculty/staff member for liability arising from his/her position as advisor to the student organization, as long as the advisor is acting within the policies, procedures, and best practices outlined by the University through the Center for Student Involvement.** Student organizations may look to their national organizations for liability protection, or they may arrange for liability protection for special events by contacting a local insurance agent or calling the University Office of Risk Management at (217) 333-3113.

If you have specific concerns about personal liability or questions about coverage for particular activities or events which the organization is contemplating, call the Student Organization Resource (SOR) staff at (312) 413-5070. SOR will research the answer by getting in touch with the University's Office of Risk Management and legal counsel.

## What if I decide to withdraw as an organizations's advisor?

There may come a time when you no longer wish to continue in your advisory role. Whether the reason is lack of time, waning interest, disagreement with the organization's direction or leaving the university, you may withdraw your participation at any time. Once you have made the decision to withdraw, inform the organization's leadership and assist them, if you can, in finding another advisor. Since organizations are required to have an advisor, your withdrawal will place the organization on unregistered status until a new advisor is found. It is the responsibility of the student organization to properly register a new advisor with the Center for Student Involvement during the designated officer update/registration periods.

