

Part 4: Faculty Advisor Manual
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APPENDIX 1

***This manual was edited August 2006.* For a copy of this manual visit <http://www.fau.edu/student/broward/activitiesbroward/>
For a copy of the Student Handbook visit <http://www.fau.edu/dean/handbook/>**

I. INTRODUCTION

Florida Atlantic University is an institution of higher education that continuously encourages the involvement of students in student organizations and activities

The advisor is an integral part of every campus organization. As a member of the faculty or staff of the University, the primary function of the advisor is to actively advise, counsel, and serve as a resource of information and guidance for the student organization. The advisor should ask questions that allow the students to consider possible alternatives, and make appropriate comments and suggestions. Through these means, the advisor can assist the students in achieving a degree of mature thinking and considered action that will strengthen the organization and help it to fulfill its objectives. Advisors also provide continuity from year to year by serving as the advisor despite change in student leadership in the student organization.

The Broward Student Development and Activities office of Florida Atlantic University embraces a wide range of student organizations. The Broward Campuses have over 20 registered or sponsored student organizations, which include social, cultural, and academically oriented organizations. This variety allows students to find a group that interests them. This also holds true for someone interested in advising a student group. It is important to find a group whose interests are similar to yours in order to ensure that the experience will be beneficial and rewarding for both you and the organization. Advising an organization does require additional time demands; however, the rewards gained by advising are great. At the same time, a group of students can start a student organization of their own that can be of their interest.

II. DEFINING AN ADVISOR

All registered student organizations at Florida Atlantic University are required to have an advisor. Some advisors may wish to advise more than one group. An advisor can be a full-time faculty or staff member. In some cases, certain non-academic staff (FAU full-time staff) could also be appropriate advisors. For ease in reading this manual, all advisors will be referred to as faculty advisors.

An advisor is one who gives ideas, shares insight, provides a different perspective, and counsels. Faculty advisors for student organizations have three 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

III. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Faculty advisors and student leaders should be aware of the policies and procedures of Florida Atlantic University and the laws of the State of Florida. The Club and Organization Manual covers these topics, and also includes: The Office of Student Development and Activities services, SG funding, and facility reservation. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of policies and regulations pertaining to

student organizations can be answered by the Office of Student Development and Activities.

IV. LEGAL LIABILITY

Student organizations must not violate Florida Atlantic University policy or local, state, or national law. Many policies and laws concerning student organizations are listed in the Student handbook. For questions concerning your liability as a faculty advisor, please contact the Associate Director of Student Development and Activities at 954-236-1001 or e-mail tmena@fau.edu.

V. RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ADVISORS AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Inter-Club Council

Broward Student Government Controller's Office

They have a fiscal workshop which advisors should be present or a representative.

Office of Student Development and Activities (OSDA) staff - There are several members of the OSDA staff who are able to assist with specific organization or advising problems or present workshops to student organizations on an as needed basis. To request assistance, come to the OSDA.

VI. HOW THE ADVISOR CAN ASSIST THE ORGANIZATION

In addition to the above listed roles and responsibilities, an advisor can assist an organization in many ways:

1. **Maintenance functions:** the advisor can help maintain the existence of the student organization by providing continuity with past history and traditions. Such activities may include consulting on University policy, serving as a role model, arbitrating group conflicts, and keeping files on past organizational functions.
2. **Group growth function:** the advisor can 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.
3. **Program content function:** the advisor can question the educational rationale for the organization's existence and lead its members into activities that will contribute to their intellectual and social development. 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.
4. **Networking Opportunities:** the advisor can help provide opportunities for organization members to interact with different people in their field of interest, helping them to develop new contacts for possible future careers. Such opportunities to network might include

identifying guest speakers, field trips or site visits, or attending conferences related to their area of interest.

VII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ADVISOR

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. An advisor should be committed to the group's success, may need to sometimes go above and beyond the call of duty, and should never be resigned to only serve as a signatory on forms.

Considering their expertise and experience, advisors can often supply significant insights on group matters such as goal setting, program ideas, conflict resolution, and group growth. It is often the advisor who can aid in maintaining an organization by providing continuity and by serving as an information source. In short, a good advisor can help nurture an organization's success.

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.

The following is adapted from the Resource & Policy Manual, Virginia Commonwealth University:

Responsibilities to the Student Organization

1. **The advisor should assist the group in developing realistic goals for the academic year.** This will contribute to the educational and personal development of the students involved. The advisor must take an active role, rendering advice and counsel as circumstances dictate.
2. **The advisor should be aware of all plans and activities of the group and inform the group that institutional policies may affect these plans.** The advisor should see that the group and its officers know where policies are listed, what the policies are, why they exist, and the channels to be followed for changes, revisions, or exceptions to policies. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of policies and regulations pertaining to student organizations can be answered by the Associate Director of Student Development and Activities.
3. **The advisor should discourage dominance of the group by any one individual and should encourage quieter students to take initiative.** Eager leaders can steal the limelight more often than is necessary. This can lead to resentment by some or pressure others into silencing themselves. The advisor can help provide a balance by pointing out such concerns in a one-on-one setting with the students or the organization leadership.
4. **The advisor may need to refer students to counseling.** Invariably, during interaction with the group's members, the advisor will encounter students with personal problems. The sympathetic interest in an individual student on the part of an advisor is a traditional role

of the college teacher and one that has a long proud history in higher education. The counseling role might require individual consultation on a personal level or referral to the student counseling service. More information about the Broward Counseling Center can be found on the website at www.fau.edu.

5. **The advisor should provide continuity within the group and should be familiar with the group's history and constitution.** Membership turnover in student organizations is high and often the only link with the immediate past is the advisor. The advisor can steer group members clear of mistakes and help them avoid the proverbial “reinventing of the wheel”. Serving as the group's memory and continuity link, the advisor can help new officers build on history and develop long term plans for the future of the organization.
6. **The advisor should offer ideas for projects and events.** The advisor will perform his/her greatest service by providing opportunities for the students to exercise initiative and judgment and to enjoy a proper measure of autonomy in self-directed social, educational, recreational, cultural, and spiritual activities. He or she should not dominate the program planning process. However, advisors should ensure that the group understands a program’s complexity and has discussed and registered the event with the appropriate FAU staff. The advisor should remember that it is the task of the active members to operate the organization. Removing this responsibility from the members would deprive them of an important educational experience.
7. **The advisor should assist the group in evaluation.** This includes evaluating individual programs as well as doing a complete evaluation at the end of the academic year. The advisor must be willing to give constructive criticism when necessary and offer words of praise for work well done.

Responsibilities to Individual Group Members

1. **The advisor should help the students find a balance between their academics and their co-curricular activities.** Student leaders often have the tendency to burn the candle at both ends and will overextend themselves if not held in check. The advisor has a unique opportunity to remind students of their academic obligations and personal needs.
2. **The advisor should encourage each individual to participate in and plan group events.** Some students fade into the background if not effectively encouraged. Being a member of a student group can provide students with valuable interpersonal and/or leadership skills, but these will not develop if the student is not involved.
3. **The advisor should encourage students to accept responsibility for specific roles within the group.** The advisor should help them realize the importance of these roles. From officer positions to committee members, each student should feel invested in and accountable for their specific role.

Responsibilities to the University

1. **The advisor should work with the group, but not direct its activities.** Although the advisor's role is not regulatory or disciplinary, the advisor has a responsibility to both the institution and the organization to keep their best interests in mind. At times, the advisor may need

to remind the organization of institutional policies so that violations do not occur. The advisor may also work with the organization's officers to establish and maintain internal group standards and regulations for conduct.

2. **Occasionally, an advisor can help an organization during an emergency.** Although this type of intervention is rarely necessary, the advisor's good judgment can be the saving grace in the event of mishaps, internal conflict, or personal crisis. Assisting the group's president as a spokesperson or serving as the main contact for the University can help in these cases. If problems of a more serious nature arise, the Associate Director of Student Development and Activities to assist you.

VIII. GETTING YOUR STUDENT ORGANIZATION TO UNDERSTAND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ADVISOR

The organization-advisor relationship is not a one-way street, with the advisor doing all of the giving and the organization doing all of the taking. The organization has some definite responsibilities to its advisor. Here are some tips to guide you in your advisory capacity:

1. **Establish a clear understanding between yourself and the organization as to the advisor's role and function.** Set up a time to discuss this at length with the leadership. Talk about the purpose of the group and its needs; determine what you have to offer as an advisor, and then agree on the nature of the relationship. Review the relationship periodically and encourage the organization to let you know how you may advise the group better.
2. **It is the responsibility of the organization to communicate its needs to the advisor.** Advisors should be willing to be involved with the organization, but they should not intrude and "force the hand" of the group.
3. **Establish lines of communication.** Find the best way to keep the flow of information moving smoothly between yourself and group members. Check your schedule for times you can meet with the organization. Tell the organization what information you, as an advisor, would like to receive on a regular basis (e.g., meeting notices, minutes, event announcements, etc.) and check to see it is sent. Remind the organization that there are many ways to communicate: face-to-face, in writing, by voice mail or e-mail.
4. **It is OK to say "No".** You have other responsibilities such as a family or relationship, job, and financial concerns that do not always permit giving undivided attention to the organization. Organizations can extend an invitation, but should not be offended if the advisor must say "no thanks".
5. **The advisor should let the organization know what type of talents he or she can offer.** Recognize that as the advisor you are a resource person with a wealth of expertise. Offer opinions, advice, and creative ideas.
6. **An advisor is an integral part of the organization but not a member.** The advisor's job is to coach and guide the organization in its function, not to perform tasks for the group.

7. **Help establish goals for your group.** Help guide the ideas of the organizations by developing ideas for a goal for this specific organization.

IX. SAMPLE ADVISOR / STUDENT ORGANIZATION STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

Note: This is a sample agreement that can be developed from the previous negotiation instrument. This section adapted from Resource & Policy Manual, Virginia Commonwealth University.

SEE APPENDIX 1

X. RESIGNING FROM ADVISING

There may come a time when you no longer are able 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 choose to resign from advising.

Once you have made the decision to resign, we encourage you to talk with the organization's leadership and assist them, if you can, in locating another advisor. Please notify the Office of Student Development and Activities in writing, to inform us of your resignation (address this letter to the Associate Director of Student Development and Activities, LA 117). Since organizations are required to have an advisor, your withdrawal will place the organization in a suspended status until a new advisor is found.

XI. THANK YOU!

The Office of Student Development and Activities appreciates your willingness to serve as a student organization faculty advisor. We thank you for your commitment to students, and hope that you find your position rewarding. We realize that this commitment takes time and energy. By working with students outside the classroom, you help further student learning. Please feel free to call our department should you have any questions regarding the role of an advisor or regarding any concerns or questions you may have.

Please note that the information contained in this handbook may change without notice when deemed appropriate by the Office of Student Development and Activities and that the handbook does not convey any rights or obligations between the University and any organization or individual, but merely sets forth the guidelines and procedures established for faculty advisors.

APPENDIX 1

This sample agreement is designed to enhance and explain the relationship between the advisor and the members of a student organization. It describes the expectations and responsibilities between parties. This may be used as a tool for evaluating the relationship between the advisor

and members of a student organization. Periodic review of the contents of this agreement is necessary for the benefit of both parties. Renegotiation of any area should occur whenever one or both parties deem it appropriate.

This sample agreement is divided into two sections. Section I outlines the rights and responsibilities of the advisor and Section II outlines the rights and responsibilities of the student organization. The elements listed are transferred from the previous negotiation instrument.

SECTION I:
Negotiated Rights & Responsibilities of the Advisor

1. The advisor is expected to have or obtain knowledge about University policies and procedures that impact student organizations
2. The advisor is expected to attend group activities, meetings, and events.
3. The advisor is expected to assist in the negotiation of financial commitment and/or contractual agreements entered into by the student organization or refer the organization to the Office of Student Development and Activities for assistance.
4. The advisor is expected to provide assistance in the areas of budget development, major expenditures and financial record keeping.
5. The advisor is expected to sign contracts for programs presented by the student organization if they are not funded by Student Government.
6. The advisor is expected to encourage student organization members to take advantage of opportunities to enhance their leadership skills.
7. The advisor is expected to provide feedback and confront behavior in members that she or he deems to be detrimental to individuals and/or other members of the organization.
8. The advisor is expected to treat students as mature individuals who have dignity and worth.
9. The advisor is expected to understand the purpose and objectives of the organization.
10. The advisor has the right to disagree with student organization decisions.
11. The advisor has a right to a private life.

SECTION II:
Negotiated Rights & Responsibilities of Student Organizations

1. Members are expected to understand the purpose of the student organization and pursue activities that fulfill its purpose. It is understood that the objectives of the organization will be compatible with the objectives of the University and not in violation of any laws.
2. Members are expected to attend activities.
3. The officers are expected to inform and involve members and the advisor prior to making any financial commitments. The advisor and the members of the organization may wish to define what expenditures the advisor should review.
4. The officers are expected to maintain financial records and follow University guidelines concerning fiscal management.
5. Members are expected to take advantage of opportunities to enhance their skills
6. Members are expected to provide feedback and confront behavior in either members or the advisor that they deem to be detrimental to that individual and/or organization.
7. Members are expected to treat the advisor as an individual who has dignity and worth.
8. Members have the right to be listened to by other members and the advisor.
9. Members have the right to choose their level of involvement in student organizations.
10. Members have the right to voice their disagreements with the decisions of the advisor.

This agreement is entered into by:

_____ Date: _____
(hereafter referred to as the advisor)

and _____ Date: _____

(hereafter referred to as the student organization representative)

of _____
(hereafter referred to as the organization)

This agreement is binding until a new agreement is developed.

Signed,

_____ Date: _____
Faculty/Staff Advisor

_____ Date: _____
Student Organization Representative

***If any questions please refer to student**