

5 Advisors

An advisor is an educator in a “non-traditional classroom.” The advisor uses personal expertise and perspective to stimulate individual development of members and the overall development of the organization.

5.1 Requirements

University regulations require each student organization to have a faculty or staff advisor that is at least part-time, not temporary and not a student worker or graduate/teaching assistant. Each organization shall be free to choose its own advisor or co-advisors, and may change its advisor at any time with a simple majority vote of current membership or as stated in the constitution.

5.2 Selecting and Recruiting an Advisor

1. Before approaching a potential advisor, keep in mind the following: (1) find someone who will have time to devote to your organization, and (2) find someone who will take the role willingly and seriously, and (3) find someone who has knowledge or skills related to the mission/purpose of the organization.
2. When approaching your potential advisor for the first time, make sure that he/she has a clear understanding of your organization's purpose, as well as what would be required pertaining to their role, duties, and time commitment involved. Be open and honest with the potential advisor about the types of activities in which the organization may participate.
3. Allow the person a reasonable length of time to consider his/her decision.
4. If possible, choose someone who shares some of the same interests as the organization, and who the leadership of the organization has previously interacted with.
5. When starting a departmental club or organization, find someone in that department to act as advisor.

5.3 Role of an Advisor

By sharing both knowledge about the university and personal experiences, the advisor can assist the organization in the conduct of its activities. In addition, valuable, mutually rewarding, co-curricular relationships between students and advisors are fostered.

The relationship between an advisor and an organization will vary from year to year and individual to individual. However, the student/advisor relationship can be crucial to the success of the organization. The list that follows contains possible roles of an advisor. It is important that the advisor and the organization communicate their expectations to each other. The advisor should be very clear about the things he/she will do, and the things he/she will not do. Of course, the expectations will vary according to the needs of the organization and the advisor.

1. The advisor recognizes and supports participation in student organizations for its contributions to the educational and personal development of students.
2. Advisors should work with student organizations but not dictate the group's programs or activities. However, advisors should be frank in offering suggestions, considerations or ideas, and discussing possible consequences.
3. The advisor should be well informed about the plans and activities of the organization. The expectation is that the advisor will attend some meetings and will consult frequently with the organization's officers.
4. The advisor should know the goals and directions of the organization and should help the group evaluate its progress.
5. The advisor should be aware of the constitution and bylaws of the organization and help with

- interpretation, if applicable.
6. The advisor provides a source of continuity within the organization and is familiar with the organization's history. In addition, the advisor assists in making sure that officers of the organization understand their responsibilities, as well as explaining the policies and regulations established for student organizations.
 7. The advisor should be familiar with university policies and procedures and help the organization comply with them. This includes policies pertaining to organizations at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi as well as rules and regulations governing Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students.
 8. The advisor may advise the organization in the exercise of responsibility, but will not have the power to control the policy of such organizations, except in situations where such policy violates established regulations of the university.
 9. The advisor should be aware of the general financial condition of the organization, and encourage good record keeping.
 10. The advisor should help ensure that the organization's activities justify expenditure of students' time, abilities, energy, and dues.
 11. The advisor may aid in the area of program content and purpose by helping students use their best judgment in selecting programs.
 12. The advisor can encourage the organization to provide opportunities for educational and personal development for its members.
 13. The advisor should help in training new officers and help them develop their leadership skills.
 14. The advisor should assist the group in setting and evaluating realistic goals and objectives each year.
 15. The advisor should point out prospective members, give direction to the group, and introduce new program ideas.
 16. The advisor should discourage the domination of the organization by an individual or group.
 17. The advisor should be aware of liability issues (i.e., hazing, alcohol, etc.) and advise the organization to make reasonable and prudent decisions regarding these issues in planning activities.
 18. The advisor should be prepared to deal with major problems or emergencies within the organization.
 19. The advisor should monitor group functioning and encourage members to fully participate, to assume appropriate responsibility for group activities, to maintain a balance between academic activities, and to maintain a balance between academic activities and co-curricular commitments.
 20. The advisor should be available to meet with officers of the organization on a regular basis for advice and consultation.

5.4 How to Work With Your Advisor

1. It is best to meet with your advisor at least one day before your meetings to go over the proposed agenda and topics to be discussed.
2. Be open to suggestions and criticism from your advisor. His/her knowledge, background, and experience will be helpful in coming up with solutions and implementing organizational procedures.
3. The advisor should be consulted well in advance of all activities. The advisor has the right to refuse to endorse activities of the organization.
4. If an advisor cannot attend your meeting, be sure to meet with him/her after the meeting to brief him/her on what happened. Advisors can be a great resource; take advantage of their experience and insight.
5. For help establishing an adequate understanding of roles and responsibilities that students and

advisors should expect, please review the Advisor Expectations Checklist (See Appendix).
The University is not responsible for the advising skills of any chosen advisor.

5.5 The Organization's Responsibilities to the Advisor

Keep in mind that the advisor is voluntarily associated with the organization. It is the organization's responsibility to inform the advisor of the activities of the organization.

- Notify the advisor of all meetings and events
- Consult your advisor in the planning of all activities.
- Consult him/her before any changes in the structure of the organization, or in the policies of the organization are made, and before major projects are undertaken.
- Understand that although the advisor has no vote that he/she should have speaking privileges.
- Remember that the responsibility for the success or failure of the organization project rests ultimately with the group, not the advisor.
- Talk over any problems or concerns with the advisor.
- Acknowledge the advisor's time and energy are donated, and express appreciation.
- Be clear and open about your expectations for your advisor's role.
- At the end of each semester, evaluate your advisor and give appropriate feedback.

5.6 Suggestions for Effective Advising

The maturity/skill level of the organization and its leadership should dictate your style of advising. If they have beginning skill levels, you may need to be more actively involved with the organization. As the leaders' skill level matures, you can then decrease the amount of direction you need to provide the organization.

- Express sincere enthusiasm and interest in the group and its activities.
- Be open to feedback from the group. Talk with them regarding your role as advisor. Be willing to admit mistakes.
- Provide feedback to the group and the leaders regarding their performance.
- Be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct and this manual so that you can be a knowledgeable resource for the group.
- Participate with the organization and get to know the members. Be available and accessible to them. They will feel more comfortable with you and be more open to your input if they know you.
- Following organization meetings, discuss any problems encountered during the meeting with the officers.

Be careful of becoming too involved with the organization. Remember that you are not a member. Your role is to advise, assist, and facilitate.