

# Student Club & Organization Advisor Manual



**The Office of  
Student Engagement  
Ursinus College**



# ADVISING 101

*A Guide for New and Experienced Organization Advisors*

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## **The Mission of Ursinus College**

The mission of the college is as real today as it was at its founding in 1869, its aim to model civility and to teach students how to put their ideas to work.

*"To enable students to become independent, responsible and thoughtful individuals through a program of liberal education. That education prepares them to live creatively and usefully, and to provide leadership for their society in an interdependent world."*

Students worldwide demonstrate conviction and ceaseless energy. Ursinus students are known for their achievements and dedicated involvement. The role of an organization advisor is crucial to the success of a student organization. The advisor who simply lends his/her name to an organization to fulfill a requirement does a great disservice to that group. Effective advising requires numerous skills normally associated with teaching or counseling and a willingness to commit time to the activities of an organization. This publication is designed to aid you in your mission to remain a successful organization advisor at Ursinus College. You will find that organizational achievement is an underlying premise of the College's mission.

The Office of Student Engagement is here to provide the support and assistance to help all clubs and organizations remain successful. Within the pages of this manual, you will learn about many useful college resources ranging from room reservations and event planning to student conduct and the Activity Fee Allocation Committee (AFAC). As an organization advisor, we would like you to take the time to read this manual in hopes that we can share and learn together.

## **QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR CONCERNS?**

Please contact the [Office](#) of Student Engagement by emailing [studentengagement@ursinus.edu](mailto:studentengagement@ursinus.edu)

## The Office of Student Engagement

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The Office of Student Engagement (Commonly known as SE) offers a wide range of services to the Ursinus College student. We oversee New Student Orientation, Greek Life, Student Government, Clubs and Organizations, and AFAC. The Office of Student Engagement is the home office for the Student Engagement staff.

The Office of Student Engagement provides several services to help support your organization's needs. We can help you with room reservations, advertising for events, planning events, or guiding you through the Activity Fund Allocation Committee (AFAC) Form.

### CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

SE oversees all Ursinus student clubs and organizations! We offer resources, counsel, and guidance to any organization in need of help. The basic procedure for starting a new club/organization is outlined in the "[Intent to Organize](#)" section on the SE Website. *All clubs and organizations receiving AFAC funding are required to complete the Organization Accreditation Process (OAP) with SE. OAP occurs every Spring semester. This process will be initiated by SE.*

### PLANNING AN EVENT

All AFAC funded & Greek Organizations that wish to host an event on campus open to all students must complete and submit an Event Space Approval and AFAC Form located on the Student Engagement website. When planning with your club/organization, your event planner will need to submit an online form that will be directed to the Office of Student Engagement and Student Government Association (SGA). Once submitted, The Office of Student Engagement will review your request for Event Space Approval and SGA will review your AFAC request. SGA may respond in a week of your submitting your request, whereas SE may respond within 48 hours of your request. This is a direct link to the online submission form: [Event Space Approval and AFAC Form](#). ***This process should be completed two weeks prior to your event.***

### WHAT IS ADVISING?

Being an effective advisor means developing a style that matches the club or organization's needs. When developing this style, it is important to keep in mind the purpose of the club, the types of activities they are involved in, and the mission of Ursinus College. Some groups will need more or less attention depending on the time of year. Negotiate with the group the time and attention they need from you before you agree to be their advisor.

Taking an active role in the organization (attending the majority of meetings, events, meeting with officers on a regular basis, giving advice) does not mean that you are running the organization. It means that you guide and assist the officers in their roles, not doing the day-to-day operations. You may attend fewer meetings or meet less frequently with the officers if the organization does not need an active advisor.

The main objective of an advisor is to be available to guide and assist the officers or members in the mission and goals of the group. How active or passive you are should be negotiated between you and the group. **Communication is essential.**

## **THE ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE ADVISOR**

Organizations rarely become successful without the active involvement of an advisor. The College requires that each student club/organization be advised by at least one **full-time** faculty or staff member. SE requires any eligible advisor to attend an advisor training held in the fall semester. Effective advising requires numerous skills normally associated with teaching or counseling and a willingness to commit time to these activities. Advising often offers few rewards other than the personal satisfaction that one has contributed significantly to the growth and development of students through co-curricular activities. We encourage you to build a list of expectations between the executive board and yourself. Below is a list of expectations that we in the Office of Student Engagement hold for our advisors.

- Have regular meetings with the officers to discuss organizational goals
- Support the group
- Be familiar with the group's history and traditions. The advisor should also be familiar with the constitution and by-laws and should be prepared to assist with the interpretation of those.
- Be knowledgeable about appropriate College policies
- Recognize the general financial condition of the organization
- Monitor the group's functions and encourage all members of the group to fully participate, assume appropriate responsibility for group activities, and to maintain a balance between academic responsibilities and co-curricular involvement.
- Consider the impact of activities the group wishes to engage in. An advisor has the right to tell the group that they cannot have a certain activity, etc.
- Intervene in conflicts between group members and/or officers.
- Provide continuity and stability as leadership changes.
- Contact Office of Student Engagement to discuss organizational problems, concerns, plans, and changes in organizational status.
- Sign all documents which require an advisor's approval (i.e. check request forms)
- Provide honest feedback to group members and positive reinforcement for accomplishments.
- Share your experience and expertise when appropriate.
- Contact the Office of Student Engagement to resign from your advising responsibilities.

## **LAYING THE GROUNDWORK**

In the beginning of any great relationship, expectations are the first issue to be discussed. Whether you are a new organization advisor or an experienced advisor starting another year, please take the time to sit down with the Executive Board of your organization and complete the exercise below.

To receive the greatest benefit from this exercise, both the Faculty/Staff Advisor and Officers of the organization should review each item. Organization members should check off those items that they expect from the Advisor. The Faculty/Staff Advisor should check off those items he/she feels are appropriate for him/her to fulfill. From this, both parties can come to an Agreement as to what the role of the Faculty/Staff Advisor will be. This Exercise can be found at the end of the manual.

### **THE DO'S AND DON'T'S OF ADVISING**

This simple list of do's and don'ts should allow you to evaluate your style and change it as needed for the specific organization you are advising:

#### **Do:**

- Allow others to fail
- Allow others to succeed
- Know your limits
- Know the group's limits
- Be visible
- Be consistent with your actions
- Trust yourself and the group
- Learn when to speak/when not to speak
- Inform the group of policies
- Teach the art of leadership
- Serve as a resource
- Be available in emergency situations
- Assist officers with procedural matters
- Represent the group in staff and faculty meetings

#### **Don't:**

- Control the group
- Manipulate the group
- Miss too many group meetings and functions
- Take ownership for the group
- Close communication
- Be afraid to try new ideas
- Be the leader
- Say "I told you so..."
- Impose your own bias
- Tell the group what to do

## **THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD ADVISOR**

- Being **AWARE**: As the advisor, know what is happening with the group at all times
- Being **DEDICATED**: You should always be willing to assist with the organization
- Being **VISIBLE**: You should always attend meetings, social functions, etc.
- Being **INFORMED**: As the advisor, know the policies, by-laws, and constitution
- Be **SUPPORTIVE**: Please provide encouragement and praise to the group
- Be **OPEN-MINDED**: You should be willing to consider new ideas and approaches
- Be **RESPECTFUL**: Earn your respect through being trustworthy and honest

## **CLUB SPORTS**

The Club Sports Program at Ursinus College is designed to allow students to compete in a variety of sports. Members of the club sport are responsible for the operation of the club. Successful club sports have leaders who communicate effectively not only with their teammates, but also with the Office of Student Engagement.

Club sports are subject to the rules and regulations found in the Student Handbook, the Club Sports Handbook, as well as other applicable policies. Please refer to the Club Sport handbook, which can be found on the Student Engagement website, for all rules and regulations.

## **NEW MEMBER EDUCATION GUIDELINES**

Every Fall, the Greek Community participates in an intake process for new students to join their organization. The history of these processes has left most campuses to refer to guidelines to ensure that we are adhering to all state and local laws as well as Ursinus policies. The following organizations are currently permitted to participate in a New Member Education process:

- Alpha Phi Epsilon
- Alpha Delta Phi Society
- Delta Phi Epsilon
- Delta Pi Sigma
- Kappa Delta Kappa
- Phi Alpha Psi
- Phi Kappa Sigma
- Pi Omega Delta
- Sigma Pi
- Sigma Gamma Rho
- Sigma Sigma Sigma
- Tau Sigma Gamma

## **NEW MEMBER EDUCATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

Please contact the Assistant Director of Student Engagement and Greek Life for a full list of the New Member Education (NME) Policies and Guidelines. Contact them through the Student Engagement email: [studentengagement@ursinus.edu](mailto:studentengagement@ursinus.edu).

## **AFAC GUIDELINES AND FUNDING**

**Approved** student organizations are eligible to receive funding from the Activity Fund Allocation Committee by following the procedures set by SGA. [AFAC Guidelines](#) can be found on the Student Engagement Website.

## **SUCCESSFUL AND HEALTHY GROUPS**

### **Seven Characteristics of a Successful Organization**

1. Organization members know each other well.
2. Members are involved in defining organizational purposes.
3. Members are used to help generate ideas.
4. There is a commitment to group decision making.
5. Skills, resources, and liabilities of the organization and community are identified.
6. Systematic problem-solving techniques are used.
7. The organization effectively communicates itself and its purpose to members and the student body.

### **Symptoms of a Healthy and Unhealthy Group**

A group is healthy when:

1. All members feel comfortable saying what they think.
2. Decisions are worked through until a general consensus of agreement is reached.
3. Well-informed members contribute their ideas in the area of their competence.
4. The whole group handles questions that concern the whole group.
5. Major issues invoke mature approaches to change.
6. Minor issues are settled with the attention they deserve.
7. Decisions reached through participation are final and satisfactory.
8. Members really understand one another's ideals, plans, and proposals.
9. The group carries forward in the performance of tasks and the achievement of goals.
10. The group is solution oriented.
11. Rewards and feedback are shared among the entire group.

A group is unhealthy when:

1. A few members do all the talking.
2. Members mumble agreement.
3. Competent people sit by silently.

4. New people with good ideas are not listened to.
5. Minor issues consume the majority of the group's time.
6. Minor and simple issues make people angry and resentful.
7. Major issues are passed over.
8. The same subjects, supposedly settled, keep coming up again.
9. Quick judgments are passed on issues people do not understand.
10. Members subjectively talk about people in a scapegoat manner.
11. The group accomplishes little in absence of the leader.
12. The group avoids change.
13. Rewards and criticism are concentrated on a few people.

*Adapted from the Student Organization Advisor Manual at James Madison University*



# Advisor Contract

Please complete this contract and file. This contract is an agreement for the advisor and the organizations members. Please clearly identify the expectations and roles within this contract. Submit to the Office of Student Engagement for filing purposes.

The members of \_\_\_\_\_ request \_\_\_\_\_ to serve  
(Organization) (Name)  
as the advisor of the organization for a period not to exceed one year beginning with  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Semester)

Duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the position are as follows: (List responsibilities and expectations of the Advisor and organization or attach separately).

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Duties and responsibilities may be reconsidered at the request of the Advisor, president, majority vote of the membership in a regular meeting, or Student Engagement Office.

President's/Chairperson's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have met with the president of the above-named organization and discussed the duties and responsibilities of Advisor as listed above. I agree to serve as Advisor and will fulfill these duties and responsibilities to the best of my abilities.

Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***LIABILITY AND RISK REDUCTION***

As an advisor of a student organization, you are the college's representative regarding the organization's activities. As such, you are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to your organization about such things as programs, use of facilities and operational procedures. If you have reason to question an action taken by the organization, express your concern directly to the organization in writing, including the date, a suggested alternative to the questionable action, a warning, etc. It is important to remember that, in general, while we need to be concerned about liability, we can seriously damage the educational process by being paranoid about it. Just as there is no specific statement that explains faculty liability for every possible classroom incident, there is none that covers all the possible situations student organizations might encounter. If you have concerns about a situation unique to your organization or to a specific event sponsored by the organization you advise, please contact someone from the Office of Student Engagement who is knowledgeable about liability and risk management. Although there is no way to eliminate risk and legal liability associated with a program or event, there are ways to reduce risk and provide a safer environment for program participants. Here are a few things that your organization can do to identify and reduce risk:

- ◆ Complete Event Space Approval and AFAC Form, located online on our webpage, to clarify the needs and expectations of participants.
- ◆ Assess the capability of the group to manage risk.
- ◆ Identify the challenges in managing risk, as well as resources to assist in your planning.
- ◆ Develop a plan of action in reducing risk.
- ◆ Communicate with everyone involved (officers, members, advisors, participants, and facilities staff)
- ◆ Identify specific risks involved in the event. These could include physical risks (such as an event with physical activity) and liability risks (such as events involving alcohol, minors, or travel).
- ◆ Identify options for reducing risks by including, but not limited to:
  - ⇒Hiring a third party vendor or contractor
  - ⇒Purchasing additional liability insurance
  - ⇒Providing advanced training
  - ⇒Assuming a 'worst case scenario' and preparing for it in order to reduce likelihood of it occurring
  - ⇒Utilizing waivers that outline the specific nature and risk associated with the event
  - ⇒Canceling the event if the conditions are dangerous or the group is not prepared to assume full responsibility for the risk involved

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK WORKSHEET

	Officers	Advisor
Attend all the general meetings of the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend all officer meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call meetings of the officers when the Advisor feels it is necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain college policies when appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain college policy to the general membership once a year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help the President prepare the agenda before each meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as Parliamentarian to the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speak up during discussion when you feel the group is going to make a poor decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exert your influence with officers during meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide resources and ideas to your group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take an active part in formulating goals for the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Act as a member of the group, except voting and holding office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receive a copy of all correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Request the treasurer's books at the end of each semester	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep the official files in your office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Let the group work out its problems (including making mistakes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Request a written evaluation at the end of each semester	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cancel activities that you believe may have been inadequately planned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approve all candidates for office in terms of scholastic standing; periodically check officers' GPAs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take an active part in officer transition and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Represent the group in any conflict with members of the campus staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take the initiative in creating teamwork and cooperation among officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mediate interpersonal conflicts as they arise                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Veto a decision when it violates a by-law or the constitution    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Keep the group aware of its stated goals, purpose and objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

By signing the living document above, both parties agree to adhere to everything discussed in this document. Revisions can be made to this document at any time following additional signatures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-Faculty/Staff Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization Name

## **Important Links and Forms**

- Access to Student Organization Email- <https://go.ursinus.edu/StudOrg-Email>
- AFAC Guidelines -[https://go.ursinus.edu/AFAC Guidelines](https://go.ursinus.edu/AFAC_Guidelines)
- Campus Advertisements & Postings Policy-  
[https://go.ursinus.edu/Campus Advertisements Postings Policy](https://go.ursinus.edu/Campus_Advertisements_Postings_Policy)
- Club Sports Handbook- [https://go.ursinus.edu/Club Sports Handbook](https://go.ursinus.edu/Club_Sports_Handbook)
- EMS- <https://go.ursinus.edu/EMS>
- Event Space Approval and AFAC - [https://go.ursinus.edu/ESA AFAC](https://go.ursinus.edu/ESA_AFAC)
- Fundraising Form- [https://go.ursinus.edu/Fundraising Form](https://go.ursinus.edu/Fundraising_Form)
- Organization Accreditation Process (OAP)- <https://go.ursinus.edu/OAP>
- Student Club and Organization Handbook- [https://go.ursinus.edu/SCOT Handbook](https://go.ursinus.edu/SCOT_Handbook)