

Student Organization Advisor Handbook

Policies, Procedures, and Resources for Student Organization Advisors at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR HANDBOOK

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HOW TO USE THIS PUBLICATION

This Handbook provides information on responsibilities, expectations, resources, and general guidance for faculty and staff serving as advisors to student organizations at UWM. It is a supplement to the Student Organization Manual and the Registered Student Organization (RSO) Standards that provide greater detail on items such organization registration, available services, common policies, and behavioral expectations.

To search this document, utilize the Control+F search function. Doing so will bring up a search box where you can enter the keyword or phrase to find it in the document.

INTRODUCTION

Faculty and staff serving as advisors are critical to the success of students and their organizations. An advisor can help provide continuity and support for student organizations, support students in their leadership and decision-making, and help organizations utilize the many resources available at UWM to support their success.

The goal of a student organization advisor is to assist in the development of students involved in the organization. The Advisor Handbook seeks to help in this endeavor. It is an assortment of suggestions, tips, expectations and procedures that have been consolidated into one resource. It is not, however, all-encompassing of everything an advisor will need to know or have all the answers to every situation an advisor might face. It is a good place to start to assist an advisor to becoming successful.

The following pages provide a framework for advisors to use when working with a student organization. The most important thing to remember as an advisor is that every organization, and every student, is different. Therefore, part of your role is to assist members as they develop their unique foundation for productivity, goal-setting, and decision-making skills that will prepare them for life beyond the University.

Benefits of Being an Advisor

Here are a few benefits of advising a student organization:

- An opportunity to get to know and work with students outside the classroom or office
- The reward of watching the group develop and grow to its fullest potential
- The reward of watching students mature and developing their individual skills and talents
- Satisfaction and sense of accomplishment through making a special contribution to a group of students
- The informal opportunity to share your knowledge and expertise on relevant topics
- The chance to demonstrate service to students, an organization and the University (*Service related to Promotion and Tenure are dependent on School or College policies*)

Attributes of a Good Advisor

- Aware: Knows what is happening with the group including goals for the year, problems being faced, and dates of meetings and events.
- Dedicated: Enjoys being involved and associated with the org and assists as needed.
- Visible: Attends meetings, social functions, and other special activities of the org.
- Informed: Familiar with the rules, policies, and regulations of the University and the by-laws and constitution of the organization.
- Supportive: Provides encouragement and praise to group members.
- Flexible: Considers new ideas and approaches you may not always agree.
- Respected: Earned respect through being trustworthy, honest, and demonstrating a genuine interest in the welfare of the group.

ADVISOR'S ROLE

The mission of a student organization advisor is to assist in the development of students involved in the organization. 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.

The basic purpose of the advisor is to work with the designated leaders and members of a functioning student organization with the intent of:

- Providing a sense of continuity for the organization, especially during officer transition
- Being a resource person with a knowledge base for institutional policies, etc.
- Assisting the leaders and members to fulfill their responsibilities
- Aiding the organization to define and achieve its goals and objectives
- Integrating all organizational activity with the overall purpose of the educational setting.

[Adapted from: McKaig, R. & Policello, S. (1984). Group Advising-Defined, Described, and Examined. In Schuh, J.H. (Ed.), A Handbook for Student Group Advisers, 47.]

Advisor Function and Role

As an advisor, you may be wondering why a student organization would want a faculty or staff advisor when most of the students are competent and capable adult leaders. An advisor can provide the student organization with support that the students may not have thought of:

- Support the student leaders with administrative tasks
- Providing support from related academic or service departments
- Assist in providing a history of the organization to new members

The role of the advisor, besides assisting student leaders with the list above, includes:

- Serving as a "sounding board" to bounce new ideas off
- Planning and assisting in the leadership development of all officers and general members
- Providing continuity and stability as student leaders change from year to year
- Providing an outside perspective or view on various policies, decisions or activities
- intervening, when appropriate, in conflicts between group members
- Helping deal with organizational crises
- Giving honest feedback to group members to assist them in their personal growth and development as leaders

ABOUT BEING AN ADVISOR

Becoming an Advisor

There are three ways someone can become a student organization advisor:

1. Ask a student organization that you are interested in if they would like you as an advisor.
2. Being asked by a student to advise his/her organization.
3. Provide your name, information and interests to Student Involvement so you can be matched up with an organization. A list of current student organizations is available at pantherorgs.uwm.edu.

Once you find an organization, the first task is to meet all the members. Attend a general meeting or an event and introduce yourself to as many students as possible. After you meet the members, set up a meeting with the current officers to discuss their history, future, expectations that you have for each other, and work on goals for the semester/year. The first couple of meetings could be a little uncomfortable but that is natural, especially if this is a completely new experience for either or both of you.

Advisor Acceptance

It can be a difficult challenge for advisors to avoid the two extremes: to get overly involved and aggressive or to be uninvolved and passive. One situation will make the advisor appear as if they are taking control, and the other makes the advisor appear as if they are not interested in the organization. For the advisor to gain acceptance from members of the organization and develop good rapport, follow these suggestions:

- Let the organization know (through verbal and non-verbal communication) that you are not in charge and the organization needs to step up and work together on its activities.
- Let the organization know that you are there and are interested in the members and wish them well, much like a "big brother" or "big sister" who would like to be helpful on occasion.

- Do not favor any one member, and do not show any signs of dislike toward any one member.
- Do not suggest or initiate activities for the organization unless they are planned on the organization's calendar, the group is brainstorming, there is a newly proposed university activity, or the group is in a rut.
- When organization members initiate activities, be helpful, though do not display actions that put you in competition for status with members.

*[Adapted from: Dunkel, N.W. & Schuh, J.H. (1998). *Advising Student Groups and Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Sherif and Sherif's Concepts on Advisor Acceptance.]*

Advisor Resignation

A Faculty/Staff Advisor may resign from their position at any time. Resignation requires a written notification to Student Involvement. Ideally, the Advisor shares this news with the organization before formally resigning. If serving as the Advisor for one or more student organizations is part of a position's responsibilities, contact the position supervisor for guidance on this process.

Advisor Removal

UWM Student Involvement reserves the right to remove a Faculty/Staff Advisor from this role with a student organization.

Faculty/Staff Advisors may be removed from this role for inappropriate activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate behavior and/or language
- Behavior that violates University policy and/or procedure
- Direct knowledge of hazing incidents and/or failure to report such incidents
- Direct knowledge of, advocacy for, and/or participation in illegal activities and/or behavior
- Behavior resulting in unreasonable and/or unnecessary risk to students

PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

Guiding Principles for Student Organization Advisors

All Registered Student Organizations must have an advisor who is employed at UW-Milwaukee (student employees, teaching, research, or graduate assistants do not qualify). Advisors are educators outside the classroom setting and a resource person for the organization. Ideally, the advice of the advisor to the organization's membership and leadership is welcome and seen as valuable. It is understood at times the advisor may disagree with organizational decisions and/or activities, but decision making and goal setting for the organization must remain in the student

membership's hands. A situation may occur when the advisor feels organizational activities or decisions as incompatible with their own beliefs, the objectives of the University, or inappropriate for a university setting. In this case, if the students do not heed the insights of the advisor, they continue as the group's advisor or not. If the actions or decisions of the organization are contrary to University policy or regulation, the advisor must report the group to Student Involvement (csidesk@uwm.edu) or the Dean of Students (dos@uwm.edu).

Advisors have a variety of roles within an organization including a mentor, teacher, leader and follower. The advisor and students must have regular communication for them to advise the organization on its day-to-day operations and activities. Ideally, the advisor assists the organization members and officers in staying in compliance with their charter, constitution and bylaws and applicable Student Association, UW-Milwaukee and UW System policies as well as local, state and federal laws and ordinances. Advisors should also help student leaders develop critical thinking skills in event planning, risk management, organization management, group processes and ethical decision making among other areas for personal development.

Guiding Principles for Student Organizations

(Selected sections. For full text see the [Student Organization Manual](#))

Financial Responsibility of Organizations

Every student organization is governed by the standards and regulations defined by the University Segregated Fees policies established by the University of Wisconsin System. Officers of organizations are responsible for making sure their groups are financially sound. Student organizations are responsible for contacting the Federal Internal Revenue Service and Wisconsin Department of Revenue for specific information on income tax requirements and other filing requirements. Student organizations may be liable to pay sales tax on some of their fund-raising efforts.

The University is Not Responsible for Debts or Other Liabilities of Student Groups. All new and continuing members of groups, as well as businesses where products and services are ordered, should be informed of this. Officers of groups may be held liable for financial obligations incurred by the group.

Role of the Faculty/Staff Advisor in Organizational Financial Matters

All Registered Student Organizations at UWM are required to have a Faculty/Staff Advisor in compliance with **UWS Policy 820**. Although control and decision making in all student organization matters must remain in the hands of students, advisors can be a great help in guiding leaders and members in developing sound decisions in these matters. Student Involvement will provide Faculty/Staff Advisors of record with copies of segregated fee budgets for the organization(s) they advise. It is helpful to have an organization advisor attend meetings with the

Student Involvement staff with regard to event planning and segregated fee fund expenditure and management (but not required).

Responsibility of Organizations

All students are subject to local, state, and federal laws and ordinances. The University expects that all student organizations will prevent unlawful actions in connection with their activities. Failure to do so could subject student organizations, the officers and members to disciplinary action. The organization acknowledges that its activities, including some which may occur on the campus of UWM, are not eligible for liability protection under the State of Wisconsin Self-Funded Liability Program and need to obtain a special-event(s) liability policy at its own expense.

Student Organization Officers

As used here, the term *officer* includes anyone who holds a position of trust, authority, or command within an organization. A student organization officer is further defined as any student who assumes a leadership position within an organization with daily responsibility for conducting its business, usually with a title and role responsibilities. Student organization officers act as authorized representatives for the organization's membership and bear some personal responsibility for it. All Registered Student Organizations at UWM have at least four enrolled student officers to comply with registration and recognition requirements.

Policy Foundations for Advisors of Student Organizations

There are several policies which advisors need to be aware of to effectively advise a student organization. Although there are dozens of policies that affect student organizations, these are some of the more important ones:

- Segregated University Fees (SUF), UW Policy 820, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/segregated-university-fees/>. This policy outlines the eligibility for and how student groups can spend SUF funds. It also lists the criteria for student organization university recognition that are set at the UW System level.
- Safety & Loss Prevention Risk Management Policy and Procedure Manual, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/risk-management/manual/>. This manual has an overview of the UW-system policies and Handbook lines. Student Organizations are covered in section 10.
- Board of Regent Policies, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/>. Items to note are: 30-6 Policy on Recognition of Student Organizations; 30-3 Handbook lines for Student Governance; and 25-3 Policy on Use of University Information Technology Resources.
- UWM Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), <https://uwm.edu/registrar/ferpa-facultystaff/> UW-System also has information on

FERPA at: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/uwc/ferpa/> This covers what information UWM may release about students to others.

- General Counsel, Overview of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/general-counsel/legal-topics/open-meetings-law/>
- Headquarter City <https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/headquarter-city-uw-system-sponsored-events-policy/>
- Regent Policy Document 13-1 General Contract Approval, Signature Authority, and Reporting <https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/general-contract-approval-signature-authority-and-reporting/>
- [UWM Legal Affairs, Signature Authority](#)
- UW System Administrative Policy 405 Universities of Wisconsin Travel and Expense Policy, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/travel-and-expense-general-travel-expense-policy/>
- Advisors are reminded that Conflict of Interest policies apply to their role with student organizations as well as their university employment. For details see Chapter UWS 8. https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/8
- UWS Chapter 17 Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures, https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17

REQUIREMENTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Requirements

All Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) must have a Faculty or Staff Advisor employed by UWM. Student employees, teaching assistants, research assistants, and graduate assistants are not eligible to serve in this role.

Advisors must:

- Complete an Advisor Contract annually with Student Involvement.
- Fulfill their role as a Campus Security Authority (CSA) under the Clery Act, including annual CSA training provided by the Dean of Students.
- Complete mandatory training for UWM employees, including Sexual Harassment/Title IX and Mandatory Reporter (Executive Order #54) training.

Definitions

- Responsibility: A duty to manage or oversee something or someone.
- Expectation: A belief that something will occur or be the case in the future.
- (Source: Oxford English Dictionary)

University Advisor Responsibilities

Advisors support student growth and help enrich university life. Key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the organization's compliance with university policies, procedures, and applicable local/state/federal laws.
- Intervening in potentially harmful or inappropriate activities (e.g., hazing) and reporting them when necessary.
- Aligning student organization activities with UWM's educational mission and each group's stated purpose.
- Being available for guidance and support, while promoting constructive group development.
- Assisting with best practices in areas such as recruitment, leadership development, event planning, budgeting, risk management, and ethical decision-making.
- Ensuring timely updates of officer and membership records and informing Student Involvement of organizational changes.
- Addressing internal conflicts through constructive input and, if needed, reporting concerns to the Director of Student Involvement or the Dean of Students.

University Expectations of Advisors

- Provide continuity and historical context to new members.
- Act as a sounding board for ideas.
- Support the leadership development of officers and members.
- Offer outside perspectives on group decisions and initiatives.
- Help mediate conflicts and manage organizational crises.
- Give honest feedback to foster student leadership growth.
- Coach students through administrative and procedural tasks.

Organization Non-Compliance

Advisors must allow students to lead the decision-making process. However, if an advisor finds organizational decisions incompatible with their values, the University's mission, or campus norms:

- They should first express their concerns and attempt to guide the group.
- If concerns are ignored, the advisor may choose to step down.
- Activities in violation of university policy, or local/state/federal law, must be reported to the Dean of Students and/or UWM Police.

Advisor Responsibilities to Organizations

- Helping set realistic goals and objectives.
- Serving as a role model for officers and members.
- Being knowledgeable about applicable policies and procedures.
- Promoting educational and personal development.
- Supporting adherence to the organization's charter (constitution, bylaws, other operating documents) and internal governance procedures.

Organization Responsibilities to Advisors

- Discuss and clarify advisor expectations at the start of the year.
- Seek guidance regularly on policies, goals, and conflict resolution.
- Keep the advisor informed about meetings and share meeting minutes.
- Meet regularly to keep the advisor updated.
- Consult the advisor before structural or policy changes and major events.
- Respect the advisor's role: non-voting but with speaking privileges.
- Provide regular feedback on the advisor relationship, including successes and areas for improvement.

Mutual Expectations Between Advisors and Organizations

Clear, early communication is essential. Advisors should define what they will and won't do, and revisit these expectations annually, especially after leadership transitions.

- Use the Checklist of Expectations (available from Student Involvement) to facilitate initial meetings.
- Let student organizations grow or decline on their own merit unless direct intervention is requested.
- Expect changes in the focus of involvement each semester.
- See: Role of Advisor Worksheet (available from Student Involvement)

(Adapted from Dunkel & Schuh, 1998, Jossey-Bass)

An Advisor's Expectations of the Organization

Advisors may expect:

- Attendance at meetings and programs.
- Advance notice of schedule changes.
- Written goals and event calendars for each semester.

- Consultation on planned activities.
- Accurate records and organized transitions.
- Policy awareness and respect for academic priorities (e.g., avoiding finals week meetings).
- Open, respectful communication and ethical conduct.

CLERY ACT REPORTER TRAINING

As UWM employees, Faculty/Staff Advisors are required to complete several trainings including Sexual Harassment (Title IX) and Mandatory Reporter Wisconsin Executive Order #54 (child abuse and neglect). In addition to these trainings, Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) Training is required under the Federal Clery Act (Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998).

Faculty/Staff Advisors of Registered Student Organizations have been identified as UWM Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) and you must complete annual training regarding your reporting obligations. The Clery Act requires all CSAs to complete training annually.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCES

Student Involvement provides primary support for Faculty/Staff Advisors of Registered Student Organizations at UWM.

Student Involvement

351 Union

414-229-5780

<https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/>

General Information: activities@uwm.edu

Front Desk and Org Support: csidesk@uwm.edu

Office Hours

During Fall and Spring semesters, the office is open 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Thursday and 9:00am to 3:00pm on Fridays. During semester breaks and during summer, hours are reduced. For specific break and summer hours check the Student Involvement website at <https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/>

Student Involvement works with nearly 300 Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) at UWM through administering organization registration, campus policies and procedures, supervising university segregated fee expenditures, and providing organizations with guidance, support and training resources. The office offers a wide range of services, activities and programs for students and organizations. The office is a valuable resource for information regarding university groups

and campus activities. Student Involvement produces a variety of publications, presentations and workshops for student organizations and their advisors.

The publications that Advisors should familiarize themselves with are: [Student Organization Manual](#) and Advisor Handbook.

Student Involvement Website Resources

<https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/>

The Student Involvement website contains many publications, forms, tools and other resources to assist advisors and their student organizations to be successful.

Organization Advising Page

This webpage is part of the Student Involvement website and has valuable resources and tools to assist advisors with the task of coaching organizations through policies, procedures and laws they will encounter throughout the academic year. [Advisor & Liaisons Page](#)

Student Organizations at UWM Annual Planning Calendar

The Student Involvement website includes a student organization's annual planning calendar. This document is very helpful in terms of planning ahead for resources that the organization would like and to help new officers figure out what happens next with their organization. [Dates and Deadlines 2025-26.pdf](#)

Training and Development (STARS program)

STARS (Student Training And Recognizing Success) is the organization development program in Student Involvement. The program includes a point system for student organizations participating in everything from basic operations for their organization to office and membership development to hosting campus wide programs. High performing organizations are recognized at the Student Excellence Awards in April.

STARS includes a series of in-person and online training opportunities for student organization officers and members.

To get more information about these and other opportunities, contact the Student Involvement at 414-229-5780 or check out the Student Involvement web page for tips and updates to the leadership information available for students, <https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/>. Information on topical workshops currently offered is available at: [STARS organization development program](#)

Student Organization Recognition

Each year, student organizations, individual student leaders and members, and organization advisors contribute in countless ways to the quality and richness of life at UWM. Student Involvement seeks to recognize these contributions and accomplishments each year.

Student Excellence Awards

Each year student organizations at UWM exceed expectations and prove to be exemplary. Through volunteering, sponsoring events/programs, and service to others, student organizations have worked hard to develop, grow, and make progress towards their goals. Student Involvement seeks to recognize these students and their organizations for their commitment to excellence.

Nominations for these awards are due in March by submission through the Student Involvement website. The Student Excellence Awards Ceremony will be held in April. The ceremony will honor several categories of student and organizational leadership.

Nomination forms are on the Student Involvement website:

<https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/>

Recognition of Regional, National and International Awards

Student Involvement would like to encourage all student organizations to contact us with news and information on any awards the organization may have received. Such awards might be for service to an off-campus community or charity, excellence in the standards of a national or international organization or winning in competitive activities. If your organization would like to share news of such a form of recognition, please contact Tom Dake at dake@uwm.edu.

Student Leadership Programs

Please take a moment and [nominate your students](#) for our upcoming **Leadership Programs!**

Student Involvement is excited to connect with students through several leadership development opportunities. Advisor nominations make an **ENORMOUS** difference in encouraging student participation, particularly for students who might not self-identify with the word “leader” until someone else provides that shoulder-tap.

[Ignite Leadership Institute](#)

- Students will connect how their values and life experiences play a role in leading others and learn transferable skills to apply on-campus and beyond.
- Best for: **New leaders** looking to grow in their understanding of leadership and find community with other leaders. All students are welcome.

- We now offer **Ignite as a retreat** – students just come for 4 hours (plus free lunch!) on ONE DAY and complete the program! We will be offering these retreats twice a semester.
- Students will have a mix of large-group and small-group experiences led by coaches.

Strengths for Students Coaching

- Students will explore what their greatest talents are, and how to **develop** and **apply** their **strengths towards their future goals**.
- Best for: Any student interested in exploring their strengths, including grad students.
- 3-hour session with lunch included small group coaching session utilizing students' Clifton StrengthsFinder results

How I Lead

- Students will form a better understanding of **their leadership style** and how it will be valuable to their future, gain access to **resources** to better understand themselves, their vision, and how to build relationships with other students.
- Best for: **All students**
- Four-week, cohort-based program, offered in the spring semester

Lead the Change

- Students will develop skills related to being an **agent of change** in our community.
- Best for: Students interested in **social justice** and **creating change**.
- Three-week cohort-based program, offered in the spring semester

You can [nominate your students](#) for any program listed above. For more information on each of our leadership programs, visit: <https://uwm.edu/studentinvolvement/get-involved/leadership/>

ADVISOR CONTRACT 2025

As part of the annual renewal registration process for student organizations, all Faculty/Staff Advisors are required to complete an Advisor Contract. The Contract is good for the academic year regardless of how many student organizations the Advisor is working with.

Registered Student Organization Advisor Contract 2025-26

The Student Organization Advisor Contract must be completed by each advisor (student officers are required to submit a similar contract) each academic year. Failure to do so means an individual is not an "officially recognized" officer or advisor and will not be given access to registered student organization (RSO) resources by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (the University)

UNIVERSITY STATUS

RSOs are affiliated with, but not official units of, the University. As a condition of the affiliation, the RSO agrees to abide by UW System and University policies. In return, the RSO gains access to selected university facilities and resources.

The RSO may only identify themselves with the University by using the following format in the organization name: Club XYZ at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. UWM cannot appear at the beginning of the organization's name. To minimize confusion, Organization names cannot be the same name as any department, unit or course at UWM.

The name or actions of the RSO must not imply University endorsement of the RSO's purpose or activities or imply that the RSO is speaking on behalf of the University or any of its divisions or departments.

Registration does not mean the university supports or endorses the views held or the positions taken by the RSO.

The RSO may not use the University's name or logos in any advertisements, web pages, or other printed or electronic materials without the University's advanced, written permission.

RSOs must be student-led and all offices and leaders in the organization must be currently enrolled students.

Faculty/Staff Advisors serve as advisors, coaches and mentors to students in RSOs. Advisors ARE NOT permitted to conduct business on behalf of an RSO including, but not limited to, reserving on-campus space, reserving and use of UWM equipment or supplies and control organization funds held in non-University accounts such as the UW Credit Union and other banking institution accounts).

UNIVERSITY ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Advisors support student growth and help enrich university life. Key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the organization's compliance with university policies, procedures, and applicable local/state/federal laws. Intervening in potentially harmful or inappropriate activities (e.g., hazing) and reporting them when necessary.
- Aligning student organization activities with UWM's educational mission and each group's stated purpose.
- Being available for guidance and support, while promoting constructive group development.
- Assisting with best practices in areas such as recruitment, leadership development, event planning, budgeting, risk management, and ethical decision- making.
- Ensuring timely updates of officer and membership records and informing Student Involvement of organizational changes.

- Addressing internal conflicts through constructive input and, if needed, reporting concerns to the Director of Student Involvement or the Dean of Students.

Use of University Provided Resources

Resources provided by the University to the RSO, including the segregated university fees (seg fees), may not be utilized for academic, personal, or political purposes, commercial gain, or any other purposes prohibited by UW System or University policy.

The RSO may not engage in academic credit-producing activities and participation in an organization must be voluntary (cannot be required for academic credit).

Use of all University facilities and spaces is arranged by reservation in advance. Only current student officers of an RSO may make such reservations and must do so through the appropriate Space Allocation Authority (SAA). Reserved use of department controlled facilities (workshops, studios, labs, etc.) is at the discretion of the controlling department chair or the appropriate SAA.

Finances and Debt

Debt: The RSO and its officers are responsible for the RSO's debts. The University is not liable for debts incurred by the RSO.

Finances: Funding and revenue for student organizations must not con-mingle with UWM funds from other sources. Generally, revenue generated by a student organization belongs to the organization. Student organizations cannot be used to generate revenue or accept payments on behalf of a UWM department.

UWM Employee and Campus Security Authority Training

As UWM employees, Faculty/Staff Advisors are required to complete a number of trainings including Sexual Harassment (Title IX) and Mandatory Reporter Wisconsin Executive Order #54 (report suspected child abuse and neglect). In addition to the trainings, Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) Training is required under the Clery Act (Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998).

Faculty/Staff Advisors of registered student organizations have been identified as UWM Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) and you must complete annual training regarding our reporting obligations. The Clery Act requires all CSAs to complete training annually.

If this form is being completed prior to October, a link to the CSA training will be emailed to you.

If you are completing this form after this date, a link for the training will appear here:

CSA Training Link (Unavailable at this time)

As a Campus Security Authority (CSA), you must promptly report all Clery reportable crimes to <https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/reporting-concerns/>. If you see a crime in action, you must report this to the UWM Police, at 414-229-9911.

The Stop Hazing Act (December 2024) amends the Clery Act and requires education and prevention training for all students, faculty and staff. Anticipate this training coming soon.

More information about the statistic collection process and definition of CSAs is available in the Compliance with Clery Act policy selected Academic and Administrative Policies (SAAPs) SAAP 10-4 [Here](#).

Conflict of Interest Considerations for Faculty/Staff Advisors

CHAPTER UWS 8 UNCLASSIFIED STAFF CODE OF ETHICS of the Wisconsin Administrative Code applies to all organization Faculty/Staff Advisors. Specifically, note UWS 8.02 and UWS 8.03.

Faculty/Staff Advisors for Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) must ensure that, in their role as advisor to an organization, they do not appear to or engage in activities that involve a conflict of interest. Student organizations must be student led, but the advising role places the university employee in a potentially challenging situation to exert influence, knowingly or unknowingly, over the decision-making process of student officers and therefore create a conflict-of interest situation.

Student organizations do arrange contracts for services with UWM employees and make use of segregated fees (seg fees) funds to pay these individuals. These payments are processed through the payroll system.

The relationship between a student organization and their Faculty/Staff Advisor is unique. Student organization's use of segregated fee funding to make payments to a Faculty/Staff Advisor can compromise the relationship between the two. Payments of this nature are generally not recommended and are subject to heightened levels of scrutiny to ensure that a conflict of interest and/or inappropriate use of seg fees is not taking place.

Questions regarding potential conflict of interest's situations may be directed to Student Involvement, csidesk@uwm.edu

Lawful Activities

The RSO, its officers, and its members are responsible for any action which violates federal, state, local laws and ordinances, or University policies. The University expects the RSO to follow the applicable laws and UW System and University policies in connection with their activities. Failure to do so could subject the RSO, its officers, and members to personal liability and/or internal University disciplinary action.

Liability

The RSO's activities, including any which may occur on the University's campus, are not eligible for liability protection under the State of Wisconsin Self- Funded Liability Program. For any events hosted or organized by the RSO, the RSO must obtain special-event(s) liability insurance at its own expense. Student officers are responsible for university property, office space, or equipment in the care of the RSO and must personally reimburse the University for any property damage or missing items that occurred while they were an officer of the organization.

Hold Harmless

As a condition of serving as a student officer of an RSO, the RSO and its officers must hold harmless and indemnify the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (UWS), its officers, employees, and all of its agents from any and all liability, loss damages, costs or expenses which arise from the negligent act or omission of any of its members, agents or invitees.

Membership

Unless the nature of the RSO entitles it to an exemption in accordance with applicable laws, no student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or be discriminated against by, the RSO because of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, national origin, ancestry, disability pregnancy, marital or parental status, political affiliation or belief, arrest or conviction record, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic. Regent's Policy 30-6 allows religious and political organizations to require that officers adhere to the beliefs articulated in the organization's purpose.

University Students

RSOs are groups whose primary and regular membership is comprised of and controlled by enrolled University students (student-led). RSO officers must meet additional enrollment requirements. Total membership must be at least 3/4 currently enrolled UWM Students.

Non-Students

RSOs may include non-student members (18 years of age or older), but they may not serve as officers, vote, or have a controlling interest in the RSO.

Faculty/Staff Advisors

Faculty/Staff Advisors must be current University faculty/staff who have met all ongoing advisor requirements, including required trainings, and are in good standing.

ORGANIZATION STAGES

Organizations, departments, businesses, etc. will go through various developmental stages: forming, norming, storming, and performing (Tuckman's model of organization development). These stages may begin and end sequentially, or they may overlap. Knowledge of these stages is useful for the advisor, because many times an advisor may need to change his/her advising style depending upon the organization's stage of development.

Forming: In this stage, members determine their place in the organization and go through a testing process. Harmony and unanimous decisions occur on most decision items, and members get to know each other and develop rapport. An advisor can provide opportunities for training and development, including icebreakers and workshops or retreats. Also, the advisor may identify expectations and goals of members and executive officers and provide support to the organization.

Norming: During this stage, the organization begins to develop its own personality. An advisor will notice how the organization responds to acceptable and unacceptable behavior within the organization. Also, during this phase, the organization may need assistance learning how to confront unacceptable behavior by organization members. The organization may develop rules, or do's and don'ts lists.

Storming: After norms have been established, individuals develop their own opinions regarding those norms. The organization discovers that everyone may not share the same opinion within the organization. Conflicts may arise during this stage, and there is a high level of emotion. The organization will need a strong rapport to survive this period-and have mutual respect for each other and the organization's vision, mission, and goals. During this time, the best thing the advisor can do is to recognize what is happening and respond with team-building exercises and/or conflict resolution strategies.

Performing: By this time the organization has made it through some hard times, learned from mistakes, and is prepared to continue meeting the goals of the organization. At this point, complacency may develop among members because they are comfortable with each other. An advisor should continue role modeling and assisting the organization with setting expectations and goals, so things keep moving forward.

[Switched transforming to performing. Adapted from: Copeland, T.R. (1996, November). Successful Matches Depend on Adviser's Style, Group Stage. *The Bulletin*, 8-12.]

ADVISING STYLES

Your advising style is the way you interact with the students. An advisor may identify with a particular style or use a combination of styles. At different points in an organization's formation and development, an advisor may play various roles. It is important to determine what role an advisor would like to play in the group, and if that role will meet the needs and expectations of the students.

Educator: Advising is situational, and the advisor may act as a teacher, coach, consultant, policy interpreter, continuity provider, and crisis intervener at any given time. The "educator" allows organizations to take risks and make mistakes while providing support. The educator's philosophy may be: "Students have the ability to meet their goals; however, my ability to empower them will enhance their natural abilities."

Good time to be an "Educator": The educator style is valuable in all stages of the group's development; however, there are times when being a combination of one of the following styles and an educator will prove to be more effective. Being an educator is essential for working with a STUDENT organization; every experience can be a learning one.

Overseer: The overseer stays at a distance and does not attend all meetings or events and only intervenes when called upon. This is not a very popular style because the organization may misinterpret your distance as lack of attention.

Good time to be an "Overseer": The only times where it is suggested to be an overseer is when the group is functioning so effectively that they just need to occasionally check in with you, which is a hard stage to reach, or when the members of the organization are not following through on your expectations of them. It is not generally beneficial to adopt the overseer style; try to work with the organization to correct the problem before it gets to that point.

Referee: The referee educates and oversees while handling organization disputes.

Good time to be a "Referee": An organization that may need this type of advising style could be at a stage where organization norms have been established, though the organization discovers individual likes and dislikes regarding these norms (i.e. storming). Organization members discover that every member in the organization does not share the same opinion. The advisor should introduce conflict resolution, team building, and meeting management activities. The advisor should seek to empower the organization members to transform themselves as they facilitate.

Boss: This style is very authoritative, and people who use it believe they always have the right answers. The boss expects the organization to take orders and "fall in line."

Good time to be a “Boss”: If the advisor balances this style with "educator," the resulting style is not as bad as it sounds. In fact, the style can be persuasive and motivating if the advisor has strong interpersonal skills. When the group is new or if there are internal leadership problems, the boss mentality can move the organization forward. This style is ineffective if the advisor is threatening or intimidating, or if the president of the organization leads in the same manner.

*[Adapted from: Copeland, T.R. (1996, November). Successful Matches Depend on Adviser's Style, Group's Stage. *The Bulletin*, 8-12.]*

ADVISING STRATEGIES

When all is said and done, here are a few additional helpful suggestions for advising:

- Network with other advisors.
- Co-advise, this will allow two people to collaborate. "Two heads are better than one."
- Outline steps that the advisor will take if a member has academic or personal difficulty.
- Attend trainings and workshops for advisors.
- Meet with officers/president regularly.
- Attend organization meetings and activities.
- Contact Student Involvement with any questions or concerns you may have in assisting and supporting your organization as well as when you need a little specialized help.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND STUDENT GROUPS

Motivating Students

Some students perceive an intrinsic value, while others perceive extrinsic value in being involved. Understanding what motivates each student will help you enable him/her to take on responsibilities and become involved in the organization.

What are Motives? Motives are needs, wants, drives, or impulses that are directed toward goals and may be conscious or unconscious. Of course, each individual is motivated by different things, and students join an organization for a variety of reasons. Doing an activity with students may be beneficial when helping identify what motivates them. Some students may indicate that they are motivated by the attention received by others for a job well done; some may say they are most motivated by inner desire. There is no one right answer, but an advisor should be tuned in to the variety of factors that affect motivation so that they may better predict what will work and what may not.

What Motivates? A student may be motivated by a variety of factors, and no form of motivation will be 100% effective. The following is a list of different forms of motivation. Some of the examples are extrinsic (motivation coming from an outside source) others are intrinsic (motivation that stems from the internal desire or goal of the student).

Recognition: Recognition is used frequently by advisors. Recognize a member's contribution verbally or in print, in front of the organization or alone. This is an easy and effective way to motivate someone - almost everybody appreciates a "Thank you!" or recognition of a job well done. Also note who enjoys public and private recognition.

Achievement: A student motivated by the need for achievement may have a tendency to overcome obstacles, to exercise power, or to strive to do something difficult as well and as quickly as possible. Achievement is often tied to positive recognition from outside sources. In a few cases, there can be an internal desire for achievement, so the person would be satisfied by completing a task to the best of his/her ability.

Desire: Some students are interested in becoming members of organizations that will lead to a desirable outcome. So, if the outcome of the organization's activity is known to be desirable, the student may be more likely to participate.

Value: If the student perceives value in participation, they may be more motivated to participate (friendship, professional goals, personal interests, etc.).

Peer Approval: A student can perceive approval and may be more likely to participate if provided with appropriate recognition. Caution: There are many students that join organizations to gain approval/acceptance from their peers to cover-up personal issues. Watch for students who are

struggling with self-confidence or that stop showing up. Follow up with students who leave to make sure they are doing okay and ask them back if appropriate.

*[Adapted from: Dunkel, N.W. & Schuh, J.H. (1998). *Advising Student Groups and Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.]*

Goal Setting for Organizations

For many student leaders, setting goals for an organization can be a new challenge. Even if they have been successful in the past with setting and achieving goals for themselves, the processes for setting goals for a group, team or organization will call for a different set of skills.

It is important that the goal-setting process involves the full membership of the organization. Without their participation, there will be no buy in and without that, the burden of reaching the goal lands exclusively on the officers.

There are many resources available on the internet for brainstorming, developing the purpose and vision for an organization. Purpose statement is required to register the organization. The development of a vision statement could be a good next step to setting goals for the organization.

Recording, editing and finalizing group goals can be challenging but it can also be team-building experience as members share their thoughts, and the group develops the language of the goals.

Goal Setting for Registered Student Organizations

The model for SMART goals works well for many student organizations. In this model, each goal must have the following components:

SPECIFIC

- Does your goal clearly and specifically state what you are trying to achieve?
- If your goal is particularly large, try breaking it down into smaller, specific SMART goals.

MEASURABLE

- How will your group know if progress is being made on achieving your goal?
- Can you quantify or put numbers to your outcome?

ATTAINABLE

- Is achieving your goal dependent on anyone else?
- What factors may prevent you from accomplishing your goal?
- How can you overcome these factors?

RELEVANT

- Why is this goal important to your organization?

- What values or parts of your organization's mission does this goal reflect?
- What effect will achieving this goal have on others?

TIMELY

- When will you reach your goal?
- If your goal is particularly large, try breaking it down into smaller goals with appropriate deadlines.

For worksheets, handouts and assistance in using this model for organization goal setting, contact Student Involvement at csidesk@uwm.edu or visit our website at [UWM Student Involvement](#)

Types of Challenges and Problems

The following lists are provided so that an advisor may have a better idea of the types of problems they may face with their organization. This list is not all inclusive, but hopefully the suggestions can serve as a Handbook. Under each listed problem are suggestions for addressing and fixing the problem.

Leadership Challenges/Problems

The leader does not consult with the organization before making significant decisions. Have a meeting with the leader to discuss the importance of consensus building and developing ownership in members by letting them be part of the decision-making process.

The leader appears incompetent because they do not have self-confidence, are non-assertive, or lacks interest in the organization. Since the rest of the organization looks to the leader for direction and support, try to work closely with the leader to develop his/her skills and confidence. If the leader lacks interest in his/her position, ask why they are in the position and help him/her to see how they are affecting the organization.

A rivalry exists between leaders in the organization. Depending on the situation, the advisor can meet with the leaders to talk through how things are working within the organization and lead the conversation to the leadership of the organization and have them reflect on their roles and effectiveness as leaders. Highlight some of the issues within the organization and ask each of them how they can help to resolve what is going on. Let them take ownership of their actions. A more passive way to handle this situation is to do a team-building exercise with the leaders or a personality assessment (i.e. Myers-Briggs), which will allow the leaders to see the various roles that are needed to make a group work, as well as the preferences of each personality type.

The leader is overloaded with work and has too many time conflicts. Many student leaders take on too much. When you see that a leader is overloaded, talk about it and see how you can help, but don't take on the student's responsibilities for him/her. Teach him/her about the importance of delegation or time management or selecting the most important things to be a part of...even if it means you'll lose him/her as the leader of the group.

Membership Challenges/Problems

- *Low attendance at meetings.* There are three basic reasons why attendance at meetings can be consistently low: (1) the organization has not recruited many members; (2) the meetings are not well run; or (3) the members do not feel a vested interest in the organization because they have not helped to produce or do anything. It could also be a combination of these things. The first step is to identify what is, or is not, happening, and then determine how the organization can fix the problem.

- *Members have low satisfaction and morale, are bored, do not communicate well, feel left out, are apathetic, or appear to be incompetent.* Start with the leaders because these are the students that the other members look to for morale and motivation. Discuss with them what is going on and how they can turn things around. Hold a social function in place of a meeting...this will re-energize members.
- Work with the officers to structure meetings to include a team-building activity or mixer for students to be active and involved.
- Members compete for attention. Find a way to recognize each member for the work they do but focus more on the group process and success.
- *An individual member's goals differ from those of the organization.* Have a mission and goal-setting meeting. It is important for the organization and individual member's goals to align for the group to move forward. In this process, the group should change or reaffirm its goals, or students could lose interest and leave.
- *There exists a lack of trust among members.* Do an exercise for team building or trust-building. Figure out the root of the problem and work on that.
- *Event fails.* When a group does not work together or know how to do something, failure is right around the corner. If a program fails, reflect with the organization on why it happened and what can be learned for next time.
- *Event succeeds, but only a few members do the work.* This is a common situation, and it is not necessarily a problem. Some events/activities only require the support of a few members. Problems arise when the whole organization needs to pull together to produce an event and members do not pull their weight or let the team down.
- Following up with the individuals that did not pull their weight to see what went wrong.
- During that conversation, and at a general body meeting, highlight the importance of teamwork and being dependable, as well as the negative effects of not being a team player. Understanding consequences is an important step of personal development.
- *There is a lack of ideas.* Lack of ideas comes when members are not interested, or they do not feel their ideas are valued.
- Help them feel valued and interested.
- The brainstorming process is a delicate one. There is no bad idea in the brainstorming process, so treat this process as a safe zone for ideas.

Organizational Challenges/Problems

Meetings are disorganized. Assist the leader in creating an agenda and how to delegate tasks effectively during the meeting.

Meetings are too long. See above suggestion.

The organization suffers from financial problems. The type of financial problem the organization is experiencing will determine how you will proceed. If the organization does not have enough money to operate, they can organize a fundraiser, submit a budget to the Student Appropriations Committee (SAC), or implement dues for members. However, if a member of the organization is embezzling funds, the issue is more complicated. Review the organization's constitution and by-laws (UWM Charter document) to check for procedure for removal and financial responsibility of members. If you feel the situation is too big, arrange a meeting with a Student Involvement staff member.

There is no continuity from one year to the next. Changing membership is part of the ebb and flow of student organizations, but this does not mean the organization needs to start over each year. Work with the current leaders to recruit and cultivate new members and leaders who will take over the next year and ensure that each officer/leader creates a transition manual/binder to pass along to his/her successor. In the Officer Training Canvas course, there is a module for officer transitions to assist organizations and their advisors to make a successful officer transition.

There is a failure to complete the organization's administrative tasks. Review duties with each officer so they know what their responsibilities are, and if they do not choose to fulfill those responsibilities, find another member who can. This may require follow regarding an officer who cannot or will not carry out the role and responsibilities they have been given.

The organization has no "plan of action." It is a good idea to have a goal setting meeting at the beginning of each semester. This gets everyone on the same page. There should also be a few reassessment/evaluation meetings during the semester to modify or create new goals.

Intra-Organization Challenges/Problems

- *Disagreement between an organization and other student organizations.* Talk with the advisor of that group to discuss what is happening and act as the moderator. If the problem is not resolved, see the Student Involvement staff.
- *Disagreement with institutional policies and procedures.* Set a meeting with a staff member in **Student Involvement** at csidesk@uwm.edu.

Advisor Challenges/Problems

- *Organization members avoid the advisor.* Do not take it personally. Find a student or two whom you can connect with and slowly work to integrate yourself into the organization.
- *Organization members do not pay attention to the advisor's advice.* The members will not always listen to the advisor. As long as the decision the students make is not against organizational, institutional or governmental policies/laws, there is not much you can do. Sometimes students need to learn from their mistakes. If the students are always disregarding your advice, reflect on how you are offering your words. Are you trying to run the organization or are you looking into the best interest of the organization and offering your thoughts at appropriate times?
- *The advisor is overwhelmed by the responsibility.* The advisor's job is not to run the organization. Work with the students to balance tasks and responsibilities.
- *The advisor assumes a leadership function.* Advisors are a part of a student organization to advise, not to assume leadership functions/positions.

[Adapted from: Lorenz, N. & Shipton, W. (1984). A Practical Approach to Group Advising and Problem Solving. A Handbook for Student Group Advisers. Schuh, J.H. (Ed.). American College Personnel Association.]

Recognizing and Resolving Problems

Generally, there are two types of problems: task problems and process problems. The two are interrelated, though an advisor should be able to recognize each independently of the other.

Task problems are problems that refer to the programs, the projects, and the activities that the organization was formed to achieve. For example:

- A programming council was unsuccessful in the planning and implementation of programs because it was disorganized.
- Process problems refer to the interrelationships among organization members. Process problems have to do with how organization members interact. For example:
- A programming council was unsuccessful in the planning and the implementation of programs because the members did not like each other.

The best time to observe organization problems is during meetings. The advisor should be aware of a silence that could indicate anger, boredom, frustration, or something else. The advisor should be aware of body language or facial expressions that can indicate important emotions.

If the advisor decides that a problem exists, they should intervene and help the organization solve the problem. The advisor should decide when it is appropriate to intervene by asking two questions:

- "To what extent does the problem interfere with the organization's task?"
- "To what extent does the problem interfere with the organization process or the satisfaction of organization members?" (*Lorenz & Shipton, 1984, pp. 79-80*)

As advisors, we are reminded that "depending upon the nature of the organization and the problem, it may be useful for the advisor to involve the leaders and members in this process (the process of diagnosis and intervention). The use of consultants or resource people is also desirable. It should be remembered that problem diagnosis and intervention is a process that requires careful observation, thought, and consideration of the impact of alternative remedies. Quick solutions rarely occur. The advisor continually must assess the situation, scrutinize the ramifications of the intervention, and be flexible enough to make alterations or changes when necessary" (*Lorenz & Shipton, 1984, p. 80*).

*[Adapted from: Lorenz, N. & Shipton, W. (1984). *A Practical Approach to Group Advising and Problem Solving. A Handbook for Student Group Advisors.* Schuh, J.H. (Ed.). American College Personnel Association.]*

Failure: A Problem or a Teaching Tool?

Many advisors struggle with the question, “Should I let (fill in the blank activity or event) that the organization is planning fail?” One way of thinking about this question is considering if the failure will create a financial issue for the organization or will negatively impact partner groups or offices. A group struggling can be an important learning tool afterwards, it can be okay to let it fail. Some advisors might not have the flexibility to make this decision if they have been instructed to ensure the success of the organization activities or they just do not want the activity to fail. Talk with the members of the organization before it gets to the point of possible failure to determine what the protocol will be and at what point the advisor should step in.

People learn from their mistakes, usually. A prompt and detailed evaluation of each activity/program coordinated by the organization will reveal ways to improve upcoming endeavors or show minor mistakes that can be avoided in the future. However, if major mistakes are allowed to happen, the impact on the organization could be detrimental or create a poor image of the organization on campus. Major mistakes may be something the organization or the University cannot afford since they may result in the loss of members, budget cuts and negative press. The organization stands to lose the most, so assist them in avoiding these mistakes.

Advisors can act as a mediator for members to minimize the number of events that may fail. Training programs for students can provide discussion about the prevention and ramifications of failure. The organization needs to know that canceling organization traditions may result in the loss of funding, a decrease in the number of future events, or a decrease in membership because of bad publicity. Organization members need to understand that the reach of their events extends beyond the scope of the active members. As a result of training, success, rather than the acceptance of failure, will be the criterion established for events.

Advisors can make failures a learning situation by emphasizing the positive and asking students how the process can be improved. At times students may be too hard on themselves if the event did not meet the group’s expectations. As an advisor, it is important to help students set realistic goals and evaluate the positive and negative factors that affected the event. Encouraging students to make checklists and timetables can help create a successful program for future years. Students also learn how to handle complaints as well as examine their own personal skills. As a result, leadership may change within an organization, or students may decide that they want to participate in activities in a way that is more suited to their abilities. Generally, it is recommended that advisors limit their input about the selection of programs and events the organization may choose but ensure that the production and planning of the activity is handled well since mistakes seem to occur most often in this phase of event planning.

There will be times when advisors are faced with the dilemma of deciding if they should intervene or if an event should fail. Advisors need to understand the organization’s members, the campus environment and the expectations of the University community before the decision can be made about letting an activity fail. Advisors can assist students by setting goals early, and they can seek advice from fellow professionals/advisors that have faced other similar situations. If the

organization does fail, advisors can help students learn by not ignoring problems and by rationally evaluating what has taken place. Advisors then can make the experience beneficial, and the program will not have been a total failure.

*[Adapted from: Ron Callahan, *The Consequences of Failure*, Programming magazine.]*

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