

ADVISORS

Current University regulations require that each student organization have a full time faculty or staff advisor. What are they for? How can you best utilize you advisor? An advisor has three basic functions:

- ❖ An advisor is a consultant to help with the organization's growth and development.
- ❖ An advisor adds to the community or your organization.
- ❖ An advisor helps in the area of program content and purpose.

The advisor may be a director or an overseer, but the approach lies somewhere in between. Choose your advisor well. If your constitution calls for your academic department to appoint one, make certain you input is considered. Discuss with your group and with your advisor what you want the advisor's role to be. Take into consideration that the advisor has to maintain a liaison role between the organization and the University. Your advisor is a consultant and should be a stabilizing force should you need help.

CHOOSING AN ADVISOR

It is important for an organization to find a good advisor, someone who will be willing to assist the student leaders and be accessible for consultation if needed. All registered organizations are expected to have at least one IUS faculty or administrative staff member serve as an advisor. Student organizations are encouraged to talk with faculty or staff members that they know and ask them to advise their organization. If the student is having difficulty finding an advisor, the coordination of student activities will serve as an advisor until one is found.

If faculty or staff member is being approached to be an advisor, make sure a discussion is held on the advisor's expectations. The role of advising will vary somewhat from group depending upon the expectations each has for one another. It is crucial during the initial stages of the relationship that the organization's members and advisors discuss, negotiate, and clarify the advisory role. Use the worksheet ADVISING ROLE (found in the appendix) as a guide to shape the desired advising relationship and the worksheet ADVISING AGREEMENT to make a commitment to the relationship expectations. If changes take place during the course of the year, either on the part of the organization or the advisor, the role may need to be re-negotiated and redefined. The advisor's role should be revisited on a yearly basis, usually after elections to review the commitments.

The Student Organization/Advisor Relationship

An advisor can have a positive effect of the success of the organization especially if they have a strong belief in the organization, a desire to help students succeed, the ability to share expertise, and a commitment to spending some time with the group.

An advisor can help a student organization by:

- ❖ acting as a liaison between the organization and the institution
- ❖ clarifying institution policy and procedures
- ❖ providing a different perspective providing positive feedback and constructive criticism
- ❖ providing continuity to the organization's policies, programs, and traditions
- ❖ assisting with the training of new officers and members developing leadership skills with organization members
- ❖ encouraging students to maintain a balance between academic and co-curricular aspects of student life
- ❖ acting as a positive role model

The student organization can help the advisor by:

- ❖ *giving an orientation relating to the organization's activities and structure*
- ❖ *providing meeting times to the advisor*
- ❖ *providing the advisor with regular updates on student organization's financial status*
- ❖ *keeping the advisor informed of organization's plans and problems*
- ❖ *making use of the advisor's background and experiences*
- ❖ *inviting the advisor to activities*
- ❖ *making the advisor feel welcome and a part of the group*
- ❖ *showing appreciation for the advisor's services*
- ❖ *distributing minutes of the meetings and other organization material to advisor*
- ❖ *being willing to discussing any dissatisfaction members have with the advisor and allowing open communication*