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OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Advisor Manual

Student Clubs and Organizations

2016-2017



Office of Student Life  
Division of Enrollment and Student Services

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Welcome to Clubs and Organizations!

Being a Advisor is an important responsibility and one not to take lightly. It is important that Advisors understand the time commitments they are undertaking. Being an Advisor can mean taking on long nights, weekend activities and countless teaching moments with club members. However, being an Advisor also means possibly changing a student's life. Throughout this manual you will find tips, techniques and support that will assist you in being the best Advisor possible.

We want to be a resource and support system to you during your time as a Club & Organization Advisor. We are willing and able to assist you, to the best of our abilities, when it comes to supporting your clubs success. Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Life anytime you have a question or concern.

Thank you for your time and commitment to assist our students and community.

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# Manual: Point and Purpose

The information in this manual is intended to help support you during your role as a Clubs and Organizations Advisor. Throughout the manual you will find supporting documents that outline roles and responsibilities of your position and regulations for how a club or organization should function. We do our best to outline as much information as possible to answer your questions, however not every question can or will be answered. If you are unable to find the answer to your question within the manual please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Life for more support.

It is important to the Office of Student Life that Advisors receive support and guidance on a professional level. You will also find information and exercises within the manual that can assist you with Advisor and leadership growth.

## Advisor Requirements

At Oklahoma City Community College, an Advisor MUST:

- Be employed by the college .
- Have earned a Bachelor's degree or have an Associate's degree with three years of working experience.
- Have approval from supervisors and Presidents Cabinet Member to be an Advisor.
- Advisor Contract on file in the Student Life Office by required deadline.
- Complete Campus Security Authority training by required deadline.
- Ability and willingness to travel with organization, including weekends and overnight events.
- *Substitutions may be acceptable in the case of extreme circumstance.*
- Attendance at Leadership Workshop(s)  
*Advisors may divide responsibility for workshops if necessary, as long as an Advisor is present for each club.*
- Attendance at required amount of Advisor Development during Fall and Spring semesters.
- Participation of organization meetings and events.
- Maintain communication with club officers and Student Life regarding events, issues, travel, etc.
- Know, understand and uphold policy and procedures outlined in College Handbook and Club Manual.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Each Advisors relationship to their student organization is different. Some Advisors play very active roles, attending meetings, working with student officers, and assisting in program planning and development. Others maintain a more passive relationship with their organization. The challenge for Advisors is to balance the roles of advisor, teacher, and consultant.

It is an expectation of the Office of Student Life that each Advisor:

- Maintain regular contact with his/her organization. Advisors need to be informed about the activities of their club/organization.
- Serve primarily as resources and consultants to student clubs and organizations.
- Help foster an atmosphere conducive to learning and exploration; students should have room to succeed and experience growth through failure.

- Provide stronger guidance during times when activities involve issues crucial to the institution (budget, hosting outside speakers, liability issues, travel, priority programs, etc.). Strong guidance during these times provides students reassurance in their support system and reinforces the importance of how their club or organization affects the community around them.
- Help the club or organization in three different areas of growth:
  - \***Group Growth** –teaching the skills and responsibilities of good leadership and “fellowship,” such as problem-solving, decision-making, financial management, conflict resolution, and program planning.
  - \***Participant Growth** –help the group’s members grow as individuals by teaching skills for improving relationships and improving self. These skills include good communication, stress management, and risk taking.
  - \***Program Content Growth** –help shape program content by offering new perspectives and direction. They initiate new programming ideas, stimulate discussions, etc.

# Exploring Advisor Expectations

It is important Advisors and the organizations communicate their expectations to each other. The Advisor should be very clear about the things he/she will do, and the things he/she will not do. Advisors are not expected to carry the weight of the organization on your back. Letting the organization thrive or decline on its merits can be a wonderful learning experience.

Expectations will vary according to the needs of the organization and the Advisor. It is recommended that Advisors meet with club officers at the beginning of each new academic year to discuss expectations and goals for both parties. It is also helpful to have these meetings when there is turnover in the officer positions. The focus on some of your duties may change each semester depending on the abilities of the members of the organization and officer team.

## ***Directions***

This checklist is designed to help Advisors and student officers arrive at a clear and mutually agreed upon role for the Advisor. The Advisor and each executive officer should respond to the following items and meet to compare answers and “iron out” any differences. For items, which are determined not to be the advisor’s responsibility, it would be valuable to clarify which officer will assume that responsibility.

For each of the following statements, respond on a scale of 1 - 4 how important this function is:

- 1 - Essential for the advisor to do
- 2 - Nice, but not essential
- 3 - Not an advisor’s role
- 4 - Does not apply to our organization

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend general meetings and executive committee meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remind officers/members of deadlines and calendar events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be available to meet with the President/Chair before each meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Speak up during discussion if you have relevant information, but otherwise let the students run meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Behave as an active member of the organization – showing interest in activities, dedication to organization, volunteer for appropriate tasks, etc. (except for voting and holding office).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide alternative thoughts or contributions to help students see both sides of an issue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend organization activities, on and off campus. Be cautious of the social events that you attend, do not want to put yourself in an awkward situation where underage drinking might be happening.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Request to see the treasurer's books at the end of each semester, and assist when needed with financial matters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check major correspondence before it is sent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide continuity by acting as a custodian of organization paraphernalia, records, etc., during the summer and during officer transitions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep the official files and copies of official correspondence in your office, if needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform the organization of infractions of its bylaws, codes, and standing rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep the organization aware of its stated objectives when planning events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform the organization of leadership opportunities in which members can participate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ State advisor responsibilities to the organization at the beginning of each year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Let the group work out problems, including making mistakes and “doing it the hard way.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage an evaluation of each activity by those students responsible for planning it and all organizational members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage teamwork and cooperation among the officers of the organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be familiar with College facilities, services, and procedures that affect organization activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Positively represent and recognize the organization in your college capacity, if applicable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recommend programs, speakers, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise, or refer students to Office of Student Life

# Expectations of the Club and Organization

As an Advisor, you will hold certain expectations of the organization. All expectations should be discussed at organization meetings at the beginning of the academic year. Feedback and evaluation are a good way to see if expectations are being met. They may be all or some of the following:

- Members' attendance at programs and meetings.
- Advance notification of meetings or cancellations.
- Written organization goals and objectives for each semester.
- Written calendar of events for each semester, if possible
- Consultation regarding planned events or programs.
- Accurate record-keeping.
- Commitment to a smooth officer transition.
- Awareness of college policies.
- Sensitivity to the academic nature of college life (i.e. no meetings during finals)
- Willingness to provide feedback to each other.
- Open communication.
- Commitment to the organization.
- Honesty.
- Mutual respect.
- Ethical behavior.



# Understanding Club and Organization Dynamics

Just like every individual is unique and has special talents so does each club or organization. What is successful for one club may be the downfall of another. It is important for Advisors to understand the culture and dynamic of their club or organization. Understanding the backgrounds and relationships of students that make up the club or organization will help Advisors better guide the group to success.

## Club and Organization Stages

Organizations, departments, businesses, etc. will go through various developmental stages: forming, norming, storming, and performing. 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.

- 1. 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. Advisors 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.
- 2. Norming:** During this stage, the organization begins to develop its own personality. A 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.
- 3. 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.
- 4. 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. A Advisor should continue role modeling and assisting the organization with setting expectations and goals so things keep moving forward.

# Club and Organization Developmental Stages

Another perspective on the student-Advisor relationship looks at the developmental stage of the club or organization and what type of advisement is best for each stage. This theory also suggests that the Advisor can adjust his/her advising style to fit the organization. This might be more difficult to do, but it has the most impact. Determine what level the group is at, and modify your style accordingly if possible.

## Organization Development Levels

- 1. Infancy:** Students demonstrate low levels of commitment to the organization, programming skills and responsibility for their actions; however, they are enthusiastic.
- 2. Adolescence:** Students demonstrate moderate programming skills, interest, commitment and responsibility.
- 3. Young Adulthood:** Students demonstrate competency in programming skills and increasing commitment, plus a willingness to take responsibility for their own actions.
- 4. Maturity:** Students demonstrate a high degree of competence in programming and group skills. A strong commitment to the group and a willingness to take responsibility for their own and

Matching the most effective advising style to the students' stage of development becomes an exercise in deductive reasoning. The advisor's styles and major role functions are described as follows.

- 1. Program Director:** High concern for product, low concern for process. Best used for students in the infancy stage.

The Advisor takes on the following roles:

Member: takes part in group activities much like a member, becomes a part of the group.

Programmer: identifies, plans and implements activities with the student group.

- 2. Teacher/Director:** High concern for product, high concern for process. Best used for students in adolescence.

The Advisor takes on the following roles:

Advocate: persuades students concerning the appropriateness of activities.

Authority: monitors students' compliance with legal requirements as well as institutional procedures and regulations, and programming.

Expert: offers suggestions to students based on experience or specialized knowledge.

**3. Advisor/Teacher:** Low concern for product because students take over this concern when they reach young adulthood, high concern for process.

The Advisor roles are:

Educator: encourages student participation in developmentally powerful experiences.

Resource: provides alternatives and suggestions to group leaders or members on request.

Evaluator: assists the group in collecting data to be used in decision making, program planning, evaluation, etc.

Process consultant: assists students with increasing the effectiveness of group functioning (e.g. problem solving); tends to be content neutral.

Fact-finder: provides information to students upon request.

**4. Consultant:** Low concern for product and process because students assume responsibility for both. Best used for students that has reached maturity.

The Advisor roles are:

Reflector: serves as a "sounding board" for students' ideas and plans.

Fact-finder: provides information to students upon request.

## 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 Advisors 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.

# 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 club or organization.

### What are motives?

Needs, wants, drives, or impulses that are directed toward goals are all different motives found within a group dynamic. Motives may be conscious or unconscious. Of course, each individual is motivated by different things, and students join a club or 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 a Advisor should be tuned in to the variety of factors that affect motivation so that he/she 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 clubs or organizations that will lead to a desirable outcome. So, if the outcome of the activity is known to be desirable, the student may be more likely to participate.
- **Value:** If the student perceives value in participation, he/she 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.

## Recognizing and Resolving Problems

Generally, there are two types of problems: task problems and process problems. The two are interrelated, recognizing each as individual issues will assist the Advisor when addressing the problems with the officer team or organization as a whole.

Task problems are problems that refer to the programs, the projects, and the activities that the organization was formed to achieve. Process problems refer to the interrelationships among organization members. Process problems have to do with how organization members interact.

- A programming committee was unsuccessful in the planning and implementation of programs because it was disorganized = Task problem
- A programming committee was unsuccessful in the planning and the implementation of programs because the members did not like each other = Process problem.

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. Advisor should be aware of body language or facial expressions that can indicate important emotions. If the Advisor decides that a problem exists, he/she should intervene and help the club or organization solve the problem. Advisors should decide when it is appropriate to intervene by asking two questions:

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

As a Advisor, 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*).

# Addressing Member Problems

The following lists are provided so a Advisor may have a better idea of the types of problems he/she may face with their club or organization. This list is not all inclusive, but hopefully the suggestions can serve as a guide. Under each listed problem are suggestions for addressing and fixing the problem.

## Leadership Problems

1. 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.

2. The leader appears incompetent because he/she does not have self-confidence, is non-assertive, and 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 he/she is in the position and help him/her to see how he/she is affecting the organization.

3. 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 club or organization and lead the conversation to the leadership of the club or 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 (Strengths Quest), 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.

4. 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 Problems

### 1. 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.

### 2. 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.

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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 match for the group to move forward. In this process, the group should change or reaffirm its goals, or students could lose interest and leave.

### 5. 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.

### 6. Programs fail.

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. This is a great chance for learning to occur.

## 7. Program 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 personal development.

## 8. 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 in the brainstorming process, so treat this process as a safe zone for ideas.

## Organizational Problems

### 1. Meetings are disorganized.

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

### 2. Meetings are too long.

See above suggestion.

### 3. 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 Office of Student Life to ask for programming assistance, or implement dues for members. However, if a member of the club or organization is embezzling funds, the issue is more complicated. Review the organization's constitution and by-laws to check for procedure for removal and financial responsibility of the member. If you feel the situation is too big, set a meeting with the Office of Student Life to help assist with addressing the issue. Members need to be aware they can be held liable by the College for issues arising with funds.

### 4. 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.



5. 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.

6. 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 Problems**

1. Disagreement between an organization and other student organizations.

Talk with the Advisor of that group, or if they do not have a Advisor encourage the student leaders of each organization meet to discuss what is happening and act as the moderator. If the problem is not resolved, see the Office of Student Life for assistance.

2. Disagreement with institutional policies and procedures.

Set a meeting with the Office of Student Life.

### **Advisor Problems**

1. 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.

2. 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?

3. The Advisor is overwhelmed by the responsibilities of the club or organization.

The advisor's job is not to run the organization. Work with the students to balance tasks and responsibilities.

4. The Advisor assumes a leadership function.

Advisors are a part of a student organization to advise, not to assume leadership functions/positions.

# Failure: A Problem or a Teaching Tool?

“Should I let the event they are planning fail?”

Many Advisors struggle with the question of whether or not to let their groups fail. It is important to remember that not every event, project or subject that the club or organization takes on is going to be a huge success. There is value in letting students learn from mistakes and seeing the outcomes of the decisions. The experience can be used as a learning tool afterwards, it can be okay to let it fail.

Some Advisors might not have the flexibility to allow failure if they have been instructed to ensure the success of the group's activities. When high profile events occur it is important to have open and honest conversations with the club to set realistic expectations. Explaining impacts that may occur if failure happens can be a motivator. In the end the club stands to lose the most.

Talking with members before it gets to possible failure is important. Setting a protocol of when and how the Advisors step in is important. Also, notifying the Office of Student Life about the pressures the club is feeling can let us better assist you and your group.

Members need to understand that the reach of their events extend beyond the scope of the active members. Through training, success, rather than the acceptance of failure, will be the criterion established for events. 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. Advisors can make failures a learning situation by emphasizing the positive and asking students how the process can be improved. It is important to help students set realistic goals and evaluate the positive and negative factors that could affect the event.

Generally, Advisors limit their input about the selection of programs and events the club 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. Checklists and timetables can help create a successful program for future years.

There will often 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 club members, the campus environment and the expectations of the college before the decision can be made about letting an activity fail. Advisors can assist students by setting goals early and seeking advice from fellow professionals/Advisors that have faced similar situations. If failure occurs, Advisors can help students learn by not ignoring the 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.

