



Advisor Manual

Student Clubs and Organizations

2019-2020



Office of Student Life
Division of Student Affairs

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Welcome to OCCC Student Clubs and Organizations!

Being a Club Advisor is an important responsibility with time commitments that should be clearly understood. While being an advisor requires time and effort, it also may positively impact the lives of many students. Throughout this manual you will find tips, techniques and support that will assist you in being the best Advisor possible.

Student Life wants to be a resource and support system for you during your time as a Club and Organization Advisor. We are willing and able to assist you in supporting your club's success. 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 Club 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. If you are unable to find the answer here to a question you may have, do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

It is important to 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 student

Faculty and Staff Advisor Requirements

At Oklahoma City Community College, an Advisor MUST:

- Be employed by the college.
- Have approval from their immediate supervisor and President's Cabinet member to be an Advisor.
- Have an 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.
- Attend Leadership Workshop(s)
Advisors may divide responsibility for workshops if necessary, as long as an Advisor is present for each club.
- Participate in 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 the Student Handbook and Club Manual.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each Advisor's 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 and be aware and informed about the activities of their club/organization.
- Serve primarily as a resource and consultant to their club/organization.
- Help foster an atmosphere conducive to learning and exploration; students should have room to succeed and experience growth through failure.

- Provide strong 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 College or the community around them.
- Help the club or organization and its individual members learn the skills and responsibilities of good leadership such as problem-solving, decision-making, financial management, conflict resolution, and program planning, communication, stress awareness, and risk taking. Advisors help shape program content by offering new perspectives and direction. Additionally, Advisors initiate new programming ideas, stimulate discussions, etc.
- Help the club or organization maintain active status by ensuring it is programming events/meetings reflective of the **5 Values**. The 5 Values align with the mission and vision of Oklahoma City Community College. Programming with Values helps student leaders continue to develop into positive well rounded individuals and productive members of the college community. Each semester clubs are required to plan and execute programs, events, or projects that cover the 5 Values. If a club or organization fails to meet this programming requirement in an academic year, the club status will be under review and may result in probation and or the club status being revoked.
- **The 5 Values are:**
 - **Innovation:** Creative and forward-thinking
 - **Integrity:** Honest, ethical, and respectful treatment of all
 - **Diversity:** Embrace and appreciate the value of differences
 - **Stewardship:** Wise and efficient use of resources
 - **Accountability:** Data-driven evidence of mission accomplishment

Every Value should be covered between the fall and spring semesters (a full academic year).

Examples of programs, events or projects involving the 5 Values:

Innovation: Events that will impact the future of the club, members or OCCC community, service learning activity.

Integrity: Guest speaker talking about ethics, fundraiser for a cause related to club mission, service learning activity.

Diversity: Visiting a museum, teaming up with a different group do a program or activity, service learning activity.

Stewardship: Budget workshop with Student Life, fundraiser for the club, semester plan with Student Life, service learning activity.

Accountability: End of semester reporting.

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 their 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 of some Advisor 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. These may include 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 among Advisor, officers, and members
- Commitment to the organization
- Honesty
- Mutual respect
- Ethical behavior

Working with Students and Student Groups

Motivating Students

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. 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 an 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:** 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. 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 some 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 who 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?"

As an 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 advisable. 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."

Addressing Member Problems

The following lists are provided so an 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, 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 reassessment and evaluation during the semester to modify goals or create new ones.

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 with whom you can connect, and slowly work to integrate yourself into the organization.

2. Organization members do not pay attention to the Advisor's advice.

Members may 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 frequently disregard 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.

Setting a protocol of when and how the Advisor steps 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 should 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.