



Penn State Erie, The Behrend College Student Organization Advisors Manual

INTRODUCTION

Student Organizations are a critical part of the collegiate experience for students. Student organizations provide a unique opportunity for students to gain practical skills and enhance the out of classroom experience. Advisors play another important role in assisting student organizations with providing involvement opportunities. Advisors serve to guide student organization members through the process of effectively operating an organization. In addition, advisors act as confidants in both individual and organizational-related matters, render knowledge about the organizations' history and tradition and can be a valuable source of information. Finally, whether assigned or volunteered, it is important to remember that advisors devote a significant portion of their time to making the students' experience at Penn State a rewarding one. This dedication is not only rewarding to the student organization and the students it serves, but also the advisor will be rewarded in a variety of ways as a result of working with student organizations.

Types of Student Organizations

There are several types of student organizations that need advisors. They are as follows:

- Governing/councils
- Honor groups
- Service groups
- Religious organizations
- Greek Letter organizations
- Media Organizations
- Club sports
- Special Interest
- Academic Clubs

Please refer to the Penn State Behrend Student Organization Directory or contact the Office of Student Activities (898-6171) for more information about these groups.

The Process for Becoming An Advisor

- Through assignment, which pertains to University faculty or staff. Some faculty or staff are assigned to work with registered student organizations as part of their work responsibilities.
- Request advisor assignment by notifying, in writing, through approval of unit supervisor. A template letter can be obtained from the Office of Student Activities. If the organization is considered high risk, the letter will also need to be signed by the Director of Student Affairs. If the organization is a club sport, the letter will also need to be signed by the Director of Athletics.

Members of the University faculty or staff can also serve as volunteer advisors. Those who choose to volunteer as advisors without unit supervisor approval shall do so in a personal capacity and not as employees, representatives, or agents of the University. Such individuals **are not** covered by University insurance for liability associated with their advisor activities.

For further information, please contact the Office of Student Activities in the Reed Union Building, 898-6171.

ADVISING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The process of advising a student organization is both challenging and very rewarding. Below are suggestions and general guidelines to use when advising a student organization. Student organizations will vary in the amount of attention they need from their advisor. In order to best serve the organization, it is helpful for both the organization and the advisor if you talk about the expectations that the organization has for you and that you have for the organization. Additionally, the Office of Student Activities is always willing to assist you should any problems arise or to provide leadership training for organizations.

Working with Student Organization Officers

Advisors can attend the regularly scheduled and special meetings of their respective organizations. Advisors should meet on a regular basis with executive officers of their organizations for the following purposes:

- To assist with the development of organizational programs.
- To discuss organizational goals and directions.
- To discuss the financial status of the organization including the identification of problems and their potential solutions, and the identification of financial strengths and means of perpetuating them.
- To discuss internal organizational difficulties (communications, delegation of responsibilities, etc.) and to assist the officers with their resolution.
- To be available to meet with organization officers and/or members when they request help.
- To be familiar with the organizations' national structure and services, if applicable.
- To articulate campus policies and procedures of the University and assist the organization in understanding these policies.
- To provide constructive criticism when it is deemed necessary; likewise, positive organizational accomplishments should be appropriately acknowledged.
- To be aware of the fact that at times he/she will be called upon to serve as a personal confidant in organization-related matters. This is a particularly sensitive role. The advisor will want to provide assistance to the person seeking advice (usually in regard to a problematic situation). However, the advisor cannot compromise his/her relationship with the group by showing favoritism to one or a small group of persons.
- To have access to the University-maintained financial records of their respective organizations. These records should be periodically reviewed. These records can be obtained from the Reed Union Building Information Desk.
- To understand that the association between advisors and their respective groups should continue as long as both parties believe the relationship is productive and mutually satisfactory. When such a relationship no longer exists, the advisor should resign and/or request a replacement.

In order to be an effective advisor, you should expect that the organization maintain good communication. Below are some suggestions that a student organization can use to help you in your role.

- Provide an orientation about the organization's activities and structure.
- Provide meeting times to the advisor.
- Provide the advisor with regular updates on the organization's financial status.
- Keep the advisor informed of the organization's plans and problems.
- Use the advisor's background and experiences to help the organization.
- Invite the advisor to organization sponsored activities.
- Show appreciation for the advisor's services.
- Distribute minutes of the meetings and other group material to the advisor as soon as possible.

Suggestions and Guidelines for Advising

- Advisors are encouraged to attend the various official functions of their organizations.
- An advisor should attempt to learn the names of organization members as quickly as possible.
- The appropriate role of the advisor is not to become "one of the gang," nor is it to remain conspicuously aloof from the group. The effective advisor is one who will render advice when it is requested, and offer counsel even though it may not have been sought.
- The advisor should be familiar with "*Penn State Policies and Rules for Student Organizations*" in order to assist with problem solving more effectively. This policy can be accessed at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/usa/studentactivities/>
- The advisor can be expected to offer counseling to individuals with personal problems unrelated to their organizational affiliation. The advisor should also be aware of Penn State services and when to refer students for additional assistance.
- An advisor should not accept an invitation to serve as an advisor (or continue to serve) if he/she is unprepared to fulfill the expectations of student organizations.
- An advisor should show genuine enthusiasm and interest in the group and their activities.
- An advisor should realize that students often might not accept his/her advice. The advisor should expect to be challenged, however, this should not be interpreted, as an indication that his/her services are no longer desired.
- An advisor should be receptive to feedback from the group. Talk to them regarding your advisory role so that everyone knows what the expectations you have for the group and the expectations they have for the advisor.

Assisting Organizations in Planning Programs (Program Content)

An advisor plays a critical role in helping organizations develop programs, events, and activities that will enhance campus life and support the educational mission of the University. The advisor may play many roles in the process of assisting an organization in planning programs, however, the most important role of the advisor comes into play in the area of *program content*. The advisor should stimulate the students through questions to think about the role of a program, how the content of the program will help or hurt the organization, and how the program will enhance campus life and support the educational mission of the University. An advisor can do the following to assist an organization in planning programs:

- Introduce new program ideas.
- Provide opportunities for students to use skills they are gaining in the classroom (i.e., analyzing an idea, researching a performer, developing a publicity plan)
- Point out new perspectives and directions to the organization.
- Ask the questions, "How will this program enhance campus life?", "How will this program support the mission of the University?", "What are some possible negative/positive reactions to this program?", "How will the organization handle the reactions to the program?"

Expectations for Fraternity and Sorority Chapter Advisors

Advisors are usually members of the chapters they advise, but an individual does not have to be a member of a Greek-letter organization to serve as an advisor. However, the decision to have a member or nonmember advisor depends on the chapter.

The following are additional guidelines that advisors of Greek-letter organizations need to know, due to the unique nature of these organizations. Advisors need to abide by these guidelines in addition to the ones established for all student organizations at Penn State.

Advisors need to know the governing bodies for fraternities and sororities at Penn State.

- The Interfraternity Council (IFC). Its purpose is to govern the member fraternities, to promote the academic, philanthropic, fraternal and social activities of the fraternities at the Penn State Behrend, and to maintain cooperation between these social fraternities, their respective international headquarters, the Erie Community, and the Pennsylvania State University.
- The Panhellenic Council. Its purpose is to develop and maintain fraternity life and interfraternal relations at a high level of accomplishment.

Advisors should know both the chapter and inter/national policies and regulations of their organizations. For further information, please contact the Coordinator of Greek Life and Leadership Programs (898-6171) or Inter/National Headquarters.

Advisors should attend chapter and the regularly scheduled Fraternity & Sorority Life meetings.

Advisors can also be helpful in the following areas:

- Be called upon in response to any crisis that may occur within the chapter.
- Assist the chapter in developing a scholarship program and creating academic incentives.
- Aid the chapter in developing their philanthropic and service programs.
- Serve as a resource for the chapter executive board and individual members.

Advisors are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Greek Life and Leadership Programs (898-6171) and/or chapter headquarters should any questions or concerns arise.

INSURANCE FOR ADVISORS

General Information

The following is a brief description of the insurance provisions contained in the major liability programs provided by the University, which include all employees as insureds. Coverage's are predicated on the facts that the individual is acting within the scope of his or her assigned University duties. When the University REQUIRES an employee to be an advisor to a registered student organization as part of his or her assigned duties, as is common with Student Affairs employees, coverage is automatic.

Automobile Liability: Automatic when using University owned vehicles. Excess when using a non-owned vehicle as part of your assigned University duties.

General Liability: Provides tort protection for bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury claims at all locations and for all University operations, including in classrooms, in laboratories, and on field trips.

Errors and Omission Insurance: Coverage for wrongful acts. This policy applies mostly to those who are in the decision making process with all faculty and staff insured. Areas of particular concern are in student grading, tenure, promotion, and other employment practices.

Workers' Compensation: Governed by Pennsylvania's Statutory Law. Provides coverage for injuries on the job with payment of medical bills and for lost time from work.

An important feature of all the above insurance coverages and policies relates to legal and related defense costs which are an integral, and not insignificant, part of the coverages.

The Risk Management Office provides adequate liability insurance coverage for exposures confronting employees performing their assigned University duties. The Office continually reviews those programs with the University's insurance brokers and liability insurance carriers in an effort to provide a comprehensive program. Questions relating to the University's Liability Insurance Program should be forwarded to the Risk Management Office, 523 Rider Building, 120 South Burrowes Street, University Park, PA 16801 (814-865-6307).

Specific Information for Volunteer Advisors

1. University Park Campus:
Insurance coverage is extended to any advisor of a registered student organization who has written approval to be an advisor or is assigned to be an advisor as part of his or her job responsibilities.
2. Campuses other than University Park:
Insurance Coverage is extended to any advisor of a registered student organization who has written approval to be an advisor by one of the following positions at the campus:
 - A) Campus Provost/Campus Dean/Campus Executive Officer, or;
 - B) Campus Director of Student Affairs

Insurance for Fraternity & Sorority Chapter Advisors

The University does not provide insurance for advisors to Greek-letter organizations. However, all chapter advisors have insurance through their chapter or international organization. Therefore advisors are encouraged to take the appropriate measures to ensure coverage against injury or wrongdoing. Investigate obtaining a policy through the chapter or chapter headquarters, if applicable. For more information, contact the Director of the Chapter's Services at your chapter's headquarters. Investigate acquiring an independent policy if one is not provided.

Fraternity & Sorority Life at Penn State offers numerous opportunities for growth and development for both students and advisors. Therefore, advisors are strongly encouraged to engage in a collaborative partnership with the Office of Greek Life, area alumnae, or their chapter headquarters.

HAZING

All student organization advisors need to be well informed about the **ANTI-HAZING** statement set forth by Penn State, which is defined below. In addition to the University's statement on hazing, advisors should also contact the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council or the chapter's headquarters to obtain their anti-hazing statements.

Hazing is defined as any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student or that willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any registered student organization. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance or any other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. Any activities as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in a registered student organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding. Any registered student organization that commits hazing is subject to disciplinary action by the appropriate registering organization.

Penalties for Hazing

All Student Organizations must be made aware of the consequences for hazing, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Probation
- Loss of Social Privileges
- Separation
- Suspension or Expulsion
- Loss of Charter
- Legal Action

ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Student Organization Training

To assist Advisors and their student organizations in having a successful year, the Office of Student Activities provides training sessions scheduled during the beginning of the Fall semester. At least one student member from the organization needs to attend, however, all of the sessions offered could benefit the entire organization and all members should be encouraged to attend as many sessions as possible. Up-to-date printed materials will be distributed to those in attendance.

Announcements for training sessions (date, time and location) will be in the communication mailboxes. We look forward to meeting your organizations representatives and providing them with the tools they need to have a successful year. Individual club sessions on leadership topics may be presented at a club or organization meeting. Contact the Office of Student Activities to discuss scheduling these programs.

Activities Fair

At the beginning of the fall semester, the Office of Student Activities and the Student Government Association sponsors an Activities Fair. Student Organizations are encouraged to register for this event that attracts hundreds of students who are looking for a way to get involved. Don't let your organization miss this great recruiting opportunity!

Program Planning Assistance

Many student organizations plan programs, events and activities. Staff members in the Office of Student Activities are available to assist in the planning of these events by providing resource information about every aspect of planning the event. Examples of information include program planning checklists, sample evaluation forms, ideas for publicity, and tips for managing the event.

Involvement Referrals

The Office of Student Activities will often develop a list of students interested in various organizations through summer consultations with incoming first year students. This is a very helpful recruitment tool for clubs and organizations and contacts to these interested new students should take place as soon as the club receives the list.

Advisor and Student Organization Executives List Serves

These List Serves are maintained to keep advisors and student organization executive officers updated regarding important information.

Leadership Unlimited

This is a peer-led program that brings experiential leadership development into student organizations, student groups, and other areas of the college through the facilitation of workshops run by the student staff for the students of the campus.

Workshops include:

ICE BREAKERS

TEAMBUILDING

- COMMUNICATION
- TRUST
- COOPERATION
- GOAL SETTING

SKILLS TRAINING

- STUDY SKILLS
- TIME MANAGEMENT
- MEETING MANAGEMENT
- PROGRAMMING

ORGANIZATIONAL

- OFFICER TRANSITION
- DIVERSITY
- RECRUITMENT
- SERVICE

Roundtable Lunch Sessions

Lunchtime programs open to student organization leaders and advisors. Topics are usually generated via feedback from the advisor and student leader list serves we maintain.

Alternative break programs

A student activities staff member accompanies a small group (10-15) students in a community service activity during a break period. Staff facilitate student engagement and reflection through structured briefing and de-briefing activities focusing the student reflection and growth from these experiences.

Student Organizations Team Kit

The office of student activities maintains a "Teams Kit" full of supplies for creative leadership development activities and exercises that student organizations may utilize at their convenience. Students simply review facilitation guidebooks in consultation with a staff member to identify innovative (and easy to do) workshops to apply within their own organizations to meet envisioned development outcomes for the group. They then sign out all of the guide resources and needed supplies from the kit for use during their own meetings and/or retreats.

Student Leadership Awards/Recognition Programs at Behrend:

- Most Outstanding Student Organization Member
 - Most Outstanding Student Organization Officer
 - Most Outstanding Student Organization President
 - Best Student Organization Advisor
 - Best Student Organization
 - Guy W. Wilson Award for Student Service to the College
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Service
 - Outstanding Adult Learner
 - Most Creative Program
 - Distinguished Community/Campus Service
 - Student Activities Leadership
 - Outstanding Greek Chapter Award
 - Student Government Association President's Award
- (Detailed nomination information is located at <http://activities.bd.psu.edu/honors/honors.htm>)

Greek Life Awards

A celebratory reception focused on recognizing the academic, leadership and community service achievements of the individual members of campus Greek community.

"Thanks A Latte" Awards

A fun filled, informal award process designed to recognize all student organization work in the area of community service. This is held each semester. The fun title captures the theme as we provide all of the student invitees with free coffee drinks from our popular campus coffee bar. This has been a very successful way to say "thanks" and further encourage students to report the community service efforts they are doing as we develop our invites from the forms they turn in on the projects they complete. Report your efforts by turning reports into the Office! Forms may be found at <http://www.pserie.psu.edu/affairs/campusmin/Behrend%20Service%20Report.doc> (Word File)<http://www.pserie.psu.edu/affairs/campusmin/Behrend%20Service%20Report.pdf> (Acrobat file)

Fall Leadership Retreat

This in depth overnight activity involves about 70 student leaders from many student organizations. They attend a two day retreat focused on the fundamentals of student leadership development and get to work with many other student leaders.

**OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES
REED UNION BUILDING
898-6171**

The Office of Student Activities provides the following services for student organizations:

1. Reserve Rooms within the Reed Union Building and other campus facilities
2. Fundraising Forms
3. Event Voice Mail to all students living on campus
4. Event E-Mail to all Penn State Behrend students
5. Event advisement and planning
6. Consultation on most University policies and procedures.
- 7.

Please note that Advisors should not make a reservation for their student organization. Requiring students to make these arrangements insures that they are meeting with appropriate planning staff members.

The Office of Student Activities is the first place to start when planning an event or starting a new organization.

Any questions, comments or concerns about the information mentioned above should be directed to the Office of Student Activities, located in the Reed Union Building at 898-6171

The SGA Accounting Clerk at the Reed Union Building Main Desk provides the following services for student organizations:

1. Club/Organization Office Keys
2. Club/Organization Voice Mail/Telephone Support
3. Table/Chair sign out
4. Event/Program sign-ups
5. Labels/Reports
6. Budget Support

It is necessary that the organization's president update the Officer Report Form list as needed at the Reed Union Building Information Desk.

The Reed Union Building Information Desk is the central location for students, faculty, staff, and visitors of Penn State Behrend to obtain a variety of information about College, upcoming events, local entertainment, and club/organization support. Behind the scenes, all club/organization financial matters are handled, which includes but is not limited to processing Treasury Request Forms, club/organization registrations, Student Activity Fee proposals, tracking all deposits, fundraising, and other income, requesting checks, purchase orders, and other forms of payment to accommodate club/organization spending.

All clubs/organizations are required to do the following each semester:

- 1) The president must complete and turn in a registration form including information regarding all executive members of their club/organization in order to be recognized by the Student Government Association.
- 2) The President and Treasurer of each club/organization must attend one of several training sessions designed to aid in their expenditures and operations throughout the academic year.

Information Regarding Procedures

All clubs/organizations must complete a Treasury Request Form, which is a form designed to explain exactly what, where, why, and how much in regards to funds they would like to spend from either allocated or non-allocated resources in their account. The Treasury Request Form must be completed and signed by the President or Treasurer of the club/organization. **THIS FORM MUST BE TURNED IN AT THE RUB DESK AT LEAST 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT.** This is to ensure that all contracts, agreements, orders, and checks or purchase orders will be completed prior to the event.

The SGA Treasurer, SGA Accounting Clerk, and/or the RUB Desk Manager review all Treasury Request Forms. These forms are viewed for proper documentation of each expenditure, availability of funds, and to insure the club/organization has completed all regarding account balances, registration and university policy.

All deposits into a club/organization's account are handled through the RUB Desk. Any funds collected from donations, fundraiser, dues, etc, are deposited into the club/organization's non-allocated account and can later be used for any purpose so long as it falls within the SGA and University fiscal guidelines. A receipt is issued for each deposit and a copy of the form will be sent to the club/organization mailbox once the transaction is completed.

Monthly statements are sent to each club/organization to aid in their tracking of account deposits and spending. In addition, if there are any problems, questions, or concerns, a meeting may be arranged in order to help the club/organization and resolve any discrepancies.

The SGA Treasurer reports a total budget balance of all clubs/organizations each week at the SGA meetings. Any requests for reallocation of monies by individual clubs/organizations are reviewed and decided on at that time.

The employees in the offices at the RUB Desk document and track all expenses, deposits, electronic billings, etc., to insure spending within budget limitations. A year-end report is generated to review the fiscal year's activities in all club/organization accounts. This is not only beneficial for the University's records, but for the clubs/organizations as well.

Student Activities Staff Contact Information

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