

MORAVIAN COLLEGE



1742

ADVISOR MANUAL

Created July 2007

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There are over 60 United Student Government (USG) recognized student clubs and organizations at Moravian College. Faculty and staff members who serve as their advisors are invaluable. Being an advisor to a student club or organization involves becoming an integral part of the organizational structure and group's activities and becoming a role model and an enhancement to the students' entire collegiate experience.

Guidelines for being an Advisor

Campus organizations are required to have at least one active advisor who is a full-time member of the faculty or administration, generally of their own choosing. The advisors inform organizations of all matters pertaining to the group's operation and function, but they do not have unilateral control over policy, nor are they responsible for actions or omissions of the organization or its members. All campus organization advisors are asked to meet with the Associate Dean of Student Development or his designee for individual or group training within the first term of their acceptance of this responsibility and periodically as deemed necessary thereafter.

Individuals without formal Moravian affiliation seeking to serve as secondary, off-campus advisors to student organizations are required to complete an application process with the relevant department of Student Affairs prior to beginning service. Service in such capacity is a privilege which shall be reevaluated annually or, should there be any circumstances of potential concern or conflict, at the most appropriate time.

(Inserted from the Moravian College Student Handbook)

Roles and Responsibilities of an Advisor

Resource Person

As a resource for the group, the advisor needs to:

- Become familiar with the Group's constitution, mission, structure and goals. Meet with group's officers to discuss the group's mission, overall needs and specific plans.
- Ensure that group sends its roster including officer information to USG and the Director of Student Activities annually and whenever changes in leadership or significant changes in membership occur.
- Be available to students and act as a resource, directing students toward college offices and departments that can help them. The Student Leader Guide (http://home.moravian.edu/students/org/usg/news/student_leader_guide.html) contains much of the information student leaders need to succeed.
- As necessary, serve as a mediator for a group, to help members sort out conflict. It is important that the advisor be seen as fair, neutral and approachable. But, realize that while group members may turn to you for guidance or support, they may not take what you say as the answer. (See Mediation Skills section below)

Guidance & Support Person

As a guide, the advisor needs to:

- Establish rapport with the members and leadership of your group.
- Help students to maintain balance between academic and co-curricular life. Being involved in co-curricular activities is a tremendous growth opportunity for students but their reason for being in college is academics and they must come first.
- Become a problem solver. Look for creative solutions to offer to the students. Be active, but do not dominate. (See Problem-Solving selection below)
- Offer both praise and constructive criticism in your advising role. The effective advisor is one who will offer advice when asked and offer counsel, even if may not have been sought.
- Catch (and praise) things the group is doing RIGHT, not just those they are doing wrong.

- Stress to your group the importance of continuous participation in leadership development training programs. These programs provide skill development and ultimately, reduce the number of conflicts you may need to navigate.

Programming Contact

As a programming contact, the advisor needs to:

- Attend organizational meetings or meet with Club officers with some regularity (weekly, biweekly, monthly), or whatever is deemed appropriate.
- Encourage groups to plan ahead. The best of intentions can fail due to a lack of planning or not knowing what else is happening on campus on a given date. The HUB and IMPACT (Moravian College's programming board) have semester-based calendars available online to assist groups with planning.
- Ensure that the club contacts the HUB well in advance if the group needs space for an event or meeting.
- Ensure that the club contacts the Community Service Office if it plans to organize a community service event. In the event that the community service involves fundraising, the group should also contact the HUB to register and get approval for the event. In addition, if the group will be soliciting local businesses for support, the group should contact the Director of Business Relations in the Development Office.
- Encourage all members to be involved. Students learn best by doing and learning from experience. Your involvement and support can help them to develop important life management skills.
- Be familiar with established College policies and procedures and ensure that your group is adhering to them. Also, be sure that your group is aware of and abiding by state and federal laws with their programming.
- Review and submit all contracts to the Vice President of Finance and Administration for approval/signature. Please review the policy for contracts (can be obtained by contacting the USG Advisor).
- Be sure to have each participant of an off campus trip sign the College's waiver of liability form prior to the event. The completed forms must be submitted to the USG Treasurer 48 hours prior to the event.

Financial Contact

As fiscal advisor to the group, the advisor needs to:

- Attend USG workshops related to club finances
- Read and understand the USG Finance Committee Standing Rules. These Rules govern how USG distributes money to clubs and how clubs should operate related to finances.
- Become familiar with the organization's financial status.
- Know the club's account number and procedure for using it
- Meet with group officers to review the group's budget.
- Review (and if necessary, assist) the group with preparing their annual budget

What Advisors Should Expect From A Student Group

- ✓ To be kept well-informed of all organization activities, meeting times, locations and agenda items. Minutes of all meetings should be given to the advisor.
- ✓ To be met with regularly by the student leaders.
- ✓ To be treated with respect by the student leaders and members.
- ✓ Made to feel welcome at all meetings and activities.
- ✓ To be informed of any potential problems that may affect the organization or the College.
- ✓ To be considerate of your professional obligations and to not leave important matters to the last minute or to demand your immediate attention.

Important Things to Remember

- Recognized student clubs and organizations should focus their activities on the mission of the group. It may be tempting for a group to organize an event (i.e. mountain climbing trip) but if it is not related to the mission of the group, the event is probably not appropriate for the group to organize.
- Understand your limit of authority in matters related to student groups and organizations. The College has procedures and regulations and as a college employee, the advisor has obligations to uphold them. The advisor is also expected to use their knowledge and influence to discourage illegal, damaging or embarrassing behaviors on the part of the student group or any of its members.
- Set ground rules for what you are willing to do/not do for the organization. Understand your limitations and abilities and be able to accept those limitations. This rule follows true for the students with whom you work. Remember: You are working with students - they are making mistakes and learning from them. Involve them and teach them.
- Promote delegation by leaders and committee work to get things accomplished.

Approaches for Building Trust & Effective Lines of Communication in the Advisor-Advisee Relationship

- Establish relationships with executive members early on in the advising role. Learn and realize why the members are involved in leadership roles within the organization. Maintain these connections through frequent casual meetings with members.
- Express sincere interest and enthusiasm in the group, their goals and activities. Be visible, open and approachable.
- Work with group members to know and get to know one another.
- Be clear of your expectations of the group members and clearly communicate what they can expect of you.
- Assist the group in developing open lines of communication with USG.
- As the advisor, it is important to realize that people give loyalty, interest, and effort as a group member when they have:
 - A sense of belonging
 - A share in planning the groups' goals
 - The belief that the goals are within reach and make sense to the individual
 - The feeling that what they are doing has real purpose and its value extends beyond the group itself.
 - A say in the dynamics of the group and its direction.
 - Knowledge of exactly what is expected of them.
 - Responsibilities that challenge them, are attainable, and contribute to the end goal.
 - Tangible information and knowledge of progress made by the group.
 - Confidence in those with whom they work; confidence based on consistent, fair treatment, recognition of effort, and mutual trust.
- When a group is making decisions, step back for a while and let them work. This shows trust in their decision-making ability. If you step too far back however, you appear uninterested. Walk the fine line.

- If you have any questions, please call the USG Advisor at X1509
- Ideas for Building a Team: Consider taking the group on a Retreat or through a Ropes Course. For ideas and information, contact the USG Advisor. The most effective team builder is to take the group yourself and give students a break from their normal duties and distractions.

Problem-Solving Skills for Advisors

“The man who insists upon seeing clarity with perfect clearness before he decides, never decides.” Henri Frederic Amiel

The Problem-Solving Process:

- Collect Information
- Define the problem
- Generate possible solutions
- Evaluate and select a solution
- Gain acceptance from others
- Implement and Evaluate

Be creative. Use your own knowledge, past experience, imagination, and outside sources (books, articles, colleagues) to come up with viable options to offer the student or group of students facing a problem.

Remember that an issue or problem for one student may present an issue for the whole organization. Problems may range from one student’s frustration with a present situation to a need to change how a group functions because the past or current ways no longer work. The scope of the issue is what determines the level and creativity needed to seek solutions.

Coming up with creative solutions requires people to do a variety of things: Develop courage to begin taking risks and explore new avenues of interest. Realize that taking risks also means making mistakes. This can be an important step in coming up with “the solution.”

Turn on natural imagination and curiosity. Take time and play with different options. No idea is foolish or stupid. One thought can quickly turn to the next and the right answer will appear.

Look at old situations in new ways. Consider topics that may seem unrelated for ideas. Call on others to act as a sounding board.

Work on ability to think “beyond” the surface. Look at the “big picture” perspective and how this issue fits into the whole organization, the Moravian College community or the community as a whole or life in general.

Be on the look-out for innovative ideas from novels, TV, advertisements and past experiences. Your solutions only need to be original in their adaptation to the problem at hand.

Be careful not to overlook the simplest and obvious solution. When we try to be creative, sometimes we fail to see that what is right in front of us is the best answer all along.

Don’t hesitate to play Devil’s advocate but be clear in that message. Ask them to explain how their actions are fair, will be perceived by others etc...To some students, your questioning may seem disapproving/negative when in reality, you are trying to help them see different options.

If the situation involves the entire group membership, try to include as many opinions and sources of input toward resolution. While doing this, try to discourage domination by one individual or sub-group.

Building Leadership Skills in Students

There are many ways to develop leadership among student leaders. One of the most important things to remember is that every individual is at a different stage of development and has a different concept of where their ability to lead lies. Whether their perception is right or wrong in your eyes, realize that they BELIEVE they have or lack the ability to lead. Start with where they are by identifying their level of development and trying to understand their point of view and philosophy for being a leader of the group.

One might also consider that a leader is also an achiever - someone who gets things done consistently and well by using the talents, resources and people around him/her in order to attain the goal. Achievers KNOW how to get the job done. But, often times, they need to be taught how to get it done. And other times, they may need assistance in completing the task.

The Recipe for Leadership: As the advisor, if you identify, develop and cultivate these ingredients among your students, your organizations will become healthy.

a. Communication:

- Active Listening: hearing, paraphrasing, understanding and communicating that understanding to the speaker.
- Reacting: a whole range of nonverbal behaviors: how you dress, the way you sit, the level of eye contact, attentiveness, response.
- Speaking: sharing ideas on a group and a personal level. Getting a clear message across involves the ability to articulate thoughts.

b. Clear-cut Vision:

Knowing how things are done and sharing that knowledge. A leader who can communicate the vision and includes the group in its creation will produce more precise planning and production and a greater commitment to the outcome.

c. Motivation:

- Figure out what motivates members of your group:
 - For some, pumping them up through encouragement and constant feedback works. For others, feeling a sense of ownership is what they need to be motivated.
- Let others know specific knowledge:
 - Why the task is taking place. The more people are in the know, the more likely they are to get and stay involved.
- Take action:
 - Separate the thinker from the doer. One loses steam and enthusiasm for a project if it is simply talked about and no progress seems to be made.
- Perseverance:
 - “Most people don’t fail because they don’t know how to do something but because they quit too soon.” (Rick Miller)
- Time:
 - The longer one takes to do something, the less motivated they will be to get it done. If a student procrastinates, any number of things can happen: they may rationalize why the task is unimportant or impossible; they may figure someone else will do it. Chances are, in the group, it won’t but

another group may beat your group to it. A common duplication happens with fundraisers done around holidays.

Helpful Contacts

Event Planning – HUB and Office of Student Activities	X1491
Business Office	X1431
Community Service Office	X1602
Mailroom	X1354
Dining Services and Catering	X1474
USG Advisor	X1509
USG Office	X7780

Helpful Information

Advertising Events - <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/policies2.htm>
Alcohol Policy – <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/policies4.htm>
Code of Conduct - <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/coCurricular.htm>
Fundraising - <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/policies8.htm>
Freedom of Association - <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/regulations5.htm>
Inclusive Language - <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/policies8.htm>
Student Leader Guide - http://home.moravian.edu/students/org/usg/news/student_leader_guide.html