



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

**← FINDING AN ADVISOR →**

Every organization has had the experience of trying to find an advisor. Even finding one is no guarantee that you won't have to do it again. Locating a dedicated and helpful person is not always easy. Being an advisor takes time and energy and many people have very busy schedules, but there is hope! With a little time and thought, you can find the advisor your group needs.

**DEVELOP A PROFILE**

There's more to finding an advisor than just getting a body to sit in a chair. While that body may fulfill your organizational requirement to have an advisor, will that body be beneficial beyond the simplistic, "yes, we have one?"

To find an advisor, you need to first decide what kind of an advisor you want. An advisor can be a valuable resource and advocate for your organization. What capacity would you like your advisor involved in your group? Only after you know what kind of advisor you want can you search out that type of person.

Develop a profile of the individual you are looking for with your executive board and/or members. Decide the type of input you need from an advisor and how much time you would like him/her to commit to the organization. Describe the personality and personal experiences which would best complement those of your members. What kind of support and guidance are you seeking? Add to your advisor profile anything you feel is an important quality for an advisor to have.

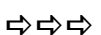
Table 1 provides some valuable information regarding advisor responsibilities. The information was gathered from a survey of advisors and students. It may be helpful as you develop your wish list of advisor qualities and face the reality of finding someone to fulfill the role.

Importance rank ordered with "1" being most important.		
Advisors	Students	
2	1	Advisors play an active role in helping the student set up meaningful programs that are consistent with the organization's purpose.
1	2	Advisors should encourage the development of responsibility and leadership in student members.
3	3	Advisors offer alternative viewpoints for the organization.
4	4	Advisors make themselves available to the student organization.
5	6	Advisors are motivators.
7	9	Advisors help the organization evaluate their programs.
12	5	Advisors serve as role models.
6	13	Advisors help make the experience educational in nature.
9	11	Advisors are a liaison between students and faculty.
8	12	Advisors provide continuity from year to year.
13	8	Advisors interpret the regulations governing the organization (e.g., local, university, national).
11	10	Advisors are good listeners.
16	7	Advisors are friends.
10	14	Advisors must be familiar with their limits to avoid domination of the group.
15	16	Advisors help to resolve conflicts.
14	18	Advisors serve as mediators.
19	15	Advisors provide legitimacy to the organization.
17	17	Advisors supervise financial matters.
18	19	Advisors attend all of the organization's functions and meetings.
20	20	Advisors hold the final say in the organization's decisions.

Table 1. Advisor Responsibilities as Perceived by Advisors and Students (conference handout)

**BRAINSTORMING POSSIBLE CANDIDATES**

Once your profile is complete, brainstorm a list of people who fit it. Treat this meeting like an interview. You will want to know if this person and your organization "fit." Ask around campus and get suggestions from your members, faculty, and staff. Dig deep - some of the best people on this campus are hidden in obscure corners. Remove from your list those names that do not fit your profile very well. Be



realistic; you may not find someone who fits it exactly, but settling for less than what you want is not helpful either.

## INTERVIEW

Target the top two or three candidates and invite them to meet with your officers. At the meeting, share with the candidate your organization's philosophy and constitution. Show them minutes of past meetings, pictures of recent events, or anything which you feel would help them learn more about your organization. Find out about the candidate's expectations and experiences. This is an interview. Each party is learning about the other to determine whether the two will make a good match.

After you have met with each candidate, choose the one you think has the most potential for helping and supporting your organization. Notify the candidate of your decision and ask him/her to accept the position.

Once the position is accepted, the only thing left to do is the formality of completing the Advisor Agreement. You may want to share your "Expectations" form with your new advisor when you meet to complete the Advisor Agreement. This will help ensure that expectations (both your's and the advisor's) are similar. Once the Advisor Agreement is completed, submit it to the Student Activities Office.

Taking the time to find an advisor who fits with your organization is worth it in the end. It's easier to find the "right one" when you know who you're looking for! Good luck!

## RELATED SAO RESOURCE

- ◆ Involving Your Advisor

## REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

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*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.  
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*