

# Working with an Adviser

Working with an adviser can be a great experience or absolutely hellish—and possibly somewhere in between. Like any relationship, the most significant issue that occurs is a lack of communication. Your adviser maintains many roles; they can be a counselor, a teacher, a mentor, a leader, a follower, or an advocate. If your adviser isn't aware of what is going on, they cannot adequately assist you in the direction of the organization. Setting expectations of each other is a helpful task early on in the process. At times, there may be some issues that come up in regards to working with your adviser, please know that you can speak with a professional staff member in OSE to help mediate any issues that arise.

## The Role of the Adviser

- An interpreter of policy.
- A contact between the organization and other entities (i.e., college administration, entertainment industry, news media, etc.)
- An information resource regarding organizational procedures, group process and programming concerns.
- A resource providing history and continuity between changing organizational leadership.
- A teacher of programming skills.
- Presenter of philosophical ideas and concepts of leadership.

*More specifically:*

- Meet weekly with the organization's president.
- Meet weekly with the executive board.
- Attend all organization meetings.
- Give a report during the organization meeting.
- Keep the executive board informed on institutional matters.
- Maintain a relationship with institutional accounting.
- Audit finances with the treasurer.
- Attend and advise student club delegations.

## Evaluating Your Adviser

Consider the following reflective statements when evaluating the performance of your adviser:

*I feel the adviser...*

- Shows a sense of direction regarding his/her job and knows what he/she is doing.
- Has the ability to obtain and analyze facts, and apply sound judgment.
- Is effective at organizing his/her own work.
- Has the ability to help me organize my work.
- Utilizes available resources.
- Displays enthusiasm about his/her job.
- Shows a willingness to do more when asked.
- Communicates well with students.
- Provides creative ideas and valuable suggestions.
- Follows through on the responsibilities assumed.
- Is on time for meetings, etc.

- Motivates students to perform effectively.
- Provides a good example of leadership.
- Is objective in decision making.
- Produces high quality work.
- Displays a sense of professionalism.

### **Profile of a Successful Adviser**

- Understanding your leadership style is the first step in effective advising.
- Use different styles for different situations.
- Assess the developmental level of your group in each situation.
- Student organization success = meeting their potential.
- Meeting potential is not contingent upon #'s or \$'s.
- Celebrate your groups' successes.
- Failure is a reality. Your group's failure is not your failure.
- The group's failure may strengthen their abilities.

Members of the Office of Student Engagement (OSE) staff are available to assist you with any questions you have regarding leadership issues. The OSE is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m.—5 p.m. For more information, please contact the office at 410.337.6124.