

StudentLife

at Niagara County Community College

Club Advisor Handbook

2021-2022



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Defining The Role

A Club and Organization advisor can be defined as someone who gives advice and helps guide student groups to their desired outcome or goal.

Purpose of an Advisor...

The role of an advisor may vary between student groups, but it is always an important one. The scope and frequency of an organization's activities, the effectiveness of its officers, the time commitments of the advisor, and several other factors determine the level of involvement the advisor will have with the organization. An advisor should be committed to the group's success, and sometimes may need to go above and beyond the call of duty. It is our hope that student group advisors take on a role that is more than serving as a signatory on forms.

Considering their expertise and experience, advisors can often supply significant insights to group matters such as goal setting, programming, conflict resolution, and group growth/development. It is often the advisor who can aid in maintaining an organization by providing continuity and by serving as an information source. In short, a good advisor can help nurture an organization's success.

Advisors are needed to help provide leadership and direction to student groups. Advisors are the liaison between The Office of Student Life and clubs. The goal being to provide information and ensuring all policies and procedures followed. Additionally, advisors should provide guidance and resources to aid in the students' leadership and personal development.

Advisor Expectations...

1. The advisor is responsible for being familiar with all Student Life policies and procedures related to clubs and organizations, as well as all College policies that affect clubs and organizations.
2. The advisor should assist the group in developing realistic goals for the academic year.
3. Provide advice and guidance to the club when planning programs, events and activities.
4. Advisors must sign all Purchase Requisitions and submit them to Student Life. In the event a Purchase Requisition is for a cash advance, the advisor is responsible for collecting and returning any and all receipts and change to the College Association (G215).
5. The Advisor must be present at the time of election for Executive Board Members (officers) which must be reflected in the minutes.
6. The Advisor must be present if the club or organization is holding an on campus event after regular business hours.

If you're ever unsure...

If you would like clarification on your role, please reach out! We're here to help you navigate your role as an advisor as best as you can.

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The Dos and Don'ts

DO

- ◆ Be knowledgeable of the organization's purpose, constitution, and policies.
- ◆ Know the Student Life policies and procedures
- ◆ Allow the group to succeed and fail, when necessary.
- ◆ Remember to let the students make the decisions while you provide guidance and advice.
- ◆ Learn the strengths and challenges of the group.
- ◆ Be visible and attend organization meetings and events.
- ◆ Establish an attendance schedule at organization meetings, which is mutually agreed upon by the advisor and the students.
- ◆ Develop a strong working relationship with all of the officers.
- ◆ Establish meetings with individuals of the organization who need additional guidance in their positions.
- ◆ Discuss concerns with officers in private and praise them in public.
- ◆ Share creative suggestions and provide feedback for activities planned by students.
- ◆ Take an active part in policy formulation through interaction with the members of the organization.
- ◆ Encourage feedback and the evaluation process.
- ◆ Encourage attendance at any leadership trainings.
- ◆ Let the organization work out its problems, but be prepared to step in when called upon to assist.
- ◆ Help to resolve conflict.
- ◆ Introduce new program ideas with educational flavor.
- ◆ Point out new perspectives and directions to the group.
- ◆ Supply the knowledge and the insight of experience.

DON'T

- ◆ Take ownership for the group, be the "parent", or the smothering administrator.
- ◆ Be afraid to let the group try new ideas.
- ◆ Be afraid to let them fail.
- ◆ Miss group meetings or functions where they are expecting your attendance.
- ◆ Assume the organization's attitudes, needs, and personalities will remain the same semester to semester.
- ◆ Manipulate the group, impose, or force your opinions.
- ◆ Assume that a new set of organization officers know the mission and purpose of the group and how to accomplish these.
- ◆ Be afraid to make a timeline with the officers to achieve goals.
- ◆ Assume the organization handles everything okay and doesn't need you.
- ◆ Be the leader or "run" the meeting.
- ◆ Impose your own bias.
- ◆ Tell the group what to do.

10 Ways to be a Great Advisor!

1. Be available

Provide your office hours and known commitments to your group. Determine how you would like to be in communication with your students (email, text, face-to-face meetings) and strive to respond within 24 hours. Remember that last minute situations happen, and your organization will appreciate a timely response.

2. Stay involved

Keep in regular contact with your group. Attend group meetings and events throughout the semester. Know what is happening and what is coming up.

3. Be supportive

Provide guidance and advice that will empower your group to make decisions and take action. You have valuable insight to offer that will lend a new perspective to the organization. You do not have to make things happen for the group, but you can serve as a resource person to help them accomplish goals.

4. Let them make mistakes

Sometimes the hardest thing to do as an advisor is to do nothing. Growth occurs from making mistakes and learning from failures. Determine the line between a safe failure and a complete meltdown. Remember: we let students walk toward the edge; but we never let them fall over!

5. Ask questions

Ask about the organization's mission and purpose. Ask how things have been done in the past. Ask what they would like to accomplish this year. Ask to read the group's constitution. Ask how things are going. Ask how you can help. When they tell you they have thought of everything, keep asking questions.

6. Give feedback

Discuss how and when your organization would like feedback. Should you speak up in meetings, or only jump in if things get off track? Determine the best way for you to communicate what the organization is doing well and what could use improvement.

7. Know the rules

Familiarize yourself with policies and procedures to effectively advise your organization's decision-making.

8. Build relationships

Get to know the members of your organization outside of their role. Ask about their classes, interests, and what their goals are for the future. Take an interest in their overall well-being, and remind them to take care of themselves. Developing a rapport early on will help the organization's operations to run smoothly all year.

9. Keep record

Organization officers move in and out of NCCC every few years. Oftentimes, the group advisor serves as the historian, with longstanding knowledge of group operations. Keep important reference documents like the organization's constitution, policies, procedures, event calendar, annual budget, and officer roles/expectations.

10. Take care of yourself!

It's okay to say "no" sometimes. Your job is to empower and guide your organization, not to do everything for them.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Model:

Recognize the problem—attack the problem not the people you are in conflict with.

Engage in a productive conflict resolution—no blame, no guilt. First step should be to define the conflict as a workable problem.

Solutions—propose possible solutions; don't try to "Band-Aid" the conflict. This should be done with both parties participating.

Pros and Cons of the solutions—talk directly and openly about one solution at a time based on suggestions above.

Exclusion is bad—integrate solution into normal behavior—there needs to be a change from one or both parties. If nothing changes, go back to #1 and redefine the problem.

Check-in—follow up with each other to see how the solution is working.

Togetherness—once conflicts are resolved.

C.O.I.N. Model:

Context—When are you referring to? What was the situation that you are referring to?

Observation—Just the facts: What did the person say or do?

Impact—What was the impact of that person's actions on you?

Next Steps—What would you hope the person would do in the future? Without judgment, what would you like the person to change about they say or do in the future similar situations?

Step that you can follow:

1. Utilize one of the models pictured above.
2. Ask to meet both students privately at the same time.
3. Allow each student to share their side of the conflict. Make sure that each students uses "I" statements.
4. Your role as an advisor is to explain their impact on other students
5. Help the students find common ground. You can even agree to disagree and make sure to value all opinions.
6. Brainstorm solutions and next steps to solve the conflict together. Agree on which steps the group will follow.

Steps to Planning an Event

Step 1.

Have the student acquire the correct Request form from the Student Life Form's Website, whether it be a fundraiser request, an event request, and a travel request form. Have a club member fill out the form online AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT.

Step 2.

Have a club representative attend a Student Government Finance Meeting Tuesdays at 12:45 pm in G244 to pitch their idea. The Vice President of SGA will reach out to you and the club president with an update on approval following the meeting.

Step 3.

If approved, funding has been allocated, and a cash advance if necessary, fill out at Purchase Requisition online. Once filled out the SGA advisor will approve the form. When the cash advance is ready for pick up, you will be notified by College Association. Make sure to leave enough time for the cash advance to be processed and to go shopping! 3 weeks before the event date is a good mark. Stop by G11D to get a tax exempt form. Make sure to keep ALL your receipts.

Step 4.

If approved and funding has been allocated, contact Rich Johnson in Dining Services to request any food needs for the event. Acquire the BEO from Brittany, fill out a Purchase Requisition online to make sure Dining Services gets their payment, If there are no food needs, skip this step!

Step 5.

Make sure the space where the event is being held is booked. Connie Gurski handles G117A, G117B, and G244 reservations. Once booking is confirmed, complete any necessary facilities work orders for tables, chairs, etc. Again, AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT.

Step 6.

Begin advertising! Send a digital copy of any flyer to Jennifer Schwab!

Step 7.

Host an AWESOME event and help the students have so much fun, they worked hard for this!

Keep in mind...

The larger and more detailed the event,
the longer you'll want to have to plan and organize!

Travel Policy

Process:

- 1) A club representative should fill out the “Travel Request” form located at <https://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/studentlife/forms/>.
- 2) The Student Group Advisor must sign off on the form for re-view by the Student Government Travel Committee.

NOTE: The completed form must be received by Student Life at least thirty (30) business days prior to the proposed travel date

- 3) Once travel and funds are approved by the Travel Committee, the Student Group will be notified.
- 4) At that time, the student group contact must work with Student Life and the Advisor to fill out Purchase Requisitions and Travel Forms for each student participating.

If SGA does not award all funds necessary to travel, the student group is responsible for fundraising the balance of the remaining cost.

Policy:

- 1) If travel is more than fifty (50) miles from Niagara County Community College, students are not permitted to provide their own transportation.
- 2) Student Group Advisors (or designee) must accompany students on any trips that are more than fifty (50) miles from NCCC and/or require overnight accommodations.
- 3) Student groups are responsible for paying for accommodations of the Advisor.
- 4) Students will be held to the standards outlined in the Student Rights & Responsibilities Code of Conduct.

Where Students go to Find What...

Office of Student Life (G243)

- ♦ Supplies requested for any given event. Such as: arrow board signs, cash boxes, etc.
- ♦ Room reservations—See Connie Gurski
- ♦ Snap Frames (around campus) - where you can advertise for your club
- ♦ Approved flyer pick up

Student Life Website

<https://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/studentlife/forms/>

- ♦ Event Request Form
- ♦ Fundraiser Request Form
- ♦ Travel Request Form
- ♦ Purchase Requisition (PR's)
- ♦ Officer and Member Registration Form
- ♦ Club Charter Packets

Clubs and Orgs Office (G117D)

- ♦ List of all clubs
- ♦ Club Snap Frame (across from G117D)
- ♦ Advisor Contact Information
- ♦ Club meeting times
- ♦ Any other help needed!

Contact Information

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