**Understanding the Roles and Expectations of Organization Advisers**

**Role of an Adviser**

A student organization adviser is a person, selected by the organization, who can provide guidance and advice in the operations of the organization. There are required advisors that work in Student Life, who likely meet the club regularly, but there are also optional advisers who are specialized to that specific organization. Advisers are educators outside of the classroom setting and a resource person for the organization. They will counsel and advise organizations by asking the “tough” questions, assist students in their thinking process, and challenge the organization to go beyond the status quo. Advisers often serve as continuity for an organization as they can pass along valuable information regarding the history of the organization and their past accomplishments. Since officers in a club transition often, this continuity can be key. An active adviser can improve the effectiveness of an organization while also assisting in the positive development of the students. **The decision making and goal setting for the organization should remain in the hands of the student membership but should be tempered with the valuable insights of the adviser.**

Advisers have four broad functions:

* **To help with the leadership development of students:** The adviser will assist students in leadership development of skills such as time management, problem-solving, delegation, conflict resolution, and communication.
* **To add to the continuity of the group as members graduate:** The adviser will share the history of the organization and explain why past decisions were made to new officers.
* **To serve as a liaison between the university and the organization:**The adviser will explain university policies and connect students to the appropriate offices for assistance.
* **To assist in the area of program content and purpose:** The adviser will assist in the development of projects, events and activities. The exact role of the adviser should be determined by the adviser and the student organization. This role may vary from organization to organization, based on the organization’s needs and goals. The adviser should never be considered just a signature in order to receive recognition. The new student leadership of the organization and the adviser should have a conversation early on to determine the role and expectations of the adviser and the adviser’s expectations of the students.

**Adviser Expectations**

The specific expectations of an adviser depends on the student organization’s needs and the adviser’s leadership style and level of commitment. Advisers should meet regularly with organization leaders to determine what the expectations of their commitment will be. The adviser should be informed about and consulted with regard to the on-going business of the organization. An adviser does not take control of the organization; this is the responsibility of the student membership and if the organization ceases to exist due to inaction by the student membership, this is an unfortunate but appropriate outcome. Organizations should not look to their adviser to do crisis intervention on behalf of the organization but only to seek to do so in conjunction with the student leadership.