



# Advisor Packet

*This packet is for advisors of student organizations to reference processes, policies and advisor responsibilities. Please print this packet for your advisor. Your advisor will be able to use the information within this packet to help effectively work with your organization throughout the coming year.*

## Sport Club Advising Overview

Thank you for your commitment to the development and growth of our sport club participants. To our first-time advisors, welcome and thank you for joining us. To our returning advisors, welcome back, and thank you for your commitment.

It is an honor to be selected by the students as an advisor; it indicates the students' respect and trust for you. This position can be tremendously rewarding for both you and the organization. Advisors provide continuity and a voice of experience to the organization. As an advisor, you will serve as an integral part of the student experience and have the opportunity to impact the growth of students in many ways. The position also provides an opportunity to offer advice, be in contact with students outside of the normal working environment, and be involved.

A strong Advisor can make a difference in the activities of a student. This position can be challenging and fun; however, with the position also come several responsibilities. The purpose of this handbook is to assist you in understanding and fulfilling these responsibilities and to provide some direction for you. Information has been assembled here to help you get started and to serve as a resource throughout the year. Should you need further reference or assistance, please feel free to contact any member of the Sport Club Administration Team. Recreation is located in suite 125 of the Barnes Center at the Arch, 315.443.4386.

## What is Advising?

Advising is...

- Allowing students to learn from their mistakes.
- Assisting in program planning.
- Attending meetings/functions.
- Being a liaison between students and administration.
- Being a valuable resource.
- Being available for counsel.
- Explaining and enforcing university policies.
- Having an enjoyable time with students.
- Maintaining regular contact with organization.
- Working with student leaders.

Advising is not...

- A bad idea.
- A full-time job (but is a fulltime commitment.)
- A signature on a line.
- Babysitting.
- Forcing personal belief systems onto students.
- "Holding hands" or "spoon feeding" students.
- Ignoring the concerns of the students.
- Making all the decisions for the club.
- Perfected without training.

## The Role of the University Advisor

Each advisor perceives his/her relation to a sport club differently. Some Advisors play very active roles, attending meetings, working with student officers, and assisting in program planning and development. Others maintain a more distant relationship to the organization. It is hoped that each Advisor will maintain some regular contact with their sport club. An Advisor accepts responsibility for keeping informed about activities of the sport club and for advising officers of the sport club on the appropriateness and general merits of policies and activities. However, Advisors are not responsible for the actions or policies of student sport club; students are solely responsible. Advisors should be both accessible and interested and should provide whatever counsel a club or its members might seek. Given the myriad of purposes, activities, and objectives of various sport clubs, the role of the Advisor will vary in some degree between groups. The purpose of this section is to outline basic functions of an Advisor. As groups vary in their expectations and needs, it is important that you, as an Advisor, develop an understanding with the sport club you are to represent as to the nature of your involvement. The Advisor and group should agree on a set of expectations of one another from the onset and should write this list down as a contract between the group and the Advisor.

A University Advisor should:

- Build a good rapport with students in the organization they advise. Only through building good relationships with group members can advisors be effective and influential. Advisors begin building rapport simply by knowing everyone in the organization and attending group functions.
- Find a good balance between being overly involved and under-involved. Advisors set principles and offer guidance and do not directly do the work which is the responsibility of the students.
- Strive for the group to be self-sufficient where the members resolve their own conflicts and solve their own problems. Students grow more from their own choices than following orders.
- Allow the group to fail. Although this is often a difficult thing to watch, it is a very powerful in developing student leaders. Failure can be the best learning experience. It is also important that the advisor not take responsibility for an organization's failures. The choice of whether or not to act is the students' decision. An advisor feeling overly responsible is most likely too involved in the group.
- Model the behavior they would like to see repeated. When a good rapport has developed students will model themselves after their advisor.
- Provide members with constant support but also challenge leaders to continue developing themselves and the organization.
- Develop a presence at organization meetings and functions.

## Basic Expectations of the University Advisor

- The UA recognizes and supports participation in student organizations for its contribution to the educational and personal development of students.
- UAs should work with student organizations but should not direct or dictate the organization's programs or activities.
- UAs should be frank however, in offering ideas, considerations, or ideas for the group's discussion.

- The UA should stay well informed about the plans and activities of the group. It is expected that advisors will attend as many meetings and activities of the group as possible and will consult frequently with the student officers.
- The UA must be aware of the goals and directions of their organization and help the group evaluate its progress toward reaching those goals.
- The UA can provide continuity within the group from year to year. He or she should be familiar with the constitution and bylaws of the organization and be prepared to assist with the interpretation of such.
- UAs ensure the group's compliance with University policies and procedures.
- UAs should provide financial supervision to the organization. Advisors should also be aware of the general financial condition of the organization and make sure the group is keeping accurate and accessible financial records.
- The UA should assist in orienting new officers and assist in developing the leadership skills of members.
- The UA should be prepared to deal with major problems or emergencies within the organization.
- UAs monitor group functioning and encourage members to fully participate, assume appropriate responsibility for group activities, and maintain a balance between academic activities and extra commitments.
- The UA must be a link to the University administration and serve the group as a resource person.
- The voluntary association between a UA and an organization should continue as long as both parties believe the relationship is productive and mutually satisfying.

## Active University Advisor Characteristics

**Integrity** - It is important for you, as a role model, both to do things right and to do the right things. Students need your guidance to assist them in becoming responsible leaders.

**Good Judgment** - Advisors should understand the mission of the university, respect university and community rules when assisting with the planning of events and should use foresight to help the organization avoid problems.

**Experience** - The most valuable resource you can provide is your activities experience. The collection of experiences you can share will assist your group in planning events that work and locate support materials and personnel. You may be able to offer new ideas and strategies that the group has not yet considered.

**Support** - Give the group autonomy but offer feedback, even when it is not solicited. Let the group work out its problems, including occasional failures, but be prepared to step in when called upon to assist. Take the initiative in promoting teamwork and cooperation. Offer encouragement and praise for a job well done, and suggest possible future improvements when things don't go so well. Support the organization's functions and events as much as possible. This gives the students a sense that you are interested and supportive of what they are doing. We encourage you to use campus resources when you enter into uncharted waters.

Remember, you don't know what you don't know!

## Specific Duties of the University Advisor

- Be informed about the organization and what the organization will require.
- Provide advice when called upon or when the situation warrants.
- Ensure that the organization registers each year with the Barnes Center at The Arch Recreation.
- Serve as a resource for planning and organizing as well as knowledge of the campus community.
- Become familiar with the purpose and structure of the organization by reviewing the constitution.
- Familiarize yourself with the group's financial structure, from where the treasury is derived (dues, fundraising), for what the money is used, how money is allocated, and how the money is budgeted; assist in budget development and execution.
- Familiarize yourself with Sport Club Handbook.
- Explain and enforce university policies when necessary, including policies on hazing and alcohol.
- Inform the group of infractions of their bylaws, codes, and standing rules.
- Attend group activities and functions and assist when necessary.
- Be familiar with university facilities, services, resources, and procedures which might affect or be of benefit to the organization.
- Function as a liaison between the organization and the campus administration and assist the group in developing an ongoing, beneficial relationship with the university.
- Supervise the transition of officers and assist in new officer training and leadership development.
- Assist officers in general operations when necessary.
- Ensure that officers know and understand the obligations of their position and that they are working to fulfill these obligations.
- Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise, when necessary.
- Monitor the group's activities and correspondence to ensure that it is appropriate and in keeping with accepted standards.
- Maintain a close relationship with the club officers and attempt to meet as many members as possible.

## Questions You May Want to Ask Your Sport Club

1. How much involvement is expected or needed?
2. How often does the sport club meet?
3. How many major activities does the sport club plan per semester?
4. How experienced are the student leaders?
5. How do your skills match the needs of the sport club?
6. What are some of the problem areas that your club specifically needs advisory assistance in dealing with? Ask for past examples.
7. What are some of the ways the Advisor can be more helpful to the club?
8. Is the Advisor expected to give feedback? How? When?
9. Are there areas of the sport club that are "hands off" to the Advisor?
10. Does the national governing body (if applicable) require an affiliated Advisor? If so, what is their role?

## Basic Expectations of the Sport Club

As in any contract, there should be mutual responsibilities, and this is true with the Advisor position as well. The following lists common responsibilities of the sport club to the Advisor. It is expected that the sport club will:

- Realize that the Advisor has a life outside of the club and respect their time accordingly.
- Orient and keep the Advisor informed of sport club events, activities, and/or problems.
- Respond promptly to the Advisor's inquiries and requests.
- Respect advice provided by the Advisor, given in the interest of the club or university.
- Comply with university, municipality, state, and national laws and policies.
- Understand that the Advisor, too, will make mistakes and will have an individual personality and style; accept and discuss this, and move on.
- Be honest with the Advisor regarding club operations; nothing is to be gained from a relationship that is not completely open.
- Provide clear expectations.
- Find out what the club is looking for in an Advisor and how the advisor can assist.
- Confirm the appointment of the Advisor each year and be certain the Advisor will serve.

## Advisor Contract

A useful instrument for sharing expectations and clearly identifying an Advisor's role is the Advisor's contract. Please take a moment to review and sign this advisor contract. Please note, that duplicates of this signed document have the potential to be copied to the dean, director or department head of the advisor's home unit. This will inform your school or department area of the commitment you are making to SU and the sport club.

The members of \_\_\_\_\_ (Sport Club Name) request \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Advisor) to serve as Advisor of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Sport Club Name) for a period not to exceed \_\_\_\_\_ (Time Frame) beginning \_\_\_\_\_ (Semester).

Duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the position are as follows:

(Please list the responsibilities of the Advisor and Sport Club. Duties/responsibilities may be reconsidered at the request of the Advisor, president or majority vote of the club membership.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
President's/Chairperson's Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
President's/Chairperson's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have met with the president of the above-named sport club and discussed the duties and responsibilities of Advisor as listed above. I understand that this responsibility falls within the scope of my employment at Syracuse University. In addition, I agree to serve as Advisor and will fulfill these duties and responsibilities to the best of my abilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This contract is effective for the time frame listed above and must be renewed each year thereafter upon the agreement of both parties.

## Advisor Checklist

This checklist will help you remember the most important aspects of advising. Reference this list often and check things off as they are completed.

- The sport club I advise has completed the appropriate re-registration forms. Please be sure they have done this by the required date.
- The sport club I advise has turned in a recent copy of their constitution. A new copy must be turned in to Barnes Center at the Arch Recreation each academic year by the re-registration due date.
- I know when my sport club's events are.
- I have placed all important dates on my calendar.
- I know where the Barnes Center at the Arch Recreation office is located.
- The sport club and I have reviewed and signed the document for the upcoming fiscal year.
- I have a new roster of my sport club's members.
- I know the goals, events and plans of my sport club for the academic year.
- I know what my sport club expects of me this year.
- My sport club knows what to expect from me.