



# **RSO Advisor Guide**

## **Syracuse University**

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Welcome to the Advisor Guide. This document is designed to be a tool and resource for individuals that have agreed to be an advisor for a Recognized Student Organization (RSO). RSO's are under the guidance of Student Engagement and the Division of Student Experience. This guide includes pertinent information regarding leadership style, advisor versus consultant roles, expectations of an Advisor, and more.

## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To foster an environment that engages the Syracuse University community through leadership development, quality services, and dedicated student-centered support.

We strive to provide opportunities for students to discover and engage their strengths, talents and passions through a fun and diverse environment; we empower students to put their learning into action on campus and in the community.

### **LEADERSHIP PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

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### **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICE**

#### **Schine Student Center**

200 Waverly Ave

Suite 230

Syracuse, NY 13244

Phone: 315-443- 2718

Main Website: <https://experience.syracuse.edu/student-engagement>

Cuse Activities: <https://cuseactivities.syr.edu/>

### **SCHINE STUDENT CENTER**

The Schine Student Center is the hub of student life on campus. The building offers students spaces for gathering, eating, socializing, studying, and more. Additionally, Student Engagement staff can assist you in reserving the meeting spaces and event spaces throughout the building.

## **TYPES OF RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (RSO)**

- Operations Based
- Supply Based
- Event Based
- Media and Publications Based

## **CATEGORIES**

- Publications/Media
- Honors/Academic/Professional
- Cultural/Ethnic Spiritual/Religious
- Public Service/Outreach
- Social/Special Interest
- Sports and Wellness
- Performance Arts/Creative Arts

## **ADVISOR ROLE**

RSO advisors are important not only because they are role models for students, but also because their involvement in the organization itself provides learning experiences that are transferable to situations beyond college. Advising allows RSO leaders to truly be developed beyond the classroom. Your help goes beyond just signing an Advisor Contract. The role of the Advisor ensures that organizations have someone who understands university policy, can cultivate community, and be a mentor for these students.

To assist the advisor and the RSO in understanding the roles of an effective advisor, the Student Engagement office offers the following list of responsibilities.

## **ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE RSO**

- Be informed about the organization including mission, purpose, and constitution; providing advice when needed.
- Assist officers when needed in understanding their duties, administering programs and plans, organizing projects, and making appropriate transitions.
- Preserve the continuity of the organization through the constitution, traditions, files, and minutes stored in Cuse Activities.
- Serve as a resource for planning and organizing as well as knowledge of the campus community.
- Encourage the use of procedures to ensure that the meetings run in an efficient,

orderly and consistent manner.

- Encourage students to understand and apply democratic principles, including the recognition of diverse opinions and rights.
- Attend as many organization meetings and events as possible, or at a minimum hold periodic meetings with the Executive Board.
- Articulate campus policies and procedures and help cut through barriers when necessary.
- Support officers and be available for evaluation of ideas.
- Facilitate discussions among officers and between officers and members.
- Be familiar with national chapter structure and services, if relevant.
- Advise individual students when necessary and mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise when necessary.
- Provide historical context of RSO to new leadership/ information necessary for leadership transitions.
- Maintain a close relationship with the executive board and members of the organization.
- Sign annual advisor terms and conditions in Cuse Activities.

## **RSO RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ADVISOR**

- Notify the advisor of all meetings and events.
- Confer with the advisor on plans, projects, events, organization functions, and/or conflicts.
- Consult with the advisor before making structure or policy changes.
- Provide advisor with meeting minutes and the financial condition of the organization.
- Understand that although the advisor has no vote, they should have speaking privileges.  
Respond promptly to the Advisor's inquiries and requests.
- Remember the responsibility for the success or failure of group projects rests ultimately with the group, not the advisor.
- Acknowledge the advisor's time and energy and express appropriate appreciation.
- State clearly and openly the expectations of the advisor.
- Be honest and upfront with the Advisor regarding organization operations.
- Confirm the appointment of the Advisor each year and be certain the advisor will serve by having them sign the contract in Cuse Activities.

## **ADVISOR VERSUS CONSULTANT**

Every recognized student organization is required to have an advisor to be active. The advisor is not the same role as a Student Engagement consultant. The RSO advisor is

an employed faculty or staff member at Syracuse University or SUNY-ESF and is chosen by the organization. The advisor should not be a graduate student or professional studies student. An advisor cannot be a staff member of the Student Engagement Leadership Unit.

RSO Coordinators serve as consultants to all recognized student organizations (RSOs). The consultant provides best practices to accomplish successful events, programming, and overarching logistics on how to remain an active recognized student organization. while also overseeing budgetary & fiscal management. The consultant is responsible for budgetary oversight and fiscal management, handling all event related paperwork including contracts and payments.

## ADVISOR STYLES

<b>Tips on Being an Effective Advisor</b>	
<b>There are many ways to be an effective advisor, these are the four different ways we encourage working with your student organizations. The most important thing to remember, based on what the organization is going through, you may need to adjust your advising style to fit the group's needs at the moment.</b>	
<b>Educator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advising approaches change and adapt in response to situation needs.</li> <li>• Allow the organization to take educational and guarded risks to create learning opportunities through mistakes.</li> <li>• Always provide support (this does also include constructive feedback and "tough love")</li> <li>• Providing opportunities of personal and group reflection after a program or event</li> <li>• Very responsive to students' needs, while not being assertive</li> </ul>
<b>Referee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempt to educate/oversee, while negotiating and handling organization disputes</li> <li>• Provide opportunities and growth through organizational training and team building exercises.</li> <li>• Motivates the organization to empower themselves and members through group transformation.</li> <li>• Best used when dealing with internal organizational politics and turmoil</li> </ul>
<b>Overseer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand back to observe from a distance but serve when called upon.</li> <li>• Be a resource when an organization needs experiential learning.</li> <li>• Assist in the creation of developing organization's competencies.</li> <li>• Can be problematic if group expects more interaction or guidance</li> </ul>

## REMEMBER...

**Every RSO is different.** RSOs are unique, not only in their statistical and physical attributes, but in the quality of their organization, in their size, and in their spirit. Therefore, an advisor must take the information contained in this manual and modify it to fit their organization.

**Every advisor is different.** By accepting this position an advisor agrees to assist the organization in conducting its operations and in realizing its ideals and aspirations. However, each advisor will also have their own philosophy and unique approach to advising and should take those into account.

**Advisors are volunteers.** The advisor is a volunteer and has other important demands on their time. The RSO should avoid setting up unrealistic expectations of them.

**Advisors are NOT dictators.** If push comes to shove, an advisor cannot force an RSO to do anything. Their respect and authority are based upon the quality of their relationship with the members.

## ADVISING THROUGH RSO TRANSITIONS

If you remain with your RSO as an advisor from one academic year to the next, you will likely witness a turnover of leadership and membership within the organization. These times of transition can be difficult for executive officers to navigate, especially if their predecessors did not prepare training/informational materials for the next generation. Below is some advice on how to advise a Recognized Student Organization through a transition in leadership.

## CONTRACTS

Overview – Contracts are a binding agreement between two parties in which each gives something in return for something else. Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) routinely work with contracts for various means such as bringing speakers or performers to campus. In contract law it is extremely important to have your agreement in writing and signed by the parties involved. Student Engagement facilitates contracts and collaborates with SU's legal counsel. RSO E-board members are not to sign contracts. The RSOs are to work closely with their RSO Coordinator to do a Letter of Intent (which is a non-binding agreement) and then a contract is drafted by SU Legal Counsel. The RSO Coordinator facilitates that. It is important that they seek this help and the RSO Coordinator is tasked with getting the contract reviewed and signed by the Comptroller.

Once it is signed by the Comptroller, the contract is then sent to the RSO to send to the vendor. Funding is to be secured before the Comptroller signs a contract.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY**

As an RSO, your student group is recognized by Syracuse University but is not an employee or a designated representative to enter into binding agreements on behalf of the University. Although RSOs cannot act as SU representatives, RSOS conduct and decisions reflect on the University, so it is important that they conduct themselves and their affairs in an appropriate manner.

## **RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS**

Advisors employed by the University are mandatory reporters. Syracuse community members who are not employed by Syracuse University do not fall under the mandated reporter policy. However, we highly encourage all advisors to reach out to the Title IX office if they encounter any issues. Specific information can be found at <https://law.syracuse.edu/student-affairs/title-ix/>

Anonymous reporting is also available through "TIPS" at 315.443.8477 (TIPS). However, the University may be limited in how it can respond to anonymous reports of Prohibited Conduct.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Recognized Student Organizations often require guidance through the particularities of university policies and procedures. As an advisor, you are able to act as a source of information for your students. Utilize the RSO Coordinator for any more questions.

## **RSO REGISTRATION AND RE-REGISTRATION**

Each academic year, RSOs must complete this process to officially register with the University. A club or organization will not be officially recognized as an RSO and cannot receive SA funding unless they have registered. Best practice is to re-register existing organizations between Spring Break and finals, but new organizations can begin the registration process at any time. More information about registration can be found in the 2023-2024 RSO Handbook.



## CUSE ACTIVITIES

'Cuse Activities is an online community that facilitates connection between students and student organizations. You will find clubs and organizations you can join, information on who they are and when they meet and events for you to browse. A platform for all organizations on campus. Your organization should be adding you as their advisor onto their page. Explore - 'Cuse Activities ([campuslabs.com](https://campuslabs.com))

## RSO CONSTITUTION

To complete the online registration or re-registration process, your students must create or update their RSO Constitution. The Office of Student Engagement encourages students to customize the Constitution to best fit their organization's mission and values. However, there is a list of statements that all RSOs must include in their Constitutions. The list is available to your students during the registration or re-registration process. The required statements are as follows:

- ❖ SU Notice of Non-Discrimination
- ❖ Statement of University Compliance
- ❖ Statement of Financial Compliance
- ❖ Title IX Policy

It might be helpful to check in with your students (especially with new leadership, or a new RSO) and make sure they have included these required statements in their RSO Constitution (and have written the statements out correctly).

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

Students may turn to you as an advisor to ask about campus resources or ask you personally for resources you do not have the capacity to provide. Feel free to direct your students to the campus resources listed below. As always, Student Engagement staff are available to respond to any RSO-related questions or concerns. Remember: you do not need to know every piece of RSO-related information to be a great advisor, but you should know how to find necessary information and how to point students in the right direction.

### COUNSELING, HEALTH AND SAFETY

**The Barnes Center at the Arch** – As the hub for student wellness, the Barnes Center at the Arch features programs, services and offerings that promote holistic health and well-being, all in one accessible, centralized space on campus.

Website: <https://experience.syracuse.edu/bewell>

**Counseling** – Professionals are available for students to speak with confidentially about various personal issues such as substance abuse, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, stress, burnout, etc.

Website: <https://experience.syracuse.edu/bewell/mental-health/counseling/>

**Headspace** – Through science-backed meditation and mindfulness tools, Headspace helps you create life-changing habits to support your mental health and find a healthier, happier you.

Website: <https://experience.syracuse.edu/bewell/mental-health/headspace/>

**SU Department of Public Safety (DPS)** – The Department of Public Safety works every day to keep the Syracuse University community a safe and secure place to live, learn, and work. DPS includes a police force dedicated to community policing, the Residential Community Safety Program responsible for residence hall security staffing and safety escorts, the Fire and Life Safety Services department in charge of fire systems maintenance, preparedness, and response to alarms on campus, and the University's Emergency Management and Business Continuity planning functions.

Website: <https://dps.syr.edu/>

**Event and Technical Support (ETS)**- The Event & Technical Services unit of Student Engagement provides technical support to events in the Goldstein Auditorium, Schine Underground, Panasci Lounge, Skybarn, and various other venues on campus. ETS also provides support for outdoor events and concerts, including Juice Jam, and activities on the Quad. If you have been to an event in any of our previously listed venues, then you have no doubt seen our employees in action.

**Operations**- provides services, conveniences, and community that our population needs in their daily lives, creating an environment for formal and informal associations.

## **ACADEMICS AND CAREER**

**Academic Resource Center** – Enhances teaching and learning by enabling a diverse student population to maximize their potential for academic success and excel throughout their experiences at Syracuse University and beyond.

<https://academicaffairs.syracuse.edu/student-resources-and-support/>

**Career and Student Employment Services** – Students’ home base for exploring career options, building a standout resume, job searching, interviewing, negotiating and finding internships. <https://experience.syracuse.edu/career/>

**Registrar’s Office** – Through exemplary service and technological innovation, we provide an inclusive, supportive and a positive experience for our students, faculty, staff and the campus community. <https://registrar.syr.edu/>

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY AND MULTICULTURALISM**

**Office of Diversity and Inclusion** – The mission of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is to set priorities and provide support for a commitment to equity across our campus. We believe equity in thought, feeling, and action fosters measurable diversity, full accessibility, true inclusivity, as well as meaningful belonging. <https://diversity.syr.edu/>

**Multicultural Affairs for Students (OMA)** – To support and promote the academic achievement, multicultural competence, social development, civic engagement, and retention of students from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups at Syracuse University. <https://experience.syracuse.edu/multicultural/about-us/mission-vision/>

**The Center for Disability** – The Center for Disability Resources embraces the concept of disability as diversity and is committed to creating a new context for disability; to redefine the term disability and the culture that surrounds it. <https://disabilityresources.syr.edu/about/>

**LGBTQ Resource Center** – The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Resource Center strives to build a socially conscious community that is inclusive of and accessible to students with marginalized genders and sexualities and the complex intersections of race, class, disability, and underrepresented identities that impact their success at Syracuse University. <https://experience.syracuse.edu/lgbtq/>

**Center for International Services** –The Center for International Services is the place to go on campus if you have questions regarding immigration regulations, passports, visas, insurance, employment and travel. Our staff is available to offer advice and information and address any questions or challenges you may have while living in the U.S. <https://experience.syracuse.edu/international>