

## **ROLE OF STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISER**

Dear Student Organization Adviser,

College is a time that encourages exploration and risk-taking to help determine life's direction. The principles, values, people, places, organizations, activities, and events encountered will become a road map that marks the student's journey.

Through their co-curricular activities, students have the opportunity to develop personal characteristics, interpersonal skills, and expand the way they learn. As an adviser you can assist in this growth by supporting the abilities a student has in these various areas and challenging students to expand their abilities through risk-taking.

We've put this section with you, the adviser, in mind. We hope that it will serve as a reference guide throughout your tenure as an adviser. The influence and impact you have on students outside of the classroom can be dramatic. The development of the "total student" can be encouraged by your positive guidance during the college years. In return, you can develop close and rewarding relationships with members of your organization. The memories of your involvement with student organizations will last a lifetime. We thank you for dedicating your time and energy to such a worthy cause.

A student organization must have at least one adviser. Advisers should be members of the faculty or staff, however, members of the local community may serve as advisers for a student organization with approval by the Coordinator of Student Activities.

Advisers are encouraged to be actively involved in the affairs of the student organization in the following ways:

- facilitate completion of annual registration materials for the organization;
- attend meetings of the organization on a periodic basis;
- provide guidance to the officers and members of the organization;
- assist the organization in setting goals, implementing programs and evaluating activities;
- review the organization's requests for campus space utilization, budget expenditures, fund raising activities, work requests, media communications and other such activities;
- attend functions sponsored by the organization; and,
- serve as a resource person to the organization for information about policies of the University.

Student officers and members of the organization should utilize the advisers in all matters pertaining to their respective organizations. Support and assistance for student organization advisers, officers and members is available in the Office of Student Activities in 122 Schwarm Hall. If we can be of assistance, or if you have any questions or concerns please contact us at 513-785-1892.

## **LIABILITY AND THE ADVISER**

Liability has become an increasing concern for colleges and universities throughout the country. You, as a student organization adviser, should be mindful of risk management principles.

Advisers should ask these questions about an organization's event:

1. What is my duty of care or level of responsibility for an event?
2. Am I following reasonable standards of care?
3. Am I doing what a prudent person would do in this situation?
4. Are there special rules to follow?
5. Are the group's activities being properly supervised?
6. What are foreseeable risks with the group's activity?
7. Are the equipment and premises safe?
8. How will I deal with injuries, which might result from the group's activities?

Four areas where liability can occur:

**TRAVEL** - In terms of group activities, which require travel, additional things to check include:

- whether the student drivers are licensed
- whether they have sufficient auto liability insurance
- whether they have a known record of reckless driving or traffic citations
- whether the cars being driven are safe

**The Office of Student Activities has available a "Planning Off-Campus Activities" packet that should be completed by each organizational member traveling.**

**ALCOHOL** - In terms of damages resulting from the misuse of alcohol, there is a dichotomy between how the courts treat the licensed liquor and how they treat the social host. The Ohio Supreme Court has come down hard on the vendor, but not so hard on the social host. However, the laws are rapidly changing in this area. The situation is totally different, however, if the social host serves liquor to a minor. In this situation, the courts are likely to be quite critical.

**HAZING** - Hazing is defined as any planned action, created situation, requirement, request, or obligation placed on any person anywhere which does not contribute to the positive development of the person. Hazing is strictly prohibited by University policy and state law. (See Student Handbook SECTION 02.109)

**SPECIAL RISKS SITUATIONS** - When dealing with any situation involving special risks be sure to take special precautions to limit risks and be sure that all participants know what the risks are. This can be accomplished through signing an "acknowledgement of risks" form which, though not a waiver of liability, constitutes an assumption of risk. "Acknowledgment of Risks" forms are available in Office of Student Activities.

Faculty and staff who act as advisers to student organizations are acting within the course and scope of their employment and are covered by Ohio's immunity laws for public employees. The University carries a General Liability Insurance for work done within the scope of employment, or performance

of duties related to the conduct of University business. Advisers who are not employees of the University are also covered as “volunteers.” They are covered for activities or work conducted or performed within the scope of their duties for the University.

As an adviser of a student organization, you are the University’s representation regarding the organization’s activities. As such, you are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to your organization related to the programs conducted, use of facilities, and organizational procedures. If you ever have reason to question an action of your organization, please speak to them about the concern, and express your concern in writing, along with the date and alternate suggestions, to the organization and the Office of Student Activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

This handbook has you, the adviser, in mind. The Office of Student Activities hopes that it will serve as a reference guide throughout your tenure as an adviser. The influence and impact you can have on students outside of the classroom can be dramatic. The development of the “total student” can be encouraged by your positive guidance during the college years. In return, you can develop close and rewarding relationship with the members of your organization. The memories of your involvement with student organizations will last a lifetime. We thank you for dedicating your time and energy to such a worthy cause.