

Club Advisor Manual

Importance of Club Advisors

The service performed by faculty and staff in advising student organizations is an important contribution to the mission of Student Affairs at Radford University: “Preparing students for lives of meaning and purpose.”

Advising a registered student organization gives faculty/staff an opportunity to make a difference in the campus community, to interact with students outside the classroom, and to enhance students’ college experiences. The interaction between advisor and student allows the opportunity for more in-depth communication which could change the trajectory of a student’s life and result in long-lasting mentorship even after the student has graduated. Many advisors find great satisfaction in seeing students develop new skills and grow both as individuals and as a team. Additionally, by being involved with student organizations, advisors are kept up to date on campus activities and may interact with campus constituencies they might not otherwise encounter.

Student organizations closely aligned with an academic department ordinarily select faculty advisors from those departments. Student organizations not affiliated with a particular department or course of study usually select members of the faculty/staff at large as advisors. The requirements and expectations of advisors vary depending on the organization.

Eligibility

Club advisors must be either faculty or staff currently employed at Radford University. Faculty may be full-time or adjunct. Staff must be full-time and may not work for an auxiliary unit (e.g. Chartwells). You do not need to apply to be a club advisor. If a club asks you to be their advisor and you fit the requirements described above, then you can be that club’s advisor. However, you are encouraged to get approval from your primary supervisor before taking on this additional responsibility.

Responsibilities

Registered student organizations are supposed to be student-initiated and student-run, but organizations are required to have an advisor to help guide student leaders as needed. Advisors should keep in mind the student-run nature of organizations and allow student members to direct the activities, mission, and membership of the organization. Advisors provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students as they work on projects, but advisors should not be leading or doing the work themselves.

Different advisors have their own styles and each organization has its own unique needs. Some advisors are very actively involved and attend every organization meeting and event, meet regularly with student officers, help with planning and executing programs, and know all members by name; others are less intensely involved, but all advisors should keep regular contact with the organization officers.

Advisors should be accessible and interested in the organization they advise. They are expected to keep themselves informed of the organization's activities, to advise student officers in the organization as needed, and to attend at least some meetings and events the organization hosts.

Please note that an advisor may be required to be present at club social events if any of the following are true: the event is open to the general public (non-Radford students), the anticipated attendance is more than 50 people, the event occurs after 7:00pm, and/or a member of the Presidents cabinet is expected to be in attendance.

Effective advisors are willing to make a commitment of time, care, and effort to support the organization and its members. There are often few accolades for advising, but an advisor's contributions can have a long-lasting impact on the health, growth, and development of the organization and its student members.

Advisors should work closely with club leaders to mutually determine the advisor's role in the organization. Although the advisor role varies based on the needs of the individual organization, advisor responsibilities typically include:

- Attending organization meetings
- Meeting regularly with the organization's president and/or executive board
- Reviewing organization finances with the organization's treasurer and advise the organization on sound financial handling practices
- Understand the organization's constitution and be sure the organization is on the right course to fulfill its mission or purpose
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, as well as guidelines, and standards of conduct related to student organizations at Radford University
- Provide advice and guidance to student leaders and organization members as needed
- Ensure the organization meets school requirements such as registering as an organization every year by October 1st and maintaining a current membership roster on RU Involved throughout the year
- Assist organization with election process and any concerns
- Oversee training and transition of new officers to ensure continuing success of the organization

- Attend trips to conferences or other club travel and advise students during these travel opportunities
- Encourage leaders to understand and utilize resources available to them on campus
- Serve as the liaison between the organization and Radford University administration
- Provide historical knowledge of the organization with club members
- Assist with risk management decisions

Advisors are not responsible or liable for the actions of an organization – that responsibility is on the student members of the organization themselves – but advisors should be aware of potential dangerous behaviors or activities involving the organizations under their care.

Advisors are not required to travel with the organizations they advise; however it may be in the best interest of the group to have an advisor present on trips. In this situation, student activities fees (e.g. CPC funding) cannot be used to pay for an advisor's travel expenses.

It is important to bear in mind that the position of advisor is not always an easy one. At times, you may have to make a difficult decision or take an action that is not popular with the organization. Understand that your first responsibility is to the health and well-being of students and to uphold campus and community policies and regulations.

Advisor Roles

An organization advisor is often called to play different roles within an organization. Given the variety of purposes, activities, and objectives of student organizations at Radford University, the themes will vary from organization to organization, but there are some common recurring roles: Mentor, Team Builder, Conflict Mediator, Reflective Agent, Educator, Motivator, Policy Interpreter, Financial Auditor, and Continuity Guardian.

Mentor

Develop a relationship and genuine interest in students and their organization. Many students will come to see their advisor as a mentor and the success of these relationships can last many years and be rewarding for both the student and the advisor. If the student is seeking an education and a career in your field, you may be asked to assist in his/her professional development. To be effective in this capacity, you will need knowledge of their academic program and profession, a genuine interest in the students' personal and professional development, and a willingness to connect students to a network of professionals. You may be approached to review resumes, to connect students with community resources, or to be a sounding board for their ideas of what they want to accomplish in the field.

At times, students will seek out someone to assist with their personal development. In this capacity, a mentor will have a basic understanding of student needs and perspectives, a desire to challenge students intellectually and emotionally while providing support to meet the challenge, and the ability to listen to students' verbal and nonverbal communication. Students may want to talk to you about family or relationship issues, conflicts they are having with other

students, or to have conversations about their ideas and thoughts on different subjects. Please keep in mind, your role is not professional counselor, so know the appropriate people to whom you should refer students in crisis. There is a list of resources you may need in the appendix of this handbook.

Team Builder

When new officers are elected or new members join the organization, you may need to help those students transition from being individuals with separate objectives and expectations into a team working toward the same goals. New officers may need coaching on the importance of team building. Positive relationships help the organization succeed as well as work through conflicts and difficult times. As the advisor, you may consider working with the student officers to develop a team building plan and to have the students implement it. Helping students in developing effective techniques for team building will keep students invested in the organization and give them the experience of learning what it takes to build a team.

Conflict Mediator

Inevitably, students who have different agendas, goals, and ideas about how things should function will join the organization. Different ideas of where the organization is heading can lead to conflict. When working with students who have come into conflict, remain objective and do not take sides. Meet with them and have them discuss their issues with each other calmly and rationally. Be familiar with the organization's constitution – it can often guide you and the members in conflict back to the organization's purpose. Remind them that they both want what is in the best interest of the organization. Ask them how they think they can work together, point out the organization's mission, and ask how their conduct is helping the organization achieve that mission. Sometimes, one student may be causing problems for other students. In many cases, this student may not realize how his/her actions and attitudes are impacting other organization members. Often, after talking about it, those attitudes or actions can be changed to make everyone feel better. In many cases, the student will appreciate honest feedback. Sometimes a member may have to be removed from the organization, but that should be considered a last resort. The organization's constitution should explain how a member may be removed. Most constitutions are available on the organization's page on RUInvolved under the "documents" section.

Reflective Agent

One of the most essential components to learning both in and out of the classroom is providing time for students to reflect on how they are doing and what they have learned. As an advisor, you may want to meet with the organization's student officers to give them the opportunity to talk about their thoughts on their performance, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Have them reflect on their successes as well as their shortcomings. Then be gently honest with them by letting them know when you agree with their self-perceptions and, in a tactful way, let them know when you disagree. If necessary, you should be able to provide concrete examples of

actions students have taken that seem to contradict their self-perceptions. Remember: any criticism you provide students should be constructive and fair. When students discuss their weaknesses, ask them how they think they can improve in those areas and ask how you can help them. Students usually have the answer to what they need, but they may be reluctant to ask for help.

Educator

Your role of educator will often come through modeling behavior geared toward success, guiding students in reflection of their actions, and simply being there to answer questions. Your life experience may help you broaden the group's understanding and to examine challenges from all points of view. One of the most difficult actions to take as an advisor is to do nothing, but sometimes this can be the most important action of all. You can serve as a voice of reason by asking questions about their plans, but allow the students to make their own decisions. Sometimes, students will succeed and sometimes they will fail, but there are good learning opportunities to be found in victories and defeats. The key is to remember your role of reflective agent and provide the students a safe place to reflect on their experiences and what they learned during the process.

Motivator

Sometimes, you may have to motivate students to achieve their organizational goals – or even to keep the organization alive. Leadership can be challenging and some students are easily discouraged and may want to quit at the first sign of difficulty. You can act as cheerleader to keep them excited about the potential successes and good experiences they will have as a student leader if they work through their doubts. You can motivate them through recognizing their efforts so far, appealing to their desire to create change, and connecting their leadership skills to experiences they may have in future employment opportunities.

Policy Interpreter

Student organizations operate under many of the same policies, procedures, and rules as the rest of Radford University. Sometimes students may not be aware of proper procedures or policies and they may behave inappropriately. The more you know about these policies and procedures, the better you can fulfill your duties as advisor in assisting students with their organizational plans. The rules and procedures impacting student organizations are listed in the Club Manual, which is posted on the Club Hub page in RU Involved.

Financial Auditor

Most organizations elect a student treasurer, but the advisor should occasionally review financial records to ensure organization funds are handled appropriately. You may need to teach a new treasurer basic elements of financial transactions and bookkeeping because they may never have done anything like it before. It is a good idea for student organizations to keep careful records of all money going into and out of organization hands and accounts.

Occasionally, students will handle funds inappropriately (such as borrowing from club money for personal expenses), simply because they are not aware of proper procedures. An advisor should be aware of the nature, extent, and pattern of an organization's expenditures and income (dues, fundraising, etc.) and introduce corrective measures when necessary. At the very least, advisors should review financial records at the end of each school year. Misappropriation of organizational funding is a violation of the Radford University Standards of Conduct and may result in sanctions for the students involved.

Advisors should NOT be listed on club bank accounts.

Continuity Guardian

The continual turnover of officers and members is inherent in every student organization. Often, the advisor serves as the only continuity link to the past – sometimes even just the previous semester. Advisors sometimes serve as institutional memory and help orient new officers to the organization's history and help them build on that foundation. Continuity also implies a connection with the future; advisors can play an important role in helping students develop long-term plans for the future of the organization and communicate these plans to succeeding generations of members.

Remember, you are the advisor and not the leader of the student organization. You provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students, but you should not be doing the hands-on work of running the organization. Students will learn better if they are engaged and doing the work themselves. Be careful of being challenged into doing work students should be doing. Ultimately, students are responsible for the successes and failures of their organizations.

Funding

Student organizations are encouraged to find creative ways to raise funds for supplies and events to support their organizations. Methods may include fundraising events, sales, soliciting donations, collecting dues, et al.

Some alternative sources of funding are available to registered student organizations through the Club Programming Committee (CPC). This funding affords the opportunity to contribute to the quality of campus life by sponsoring special events and programs that may not be possible without additional financial assistance. This funding is intended to enhance the college experience of the entire Radford University community, not to cover operational expenses for an organization.

Organizations may receive up to \$4,000 per year for on-campus events. Events must be open to all Radford University students to be eligible for CPC funding. Funding may not be used toward equipment or apparel. Organizations may receive up to \$950 per year for travel.

Application deadlines are crucial for each of these funding opportunities. In each case, late applications will be rejected automatically, so make your plans and submit your funding applications well in advance of your proposed event.

Organizations directly funded by the Student Finance Committee (including R-SPaCE, Diversity Awareness Programming, Appalachian Events Committee, Peer Health Educators, Highlander Student Media, ISAC, and BSAC) and organizations that are part of the Sports Club Council are not eligible to apply for funding through these sources.

Students interested in receiving CPC funding for an event or travel, should visit the Club Hub in room 226 of The Hurlburt Student Center for a consultation and assistance with completing the funding application.

Risk Management

For a full list of guidelines and policies, visit

<https://www.radford.edu/content/policies/home/policies.html>

Guidelines that frequently impact student organization activities are outlined in the Club Manual and include 1) use of Radford University logo for promo and apparel, 2) candle usage, 3) Bonnie Lobby and Plaza tabling, 4) event decorating, 5) movies, and 6) fundraising.

Please familiarize yourself with these policies and guidelines to assist student organizations with applying these policies and guidelines to club activities. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the students within the organization to know and adhere to these guidelines.

Student Activities Tile (RU Involved)

Also known as RU Involved, the Student Activities tile on One Campus takes you to an online communication and management tool for registered student organizations, student leaders, and advisors. This platform allows you to:

1. Re-register your organization at the end of each school year to maintain status as a registered student organization;
2. Promote and publicize organization events and meetings;
3. Communicate with organization members;
4. Manage club membership and participation;
5. Store files and documents;
6. Share club photos;

7. Hold online elections;
8. Recruit new organization members;
9. Contact the leaders and members of other student organizations;
10. Find other organizations to co-sponsor events with your club;
11. Discover other organizations you may be interested in joining;
12. Track your own involvement during your college career; and
13. Post news stories about your organization.

Advisors are required to be assigned the “faculty advisor” position on the club’s RU Involved page roster. This serves as our record of who is acting club advisor and allows current club advisors to receive pertinent information via email.

For assistance with the Student Activities tile, please email involve@radford.edu, or visit the Club Hub in the Student Involvement Suite in The Hurlburt Student Center.

Club Resources

All registered student organizations have a profile on the Student Activities tile to help them manage and promote their organization.

Registered student organizations have access to the Club Hub, which includes

14. 100 black and white copies per month
15. 25 color copies per month
16. 1 professionally printed banner per club per year
17. 5 poster boards per month
18. Club mailboxes
19. Die-cut shapes and letters machines
20. Color paper and cardstock
21. Craft/art supplies
22. Laminator
23. Decorations
24. Poster printer and outdoor display frames

Registered student organizations may reserve space on campus.

Registered student organizations may fundraise by selling merchandise or through admission to club events. Organizations funded by the Student Finance Committee (DAP, Student Media, SGA, Sports Club Council, etc.) may not fundraise.

Registered student organizations may receive up to \$4,000 each year for on-campus events that are open to all students. Funding is available through the Club Programming Committee and allocated on a first-come basis. Organizations funded by the Student Finance Committee (DAP, Student Media, SGA, Sports Club Council, etc.) are not eligible to receive this funding.

Registered student organizations may receive up to \$950 each year for club-related travel. Funding is available through the Club Programming Committee and allocated on a first-come basis. Organizations funded by the Student Finance Committee (DAP, Student Media, SGA, Sports Club Council, etc.) are not eligible to receive this funding.

Registered student organizations may reserve the Game Room in The Hurlburt Student Center (“The Bonnie”) for two hours per semester at no cost – subject to availability. Contact rmead@radford.edu to request a reservation.

Registered student organizations may include Radford University in their club name in the following format only: XYZ Club at Radford University. Please note that the formats “Radford University XYZ Club” or “RU XYZ Club” are not acceptable.

Getting Started

While not required, club advisors are encouraged to meet regularly with club officers. This can take the form of attending club meetings or holding separate meetings between just club officers and the advisor (often referred to as “one on ones” or “cabinet meetings”).

Ask club officers to copy you on any club-related emails. You can also ask to be added to the club GroupMe if the club uses GroupMe for internal communication.

Pro tip: Set the GroupMe settings to “mute” for the club’s GroupMe and check it when you check your work email. This will save you from getting alerts when the students are active and you are sleeping.

Introduce yourself! Let club members know who you are, your preferred communication methods, your advising style, and your availability.

Advisory Excellence Award

In addition to the multiple awards students and student organizations can receive, an Advisory Excellence Award is also given each spring. This award recognizes an advisor of a student organization who has made an extraordinary impact on students’ lives and has made positive

contributions to the development of students outside of the classroom and to the quality of life at Radford University and/or the surrounding community. Advisors are nominated by students or peers and the recipients are selected by a committee of faculty, staff, and students.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I become a club advisor?

Usually, a faculty or staff member becomes a club advisor because a student asks them directly to advise their organization. However, faculty and staff interested in serving as a club advisor can express their interest by filling out [this form](#) on RU Involve or emailing involve@radford.edu.

What is the difference between “club advisor” and “faculty advisor”?

There is no difference. “Club advisor” is the preferred term used by Student Involvement as club advisors may be faculty or staff. In RU Involved, the platform uses “faculty advisor” as the template title for club advisors.

What happens if the advisor steps down or leaves the university?

Active organizations who lose their advisor are granted one semester to find a new advisor before they lose their active status.

What do I do if the club I advise has no members?

This typically happens when all active club members graduate and have not recruited any new members to take their place in the club. It can also happen if active members decide to quit the organization, but this is less common. As an advisor, you have two options.

1. Let the club become inactive. Make sure any updated documents or club materials are uploaded onto the club’s RU Involved page. When annual re-registration is not completed, the club will be placed in inactive status. In the future, if a student wishes to reactivate the club, all of the documents will still be on the portal for them to access and reactivate the club. If there is a bank account involved, it should be closed by the last student managers of the account. The funds may either be donated directly to another student organization or donated to the Club Programming Fund managed by the Department of Student Involvement.
2. Take an active role in recruitment and transition. This is a common path for department-supported clubs (e.g. Sociology Club). The advisor serves as acting club president until they can recruit students to fill the role.

Resources

- [Standards of Student Conduct](#)
- [SAVES](#), Substance Abuse and Violence Education Support:
 - 540-831-5709, saves@radford.edu
- [Student Counseling Services](#):
 - 540-831-5226
- [CAS](#), Center of Accessibility Services:
 - 540-831-6350, cas@radford.edu
- [RUPD](#), Radford University Police Department:
 - 540-831-5500