

# RSO Advisor Resource Manual Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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## **Introduction**

Participation in student organizations is voluntary, as well as a faculty or staff members' decision to serve as an RSO Advisor. In the course of planning and implementing organizational activities, Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) need information on the use of University facilities, budgeting, planning techniques and a myriad of special arrangement concerns.

This handbook is intended to complement the Registered Student Organization Handbook which provides complete information regarding University policies that relate to student organizations. The Registered Student Organization Handbook is a resource for both student leaders and advisors. It is available through the Student Involvement website, [www.getinvolved.siu.edu](http://www.getinvolved.siu.edu)

### **PURPOSE OF RSO'S AT SIU CARBONDALE**

RSOs at SIU Carbondale are designed to provide opportunities for student involvement. These opportunities contribute to the growth and development of students within an enriched environment.

## **Role of the Advisor**

The role of the advisor will vary based on the needs of the individual organizations. Advisors should have a committed level of interest in the mission and purpose of the organization. Involvement in organization activities may also vary, but it should be understood that an advisor may have to go beyond the constraints of "9-5" to support the organization. It is encouraged that the advisor's role should go beyond signatory on forms, but it should also be understood that the advisor should not run the organization.

Advisors have an important role in the organization by serving as the historian and interpreter of policy for organization members. The knowledge and expertise of advisors can provide continuity for members, helping to ensure the success and longevity of the organization.

The relationship between advisor and member is unique and is defined by the expectations set by both parties.

Despite the challenges, the role of an advisor is rewarding for both the students and the Advisors. Students who have faculty/ staff mentors who are involved in all aspects of the learning process, both in and out of the classroom, are more likely to persist and succeed at SIU Carbondale.

### **ADVISORS ARE ENCOURGAED TO DO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. To assist the individual student within the context of the student organization
2. To become involved in the learning process
3. To serve as a mentor for both the individual student and the group as a whole
4. To promote the psychosocial as well as the cognitive development of students
5. Prospective faculty advisors should refer to the "Defining the Advisor Role" before agreeing to serve as an advisor to an organization. All advisors are encouraged to clarify his/her role as advisor to the group members as he/she sees it
6. Encourage and assist the group in setting organization goals
7. Be available to the officers of the organization for consultation
8. Promote involvement and discussion
9. Assist the officers in understanding their duties and organizing programs
10. Attend meetings as often as possible
11. Challenge the students to strive for more, and then support them in their efforts

## ADVISORS REQUIREMENTS:

1. Must be an employee of the University in a faculty or staff position.
  - a. Exception 1. Campus Ministers who hold the designation of Adjunct Staff/Student Affairs are eligible to advise Religious Groups. (Graduate students with or without graduate assistantship appointments are not eligible to serve as an Advisor.)
  - b. Exception 2. If per a faculty/ staff member's job description, that person is required to serve as the advisor to an RSO and there are clear and proved shared goals between the advisors department and the mission and purpose of the RSO.
2. Will serve as a Fiscal Officer if a student group that operates financially from a University Agency Account. The Associate Dean of Students is the fiscal officer and Staff Delegate for RSO's: Campus Ministers are not eligible to serve as Fiscal Officers.
3. If an advisor leaves his/her role, the organization must identify and determine a new advisor in a timely manner. The new advisor must complete the Advisor Verification Form (located through OrgSync) in order for the groups' information to be accurately updated.
4. Determined length of term in your role as the advisor
5. Review the RSO Handbook and familiarize oneself with University policies
6. Encourage the officers to maintain accurate records
7. Stay up-to-date on what is occurring within the organization
8. Attend any Advisor orientation or RSO programming and be familiar with the location and services of Student Involvement
9. Promote diversity within the organization
10. Teach the art of leadership
11. Help bridge the year-to-year changes in officers
12. Do not let personal goals interfere with or influence group decisions, activities, or goals
13. Provide continuity to the organization's policies, programs, and traditions
14. Most importantly, the advisor should be a caring individual with a real interest in and concern for students and their growth

## EXPECTED ADVISOR QUALITIES

Ideally, criteria for an advisor should realistically represent a group's expectations. The following is a typical list of criteria for a quality advisor a student organization should look for:

1. A strong belief in the organization
2. Willingness to share expertise
3. Ability to serve as a role model
4. Desire to help students
5. Willingness to commit sufficient time
6. Ability to teach leadership development
7. Familiarity with University regulations governing organizations
8. Ability to motivate others
9. Enthusiasm
10. Sense of humor
11. Willingness to listen to students
12. Interest in student's personal growth and development beyond the classroom
13. Ability to work with others
14. Allow the learning process to work by making the organization take responsibility for poor planning, oversights, and failures

## Statements of Responsibility for RSO Advisors

As an RSO Advisor, it is understood that I am responsible for the following:

### **Group Growth:**

This area consists of those advisory activities that improve the operation and effectiveness of the group and help it progress toward its goal. Related advisory activities might include teaching techniques and responsibilities of good leadership, developing procedures and plans for action, keeping the group focused on goals, and stimulating or initiating activities and programs. Networking can also stimulate growth. Opportunities to network might include identifying guest speakers, field trips or site visits, or encouraging attending conferences related to their area of interest.

### **Program Content:**

This area involves the Advisor assisting the organization to complement the formal curricular offerings of the University. It is here that the Advisor can stimulate the talents and abilities of student intellectual development while enriching campus life. Advisory activities related to program ideas are providing opportunities for the practice of classroom-acquired skills, pointing out new perspectives and directions to the group, and supplying expert knowledge and the insight of experience.

### **Group Maintenance:**

This area seeks to maintain the existence of the student organization and to help keep it out of unnecessary difficulty by alerting the group to University policies and procedures that pertain to RSOs. In addition, the Advisor assists by arbitrating intra-group disputes, providing advice when called upon, providing history and tradition of past groups when advisable, and helping the group is aware of the importance of good public relations for the organization and the institution.

### **Group Responsibility:**

This area consists of communicating any risk and/or liability that may arise from those activities the organization involves itself in. It is important to communicate to our organizations that while they are recognized by the university (which allows the group access to the universities name as well as facilities and some financial support), Southern Illinois University Carbondale will not be held responsible for any and all claims and/or damages that may arise from or incident to the organization and any rental use of university facilities including, but not limited to, any and all claims for personal injury, bodily injury, damage to property, or violation of any local, state or federal law.

As the advisor I agree to:

1. Serve as the central contact for the RSO
2. Handle and RSO regulations/procedural problems with the University
3. Serve as the RSO Fiscal Advisor and/or Fiscal Officer, if necessary
4. To ensure that the RSO complies with Organization Responsibility Requirements
5. That I am an employed faculty or staff member at SIU Carbondale. (Emeritus, GAs, or TA,s are not eligible to sign as an advisor)
6. Or that I am contracted adjunct faculty for a religious RSO
7. Per Clery Act requirements, as an advisor of an RSO you are considered a "Campus Security Authority". As such, you shall immediately report any crimes of which you are made aware to the Southern Illinois University Police Department.

## **Advising Benefits**

### **IMMEASURABLE REWARDS**

There are many benefits associated with becoming an advisor to a student organization. Here are some examples:

- Seeing and helping students learn and develop new skills and the satisfaction that brings.
- Watching a disparate group come together to share common interests and work toward common goals and an understanding of differences.
- Developing a personal relationship with students in a positive, non-employment, non-judicial, non-crisis setting.
- Furthering personal goals or interests by choosing to work with an organization that reflects one's interests.
- Sharing one's education, experiences, talents, and abilities with students through regular mentoring and role modeling interactions.
- Advising organizations which address both the programmatic and governance needs of its constituents or members.
- Augmenting the positive impact of the organization by cultivating more active leaders in a campus that is working towards the development of an inclusive, involving, and developmental community.

The list goes on. The advisor role can offer opportunities for professionals to facilitate student development outside of the classroom. Students often point to their experience in a student organization as the most meaningful experience in their college career.

Being a part of that experience is a benefit you cannot find anywhere else!

As an advisor you will assume numerous roles and all possible roles are not mentioned here. A key idea to remember is that you are an advisor not the leader. You provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students as they work on projects, but you should not be doing the work. Students will learn through engagement. The students make the decisions, and they are accountable for those decisions, and for the successes and failures of their groups.

*-Some information provided by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Advisor Manual*

## Advising Checklist

The Advisor has a vital role in ensuring the continuity of the organization they advise. Below is a checklist that will help the organization stay active and formally registered with the Office of Student Involvement.

New officers (Scheduling, Financial and Presidents/ Primary Officer) should complete the Student Involvement RSO Certification Training

- ✓ In accordance with University Policy, each RSO is required to renew their Annual Registration through their OrgSync portal. The date ranges listed below should help a group determine when the appropriate time to register is for their group:
  - FALL REGISTRATION-
    - Leadership changes between the last week of March and the fourth week after the beginning of the next fall semester
  - SPRING REGISTRATION-
    - Leadership Changes the last week in November through the last week in February
- ✓ Ensure all RSO equipment is tagged and accounted for (over \$100 requires tag).
- ✓ Ensure the latest copy of the RSO Constitution and Bylaws is uploaded to the groups OrgSync Portal, and that Student Involvement has a copy of it.
- ✓ Become familiar with your current budget, past program evaluations, and status of the incoming officers.
- ✓ Transition any new officers and obtain transition packets/manuals from leaving officers.
- ✓ Attend the Advisor Brunch in the Fall and be familiar with the location and services of Student Involvement
- ✓ Inform officers of the annual SIU Leadership Conference which they can attend.

### OTHER HELPFUL REMINDERS

Remember that there are extensive policies and procedures regarding the following items:

Dances	Tailgating
Alcohol	Transportation
Mailings	Contracts
Printed Material	Food Sales
Protests	Space Reservations
Chalking	Solicitation
Travel	Websites
Purchase	Fundraising/ Raffles

Access to the above mentioned policies as well as links to RSO Funding Guidelines, and Disciplinary Actions are available through the RSO Handbook and the Student Involvement website, [www.getinvolved.siu.edu](http://www.getinvolved.siu.edu).