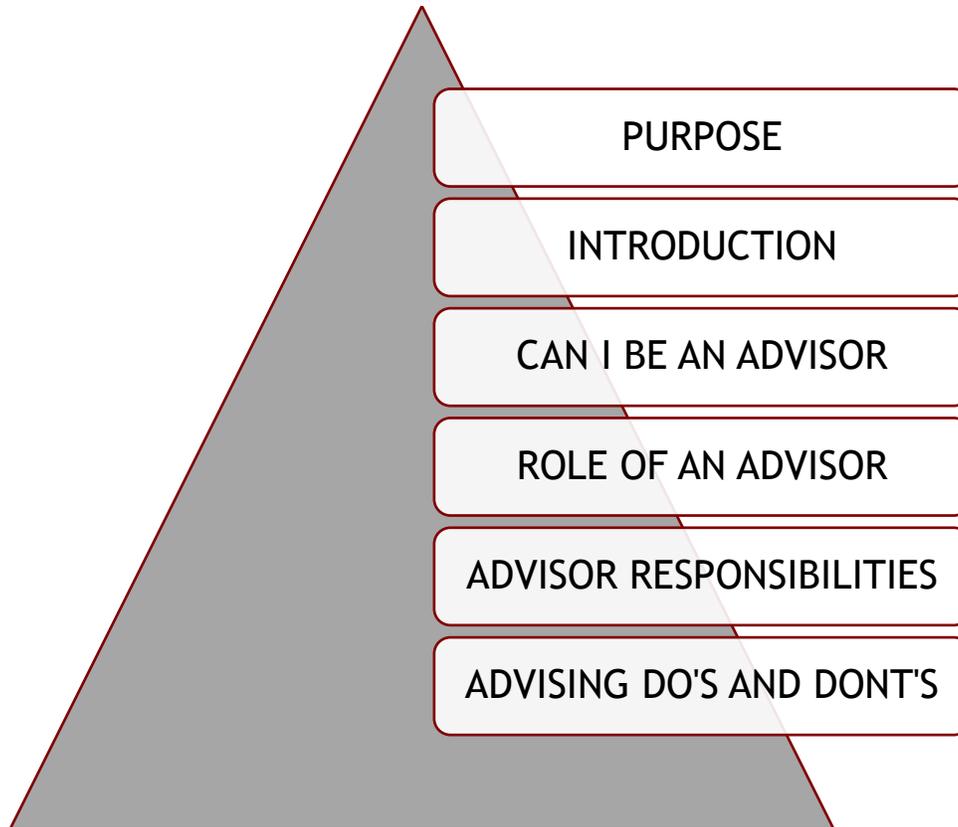


# RSO ADVISOR HANDBOOK

## Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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### PURPOSE

The advisor relationship can be an integral part of an organization's success. The purpose of this handbook is to help advisors navigate the resources available to them. Advisors are important to Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) not only because they are role models to students, but also because their involvement in the organization itself provides a learning experience that is transferable to situations beyond college.

This content should enhance the advisor's effectiveness, rapport with students, and overall enjoyment of the advising experience. 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.

# 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. It is available through the Office of Student Engagement's, <http://www.getinvolved.siu.edu>

## CAN I BE AN ADVISOR?

To be an RSO advisor, the following requirements must be met:

### 1. **Must be a full time, faculty or staff of SIU**

- a. Exception 1: Campus Ministers who hold the designation of Adjunct Staff/Student Affairs are eligible to advise Religious Groups. Additional paperwork must be completed. (Graduate students with or without a graduate assistantship appointment are not eligible to serve as a primary Advisor)

## ROLE OF AN ADVISOR

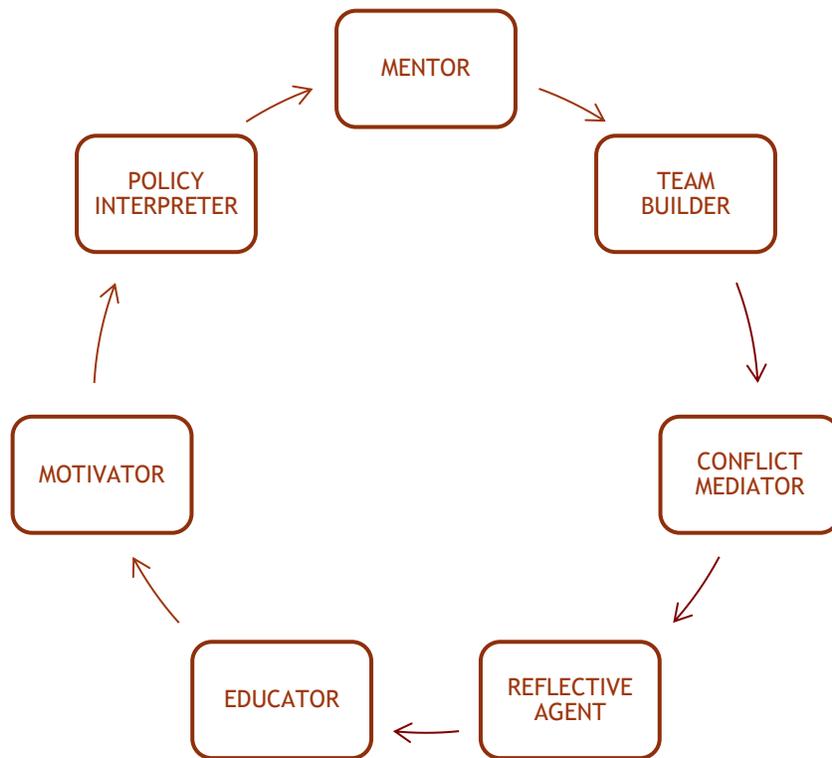
The role of the advisor will vary based on the needs of the individual student organization. Advisors should have a committed level of interest in the mission and purpose of the organization. Involvement in organization activities will vary, but advisors should be both accessible and interested while providing whatever counsel an organization or its members might seek.

It is *encouraged and expected* that the advisor's role should go beyond signatory on forms. 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 while helping to ensure the success and longevity of the organization.

The relationship between advisor and student officers is unique and will vary by organization. It's important that advisors and officers agree on a set of expectations. There is an Advisor Expectation Checklist listed on [getinvolved.siu.edu](http://www.getinvolved.siu.edu) that will assist in the setting of expectations.

As an advisor you will assume numerous roles. A key idea to remember is that you are an advisor and not the organization president or 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 if they are engaged. Be careful of being challenged into doing the work for a student project. The students make the decisions, and they are accountable for those decisions and for the successes and failures of their organizations.

**There are seven roles that advisors often take on at different times during their term as an advisor:**



## **MENTOR**

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. Advisors must be willing to serve as a mentor for both the individual student and the group as a whole.

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 also 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.

If the student is seeking an education and a career in your field, you may be asked to assist in his/her professional development. 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.

## **TEAM BUILDER**

Team building is important because it enhances the relationships within the organization. Positive relationships help the student organization succeed and work through conflicts.

As the advisor, you may consider working with the student officers to develop a plan and to have the students implement it. Training students in effective techniques for team building will keep students invested in the

organization and give them the opportunity to learn what it takes to build a team. To accomplish the goal of creating an effective team, it is sometimes necessary to conduct a workshop to engage students in this process.

Be sure to use your campus resources! Touch of Nature has many options that will help your student organization grow as a team!

## **CONFLICT MEDIATOR**

Inevitably, students are going to join the student organization with different agendas, goals, and ideas about how things should function and the direction they should be taking. As an advisor, it is important to have frequent communication with the student organization so the possibility of conflict may be minimized.

In many cases, students may not realize that his/her actions are causing a problem. In this case, speaking with the student individually could be helpful. Chances are that no one has met with the student previously and discussed how his/her attitudes are impacting other people and how those attitudes or actions can be changed to make everyone feel better. In many cases, the student will appreciate honest feedback.

## **REFLECTIVE AGENT**

One of the most essential components to student development in co-curricular programming is providing time for students to reflect on how and what they are doing. As an advisor, you will want your officers to talk to you about how they think they are performing, their strengths and their challenges. Give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on their performance. Then be honest with them. Let them know when you agree with their self-perceptions and in a tactful manner, let them know when you disagree.

Remember, any criticism you provide students should be constructive and you will want to provide concrete examples of actions the student took that seem to contradict their self-perceptions. When students discuss their challenges, ask them how they can improve those areas and how you can help them. Students usually have the answer to what they need; they just don't like to ask for help. Remember to have students reflect on their both their successes and failures. Be sure to celebrate their successes!

## **EDUCATOR**

As a student organization advisor, your role of educator will often come through modeling behavior geared toward success, guiding the student in reflection of their actions and being available to answer questions. 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. Allow the students to make their decisions even if they do not agree with your ideas. Sometimes, students will succeed; other times, they may fail. The key is to return to the role of the reflective agent and give the students a safe place to reflect on their experiences.

## **MOTIVATOR**

As an advisor, you may have to motivate students to excel, to carry out their plans and to achieve their goals. Some students are easily discouraged and at the first sign of difficulty they may want to quit.

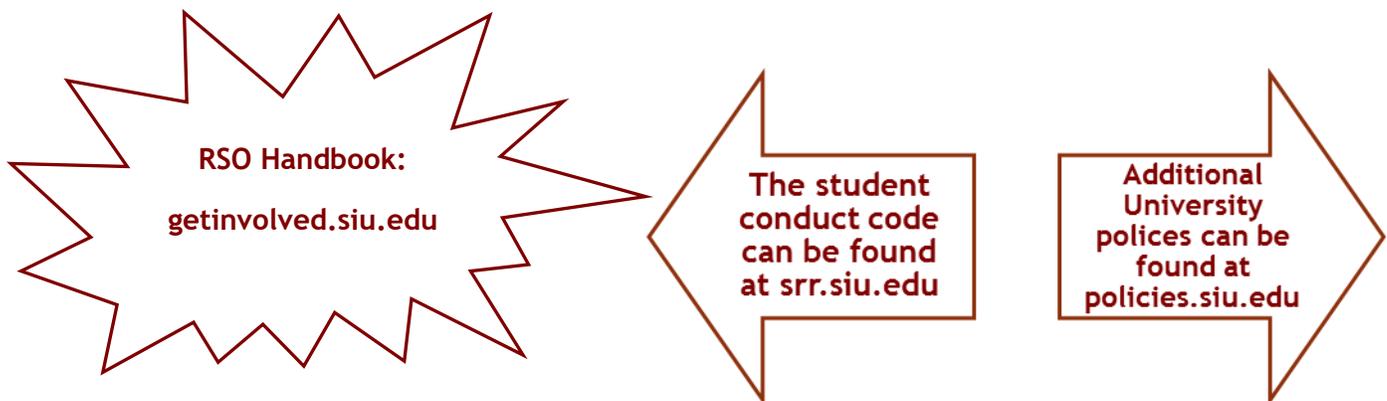
As their advisor, you may need to be their "cheerleader" to keep them excited about all the potential successes they will experience. You can motivate students through the recognition of their efforts, appealing to their desire to create change, and by connecting their experiences here at SIU to the experiences they will have in the community.

**The following include methods by which you can motivate members of the student organization:**



**POLICY INTERPRETER**

Student organizations operate under policies, procedures and rules. At times, students may not be aware of these policies and they will do things in an inappropriate manner. The more you know about these policies the better advising you can give to the students on their plans. The RSO Handbook is located at [getinvolved.siu.edu](http://getinvolved.siu.edu)



# ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

During the annual renewal of the student organization, advisors are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to completed an Student Organization Advisor Agreement located on the [getinvolved.siu.edu](http://getinvolved.siu.edu) website. This ensures that advisers are willing and able to advise a student organization for another academic year.

## FINANCIAL MANAGER

Advisors serve as a Financial Manager if a student group elects to deposit their funds with the accountant in the Office of Student Engagement. An organizations financial manager **MUST** be a full-time employee or an approved student organization advisor.

Advisors are responsible for reviewing financial activity for accuracy. Charges and withdrawals from the student organization's University account requires an advisor's approval. Though we do not encourage it, if your student organization does not utilize an University account, it is good practice to be aware of where the organization's money is located and who has access to it.

## EVENT ATTENDANCE

As students plan events, advisors must be involved. Talk with your student organization and assist as much as possible. If your student organization plans to host an event with an estimated attendance of 100 people or more or if tickets are being sold, advisors must be present at the event. Depending on where your student organization is hosting the event, the facility may request additional requirements of the advisor.

**Your involvement in planning an event is paramount to the success of the event. Become involved!**

## CAMPUS SECURITY AUTHORITY

Advisors serve as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) for the University. As such, advisors are responsible for immediately reporting any Clery Act violations and incidents of sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking to the University. Online training on being a Campus Security Authority is offered annually through the Department of Public Safety. In addition to being a Campus Security Authority, advisors are asked to share any information with the Dean of Students regarding potential student safety and/or conduct concerns.

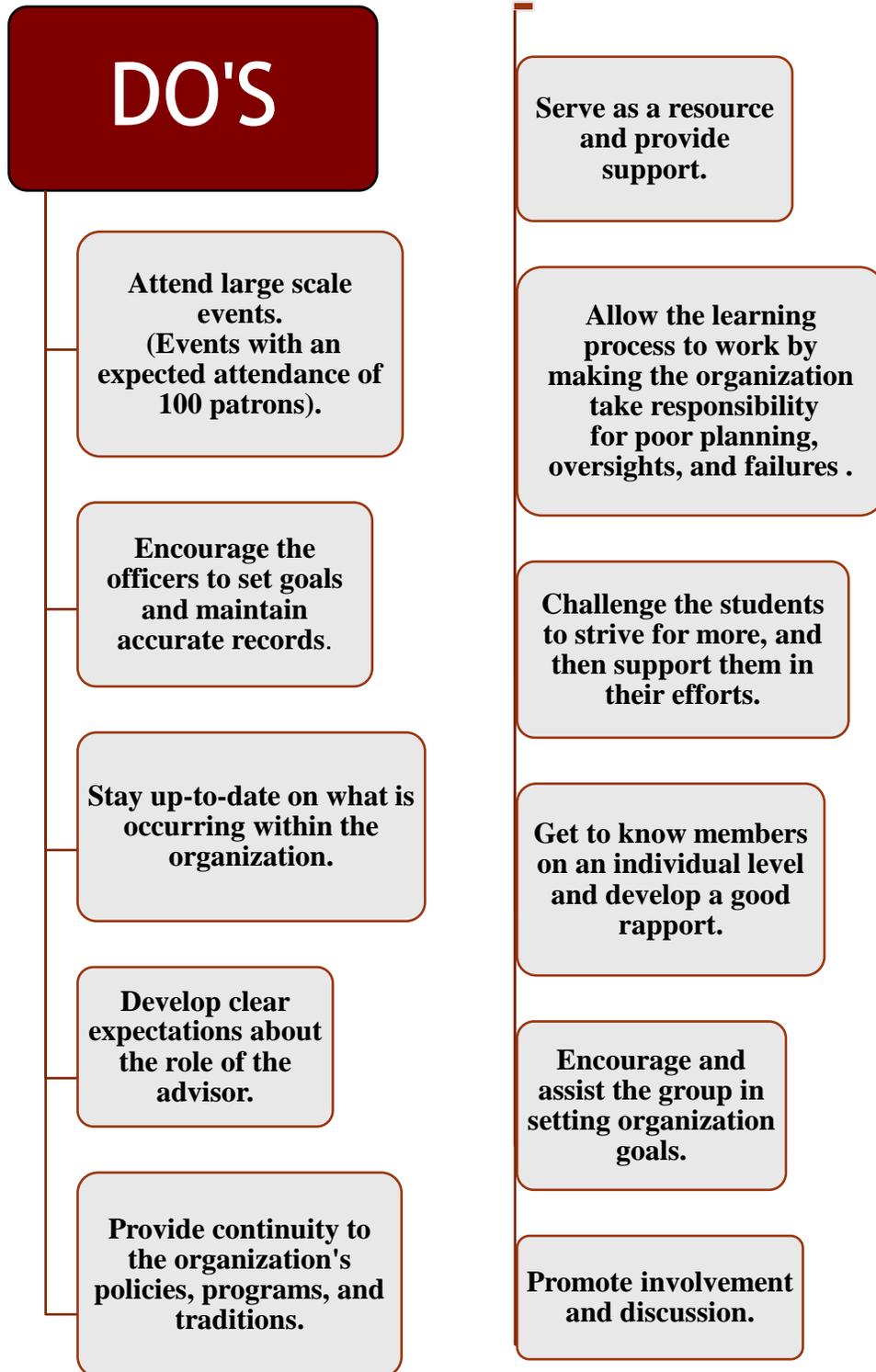
**For more information on being a Campus Security Authority, visit: [safe.siu.edu](http://safe.siu.edu)**

## SALUKI CARES

**Saluki Cares** follows established protocol to ensure that concerning student behavior, mental health and medical issues, or other incidents are addressed consistently. If you notice any potential issues, you are asked to fill out the online form or call Saluki Cares at 618-453-2121.

**To report a student issue or for more information on Saluki Cares, visit: [salukicare.siu.edu](http://salukicare.siu.edu)**

# ADVISING DO'S AND DON'TS



# DONT'S

- Do not let personal goals interfere with or influence group decisions, activities, or goals.
- Impose your own bias.
- Assume the group handles everything okay and does not need an advisor.
- Close off lines of communication.
- Prevent students from trying new ideas.
- Be consistently absent from group meetings or functions.
- Assume the organizations needs, attitudeies, and personalties will stay the same year to year.
- Allow the group to become a one person organization.