

# The Office of Campus Life Advisor Guide 2009-2010

The Ohio State University at Mansfield  
And  
North Central State College

*On Behalf of the Office of Campus Life I would like to thank you for the time and energy you devote to student organizations on our campus. Your efforts provide opportunities for both North Central State and Ohio State University at Mansfield students to develop and enhance the leadership skills necessary to lead well rounded and engaged lives. Your involvement as an advisor makes a difference on this campus.*

*Andy Crawford*

*Coordinator of Campus Life*

## Office of Campus Life

### Mission

The Office of Campus Life strives to complement the academic programs at The Ohio State University-Mansfield and North Central State College and enhance the overall educational experience of student by providing co-curricular programming that is intended to foster interpersonal and leadership skill development, appreciation for diverse people and opinions, and opportunities for social, cultural, intellectual, physical and emotion growth.

### Introduction

Student organizations are a valuable part of a student's college experience. All registered student organizations on the Mansfield Campus are required to have an advisor who is a member of either The Ohio State University at Mansfield or North Central State College. Advisors serve to guide and mentor our student organizations. In addition, advisors are resources for both individual and group related issues. They share knowledge about the organization's history and traditions, as well as The Ohio State University at Mansfield and North Central State College guidelines.

There have been as many as 50 registered student organizations on the Mansfield Campus. It is important to understand every student organization is unique and each academic year brings new members, new rewards and new challenges. Due to the nature of some organizations, such as sport clubs or skydiving, additional liability risks may be present which require more attention. *Please see the Coordinator of Campus Life for additional material on risk management.*

All registered student organizations are listed on the Office of Campus Life web page. The site has valuable information on student organizations, leadership development, community service as well as the **Student Organization Handbook** – a resource for all organizations. This Advisor's Guide is designed to provide key information regarding policies and procedures for the operation of a registered student organization as well as other information which may assist an advisor in their role.

## Why Advise

The experiential learning possibilities of co-curricular activities represent a rich educational resource. Advisors to registered student organizations are a valuable component in the group's development as a result of their presence and influence within the organizational structure. Meaningful and engaged advising can enhance co-curricular activities and transform random non-purposeful programs into meaningful experience with defined educational goals and outcomes augmenting the students' growth and development. Potential reasons to become involved with student organizations in the role of advisor are:

- The opportunity to learn from students and to be more in tune with what is going on in the mind of a college student.
- The ability to help students implement what has been learned in the classroom and applies it in their co-curricular activities.
- The satisfaction and rewards in observing the student and their organization develop grow, build character, integrity, trust, and dependability while they discover who they are and truly begin to find their voice.
- The ability to make a difference in students' lives and know that....

### **YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!**

It is an honor to be asked to serve as an advisor, but it is also important for you to understand the additional demands that will be placed upon your time and energy. You will be instrumental in developing the students on our campus into leaders. In addition, you will be guiding students as they learn skills that will help in their own development.

## Role of the Advisor

Obviously, the advisor role is varied and complex. However, understanding of the following may be helpful in establishing a good working relationship with your student organization.

The style and specifics of the relationship between the advisor and organization must be tailored to the specific group and its members. It is crucial for both the advisor and the organization to have realistic expectations of what the advisors role should be.

Clearly defining and articulating both the advisor and the organization's role is beneficial to both and prevents miscommunication later in the semester. However, these roles may require consistent evaluation and refining throughout the academic year. Reflection and critical analysis of one's role at the end of each semester will enhance the growth and development of the individual, whether it is the advisor or student.

### **Some questions you may want to ask yourself as an advisor are**

- Why do I want to advise a student organization and why did I choose this organization?
- Am I familiar with the mission and constitution of this organization?
- Do I know the names of the executive board members and general members of the organization?
- Have I attended some of the programs?
- Have I Maintained an open line of communication with the members?
- What were the biggest challenges I faced as this organization's advisor?
- What were the most rewarding aspects of advising this group?
- Have I provided an opportunity for the executive board to evaluate me?
- What are three goals I would like to attain next year as the advisor to this organization?

Certainly there are many more questions that could and should be asked. These are just a sampling to get the reflective process started. In addition to the advisor, the organization should also do some meaningful reflection at various times during the academic year.

It is wise to build a good working relationship with the executive board members of the organization because an effective executive board is essential to the success of any organization.

### **What is expected from Advisors**

The advisor must:

- Be an employee (faculty, staff, or administration) of the Mansfield Campus

The advisor should:

- Be interested in the organization and should be knowledgeable about its purpose, programs and members.
- Be willing to serve as a consultant and a resource to both the offices and the general membership of the organization.
- Attend meetings (especially executive board meetings) and programs/events sponsored by the organization as appropriate.
- Become familiar with and ensure that the organization is in compliance with Mansfield Campus policies and guidelines.
- Be aware of the financial status of the organization and encourage sound fiscal management.
- Be knowledgeable about the registration process for student organizations and assist in the transition process.
- Be aware of liability/risk issues.

## **What the organization may expect of Advisors**

The advisor should:

- Serve as a liaison between the student organization and the college in terms of policies, guidelines, and contact names and numbers on and off-campus resources
- Assist in the development of a vision and mission statement for the organization, as well as short and long-term goals.
- Encourage and assist the members in making programs purposeful and meaningful for their targeted audience through organized pre-planning, facilitating, and evaluations of their programs.
- Assist in educating the members about group dynamics, different learning and leadership styles, organizational structure, diversity, programming, assessment, and collaboration.
- Set aside specific office hours to allow student organization members to “drop in” and openly discuss any issues they may have.

## **What Advisors may expect of the organization**

The organization should:

- Keep the advisor informed of all activities, meetings, and any issues that may arise. This can easily be done by adding the advisor to the organization’s listserv and providing them with a copy of meeting minutes.
- Have the executive board members (at the very least the President) meet regularly with the advisor. This is a great opportunity for one-on-one discussion and for the executive board members to get valuable information that may enhance their role as a leader.

## **Working with the General Membership**

Advisors play an important role with the entire organization. The manner in which advising is done varies from group to group and is influenced by the personality and working style of both the advisor and the members of the organization. The advisor should encourage the organization to hold workshops, retreats, and other social events to better develop the leadership, communication, teambuilding, and organization skills of its members. The advisor, along with the entire organization, should be aware of risk management issues that may rise in each of their programs.

## Student Organization Registration

The following are key components of being a registered student organization

- Every student organization must go through the registration process each academic year
- The Student Organization Registration form is online and can be accessed from the Office of Campus Life web site.
- All organizations must have a constitution on file with the Office of Campus. A sample constitution can be found in the Student Organization Handbook. This handbook is available on the Office of Campus Life web site.
- All executive board members must be students at either The Ohio State University at Mansfield or North Central State College.

## Event Planning

It is very important for your organization to plan ahead for programs. Many of the details require the assistance of more than one department and the proper timeline is imperative. If the program requires the assistance of The Office of Campus Life, please plan accordingly. It is extremely important that you meet with the Coordinator of Campus Life prior to running an event. This individual is here to assist the organization in making everything run smooth. Forms for events of campus can be found on the web site as well as an event checklist form that can be beneficial during the planning of an event. Once again we urge each organization to meet with the Coordinator of Campus Life prior to event planning. We have a variety of materials that may be useful including an event planning packet.

*Thanks once again for your desire to assist students on our campus. Your willingness to advise goes a long way in the development of our student leaders. If you should have any questions along the way, please feel free to contact me. I am here to serve you and make the process as easy as possible.*

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