The role of an advisor varies, but it is always an important one. The scope and frequency of an organization’s activities, the effectiveness of its officers, the time commitments of the advisor, and several other factors determine the level of involvement the advisor will have with the organization. An advisor should be committed to the group’s success, and may need to sometimes go above and beyond the call of duty. An advisor should never be resigned to only serve as a signatory on forms.

Considering their expertise and experience, advisors can often supply significant insights to group matters such as goal setting, programming, conflict resolution, and group growth/development. It is often the advisor who can aid in maintaining an organization by providing continuity and by serving as an information source. In short, a good advisor can help nurture an organization’s success.

The pattern of teamwork between an advisor and the organization must be specifically tailored to the personalities and needs of both parties. Some guidance is necessary in developing such a relationship. Listed below are some expectations which can be negotiated between student organization leaders and their advisor. This form is designed to help advisors and officers arrive at a clear and mutually agreed upon advisor role.

The advisor and the officers of the organization should rank the following items from 1 to 5, with 1 being an essential duty of the advisor and 5 being absolutely not an advisor’s duty. Both parties should then meet to compare answers and discuss any differences. For items that are determined not to be the responsibility of the advisor, it is important to establish whose responsibility it will be.

1. Attend all general meetings.
2. Attend all executive committee meetings.
3. Call meetings of the executive committee when believed to be necessary.
4. Explain University policies and procedures when relevant to the discussion.
5. Explain University policies and procedures to the entire group once a year.
6. Depend on the officers to observe University policies and procedures throughout their terms.
7. Meet with the president before each meeting.
8. Help the president prepare an agenda before each meeting.
9. Speak up during discussion when the group may make a poor decision.
10. Be quiet during the general meetings unless called upon.
11. Exert influence with officers between meetings.
12. Take an active part in formulating the goals of the group.
Initiate ideas for discussion when it is believed they will be helpful to the group.

Be one of the group; except for voting and holding office.

Attend all group activities, meetings, events, etc.

Request to see the treasurer’s books at the end of each semester.

Check the secretary’s minutes before they are written in final form.

Check all official correspondence before it is sent.

Get a copy of all official correspondence.

Be a custodian of all group materials, records, supplies, etc. during the summer and between officer transitions.

Keep the official files of the organization.

Inform the group of infractions of their bylaws, codes, and other standing rules.

Make the group aware of its stated objectives when planning events.

Veto a decision when it violates a stated objective, bylaw, or University policy.

Mediate interpersonal conflicts that may arise.

Be responsible for planning leadership skills workshops.

Let the group work out its problems; allow for mistakes and “doing it the hard way.”

Insist on an evaluation of each activity by those students responsible for planning it.

Take the initiative in developing teamwork and cooperation among the officers.

Let the group thrive or decline on its own; do not interfere unless requested.

Represent the group in any conflicts with members of the University staff.

Be familiar with University resources and procedures that affect group activities.

Sit next to the president and/or officers during meetings and correct procedural “mistakes” when they occur immediately.

Take an active part in the orderly transition of responsibilities between old and new officers at the end of the year.

Cancel any activities when you believe they have been inadequately planned, will violate University rules, or are unsafe.
Possible Responsibilities to the Student Organization

* The advisor should assist the group in developing realistic goals for the academic year.
* The advisor should be aware of all plans and activities of the group and inform the group of institutional policies that may affect these plans.
* The advisor should discourage dominance of the group by any one individual and should encourage quieter students to take initiative.
* The advisor should provide continuity within the group and should be familiar with the group’s history and constitution.
* The advisor should offer ideas for projects and events.
* The advisor should assist the group in evaluation.

Possible Responsibilities to Individual Members

* The advisor should help the students find a balance between their academics and their co-curricular activities.
* The advisor should encourage each individual to participate in and plan group events.
* The advisor should encourage students to accept responsibility for specific roles within the group.

Possible Responsibilities to the University

* The advisor should work with the group, but not direct its activities.
* Occasionally, an advisor can help an organization during an emergency or crisis situation.

Name of Student Organization: ___________________________________________________________

Advisor

Name ___________________________________________ Signature __________________________

Officers

Name ___________________________________________ Signature __________________________

Name ___________________________________________ Signature __________________________

Name ___________________________________________ Signature __________________________

Name ___________________________________________ Signature __________________________

Name ___________________________________________ Signature __________________________

By signing this agreement, the advisor and officers of the student organization agree to have a positive working relationship and meet stated expectations agreed upon above. In addition, the advisor and officers agree that they will communicate to one another if expectations are not being met or need to be revised throughout the academic year.