



UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

State University of New York

Faculty/Staff Advisor Handbook

2018-2019

Office of Student Activities

University at Albany Faculty/Staff Advisor Handbook

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Research on student organizations and their advisors has shown that faculty advisors were indispensable in ensuring that learning occurred within the group. Faculty involvement with students (including as organization advisors) was found to be a determining factor in college students' satisfaction, persistence, and intellectual and personal development (Floerchinger, 1992). The research is clear that the more we engage students with faculty – inside and outside the classroom – the higher our chance for student success, retention and satisfaction. Involvement with student organizations is no exception.

In addition, research has shown that the faculty also have received benefits from their involvement with the group. Dunkel and Schuh (1998) noted several common rewards that motivate student organization advisors including:

- Observing the development of college students during their matriculation;
- Recognition from the institution, organization, or students;
- Serving as a job reference for students; and
- Serving as a mentor for students.

As you consider becoming a student organization faculty advisor, note that there are various ways you may choose to get involved. Faculty or staff members may

- Have a special interest in a particular activity or organization and may contact the leaders of that organization and volunteer to serve as the advisor.
- Be asked by students or administrators to advise the organization based upon their academic or professional expertise.
- Be asked by students because they have served as a mentor or past professor to one of the officers.

Most faculty, if they have never served as a faculty advisor for an organization, do not know what to expect and can be apprehensive to agree when asked by a student officer. This is normal. To address the uncertainty, the Office of Student Activities has created resources to support our faculty advisors, which can be found in section IV of this handbook.

I hope that you consider being a faculty advisor and if you have any further questions or feedback, I ask that you contact me, who will serve as the resource for faculty advisors. You can find all of our student organizations at MyInvolvement.org/Organizations - take a look at all of these groups and consider supporting our campus community as a faculty advisor.

Sincerely,

Pamela Alexander, Director of Student Activities



Sources:

Floerchinger, D. (1992). Enhancing the role of student organization advisors in building a positive campus community. Campus Activities Programming, 26(6), 39–46.

Dunkel, N. W., & Schuh, J. H. (1998). Advising student groups and organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

FACULTY ADVISOR RELATIONSHIP STATEMENT

Each student organization is required to select an advisor who is a faculty or staff member at the University at Albany. Organization officers are responsible for all communication with their advisor. It is important for an advisor to understand that an organization and its members want and need different things at different times. It is helpful to talk early in the year with organization members to determine what roles, style, and functions you may want to use for the year. Advisors and officers are encouraged to discuss expectations of each other.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADVISORS

Faculty/Staff Advisors voluntarily serve in their role as a student organization Faculty/Staff Advisor but are considered to be engaging in a service to the University. Advisors are asked to be familiar with the mission of the organization, get to know the leadership and as many members as possible, provide support and guidance as necessary, help officers manage any obstacles that may hinder the group from accomplishing its goals. Attendance at group events and programs is highly encouraged.

All Advisors are expected to mentor club officers as needed and will be invited to attend an Advisor Training Meeting with The Office of Student Activities.

In essence, a good Advisor may contribute some or all of the following:

- Familiarity with the governing documents of their respective organizations. Constitutions/by-laws can be found in the Documents section of each organization's page on MyInvolvement.org. For organizations recognized by the Student Association (SA) or Graduate Student Association (GSA), SA governing documents can be found [here](#) and GSA governing documents can be found [here](#).
- Familiarity with UAlbany's policies and rules which govern registered student organizations found in the [Student Organization Handbook](#)
 - Additional guidelines for club sports can be found in the [Club Sports Handbook](#)
 - Additional guidelines for fraternities and sororities can be obtained by contacting Student Activities at (518) 442-5566
- Encourages members to adhere to these policies as well as to obey local, state, and national laws
- Is listed on the organization's roster on MyInvolvement.org (group officers should invite you)
- Gets to know members and meets regularly with the officers to offer input into the club's decision-making processes, but should not assume a leadership role in the organization
- Helps develop leaders by encouraging the growth of initiative, responsibility, and leadership in the club's student officers and student members of the club
- Lends experience, judgment, knowledge and offers overall support in assisting the officers and members in the development of the club and the setting of club goals
- Provides continuity and historical context of organization and University policies and procedures whenever possible
- Offers assistance in developing and overseeing the club budget
- Offers assistance in officer transitions
- Obtains copies of agendas, minutes, calendars and organizational materials to be aware of what is going on and to have records to help present to future members
- Challenges members to excel academically

THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES WITH STUDENT GROUPS

FACULTY ADVISOR SUPPORT

The Office of Student Activities offers the following resources to support you in your role in student organizations:

- **Faculty/Staff Advisor Professional Staff Support:** A professional staff member, Pamela Alexander, Director, in the Office of Student Activities who is available to consult with advisors as needed. Pamela can be reached via palexander2@albany.edu or (518) 442-5566.
- **Faculty/Staff Advisor In-Service:** A session offered each year for new or seasoned advisors. This year's orientation will be 10/3/2018. Reserve your spot here.
- **Hazing:** An optional training for faculty advisors held during hazing awareness week that focuses on what hazing is and how to talk about hazing with student organizations.
- **Student Organization Handbook:** A document outlining procedures for reserving space, hosting events, risk management, and more!
- **Faculty/Staff Advisor LISTSERV List:** A method for Student Activities to distribute student group-related info to keep Advisors informed while also offering a forum for advice/support to draw from the collective wisdom of advisors. To subscribe, contact Pamela Alexander at palexander2@albany.edu.
- **Faculty/Staff Advisor Recognition:** A Spring event to recognize the contributions to student organizations made by Faculty/Staff Advisors.

GROUP REGISTRATION WITH STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Each UAlbany student organization, regardless of its recognizing body, must register each year with the Office of Student Activities. This registration provides access to University services:

- Use of a page on MyInvolvement.org for their organization
- Reserving campus space, including tabling, through Student Activities
- Access to albany.edu email accounts and web space
- Posting flyers on Podium bulletin boards
- Hanging banners in the Campus Center

Registration is conducted annually via the organization's MyInvolvement page. As part of the registration process, organization Presidents acknowledge and agree to various University policies, including our anti-hazing policy and room usage agreement.

The Student Organization Resource Center

SORC can provide to student leaders general guidance, risk management assessments, poster review, finance support as well as common materials used by student groups.

The HUB

Student Organization Space in the new Campus Center (the HUB) which has a conference room and storage available to groups

GROUP POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ADVISORS

RECOGNITION & NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Each UAlbany student organization must be recognized by one of three bodies: the undergraduate Student Association (student government), the Graduate Student Association (GSA), or a campus department or office. If recognized by a campus department or office, that unit must also assign a member of its staff to serve as the organization's Faculty Advisor. In addition to local recognition, some organizations may have a national affiliation as a chapter of that national body. Each recognizing body may have specific requirements in order for the organization to maintain recognition, and thus, the ability to operate on the UAlbany campus.

MYINVOLVEMENT.ORG

MyInvolvement.org is the official source for involvement opportunities at UAlbany. Each student organization registered with Student Activities has access to a page for their organization, which offers the ability to post flyers/events, communicate to current and prospective members, store documents online, and hold officer elections. At minimum, each organization should keep their membership rosters and contact info updated.

CAMPUS SPACE RESERVATIONS

UAlbany utilizes a campus-wide event and academic scheduling system, [Virtual EMS](#), through which all space on campus is reserved. Registered student organizations are now able to use this new online software to reserve spaces. Please visit our [Event Planning Page](#) for more information.

ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Campus programming serves many functions, one of which is building community. In fact, many of our campus traditions are sponsored by student organizations such as fashion shows, lectures, banquets, and performances. Campus programming also provides an opportunity for student organizations to collaborate with other organizations or offices and further build community. Aside from reserving space, coordinating details, and advertising the event, various questions can surface regarding finer details. Our [Event Planning Page](#) (under continuous development) will help you address these finer details.

The Office of Student Activities provides event support to organizations planning on-campus events. Interested student leaders and Advisors should contact Jennifer Anderson (janderson@albany.edu) to schedule an appointment. SORC HAS EVENT FORMS ON MYINVOLVEMENT

OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Off-campus events sponsored by organizations that are recognized by Student Association or the Graduate Student Association are covered by that entity's liability insurance. Departmental groups or those recognized by offices fall under the University's purview. For off-campus events hosted by a student organization, the [Off-campus Event Registration Form](#) must be submitted to the Office of Student Activities. In addition, organizations interested in utilizing a "hold harmless agreement" will find a sample [here](#).

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OFF-CAMPUS ADVISORS

While we appreciate the support of our student organizations from those in the community who are not UAlbany faculty or staff members, the University does not recognize the authority of this advisor to conduct official club business on behalf of the organization. Only the authorized organization officers have the ability to utilize University services on behalf of the club.

OTHER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures related to student organization activity are posted on the Student Activities web site:

- [Posting Flyers](#)
- [Albany.edu Email & Web Space](#)
- [Hanging Banners in the Campus Center](#)
- [Anti-Hazing Information](#)
- [Protest Activity Guide](#)
- [University Sound Policy](#)

OFFICERS

OFFICER ROLES

The role of each officer can differ from one organization to the next. The duties of each should be outlined in your organization's Constitution/by-laws. In general, the President of each organization carries the overall responsibility for the organization but works in partnership with the rest of the executive board. The composition of this executive board will also differ between organizations. Most, however, will have the following (in addition to the President) who, in general, are responsible for the duties outlined below:

- Vice President: responsible for acting in the President's absence but may have other specified duties
- Treasurer: responsible for managing the finances of each organization
- Secretary: responsible for overall record-keeping for the organization, including composing and maintaining meeting minutes, and formulating agendas

Depending upon the nature of the organization, other officer positions may include Public Relations Chair, Fundraising Chair, Conference Chair, and Historian.

OFFICER ELECTIONS

In conjunction with an organization's Constitution/by-laws, officer elections should be conducted annually as defined in the organization's governing documents. Per Student Association and Student Activities policy, all officer elections for the following academic year should be conducted no later than April 15th. Officer elections should be conducted via the organization's MyInvolvement page.

Specific requirements regarding officer eligibility (which may be in addition to national or organization requirements) is as follows:

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- Per Student Association By-Laws (which applies to organizations recognized by the Student Association), “Anyone holding an office in any club or organization must be a full time fee-paying undergraduate student in good standing (2.0 GPA) and remain so during their entire term.”

OFFICER TRANSITION

A key element in an organization’s success and longevity lies in the transition of officers from one year to the next. One benefit of Advisors is continuity to the organization. In addition to handing down notebooks, meeting minutes, and Constitution/by-laws, office space (if applicable), email & web account, and MyInvolvement access should be addressed. We encourage transitional meetings or perhaps even day-long retreats. Download our officer transition guide [here](#).

UNDERSTANDING FINANCES

CONTRACTS & FUNDING

Organizations that are recognized and funded by (note: organizations may be recognized by but not necessarily funded) the Student Association or Graduate Student Association are allocated a portion of the student activity fee, paid by each UAlbany student. There are specific guidelines regarding the use of these fees, which can be found [here](#). In addition, the following recognizing bodies have specific policies regarding use of funding:

- [Student Association Treasurer’s Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Student Association Financial Guidelines](#)

Of course, UAlbany departments or offices may provide funding to organizations, as well, and will be bound by University requirements tied to that funding source.

We recommend a University Auxiliary Services (UAS) agency account for organizations not recognized by the Student Association or Graduate Student Association. The application can be found [here](#).

In addition, organizations and Advisors should be aware of the following:

- Contracts. Must be signed by authorized representatives of SA or GSA, or University Comptroller (for groups recognized by a University department).
- Budgeting. Each organization not funded by SA or GSA is encouraged to prepare a budget prior to each fiscal year (and submit a copy to the Faculty Advisor) and conduct an audit of its expenditures and income at the conclusion of each year.
- SA Funding Procedures. Per SA’s by-laws (Section 505), all student organizations must submit a budget packet to the Board of Finance (the body responsible for allocating the SA budget) no later than the third Friday in the month of February. The Board of Finance (BOF) will then notify each organization of their **tentative allotted budget** no later than the third Friday of March. Each student organization must then accept their allocation, or meet with the SA Senate’s Constituent Relations Committee to appeal. If an appeal is granted by the committee, the BOF will have full review of the grant

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recommendation of the committee and declare a final budget for the respective student organization. The organization will then be notified of the BOF's final decision. At this time, the Student Association Senate shall have the power to amend the budget and vote on a final budget. Organizations can be given permission to make appeals to the Senate during the Senate budget meeting at the discretion of the Chair of the Senate. Any currently funded group must go through the budget procedure to receive funding for the following year.

- GSA Funding Procedures. Per the GSA's by-laws (Article II), an organization must receive recognition from the GSA to become eligible for funding. Allocated funds are for the specific purpose of promoting campus-wide educational, cultural, social and recreational development activities. There are two periods for recognition and/or funding:
 - Fall Funding/Recognition Period: September 20th-February 9th
 - Spring Funding/Recognition Period: February 10th –September 19th

All organizations must submit a budget application for both funding periods. The deadlines for submission are:

- By 5pm on the final Monday in September to be funded for the fall funding period.
- By 5pm on the fourth Monday in January to be funded for the spring funding period.

This schedule allows more opportunity for new groups to form and for existing groups to plan activities on a semester basis rather than trying to plan for the entire academic year in advance.

- Tax Exempt Purchases. Purchases eligible for tax exemption made by organizations recognized by the Student Association or Graduate Student Association may obtain and use a tax exempt form from their respective recognizing body. Organizations with a national affiliation may be entitled to use the national body's tax exempt status for eligible purchases. Organizations recognized by campus departments or offices are not eligible to use the University's tax exempt status.
- UAS Program Funds. Each year University Auxiliary Services (UAS) provides funds to support events on campus which foster educational growth and community involvement. More information can be found on [UAS' web site](#).
- University at Albany Foundation Accounts. The University at Albany Foundation (UAF) is a separate 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation whose sole purpose is to encourage philanthropic support to UAlbany. Several student organizations have accounts with the UAF due to participation in the [UAlbany Unite](#) student group video campaign. Other organizations may have these accounts due to alumni fundraising initiatives. UAF funds may be used to pay for expenses associated with events, such as DJs and catering, or other student organization operations. Foundation funds will roll over and be available for your group's use next year if all funds are not expended. Student organization officers may contact Dawn Hubert (dhubert@albany.edu) to verify whether the organization has an account, check the account balance, and expend any funds. If your organization is a club sport, please contact Craig Brewer via cbrewer@albany.edu.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising activities include any events where money is collected. This could include events where funds are raised for the benefit of a student-run group, a non-university affiliated charity organization, or simply collected at the door in hopes of breaking even.

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SA-recognized organizations must turn all funds collected at a fundraising event over to the SA Comptroller for processing on the first business day immediately following the event (e.g. funds from an event held on Thursday should be turned in on Friday; funds from an event held on Saturday should be turned in on Monday).

There are many different ways to fundraise, but [this document](#) may give you a few ideas.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Office of Student Activities is concerned about the well-being of all participants in our programs. Risks are inherent in most student activities. Therefore, our office and facility managers are constantly searching for ways to reduce these risks through risk management strategies. Liability exposure is a serious issue, and each individual organization should realize that participants are only covered by their personal insurance or by any other additional insurance purchased by the organization's governing body (Student Association, Graduate Student Association, or their national office/headquarters). Each organization should take steps to consider possible risks and implement their own risk management reductions strategies for all of their events and activities as appropriate.

INSURANCE

Activities conducted by organizations recognized by the Student Association and Graduate Student Association are covered by either recognizing body's insurance policy. Questions regarding coverage for activities conducted by organizations that are recognized by a UAlbany department or office should be directed to that recognizing body.

ADVISOR LIABILITY

Colleges and their personnel have a duty to provide students with a safe and healthy educational environment. Advisors should employ strategies to mitigate risk by maintaining an awareness of the student organization's actions/activities as well as University policies regarding student organizations and addressing potential issues/situations in advance.

Advisors are understandably concerned about any personal liability that may result from any behaviors of the student organization(s) they advise. ***As an employee of the University, the Faculty/Staff Advisor to a recognized student organization serves as an agent for the University at Albany and is thus protected from personal liability as he/she is providing a service to the University. The University will defend and protect the faculty/staff member from liability arising from his/her role as Advisor so long as the Advisor's actions are within the scope of the duties of a Faculty Advisor and not intentional or criminal behavior.***

TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL

All organizations must abide by the rules and regulations regarding transportation and travel set forth by the Student Association (see SA by-laws, section 519) or Graduate Student Association, if recognized by either body. For non-SA and GSA-recognized organizations, all off-campus events should be vetted through the department/office that recognizes the organization. To reduce potential liability, public

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transportation or that provided by a professional driver (e.g., charter bus) is preferred. For advisors who assume the role of driver, please be aware that if a motor vehicle accident occurs, your personal liability insurance will serve as the first line of defense. Thus, we encourage advisors not to drive their own cars but instead to rent a car and purchase liability insurance through the rental agency and use that insurance as the first line of defense.

GENERAL RISK REDUCTION

Although there is no way to completely eliminate risk associated with a program or event, there are ways to reduce risk and provide a safer environment for program participants.

Student Activities staff is available to advise and consult with student leaders regarding managing risks for your organization and your events. If an Advisor has concerns about a situation unique to an organization or to a specific event sponsored by the organization they advise, they should first meet with the officers to discuss the situation in more detail. If necessary or for further consultation, contact Pamela Alexander (Director, Student Activities via (518) 442-5566 or palexander2@albany.edu). In case of an emergency, contact University Police (442-3131) immediately.

Please see [this guide](#) to help your organization identify and reduce risk.

HAZING

Hazing is a societal problem that is not limited to fraternities or sororities, but can occur in any organization. Hazing is a premeditated act of power and control over others and is considered victimization. It is abusive, degrading and often life-threatening. Hazing is defined as any reckless or intentional conduct in connection with the initiation into or affiliation with any organization which degrades, humiliates, or endangers the mental or physical health of any person, regardless of the person's willingness to participate, or which damages, destroys or removes any public or private property. For more information, please visit www.albany.edu/stophazing.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Police/Fire/Ambulance: 911 (on campus): 518-442-3131 (cell phone)
- Five Quad Ambulance: 911 (on campus): 518-442-3131 (cell phone)
- Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program Hotline: 518-442-5777
- MyInvolvement.org: SORC, 518-442-5566, sorc@albany.edu, (during business hours)
- Student Activities Liaison: Pamela Alexander, 518-442-5566, palexander2@albany.edu, (during business hours)
- University Counseling Center: 518-442-5800 (during business hours)
- University Health Center: 518-442-5454 (during business hours)