



Advisors

Advisor Roles

Advisor Responsibilities

RSO's Responsibilities to the Advisor

Advisor Roles

Student involvement in RSOs provides the opportunity for students to develop organizational and leadership skills. Students can complement their educational objectives through important out-of-classroom activities that offer them the chance to increase their knowledge and life skills, exercise basic freedoms, gain valuable experience and learn about human behavior. In support of these objectives, it is important that persons with experience in RSOs be available to assist students in their organizational endeavors. While the range of student activities and RSO purposes are diverse, advisors can be a valuable resource to the RSO in terms of helping with planning matters, University regulations and policies, and financial concerns. Some advisors have a high level of involvement with every aspect of the RSO, while others may have a very limited role. It is up to the student leaders and the advisor to set the parameters of involvement. Attaining advisors who are committed to student learning through out-of-class activities is crucial.

All RSOs are required to have an advisor. For RSOs comprised of only undergraduate students, the advisor must be an MSU faculty or staff member or a graduate student. For graduate RSOs, the advisor must be either an MSU faculty or staff member.

Advisor Responsibilities

It is important that advisors understand the responsibilities involved before making a commitment to an RSO. Those responsibilities include:

1. Assist officers with procedural matters. Be knowledgeable of the RSO's purposes and constitution and help the general membership adhere to them.
2. Be knowledgeable about, and comply with federal, state and local laws and ordinances, as well as campus policies. Inform the RSO of pertinent policies.
3. Empower students to take action and to take satisfaction in seeing RSO succeed.
4. Allow the RSO to succeed, and allow the RSO to fail. Learn when to speak and when not to speak. Remember to let the students make the decisions while you provide advice and guidance.
5. At the beginning, develop clear expectations about the role of the advisor and your relationship to the RSO.
6. Read and understand the RSO's constitution.
7. Develop a strong working relationship with all of the officers. Establish as needed meetings with individual members of the RSO who need additional guidance in

their officer or committee positions. Be a sounding board, especially for officers, and be supportive of all members. Discuss concerns with officers in private and praise them in public.

8. Help resolve intragroup conflict.
9. Meet with the officers and help them to set goals. Encourage the Executive Board to disseminate reports (such as financial reports) to the general membership on a regular basis. Encourage these leaders to understand and apply democratic principles, including recognition of minority opinions and rights.
10. Be visible and choose to attend as many general RSO meetings and activities as possible. At the same time, know your limits.
11. Some RSOs occasionally plan major (large scale) student events, such as social events, entertainment events, and concerts involving 300 or more participants. Since a campus police presence is often required, the advisor or their designee must be present at these events.
12. Know your RSO's limits. Help students find a balance between activities, major events, and their academic responsibilities.
13. Head off situations that might give rise to poor public relations for RSO or the University.
14. Introduce new program ideas with educational flavor; point out new perspectives and directions to the RSO; and supply the knowledge and the insight of experience.
15. Serve as a resource person. The advisor does not set the policy of the RSO, but should take an active part in its formulation through interaction with the members of the RSO. The advisor's name is public record and will be included in the RSO's profile on Community.
16. Since members and officers in any RSO are ordinarily active only as long as they are students, the advisor can serve as a continuity factor for the RSO.
17. Plan and encourage attendance at leadership training.

Advisors are required to sign an agreement of acknowledgement and understanding of their responsibilities. The following is an example of the agreement form.

Advisor Agreement (Sample Form)
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I agree to be the advisor of the _____. I have read and understand the University's policies and administrative rulings associated with student tax collecting bodies contained in the student handbook, Spartan Life. I specifically acknowledge I have also read and understand the expectations as presented in the Student Fee Collection Accountability Measures. In addition, I have received a copy of and have read the advisor's section of the Student Organization Handbook. I recognize that the duties of an advisor include upholding MSU's mission, policies, and regulations, maintaining regular contact with the group's officers, being familiar with the activities of the group, and providing assistance in the administration of the financial affairs of the group as specified in the Student Fee Collection Accountability Measures.

Name:	Date:
University Department:	Title:
Address:	Telephone:
Signature:	

The Registered Student Organization's Responsibility to the Advisor

1. Notify the advisor of all meetings and events.
2. Consult with the advisor in the planning of projects and events.
3. Consult with the advisor before any changes are made in the structure of the RSO, or in the policies of the RSO, and before major projects and programs are undertaken.
4. Understand that while the advisor has no vote, the advisor does have speaking privileges at meetings.
5. The responsibility for the success or failure of the RSO project, rests ultimately with the RSO, not the advisor.
6. Talk over any problems or concerns with the advisor.
7. Acknowledge that the advisor's time and energy are donated, and express appreciation.
8. Try to be clear and open about your expectations for your advisor's role.
9. Periodically, evaluate your advisor and give appropriate feedback. Student Life staff can offer suggestions for feedback forms.

