

**Advising Guidelines for Student Organizations  
within  
the Division of Student Affairs**

**R·I·T**

February 7, 2005

**Contents**

<b>I. Introduction</b>	2
<b>II. Guidelines for Administrative Advisors</b>	2
A. Definition	2
B. Basic Understandings and Minimum Expectations	2
<b>III. Guidelines for Faculty/Staff Advisors</b>	3
A. Definition	3
B. Basic Understandings and Minimum Expectations	3
C. Procedure for Faculty/Staff Advisor	4
<b>IV. Operational Procedures for Advisors of Student Organizations     within Student Affairs</b>	6
A. Organizational Guidelines for All Advisors	6
B. Operations Procedures for Administrative Advisors	6
C. Operations Procedures for Faculty/Staff Advisors	7
D. Resource and Referral Sources for Advisor	9

## **Advising Guidelines for Student Organizations within the Division of Student Affairs**

### **I. Introduction**

Advising of student organizations is an integral part of the student experience at RIT. The Student Affairs division recognizes that this is a special mentoring and teaching relationship which helps to nurture the growth of the organization, and the success of student officers and members. The Student Affairs division requires that at least one faculty/staff advisor is recruited for:

- divisionally-recognized student clubs;
- Student Government-recognized clubs;
- special interest houses within Residence Life;
- major student organizations recognized under Student Government and by the Student Affairs division; and
- Greek-letter organizations traditionally associated with the social fraternity and sorority movement.

### **II. Guidelines for Administrative Advisors**

#### **A. Definition**

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (or an appointed designee) generally recognizes two different kinds of advisors.

A. Administrative Advisors are assigned to selected organizations (e.g. major student organizations; special interest houses).

- Their role affiliates them with the organization; it thus holds them responsible for advising the organization regarding university policies and procedures.
- Their role is written into their job description or assigned in their Plan of Work.
- They provide general advising, mentoring and coaching functions.
- They also perform central administrative responsibilities including:
  - i. Understanding basic accounting procedures (Oracle) and authorizing financial approval on the budget and expenditures. (All of these organizations have been assigned a department number through the RIT Accounting department);
  - ii. Program planning and advisement of program planning;
  - iii. Interpretation of the organization's constitution and by-laws;
  - iv. Advisement and referral regarding safety standards for programs and activities;
  - v. Serving as a resource person regarding institutional policies;
  - vi. Establishing historical context for officers and members.

#### **B. Basic Understandings and Minimum Expectations**

Administrative Advisors are recruited by the Student Affairs division for major student organizations. Their basic understandings and minimum expectations are identified in their job descriptions and plans of work.

1. Administrative Advisors for student organizations within the Student Affairs division must be full-time regular RIT employees or full-time regular faculty.
2. Administrative Advisors are expected to attend training programs and coordination meetings with the Director of the Center for Campus Life, as requested.

3. All Administrative Advisors are expected to attend an annual training meeting which can continue to provide them with updated information regarding the most relevant information to enhance their advising function.
4. Administrative Advisors should be able to reference the institute policies and procedures as recorded in the Student Rights and Responsibilities, and refer students to the appropriate department for policy interpretation as listed in the “Operational Procedures for Advisors of Student Organizations within Student Affairs” (Section IV).
5. Administrative Advisors are expected to encourage student organizations and officers to adhere to institute rules, procedures and processes, and take preventative action should they believe that student organization or officer(s) are not doing so. Administrative Advisors should adhere to these institute rules, procedures and processes themselves, especially in conjunction with the organization’s activities.
6. Administrative Advisors are expected to be generally knowledgeable about the state, federal and local laws that students are expected to follow, as addressed in the Student Rights and Responsibilities. Administrative Advisors should adhere to these laws themselves, especially in conjunction with the organization’s activities.

### **III. Guidelines for Faculty/Staff Advisors for Organizations Recognized by Processes within Student Affairs**

#### **A. Definition**

A. Faculty/staff advisors volunteer to work with an organization recognized by Student Government or the Student Affairs division (e.g. clubs, Greek-letter chapters).

- They work with the group in their free time as an extension of their role within the university community.
- They serve vital functions in role modeling, facilitating development in officers, and motivating members.
- They serve as a referral agent to other departments or staff regarding policy information and resources.
- They provide general advising, mentoring and coaching functions.

#### **B. Basic Understandings and Minimum Expectations**

Faculty/Staff Advisors are recruited by the student organization. “Basic Understandings” about their roles are listed below.

1. All Faculty/Staff Advisors for student organizations within the Student Affairs division must be full-time RIT employees or full-time faculty.
2. All new Faculty/Staff Advisors are encouraged to schedule an advisor orientation with a member of the Center for Campus Life within the first quarter of becoming an advisor, and to read the Club Advisors’ Manual (<http://campuslife.rit.edu/clubs/resources/ClubAdvisorHandbook.pdf>) and Greek Resources (<http://campuslife.rit.edu/main/fratsorlife/resources>).
3. All returning Faculty/Staff Advisors are expected to attend an annual advisor meeting which can continue to provide them with updated information regarding the most relevant information to enhance their advising function.
4. Faculty/Staff Advisors should be able to reference institute policies and procedures as recorded in the Student Rights and Responsibilities, and refer students to the appropriate department for policy interpretation as listed in the “Operational Procedures for Advisors of Student Organizations within Student Affairs” (Section IV).
5. Faculty/Staff Advisors are expected to encourage student organizations and officers to adhere to institute rules, procedures and processes, and take preventative action should they

believe that student organizations or officers are not doing so. Faculty/Staff Advisors should adhere to these institute rules, procedures and processes themselves, especially in conjunction with the organization's activities.

6. Faculty/Staff Advisors are expected to be generally knowledgeable about the state, federal and local laws that students are expected to follow, as addressed in the Student Rights and Responsibilities. Faculty/Staff Advisors should adhere to these laws themselves, especially in conjunction with the organization's activities.
7. Faculty/Staff Advisors should know and follow RIT accounting procedures when applicable. If their organization receives funds for a budget through RIT, they should be able to read the Student Club Budget Guidelines, or make appropriate referrals when questions arise. Faculty/Staff Advisors should reasonably follow instruction from the appropriate staff in Accounting and Student Affairs regarding organizations' financial transactions.

### **C. Procedures for Faculty/Staff Advisors**

Once the name of a Faculty/Staff Advisor has been submitted, the Student Affairs division will confirm that they are serving as an advisor, thus recognizing them and adding them to the list of official advisors within the Center for Campus Life.

Faculty/Staff Advisors recognition is valuable in that:

- it formalizes the advisor's status and correlated institute duties while serving in this role for the institute;
- it provides advisors with various resources from the division of Student Affairs including manuals, training programs, and referral/support services;
- it provides documentation of the advisor's experience for their supervisor and portfolio.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (or its designee) reserves the right to provide intervention strategies should an advisor fail to meet the minimum requirements listed above at any time during their relationship with the student organization. The Vice President of Student Affairs or his/her designee may recommend professional development activities, provide written notification of failure to meet minimum expectations/basic understandings, or remove advisor recognition from those advisors who do not meet minimum expectations/basic understandings. Removal of Faculty/Staff Advisor recognition will be for a time period up to two years, pending review at the end of that time period. Outcomes resulting from the removal of Faculty/Staff Advisor Recognition will include the following:

- The organization must recruit a new Faculty/Staff Advisor that meets minimum expectations within one quarter;
- Assignment of an interim recognized Faculty/Staff Advisor (if required) to the organization until a new advisor is found;
- Removal of the Faculty/Staff Advisor's name from the advisor list;
- Removal of the Faculty/Staff Advisor's name from formal communication distribution lists and methods;
- Removal of the Faculty/Staff Advisor's name from any official institute forms which provide or imply authorization privileges.

Procedures for notifying advisors of any change in their eligibility are available at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs or the Center for Campus Life.

#### **IV. Operational Procedures for Advisors of Student Organizations within Student Affairs**

As stated earlier, advising of student organizations is an integral part of the student experience at RIT. The Student Affairs division recognizes that this is a special mentoring and teaching relationship which helps to nurture the growth of the organization, and the success of the individual student officers, as well as its members.

##### **A. Organizational Guidelines for All Advisors**

All advisors are encouraged to interact with students and their organizations outside of the classroom in a variety of settings, including formal business meetings, informal planning sessions and registered social settings. The following are some basic organizational guidelines for all advisors:

1. Meet with the organization annually to discuss mutual expectations of the organization from the advisor, and also expectations that the advisor has of the organization. This can include:
  - Frequency of meetings;
  - Methods of communication;
  - Areas of skill expertise
  - Informally summarize your expectations in writing as an evaluation tool for mid-year and year-end evaluation.
2. Conduct a mid-year and year-end informal review. Use a simple process to ask student leaders and members for feedback, and also feel free to provide feedback to them regarding your experience.
3. Ask the group for a copy of their goals and objectives.
4. Encourage groups to determine if any events that they are planning require event registration through the Center for Campus Life; or if they are eligible for funding.

Listed below are additional guidelines that can help to preserve the integrity and quality of the advisor function for both the advisor and the student organization.

##### **B. Guidelines for Administrative Advisors**

###### **1. Financial Guidelines for Administrative Advisors**

1. Review the organization's budget before it is handed in.
  - Help the group evaluate if projects, revenue or expenses are itemized accurately.
  - Keep estimated expenses and actual transactions within institute purchasing and accounting procedures.
  - Keep all funds in the proper institute accounts; deposit all revenue in the proper institute account.
  - Encourage the group to cross reference its goals with its budget in order to ensure that their goals are financially attainable.

###### **2. Professional Guidelines for Administrative Advisors**

1. Provide students with a business e-mail address only.
2. Limit your interaction with the organization to professional settings or activities that the group has registered as official institute activities.
3. If students need transportation, encourage them to organize transportation at their own initiative or through RIT transportation vehicles.
4. Recognize that driving students to different destinations in your personal vehicle obligates you to use your personal auto insurance as the primary coverage in the event of an accident.

5. If you feel that you would like to host students at your home, exercise discretion. Do not provide alcohol to students.
6. Discuss your advising role with your supervisor and write it down in your plan of work.
7. Interact with all students without partiality, maintaining the advisor to student relationship.
8. Do not assume a management or leadership role in the organization. Allow student leaders to assume these roles and learn within the parameters of their position. Help them to avoid errors. Should errors occur, debrief them and provide positive constructive feedback.
9. When asked to sign documents in your role for the organization, always use the title, "Advisor".
10. Be certain you are authorized to sign documents (e.g. contracts, check requests) prior to doing so. If you are authorized to sign, have a written record granting your authorization and the maximum dollar amount you are authorized to spend. Maintain a copy of any authorizations that you make

### **C. Guidelines for Faculty/Staff Advisors**

#### **1. Financial Guidelines for Faculty/Staff Advisors**

Working with clubs often involves helping them with their finances. Faculty/Staff advisors may not be financial experts, but listed below are some simple thoughts to be more effective in your role without having to be an accountant.

1. Club advisors should ask the group for a copy of their budget. Ask the group to review it with you.
2. Faculty/Staff Advisors will be asked to sign approval forms for the club or organization regarding financial transactions with RIT funds or event plans (i.e. events, trips). Faculty/Staff Advisors are being asked to sign so that Student Affairs staff know that they have been informed about the groups' activities.

Therefore:

- Discuss plans before you sign off, and write down some informal notes if you think it will help you remember information later.
  - Keep all funds in the proper institute accounts; promptly deposit all revenue in the proper institute accounts only.
  - Ask if student leaders if they have enough funds in their account to cover their expenses.
  - Call the SG Bookkeeper if you have a question.
3. Ask the group to review their budget with you periodically.
  4. Assume that ALL club expenses require prior approval from someone in Campus Life or Student Government. Reimbursements are not guaranteed.

#### **2. Professional Guidelines for Faculty/Staff Advisors**

1. Provide students with your work phone number only. Do not provide them with your personal home telephone number unless you play an administrative role with the organization that your supervisor has approved.
2. Provide students with a business e-mail address only.
3. You should not join the student organization as a member, even if you are invited. It is always critical to maintain the advisor role as the primary role.
4. Limit your interaction with the organization to professional settings or formal activities that the group has registered as official institute activities.
5. If students need transportation, allow them to organize transportation at their own initiative or through RIT transportation vehicles.
6. Recognize that driving students to different destinations in your personal vehicle obligates

- you to use your personal auto insurance as the primary coverage in the event of an accident.
7. If you feel that you would like to host students at your home, exercise discretion. It is strongly advised to not provide alcohol to students.
  8. Discuss your advising role with your supervisor and write it down in your plan of work.
  9. Interact with all students without partiality, maintaining the advisor to student relationship.
  10. Do not assume a management or leadership role in the organization. Allow student leaders to assume these roles and learn within the parameters of their position. Help them to avoid errors. Should errors occur, debrief them and provide positive constructive feedback.
  11. When asked to sign documents for the organization, always use the title, "Advisor".
  12. Be certain you are authorized to sign documents (e.g. contracts, check requests) prior to doing so. If you are authorized to sign, have a written record granting your authorization and the maximum dollar amount you are authorized to spend. Maintain a copy of any authorizations that you approve.
  13. Read and refer to the Club Recognition Guidelines, which are on the Student Affairs website, contained within the RIT Rights and Responsibilities.

**D. Resource and Referral Sources for All Advisors**

<b>Issue/Concern/Topic</b>	<b>Referral</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Advising Issues (Style, Roles)-Clubs	Ryan Giglia	5-7685	2138	rjgccl
Advising Issues (Style, Roles)-Greeks	Jessica Berner	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
Advising Issues (Style, Roles)-MSO's	Mike D'Arcangelo	5-2224	2114	mndccl
Alcohol Policy	Dawn Soufleris	5-2574	2460	dmsrhs
	Rob Eckhardt	5-2894	2460	rjerla
Budget Questions-Clubs	Ryan Giglia	5-7685	2138	rjgccl
	Merry Waters	5-5658	1150	mlw0137
Budget Questions-Greeks	Jessica Berner	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
Budget Questions-Major Student Orgs.	Carol Reed	5-6931	2136	cjr2033
	Michael D'Arcangelo	5-2224	2114	mndccl
Budget Questions- Oracle or Statements	Merry Schading	5-5658	1148	mlw0137
Constitution/By-Laws, Interpretation/ Role	Ryan Giglia	5-7685	2138	rjgccl
	Jessica Berner	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
Contracting Questions	Michael D'Arcangelo	5-2224	2130	mndccl
	Ryan Giglia	5-7685	2138	rjgccl
	Beth Crvelin	6-6569		babcccl
Deaf Culture	Erin Esposito	TBA	TBA	eaensl
Funding Requests (Requests for Funds)	Carol Reed	5-6931	2136	cjr2033
	Mike D'Arcangelo	5-2224	2114	mndccl
Event Registration Procedure	Beth Crvelin	6-6569		babcccl
Fraternity Insurance Purchasing Group	Jessica Berner	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
Hazing	Jessica Berner,	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
	Michael D'Arcangelo	5-2224	2130	mndccl
	Ryan Giglia	5-7685	2138	rjgccl
	Michael D'Arcangelo	5-2224	2114	mndccl
Insurance Questions	Melinda Ward	5-6131	4008	mjwrmss
Leadership Training Questions	Molly McGowan	5-6171	2140	mtmccl
Mediation	Joe Johnston	5-7668	2460	jjpvsa
Recognition Procedure-Clubs	Ryan Giglia	5-7685	2138	rjgccl
Recognition Procedure-Greeks	Jessica Berner	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
Rights and Responsibilities	Dawn Soufleris	5-2574	2460	dmsrhs
Risk Management Issues	Melinda Ward	5-6131	4008	mjwrmss
	Jessica Berner	5-7123	2120	jrbccl
Student Conduct Policy	Dawn Soufleris	5-2574	2460	dmsrhs
Travel (and Event Registration)	Beth Crvelin	6-6569		babcccl
Travel and Van Usage	Beth Crvelin	6-6569		babcccl
	Kathy Hall	5-2204	1150	kahhcc

**Procedures for Removal of Recognition from Faculty/Staff Advisors (Internal Document)**

Procedures for notifying Faculty/Staff Advisors of any change in their eligibility are available at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs or the Center for Campus Life upon request.

The Center for Campus Life will periodically review the list of advisor to determine to the best their ability that advisors meet minimum expectations. In the event that someone should not meet minimum expectations, they will be notified by a representative of the Center for Campus Life. As always, Faculty/Staff Advisors may choose to meet privately with the representative of the center, and are encouraged to do so.

1. The organization will be notified that recognition of faculty/staff advisor has been removed.
2. The Faculty/Staff Advisor's name will be removed from resource and distribution lists.
3. An alternative advisor will be assigned for the interim to help the student organization.
4. The faculty/staff member may appeal the decision to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs based upon the following:
  - (a) to determine whether the decision was rendered objectively based upon the minimum criteria; and
  - (b) to present new information that was not available at the time of the original decision.
5. The appeal must be completed in writing to the appropriate professional as designated upon notification, within ten (10) days of receiving the letter which indicates the final decision.
6. All appeals are final.

Questions regarding the process can be forwarded to the Director of the Center for Campus Life or the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.