20 Tips for Advisors to Increase Organizational Productivity

1. Know what the students expect of you as an Advisor.
2. Let the organization and individual members know what you expect of them.
3. Express a sincere interest in the organization and its mission. Stress the importance of each individual’s contribution to the whole.
4. Assist the organization in setting realistic, attainable goals. Ensure beginning success as much as possible, but allow the responsibility and implementation of events to lie primarily with the organization.
5. Have the goals or objectives of the organization firmly in mind. Know the purposes of the organization and know what things will need to be accomplished to meet the goals.
6. Assist the organization in achieving its goals. Understand why people become involved. Learn strengths and emphasize them. Help the organization learn through involvement by providing opportunities.
7. Know and understand the students with whom you are working. Different organizations require different approaches.
8. Assist the organization in determining the needs of the people the organization is serving.
9. Express a sincere interest in each member. Encourage everyone to be responsible.
10. Assist the members in understanding the organization’s dynamics and human interaction. Recognize that at times the process is more important than the content.
11. Realize the importance of the peer group and its effect on each member’s participation or lack thereof. Communicate that each individual’s efforts are needed and appreciated.
12. Assist the organization in developing a system by which they can evaluate their progress. Balance task orientation with social needs of members.
13. Use a reward system and recognition system for work well done.
14. Develop a style that balances active and passive organization membership.
15. Be aware of the various roles that you will have: clarifier, consultant, counselor, educator, facilitator, friend, information source, mentor, and role model.
16. Do not allow yourself to be placed in the position of chairperson.
17. Be aware of institutional power structure—both formal and informal. Discuss institutional developments and policies with members.
18. Provide continuity for the organization from semester to semester.
19. Challenge the organization to grow and develop. Encourage independent thinking and decision-making.
20. Be creative and innovative. Keep a sense of humor!

Adapted from M.J. Michael) Office of Student Leadership Development Programs at East Carolina University, as shown in ACPA Advisor Manual 6.2009
Advisor Role/Responsibilities clarification worksheet

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 sometimes go above and beyond the call of duty. A 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 be 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.

- [ ] Attend all general meetings
- [ ] Attend all executive committee meetings
Call meetings of executive committee when believed to be necessary
Explain university policies and procedures when relevant to discussion
Explain University and procedures to the entire group once a year
Depend on the officers to observe University policies and procedures throughout their terms
Meet with the president before each meeting
Help the president prepare an agenda before each meeting
Speak up during discussion when the group may make a poor decision
Be quiet during the general meetings unless called upon
Exert influence with officers between meetings
Take an active part in formulating the goals of the group

Adapted from University of Michigan Advisor Guidebook
http://campusinvolvement.umich.edu/content/advisor-guidebook-student-organizations