Advice for Advisors from Advisors

On September 30th and October 4th, 2014, advisors from clubs and organizations across campus gathered together to network and share ideas about their work student groups at Sonoma State University. The following is a summary of advice, tips, and tricks on how advisors on campus have effectively navigated their role as advisor to student leaders and clubs in our community.

What is the role of an advisor in a student club or organization at SSU?

• Advisors support student leaders and members of clubs and organizations
  o Questioning, challenging, facilitating conversations
• Liaison between faculty and students (in the case of many academic or departmental organizations)
• Advisors are the institutional memory, continuous thread in the organization
  o Advisor holds history, consistency in college student organizations (which are characterized as having high officer and member turnover)

How involved should the advisor be in the club?

• It’s specific to the needs and wants of the club
  o Discussions clarifying this involvement are encouraged between advisors and club leaders
• Active in organization events/fundraisers/events, but should not be running the club
  o Club is student-run, not advisor run
    ▪ Facilitate decision making and critical thinking—ask questions!
    ▪ Help club make good decisions
    ▪ Encourage student development
    ▪ Failure is ok—make it a learning moment!

How do advisors stay connected with the club? Leaders of the club?

• Meet with officers prior to meetings
  o Review meeting agenda items, dates
    ▪ Helps leaders to prepare for a meeting
  o Create learning moments
    ▪ Teach them how to run an effective meeting, facilitate a group
• Attend the club’s meetings
  o Gain an understanding of what is going on/get a lay of the land
• Encourage open communication with club and CSLIS office
  o Touch base, check in, updates on club events/meetings

How can advisors help to increase commitment and engagement of club leaders and members?

• Work with student leaders to create more positions other than just the required President and Treasurer
  o Give everyone a job/responsibility
    ▪ Increases commitment and sense of “ownership” to club
  o Future leaders come from this group
    ▪ Emerging leaders
      • Consider having the president elect shadow the current president for a year to learn what his or her future job will entail.