



Student Organization Advisor Manual

SUNY Geneseo
Division of Student and Campus Life
Department of Student Life
321 MacVittie College Union
www.geneseo.edu/union
585-245-5851



Table of Contents

Letter from The Department of Student Life.....	3
Department of Student Life.....	4
Staff.....	4
Student Organizations.....	4
Student Organization Categories.....	4
Advisor Role.....	5
Expectations.....	5
Responsibilities.....	5
Rewards/Benefits.....	6
Tips for Effective Advising.....	7
Do's and Don't's of Advising.....	8
Liability and Risk Management.....	8
Hazing.....	8
Risk Reduction.....	9
Services Provided by Department of Student Life.....	10
Resources.....	11



Letter from The Department of Student Life:

Congratulations on being asked to become a student organization Advisor! Whether you are new or experienced in this role, your active involvement will contribute to an exciting year. Advising a student organization is a challenging and rewarding experience.

This manual will provide you with information about being an advisor as well as important resources. In addition, there is information related to liability and risk reduction so you can prepare for discussions with your organizations.

As an Advisor to a student organization you have the opportunity to extend the learning that happens out of the classroom. You will also have the potential to influence and develop that learning with the students. We appreciate your commitment and dedication to enhancing student life at SUNY Geneseo. Students will grow and develop as you fulfill the vital role as an advisor.

Please know that the The Department of Student Life department is always here to assist you if you should have any questions or concerns. We are located in the MacVittie College Union, room 321, or can be reached at 585-245-5851.

Best wishes for a successful year!



STUDENT LIFE

It is the intention of the Department of Student Life to provide and to identify opportunities for students that result in increased learning, greater self-awareness and a clearer sense of purpose.

Geneseo achieves its educational mission by combining a rigorous curriculum with a rich co-curricular life. The student life experience at Geneseo is intentionally educational, and fosters widespread, substantive student engagement in carefully designed, developmentally based programs and services.

It is the mission of the Geneseo Department of Student Life to catalogue, promote, assess and strengthen student learning opportunities within Student and Campus Life that contribute to a rich, meaningful, and fulfilling college experience for Geneseo students.

The Department of Student Life includes the MacVittie College Union and its functions, the Student and Campus Life core co-curriculum, the Student and Campus Life student internship program, and the student employee development series.

Student Life Staff	Position
Charles “Chip” Matthews	Director of Student Life
Tiffany Brodner	Senior Coordinator of Student Programs
Lauren Thompson	Coordinator of Late Knight Programs
Kristina Barsema	Coordinator of Student Organizations & Activities
Lexi Athens	Geneseo Late Knight Graduate Assistant
Cheryl Deusenbery	Secretary

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

SUNY Geneseo currently offers over 200 student organization opportunities. A full list of active Registered Student Organization Opportunities can be found at <http://www.geneseo.edu/union/current-registered-student-organizations>

STUDENT ORGANIZATION CATEGORIES	
Academic	Honorary
Advocacy/Political	Media & Publications
Club Sport	Performing Arts
Cultural	Special Interest
Fraternal	Spiritual
Gaming & Recreation	Volunteer
Governing/Programming	



ADVISOR EXPECTATIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES/REWARDS

Each advisor perceives his/her relationship to a student organization differently. Some Advisors play very active roles, attending meetings, working with student officers, and assisting in program planning and development. Others maintain a more passive relationship with their organization. It is required that each Advisor will maintain regular contact with his/her organization. Advisors accept responsibility for keeping informed about activities of the organization and for advising organization officers and members of college policies and procedures.

A. Expectations:

The advisor of an organization must be a faculty or staff member of SUNY Geneseo. Emeriti are considered acceptable advisors. All recognized student organizations must have an advisor to maintain college registration. Student organizations are responsible for finding a suitable advisor for their club. Organizations seeking advice on advisor selection may consult the Coordinator of Student Organizations & Campus Activities. Student organization officers will nominate a faculty/staff member to serve as their advisor. However, a department may suggest possible advisors.

The advisor role is a voluntary commitment. Therefore each individual advisor must decide the amount of time and energy they can devote to the organization. The Advisor should let the organization know how much time they are able to commit. It is also important that the organization officers share their own expectations and limits. It is up to the particular advisor and the respective organization to decide the best way to make their relationship productive, successful, and fulfilling.

An individual should not accept the invitation to serve in the important role of advisor unless he or she is capable of fulfilling the expectations.

B. Responsibilities:

Advisors play a vital role in making the student organization experience meaningful for the officers and members. The most successful organizations are those in which the advisor takes an active interest in the group. Advisors to student organizations should offer constructive criticism and guidance, while allowing the students to develop their own goals, rules, and methods of accountability.

Advisor responsibilities include:

1. Serve as a resource and guide to the organization.
2. Attend some meetings of the organization and their executive board. Advisors should also try to attend a few club programs/activities to show their support for the organization.
3. Maintain an awareness of the activities and programs sponsored by the organization.



4. Take an active role in helping the students plan and execute a meaningful program that is consistent with the organization's purposes and with the goals and objectives of the College.
5. Motivate the organization to develop leadership skills, professionalism, and personal growth.
6. Provide support, direction, feedback and praise to the organization.
7. Notify college administrators of any unacceptable behavior, violations, or noncompliance on behalf of the organization.
8. Articulate campus policies and procedures and assist the organization in understanding these policies.
9. Provide guidance regarding financial transactions, help maintain accurate financial records, and help organization submit student association budgets, if applicable.
10. Provide consistency and continuity during leadership transitions from year to year.
11. Communicate to new members the goals and procedures of the organization so that all members understand why the organization exists, why it was started, and who is responsible for doing the various jobs.
12. Provide signature and oversight to the continuing registration process
13. All student organization advisors are considered "Campus Security Authorities" (mandated reporters). A "Campus Security Authority" is a college official who has significant responsibility for student and campus activities. The Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (Clery Act), requires colleges that receive federal financial aid to report the occurrence of certain criminal offenses that are reported to local police agencies or any official of the college who is defined as a "Campus Security Authority" (mandated reporter). Criminal offenses required to be reported are: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, negligent manslaughter, sex offenses broken down by forcible sex offenses (includes rape) and non-forcible sex offenses (incest and statutory rape), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, arrests for liquor, weapon and drug violations, date of the incident. As "Campus Security Authority" (mandated reporter) the advisor must report the details of the incident; what, where and when the incident occurred; who was involved is helpful but not mandatory; and the location of the incident to University Police and/or the Dean of Students.

C. Rewards/Benefits

As a student organization advisor, you have the benefit of working with students on a co-curricular level. The rewards of being an advisor are truly endless. The following is a short list of some of those benefits:

1. Working with students as they learn and develop new skills
2. Serve as a mentor to the students that you advise.
3. The created networks and support groups with other advisors on campus.
4. The opportunity to participate in an organization with a purpose you enjoy.



5. Coming together with students to share common interests on working toward a common goal.

*Revised/condensed from AZ Western College advisor handbook

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVISING

A. Most Groups Prefer an Active Advisor:

Being active does not mean serving as the leader, but rather it means getting involved with the group. Such involvement usually includes attending meetings and activities, assessing the group's progress, and being available to discuss ideas and problems. An advisor may also establish personal time with individual officers and members to discuss organizational and personal concerns.

B. Be a Good Resource:

You should be familiar with the policies and procedures of the organization and the institution before trying to advise the group. Regardless of how great the program may be, it may not be successful if such details as room reservations, contracts, or fundraising requests have not been completed. You may refer to the Student Organization Handbook to find more information regarding program planning. The Department of Student Life staff would also be happy to answer any of your questions.

C. Help the Group Set Appropriate Goals:

It is hard to measure success if the organization does not have goals. It is beneficial for the advisor to make recommendations based upon the stated purpose of the group and the organizations previous objectives. Break each goal down into doable steps. A time line for completion should be created for each established goal.

D. Support the Group Enthusiastically:

It is essential that this enthusiasm result from a sincere belief in the group and its goals.

E. Do Not Be Afraid to Admit A Lack of Information:

It is far better to say "I do not know the answer to that, but I will find out and get back to you" than to give misinformation.

F. The Advisor Should not 'Bail Out' the Organization:

A group that fails and learns from that failure acquires the potential to evolve into a stronger and more productive group. The Advisor could offer solutions to problems but let the group decide what to do. It is better for an organization to learn from there past mistakes than succeeds only to become dependent on the advisor.



G. Never Underestimate the Importance of Positive Reinforcement:

Sincere praise and encouragement of positive outcomes can increase the likelihood that they will reoccur. Positive reinforcement is a powerful tool for advisors.

* Revised and condensed from Morrisville State College's Advisor Handbook

DO'S & DON'TS OF ADVISING

Do:

- Allow the group to succeed
- Allow the group to fail, within reason
- Know your limits & group's limits
- Discuss concerns w/ officers in private
- Be visible
- Be consistent with your actions
- Teach Leadership
- Keep your sense of humor
- Learn when to speak/when not to
- Inform group of policies & Procedures
- Note your work on your annual reports
- Read the organizations constitution

Don't:

- Control/Manipulate the group
- Run the meetings
- Miss important group meetings or functions
- Take ownership of the group
- Close communications
- Be afraid to let your group try new ideas
- Know it all
- Take everything so seriously
- Say "I told you so...."
- Act as the President
- Believe you are insignificant
- Impose your own bias

*Revised and condensed from *A Handbook for Student Group Advisors*, by John H. Shuh.

LIABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

A. Hazing:

In general, it is important for you to keep in mind that as an advisor, you are the college's representative regarding the organization and its activities. As such, you are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to your organization about programs, events, procedures, etc. All student organizations advisors should be well informed about the Hazing statement set forth by SUNY Geneseo.

B. SUNY Geneseo Hazing Definition:

Hazing means any act, explicit or implicit, committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization or team *and* which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of the student, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing also includes



soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts.

Geneseo's Student Code of Conduct states that all members of the college community are required to abide by the statutory Rules of Public Order (Section 6450) of the New York State Education Law which specifically states:

No person, either singly or in concert with others shall...

Take any action, create or participate in the creation of any situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health or which involves the forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

C. New York State Penal Law – HAZING:

Section 120.16 Hazing in the first degree.

A person is guilty of hazing in the first degree when, in the course of another person's initiation into or affiliation with any organization, he intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person and thereby causes such injury.

*Hazing in the first degree is a class A misdemeanor.

Section 120.17 Hazing in the second degree.

A person is guilty of hazing in the second degree when, in the course of another person's initiation or affiliation with any organization, he intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person.

*Hazing in the second degree is a violation.

D. Penalties for Hazing:

Violations of the College's hazing policy, the Rules of Public Order, or state law will not be tolerated. Individuals and recognized organizations who violate any of the above policies, rules, regulations or laws are subject to college conduct, as well as legal, action; organizations are subject to college disciplinary action, and risk losing such things as college privileges and/or registration

E. Risk Reduction:

As an Advisor, you may be liable for some of the actions of your organization. You can reduce some of the risk by:

1. Being aware of the activities your organization is planning. Discuss the activities and agree that the planned programs are safe and reasonable.
2. Ensuring that all activities are upholding the college mission statement and all college policies.
3. Checking with the officers of your organization to make sure they are aware of any risks associated with their activities and are planning accordingly.



4. Continue to discuss possible ways for your organization to limit risks.

*Source: http://www.geneseo.edu/handbook/policies_procedures#hazingpolicy
<http://www.myacpa.org/comm/student/documents/acpaadvisormanual.pdf>

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT LIFE

A. Continuing Registration:

At the beginning of the Fall semester, The Department of Student Life organizes a mandatory workshop for all student organization officers. The purpose of this meeting is to provide organizations with information about available resources and to update organizations on any important policy changes. Organization officers can also take advantage of other developmental opportunities via the GOLD workshops.

*Note: Student Association funding is entirely separate from College registration.

B. Student Organization Expo:

In the beginning of every Fall and Spring semester, The Department of Student Life hosts a Student Organization Expo for all recognized student organizations. This event attracts over 1,000 students who are looking to get involved. This is a great way to showcase what your organization is about and recruit new members. Announcements about registration are sent to the organization's presidents and the organizations generic email account (if applicable).

C. Student Organization Handbook:

This is a great resource for all student organizations and Advisors. This handbook explains college procedures, resources, and policies for recognized student organizations. All organization officers should know how to access this document and have taken the time to read through the handbook.

<http://www.geneseo.edu/sites/default/files/isu/union/Student%20Organization%20Handbook.pdf>

D. Geneseo Late Knight:

Organizations have a variety of opportunities to showcase themselves and sponsor events through the Geneseo Late Knight grant program. Through sponsoring a Late Knight activity the organization is able to promote their group and recruit potential new members. Please contact the Late Knight Coordinator in CU 326 or complete the application online at:

<http://glk.geneseo.edu/grant.html>

E. Upstate Escapes Grant:

The Upstate Escapes Grant Program offers student organizations, faculty, and staff up to \$400 to help fund transportation costs for cultural, recreational, social, and educational trips that expand on students' classroom learning and foster relationships between peers. To apply, please complete the application online at the Upstate Escapes website.



F. Coordinator or Student Organizations & Activities:

The Coordinator of Student Organizations & Activities is an available resource to student organizations and their Advisors. Advisors are urged to contact the Coordinator if they have questions or wish to discuss anything pertaining to their particular organization.

Handbook Resources:

Arizona Western College: www.azwestern.edu

Morrisville State College: <http://www.morrisville.edu/documents/studentactivities/sgo/cluborghandbook.pdf>

Florida State University: <http://hazing.fsu.edu/>

SUNY Geneseo Student Code of Conduct: http://www.geneseo.edu/handbook/policies_procedures#hazingpolicy

ACPA Handbook: <http://www.myacpa.org/comm/student/documents/acpaadvisormanual.pdf>