

# Finding, Involving and Keeping Your Advisor

As a student organization leader one of your main responsibilities is working with your organization advisor. And for some, the first challenge you may experience with an advisor is finding one!

The student leaders of an organization are ultimately responsible for building bridges between the organization and the advisor. So whether you are in the process of “finding”, “involving” or simply “keeping” your advisor, here are a few tips to tap!

## Finding: Who to Ask?

Imagine this...you just received an email from your current advisor; she has accepted a new position at another institution and will be unable to fulfill her advising role for your group beginning in the fall. Where do you begin? How do you find someone as dedicated as she is to the organization?

- **First, see this as an opportunity.** Yes, it is hard to say “good-bye” to a member of an organization that was so valued by the group. However, here is your opportunity to welcome new advising ideas, support and contributions to the team.
- **Spend some time at an organization meeting identifying what the group needs in an advisor.** Try to think more about skills and resources that will benefit the organization, and avoid comparing the traits of your former advisor(s) to the ideal new advisor.
- **Create a job description and print off a few copies.** This will come in handy when you are ready to approach potential candidates and they ask you what the expectations of an advisor are. Plus, the process of putting together this description on paper will really help your group clarify what they are looking for in an advisor!
- **Brainstorm.** Once you have determined the characteristics you are seeking in an advisor, spend some time brainstorming names of faculty, staff, administrators or if your institution allows, community members, that might fit your needs.
- **Invite potential prospects to check your group out.** Draft a formal letter of invitation to those individuals you would like to approach. In-

vite them to take a closer look at your group if they are interested.

- **Make a decision.** Selecting an advisor can be an informal process or a formal process; you need to determine what is best for your group. However, put whatever advisor selection process you follow in writing, so the group has a record of how past advisors have been selected for the next time around!

## What Do You Think?

Listed below are several statements that describe possible responsibilities an advisor may have. Take some time and rate each of these as they relate to the expectations and needs you have of your advisor for the coming year. Ask your advisor to complete the survey as well and then compare and discuss your respective responses.

1 – Expect    2 – Optional    3 – Not Necessary

- ▲ Attend and participate in all executive board meetings.
- ▲ Schedule weekly/biweekly one-on-one meetings with executive board members.
- ▲ Attend and participate in all organization meetings.
- ▲ Attend social and service functions (fundraisers, programs, dances, etc).
- ▲ Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise in the group.
- ▲ Represent the group in any conflicts with members of the college/university community.
- ▲ Help manage the budget and financial obligations of the organization.
- ▲ Ensure that elections and/or proper training and transition takes place annually.
- ▲ Be ultimately responsible for knowing and communicating institutional policies to the group.
- ▲ Provide your own expectation and rank it...