ROLE OF FACULTY ADVISOR

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SA.007 - Role of Faculty Advisor

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STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISORS

What is an Advisor?
A student organization advisor is a faculty or staff member who provides support and guidance to officers and members of a student organization. The advisor not only serves as a representative of the group in an official capacity, but also as a student advocate. An advisor is one who gives ideas, shares insight, provides a different perspective and encourages organization members.

Roles & Responsibilities
An advisor must be an employee of John Jay College and either a member of the faculty or a HEO staff member. Advisors agree to serve in their capacity for a full academic year and must submit a signed Student Organization Advisor Contract to the Office of Student Life upon their agreement to serve with the student organization. Advisors should be familiar with College policies and procedures as detailed in the CUNY Bylaws, the PSC/CUNY contract and the Office of Student Life Compass Guide. Advisors should contact the Office of Student Life when questions and concerns arise regarding their student organization. Faculty and staff are limited to advising no more than two organizations during the academic year. Exceptions may be granted by the Dean of Students, upon written request.

Who Can Be An Advisor?
Any faculty who is NOT on sabbatical or staff that is a HEO (Non-Teaching Instructional Staff) staff member at John Jay College may be invited to serve as a student organization advisor. All student organizations are required to have an advisor. The advisor must be a current John Jay College faculty or a HEO staff member. The Office of Student Life is available to help you in connecting with potential advisors for your organization. Advisors are extremely important in helping your organization keep on track. It is important to find an advisor that you have a close relationship with or one that has an active interest in the student organization you are starting. Ask faculty or staff members you are close with; odds are that if they cannot serve in the advisor role, they know of someone who can. For more information about selecting an advisor, please see the Office of Student Life.

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Advisor Roles
• To be an active representative for the student organization to the John Jay College community, and serve as a resource, support, role model, and mentor to the executive board and the members.
• To encourage openness, honesty, and commitment by maintaining regular communication with executive board members, demonstrating genuine interest in the organization, promoting team building, fostering ownership, encouraging creativity/fun, and following through on all agreed upon responsibilities.
• To assist the organization in defining its goals, holding to its purpose, and understanding the possible ramifications certain decisions or actions may have on the organization.
• To attend and be present for the duration of on-campus and off-campus events. A student organization must have a faculty advisor or a designee approved by the Office of Student Life accompany their group on all off-campus trips; as an advisor you may be called upon to travel with your group. If you are not able to attend, the student organization must find another faculty member or HEO staff member to be present during the event.
To challenge the organization to examine and evaluate the way in which it functions in order to encourage thoughtful decision making that will further the organization and serve the needs of the John Jay College community. To encourage and provide opportunities for leadership development and assist with developing strategies to retain members.

To express your concerns to the Office of Student Life over student organization actions, policies, decisions and publications that violate federal or state laws; CUNY bylaws, college policies and the PSC/CUNY contract.

To always remember that the organization belongs to the students, and that the advisor’s primary role is that of an active consultant and resource person. To achieve this, an advisor must interact with the executive board and the general members and be a participant.

Student organization leaders should meet regularly with their advisors, and they should invite the advisor to organization meetings, executive board meetings, and programs/events. Have a conversation with your advisor to determine how active he/she will be with the student organization and executive board.

**Expectations**

Advisors shall . . .

- be familiar with the mission, goals, and purposes of the student organization he or she is advising (referring to the student organization’s constitution and/or the Compass Guide could be helpful);
- attend student organization activities, conferences, competitions, retreats or other such activities as is practical;
- meet with the student organization as it plans its activities and budget, and hold regular meetings with student organization officers as necessary
- meet once a semester with the Director of Student Life or designee;
- provide continuity with student organization’s programming from year to year;
- assist the group in formulating long-range goals and in planning and initiating short-term projects;
- promote student awareness of, and adherence to, policies governing student groups;
- serve as a resource person for alternative solutions to problems confronting the group;
- make suggestions that will permit the officers to improve leadership skills; and
- attend advisor workshops offered by the Office of Student Life.

Advisors should expect the student organization’s officers to . . .

- keep them well-informed of all organization activities, meeting times, locations and agenda items;
- meet with them regularly;
- treat them with respect;
- make them feel welcome at all meetings and activities;
- inform them of any potential problems that may affect the organization or the College;
- be considerate of their professional obligations and to not leave important matters to the last minute;
- be the decision-makers and initiators of the student organization’s programming and policy; and
- use them as a sounding board for discussing plans and problems.
A faculty advisor must accompany their group on trips. Student organizations planning trips must obtain the signature of their faculty advisor prior to the date of departure. If the advisor cannot go on the trip, a designee must be selected to accompany the student organization and obtain his/her signature.

If at any time during a trip or off-campus activity the faculty advisor has reason to believe that the safety of the students or the advisor is in jeopardy, the advisor has the right to take corrective action and if necessary cancel the activity or trip. In the event a student’s behavior on a trip violates CUNY and/or John Jay College rules and regulations, the faculty advisor should write a memorandum about the incident and forward it to the Office of the Vice President for Student Development and the Office of Student Life.

**Protection of Faculty/Staff Advisors**

The Office of the General Counsel and Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs in a memorandum dated March 2, 1992, responded to a question about what “protection” faculty/staff advisors have when they function in that capacity with students. It was indicated, “If such service is in the discharge of their duties and within the scope of their service on behalf of the University, they are entitled to two protections if sued by a student or anyone else:

1. to be defended in a suit
2. to be indemnified in the amount of the judgment or settlement”