

ROLES OF AN ADVISOR

(Adapted from Clemson University RHC Advisor Manual)

A resource person: any staff member will know the general services of the campus and community.

A planner: the advisor will actively help the members plan, promote, carryout and evaluate their programs.

A financial counselor: advisors are responsible for overseeing the budget and watching what the money is spent on.

A supervisor: the advisor should not run the meetings, but will be there to lend support and direction when things get out of hand.

A role model: advisors will be willing to help officers begin the year and will continue this guidance and support throughout the year. Advisors will aid in these tasks to the best of their ability.

A consultant: many times, students will need help in setting up budgets, obtaining support, etc.

A sounding board: hall staffs are the ones that students generally have the most contact. Advisors will be willing to give opinions and direct students to the proper University officials or further discussion as needed.

A liaison: advisors will provide a balance of professionalism between the group and the University and will aid in the group's growth and development.

A developer: the advisor will encourage and stimulate the development of leadership and interpersonal skills. Also, they will help educate the RHC on the importance of being accountable for one's own actions.

GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF AN ADVISOR

1. Assist the group in negotiating all group members' roles.
2. Express sincere enthusiasm and interest in the group and all its activities.
3. Be open to criticisms from the group. Work with them to re-evaluate your role. Be willing to be wrong.
4. At times, it is wise to allow the group to be on its own. You can demonstrate your trust in them by stepping back for a short time; however, do not pull back too far because they may feel that you have lost interest. And if you never step back in, then you may be hurting yourself as well as the group.
5. Act as a positive critic to the group. Give them feedback on how they are doing.
6. Sometimes make suggestions through group members than directly to the group.
7. Be aware of any and all procedures and regulations affecting the group. Assist them in adhering to them.
8. Encourage the group to keep records and evaluations in files. Procedures for passing this information on should be developed.
9. Try to encourage the assignments of tasks to all members. If a member merely comes to meetings and listens, he/she will quickly lose interest.
10. Use the tools you have to assist the group. This includes discussion methods, goal setting, role negotiating, small sub-groups, group representatives, role-playing, etc.
11. Share problems with other professionals in order to get advice.

EVEN MORE ON THE ROLE OF AN ADVISOR

Starting point: the advisor and the group should determine jointly the advisor's role.

- *Let students discuss what they feel the advisor's role in the group should be.
- *The advisor should state a definition of the role, including institutional pressures that affect it.
- *Have open & joint discussions.
- *The advisor must follow up on the agreed-upon role. If change takes place, renegotiate the role.
- *The role should be an active one of giving information and advice as well as assisting the group when they get bogged down.
- *Advisors should make students aware of alternatives.
- *Students are free to make their own decisions. The advisor should not have a veto.
- *The group advisor, however, does have the power of persuasion and should use it.
- *Have faith in students to make good decisions.
- *Remember, students have the right to make mistakes but advisors should not "set them up" to make errors. Offer the best advice possible including warnings when you feel they need them.
- *Do not use student groups as a vehicle for expressing your leadership ability. Your task is to develop leadership in students.

Evaluate the role: it is important for the advisor to periodically become involved in the evaluation of his/her effectiveness. It is most helpful when the advisor does a self-evaluation and then the group does one. These evaluations should be written and discussed in open, two-way communication. Here are some areas to consider in the evaluation process:

- *Is the advisor following the agreed-upon role? Is there a need to renegotiate the role?
- *Is the advisor available to the group?
- *Is the advisor appropriately involved at meetings?

*Is the advisor helpful to individual officers and members?

*Does the advisor offer constructive criticism and the appropriate suggestions?

*Does the advisor share information concerning institutional policies and procedures with the group?

*Does the advisor assist leaders in learning and using group development tools?