

Advisor Guide

for Durham Tech Student Club/Organizations

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What is an advisor?

An advisor is to serve as a:

- Guide
- Mentor
- Professional liaison and line for collaboration between administration, faculty, staff and students
- Assistant with recruitment and retention
- Development Agent

What do advisors do?

- ▶ Provide guidance to individuals or groups when conducting business, planning programs and events
- ▶ Help with strategic navigation with conflict resolution
- ▶ Attend all business meetings, and as many programs and events that your schedule permits
 - Your students are your responsibility
 - This is not to micromanage or show that you do not trust your students; being present allows for the visible display of your commitment and access to you
- ▶ Ensure that club/organization members are in good academic and conduct standing
- ▶ Hold club/organization members accountable with abiding by the College Policies and Procedures, Club/Organization governing documents, and Student Code of Conduct

Important: Advisors do not just "pop their head in" and sign off on paperwork

What do advisors do? (cont.)

- ▶ Have comprehension of their student club/organization's governing documents
- ▶ Advisor(s) should also have **full** access to the most **up-to-date** versions of these documents, the club/organization's financial information, social media and email login credentials, and all correspondence being distributed, **prior** to its distribution
- ▶ If the club is affiliated with the SGA, advisors should have comprehension of the SGA's governing documents
- ▶ Communicate with students, faculty, and staff thoroughly and professionally (using school supported software and accessible platforms); texting should not be the primary method for conducting business
- ▶ Ensure that all items such as: Club Registration, Reactivation Requests, Request for Charter, Member Roster, Governing Documents are appropriately maintained and accounted for
- ▶ Be approachable and **authentic**

Advisor Roles

► **Mentor**

- Train students; provide personal and professional development

► **Team Builder**

- Promote and foster community and community building
- Be intentional with inclusive behavior and practices
- Foster collaboration and the understanding of it for student-to-student interactions, and those between students and faculty/staff

► **Mediator**

- Healthy and professional conflict resolution
- Receive all sides of the story from appropriate parties; identify a plan for resolution and success; be fair and solution-oriented

► **Agent**

- Liaison; standing by and with your students when they need support or protection

Advisor Roles

► Advocate

- Be genuine and passionate about the desires and needs of your students; support their cause and provide development along the way
- Saying "no" to your students does not mean that you are not in their corner
- Hold them accountable to abiding by timelines, considering different perspectives and approaches, fleshing out details for program planning, and other items to make sure that they are prepared

► Educator

- Students may ask "why?", and "because I said so." is not always an appropriate response
- Provide knowledge and awareness of student needs, concerns, reasonings for circumstances; you are a resource, so be ready to be accessed (it's okay to not know, but make it a mission to find out)
- Be clear about expectations and make sure your expectations are obtainable

► Motivator

- Get and keep your students excited about their organization and their purpose!
- Excitement leads to successful engagement and fosters positive results for recruitment and retention

► Interpreter

- Advisors should possess and display an accurate knowledge of college, SGA and club/organization policies, procedures, and/or governing documents
- If you are unsure about something, or just want to double check, communicate that with your students and be intentional about obtaining and relaying the correct information

Advisor (Leadership) Styles

Direct

- Assign tasks, monitors task progress and completion closely
- Should be used for low-performing and new members that display little or no knowledge of processes and expectations

Coach

- Recognize team and individual strengths, areas for improvement and motivations
- Use these factors to navigate towards and through success(es)

Support

- Provide access, resources, and tools for success until individual(s) prove that they are ready and able to work more independently

Delegate

- Assign tasks, and monitor progress and completion with checkpoints
- Should be used for high performing members that display a comprehensive knowledge of tasks and duties
- These students/members are more responsible/able to be entrusted with working appropriately and autonomously
- This does not mean that they do not need you, but this is able to be implemented after a clear display of trustworthiness to fulfill tasks and obligations

Advising is a Skill

► Adaptability

- Be ready to pivot; Sometimes we have to expect the unexpected with programming, college procedures and mandates, executive board and membership fluctuation or resignation, and other items in between

► Flexibility

- The students are not on your time; you should meet in the middle
- Remember "It's not about you."; advising, education, and anything with students are service-oriented jobs

► Identify

- Be able to identify core issues and problems
- When you know what the origin or root of something is, you gain understanding and are able to make decisions for resolution that make sense and are for the greater good

► Agreements

- Some things will be absolute "yes's", some things will be absolute "no's", and sometimes you will have to meet your students in the middle
- Be firm and correct when you present an absolute "no"; your "no" may not have a written explanation and that is okay
- You should always be willing to listen to student voices
- Establishing agreements provides the space for clarity to be provided, opinions and policies to be expressed or explained, it establishes trust, and fosters collaborative mindsets and student leadership development

► Emotional Intelligence

- Be intentional and mindful; your students' mental health matters and your mental health matters
- Give yourself and your students grace
- Be tactful and professional if students give you pushback; know how to navigate situations and do not be afraid to ask for wisdom or assistance from outside parties to reach a successful resolution

Advising is a Skill (cont.)

Communication and Comprehension

- Be clear, be exact, be timely
- Listen to receive and not primarily to respond
- Be sure that you are included in and on **all** correspondence; advisors should review, provide suggestions for revisions, and approve all posts and messages **prior** to their distribution

Conflict Resolution

- Learn, Listen, Think (receive all the information, and do not jump into a quick or irrational solution)
- Encourage reflection, self-awareness, and be solution-oriented
- Accountability agreements and systems

Establish rapport with students and colleagues

- Having healthy and respectful relationships allows for connection which fosters room for development, support, and collaborative work
- Be authentic and be exact when presenting who you are, your expectations and goals
- Always align with the mission and goals of the college, your department and what is in the students' best interest

Leadership, personal, and professional development

- Advisors and group members are growing and learning through each experience; skills are transferrable to life and professional spaces

Accountability

- Encourage it and receive it
- Advising is a collaborative effort; so do your part, but not too much
- Keep active and accurate records and documentation of everything

That's Not How Any of This Works

An advisor is **not**:

- ▶ A dictator
 - ▶ A member of the club
 - ▶ Judge and jury
 - ▶ Bound to the governing documents of the club/organization
 - ▶ Responsible for fulfilling student duties or roles
 - ▶ Advisors may participate in volunteer opportunities, but they are not able to complete volunteer hours on behalf of the club/organization that they are responsible for
- Simply put, if an advisor volunteers, the club will not receive credit for the advisor's completed hours.

Note: Administrative permissions may be put in action if they are for the progress of business being conducted in an appropriate manner.

(An advisor may say "no", but it cannot be a personal measure.)

Advisor Eligibility

- ▶ Current, full time Durham Tech faculty or staff member
- ▶ Must have completed their probationary period for college employment
- ▶ Be able to communicate to student club members clearly, effectively, and professionally (and professional colleagues when needed)
- ▶ Must indicate each academic year, in an email to the SGA Advisor, their written consent and agreement to serve as the club/organization advisor by the provided due date

When to Reach Out

- ▶ When you have a question
- ▶ If you are stepping down from your advisory role
- ▶ If you are leaving the college
- ▶ There are updates or transitions in your membership roster, Senate Representative (if the group is affiliated with the SGA), and/or club Executive Board
- ▶ The student club/group wants to collaborate with the SGA for programming or activities

Communication

- ▶ Follow up with your students regularly about emails and other communications that may come from the school or the SGA Advisor regarding clubs, organizations, due dates, and activities
- ▶ Verbal agreements are nice, but not enough. **Always** follow up in writing (email) about task delegation, fulfillment, expectations, etc.
- ▶ Initial follow ups should be done within two (2) of the agreement being made
- ▶ A follow up is not just seeing where students are with task completion
- ▶ Follow ups should also be overviews that revisit any conversation that was had regarding club/organization business.
- ▶ Your student leaders are who need to submit club/organization registration forms and agreements to engage in SGA programming ; as the advisor, you should be CC'd, included in and/or made aware of all plans for engagement from discussion until the day of the program/event
- ▶ Clarity, direction, understanding, and firmness. All are needed to be a successful advisor

Important: Club advisors and the SGA Advisor are collaborative partners as well