

Advisor Guide

for Durham Tech Student Club/Organizations

Created by: Dway Pulliam

Coordinator, Student Enrichment, Engagement, and Resources

SGA Advisor

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 accurate 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
- ▶ For Durham Tech, advisors should have an active 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

Note: Be mindful to check your email(s) on a regular basis so that you do not miss important information.

- ▶ 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

► 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 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 (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 and/or club Executive Board
- ▶ The student club/group wants to collaborate with the SGA for programming or activities
- ▶ The club/organization has an additional endeavor to the calendar that they have submitted

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) days 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

Club Marketing Materials

- All club flyers, graphics, posters, etc. (electronic and physical) for meetings, engagement, fundraisers, etc. are to be submitted to the Coordinator, Student Engagement, Enrichment, and Resources prior to their posting
- Visual items must be approved by the Coordinator prior to their posting
- Materials *should* be submitted at least two-weeks prior to the anticipated program date to give time for review and revisions as needed
- Last minute requests will not constitute immediate review nor approval from the Coordinator
- Any items posted without approval will be subject for removal with a written follow up via email to the club's student leadership with the advisor(s) in copy

Let's Clear the Air

- ▶ Advisors are welcome to attend General Business meetings
- ▶ Allotted funding for reactivated clubs is \$250 and for recurring clubs it is \$500; funds are only accessible to clubs that are active and that fulfill their SGA duties
- ▶ Reimbursements and additional funding will have caps this year and moving forward (Fundraising is heavily encouraged; SGA funds should not be the sole nor primary source of income for a club/organization)
- **If your group intends to ask the SGA for reimbursement, this needs to be presented to the SGA Advisor in the written proposal/funding request before any monies are spent;** the SGA votes on items that involve their budget, and the Student Enrichment team (appropriate professional staff on this team) will correspond with you regarding the request*
- ▶ SGA obligations (meetings and volunteering) are not optional*
- ▶ The Senate Representative is NOT the sole person responsible for fulfilling SGA volunteer hours; all club members should be assisting with this
- ▶ The Senate Representative IS allowed to have an alternate go in their place for General Business and/or Subcommittee meetings
- Just be sure to email the SGA Advisor in advance of the meeting so we can be sure that the alternate has what they need to be prepared for the meeting
- The Senate Representative should be taking minutes during the SGA meeting and be able to provide deliverables and accurate minutes to their club's members and advisor(s); they are you all's liaison(s)

Let's Clear the Air (cont.)

- ▶ If SGA obligations are not fulfilled (if requested/required documents are not provided, meetings are missed by the Senate Rep., volunteer hours not fulfilled, violation of Student Code of Conduct by the group collectively, etc.):
- ▶ Your group will lose their storage cabinet in the Barbara Baker Room
- ▶ SGA funding will be not be available
- ▶ Your club will be deemed inactive and unable to function as a separate or collaborative entity
- ▶ Currently, Student Enrichment is continuing to establish a structure for clubs/organizations that best supports student success, and we will be in touch with any changes that occur; we appreciate you all's patience and understanding
- ▶ It is a dual effort between club advisors, members, and the SGA to ensure that club members are attending SGA meetings, fulfilling their required service hours, and relaying all SGA information to their current club members
- ▶ Club Advisors are not eligible to complete club business on behalf of students

Updates

- ▶ Programming and structure will look different as we move forward
- ▶ Get your next E-Board figured out during the Spring semester; Use part of the summer and early Fall semester to plan and get prepared for the upcoming academic year
- ▶ Fall Fest and Spring Fling are no longer SGA hosted programs
- ▶ Please use the flyers and graphics that you may see to learn who is hosting what (Student Enrichment and SGA logos will be on all visual items to show you this)

Funding Requests

SGA

- As a reminder, voting on items such as but not limited to funding requests require the SGA Advisor or other appropriate staff member serving in the Advisor's absence to be physically present; if no advisor is present, no voting for items such as funding requests is to occur
- Per the SGA's Operational Guidelines, in order to request funds (this includes additional funding), club senators are to meet with the SGA Treasurer and an Advisor to receive guidance, and to develop a S.M.A.R.T (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely) motion that is subject to the approval of the delegation during a general business meeting
 - Review and approval by the SGA Advisor will be a maintained practice for recordkeeping and accuracy

The guidance above was provided to all club senators and club advisors in the SGA Advisor's written report for April 2024.

No funding requests will be considered after the SGA General Business meeting that immediately precedes the final General Business meeting for the academic year.

Funding Requests (Cont.)

- Recurring clubs (active and in good standing with the SGA) are allotted \$500.00 per academic year; these groups (if active and in good standing with the SGA), may request up to an additional \$500.00 per academic year for a total of \$1000.00 per year*
- Reactivated clubs are allotted \$250.00 per academic year (if active and in good standing with the SGA); these groups may request up to an additional \$500.00 per academic year for a total of \$750.00*
- Submitting a request does not guarantee receipt of all or any monies desired by the student group; partial or full approval is subject to a vote and the approval of the Student Enrichment team
- The final day for clubs to submit requests will be the General Business Meeting that immediately precedes the last General Business Meeting of the academic year
- Last minute (week of, day before, day of) requests will not be accommodated for eligibility to be presented to the body
- Funding requests should be presented prior to the meeting agenda being sent to the club senators
- *circumstances may vary depending on the club's activity, if the endeavor is an annual endeavor, or other criteria defined by the appropriate staff of the Student Enrichment Team
- ▶ The SGA Advisor will coordinate with the Business Office to submit all materials for them to process any funding requests.
- ▶ **Note: SGA Funds are NOT to be the primary source of any student organization's funding.**
- ▶ **Clubs are greatly encouraged to fundraise.**
- ▶ Deviation from this guidance or any guidance for SGA business may result in the implementation of the Accountability System, freezing or denial of funds or funding requests for a designated period of time or endeavor or other action deemed appropriate by the appropriate staff of the Student Enrichment team.
- ▶ *Receipts for approved reimbursement requests should be submitted via email to the SGA Advisor within three (3) and not to exceed five (5) consecutive business days following the purchase
- ▶ ***Reimbursements will not be accommodated if the initial request for reimbursement is made after the monies have been spent and/or have been excluded from the primary proposal submission**

The Funding Request Process

- ▶ Funding request materials are to be submitted to the SGA Advisor via email in the requested timely fashion
- ▶ After the required meeting with the SGA Advisor is had (where the SMART motion is developed), the club's senator or other delegated student representative will be eligible to present the motion (funding request) during the General Business meeting that follows the SMART motion meeting
- ▶ There will be time (5-7 minutes) for the student to elaborate on the funding request, share more about the endeavor the funding is for as well as answer any questions the body may have; the body will vote on whether to approve or deny the request
- ▶ After the vote, if the item is approved, the SGA Advisor will submit all needed materials to the Business Office for check processing
- ▶ All proposals will need to be written out to explain what the funds will be used for as well as a detailed cost breakdown
- ▶ If the request includes reimbursement: receipts and Durham Tech ID numbers will be needed
- ▶ If the request is for a conference, summit, or other professional endeavor: an itinerary, hotel invoice(s)/receipt(s), transportation invoice(s)/receipt(s) will be needed

FYI

- ▶ Students and/or faculty or staff that attempt to operate outside of the SGA's governing documents or guidance given by the SGA Advisor may forfeit or delay their club's ability to submit a funding request
- ▶ If there is a recurring conference, summit, or other professional development opportunity that your group attends annually, please let the SGA Advisor know at the top of the academic year
- ▶ Funding requests and their materials should not be submitted during the week of the General Business meeting that the club wishes to present their request at; late requests are subject to be placed on the following month's agenda upon completion of the process outlined in the SGA's governing documents