

# Welcome

## **Dear Student Organization Advisor:**

This Handbook has been developed to help you in your role as an advisor for one of the Saint Mary's College Student Organizations. We in the Office of Student Involvement & Leadership hope that this resource will assist you in advising your student group and will familiarize you with your role as an advisor. Use it as a ready reference, where you will find helpful tips for bringing success to your students' organization.

Involvement in campus organizations and activities can be both a rewarding and educational experience. We thank you for your willingness to advise students and work with them in a cocurricular setting. Student leaders look up to their advisors and seek out their guidance, using them as both mentors and teachers. Please know that the work you do with these organizations truly does make a difference for the students.

The Student Involvement & Leadership staff is always ready and willing to assist you. Please contact us with any of your needs!

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# Student Involvement and Leadership

The mission of Student Involvement & Leadership is to cultivate opportunities for student leadership, meaningful relationships and life-long learning by providing a dynamic environment while responding to diverse student interests. We value:

## Relationships and Inclusive Community

- SIL offers a safe, comfortable, and inviting space to engage students in their success and growth.
- SIL affords students opportunities and experiences to foster communities of mutual respect and develop meaningful relationships with members of the College community.
- SIL affirms students in the use of their talents and skills in the service of others.

## Student Ownership and Empowerment

- SIL responds actively to the interests of students.
- SIL advances student issues and concerns.
- SIL includes supportive structures for student owned initiatives.

## Cooperation and Collaboration

- SIL creates collaborative partnerships to strengthen the overall College community.
- SIL provides professional staff members who advise, advocate, and gives best practices to student and College programs.

Student Involvement & Leadership (SIL) oversees and mentors all aspects of the Associated Students of Saint Mary's College (ASSMC) including student government, student media, student clubs, and other student organizations. We are the clearing-house for all registered student groups on campus and work collaboratively with the Associated Students to meet student needs and interests.

Other ways we assist student groups are:

- Guidance on meeting and event planning
- Guidance on club operations such as how to run an effective meeting, recruitment and retention of members, leadership skills, and conflict resolution
- Guidance on retreat planning, team-building activities, and retreat sites
- Resource library for ideas on performers, programs, speakers and leadership tools
- Grant opportunities for student leadership development activities such as conferences or training
- Leadership opportunities such as workshops and retreats

Student Organizations are **required** to contact us for:

- Registering the group
- Advance approval of *all* meetings and events
- Approval on facility request forms and work orders
- Contracts (writing and negotiating) for entertainers, services, or off-campus facilities
- Staffing for student events
- Approval of fund-raisers
- Approval of off-campus vendors
- Booking space on campus
- Alcohol requests at student-sponsored functions and, if approved, to procure the liquor license
- Approval of *all* publicity materials (banners, posters, flyers, etc.)

# What is an Advisor?

The role of the advisor is based upon the nature and type of activities specific to each student organization and varies according to the style of each individual student organization. However, the specific responsibilities performed by each advisor are similar. When acting in an advising role, the advisor is considered an agent of the institution and, thus, acting within the scope of official authority on behalf of Saint Mary's College. **Basically, an advisor is a person who gives advice or makes a recommendation as to a decision or a course of action.**

*An advisor serves many functions for an organization. Some of these include:*

- Assist in overseeing all activities of the student organization, being sure to follow the rules and standards established by the College (e.g. campus facility policies, chaperoning, etc.), the Associated Students of Students of Saint Mary's College, and the student organization's constitution.
- Attend student organization's meetings and activities.
- Ensure that officers have a 2.00 minimum cumulative GPA.
- Support the mission and focus of the student organization on campus, which helps the organization achieve longevity and success by seeing progression from year to year.
- Provide positive reinforcement and constructive criticism for student organization and its members.
- Provide the group with both on and off campus resources and connections. Assist the group with making the appropriate connections to resources and personnel that will enhance the activities and programs the group is hosting or sponsoring.
- Counsel and advise the officers and members of the group, especially the executive board. Serve as a "sounding board" off of which the organization can bounce new ideas and concerns.
- Take an active part in the forming of the student organization's procedures and policies of operation.
- Attend student organization sponsored events that permit non-college attendees and/or events serving alcohol. Advisors attending these events may have additional on-site responsibilities assigned to them by Student Involvement and Leadership as needed.
- Attend an annual advisor workshop, facilitated by SIL, for updated information and policy changes necessary for student organization advising.
- Stay in contact with Student Involvement and Leadership in order to discuss any organizational concerns or questions that may arise.

# Roles of an Advisor

## **Mentor:**

Student leaders are constantly searching for *mentors* at Saint Mary's College who can help them develop skills and offer support. A *mentor* brings a certain amount of knowledge to the students; knowledge not only of the functions of the organizations, but also a larger sense of general knowledge. An organization's *mentor* has the ability to develop students' leadership skills on a personal level. A *mentor* should be honest with their students, praising when a job is done well and offering constructive criticism when things need to be improved. Most importantly, a *mentor* should be enthusiastic about the role they play. If the student leaders see that their *mentor* is not excited about the work the organization is doing, the leaders will be less likely to maintain a necessary enthusiasm for their position.

## **Supervisor:**

Student leaders need guidance. A good *supervisor* is someone who is willing to keep the leaders on track and offer help in improving the organization. A *supervisor* will offer assistance in ensuring that the organization stays committed and focused on the goals. A good *supervisor* will offer ways to build relations within the team, assess, and plan for the future. The *supervisor* always keeps the goals of the organization in mind when helping student leaders evaluate meetings, events and other organization functions. If things are not going well in the organization, it is the job of the *supervisor* to help the organization's leaders regain the necessary tools to be successful.

## **Teacher:**

An advisor should also be a *teacher* to an organization. Not only is offering advice and insight important for advisers, but students many times need to be taught. Most likely the adviser will be the most consistent member of the organization. It is up to the *teacher* to explain to new members and leaders the operations and history of the organization. Since both students and advisers have so little time together, every contact the *teacher* has with the students should be of high quality. Wasted time is unproductive for everyone involved. Like any good *teacher*, an advisor should not simply give answers but give the means to the answers so that the students can discover the answers on their own.

## **Motivator:**

Student leaders tend to be highly motivated individuals. As the year progresses though, that motivation may decrease as academics and other extracurricular activities take precedent. An advisor needs to be a constant *motivator* for student leaders and organizations. *Motivating* is the simplest and most effective job an advisor does. The easiest form a *motivator* engages in is through personal contact with the organization's student leaders. Through personal contact, student leaders will sense a true interest and feel validated by the efforts of the advisor. Recognition is key to a good *motivator*. Through public or private recognition, students sense they have a supporter and feel a sense of accomplishment for the work they are putting into the organization. Most importantly, the *motivator* needs to ensure that the whole experience is enjoyable. Nothing will keep students more *motivated* than an experience that is both rewarding and fun!

# Benefits of Being an Advisor

There are many benefits associated with becoming an advisor to a student organization. They include (but are not limited to!) the following:

- The opportunity to develop personal relationships with students outside the classroom or office.
- Sharing your interests with students whom share the same interests.
- Seeing the growth of students. College students are developing new skills and a willingness to take leadership roles. To see a freshmen student who played a minor role in the organization become an organization's president a few years later can be inspiring and exciting.
- The rewards of watching individual students develop their skills and talents as well as watching a group develop to its fullest potential.
- Watching a group come together to share common interests and work toward common goals.
- Develop new networks among fellow advisors. You would be very surprised at the large variety of different campus departments represented by advisors.
- Networking with other institutions. Many institutions offer the same programs that Saint Mary's College does, and being an advisor gives you the opportunity to network with those outside of our own community.
- New challenges! Every day of being an advisor brings a new challenge. Students differ from year to year, month to month, and even day to day. Working on new challenges keeps you refreshed and motivated.

## **Requirements for Advisors**

- Be an employee of Saint Mary's College.
- Be willing to dedicate time and effort to ensuring the success of an organization.
- Ensure that the organization is following the rules and standards established by Saint Mary's College, the Associated Students of Saint Mary's College, and the organization's constitution.
- Take an active role in the organization by attending meetings, events and other organizational activities.
- Attend a yearly advisor workshop, facilitated by Student Involvement and Leadership for updated information and policy changes necessary for student organization advising.
- Be willing to face many new challenges.

# Tips for New (and Old!) Advisors

Being a new advisor can be both an exciting and confusing time. What are your students' expectations? What are your expectations? What should I be doing? Questions arise as to what role you should play. One of the benefits of being an advisor is that you get to decide just how much involvement you want to take. Every organization and student leader is different and requires a different focus or support. These tips are meant to be a starting point for determining what sort of adviser you want to be to your students' organization.

- **Review as much information as possible regarding the organization and its relation to Saint Mary's College.** You have already begun this journey if you are reading this manual. The more you learn of the organization, the more you can understand the goals of the organization. Every Saint Mary's College student organization has a constitution. This could be a good starting point for you. The constitution is meant to provide goals, purpose and a strategy for attaining goals. The more you understand the history and practices of the organization, the better you will become in determining the needs of the organization.
- **Spend time getting to know the students.** It can be a stressful and nerve-wracking experience for student leaders to find an advisor. They have come to you because they trust and see great potential in you. Get to know them! Our student leaders at Saint Mary's College are outstanding and enthusiastic individuals who want to learn as much from you as possible. To be a successful advisor, you must be trusted and available. By taking the time to get to know the students, especially at the beginning of the year, you are building this relationship. Getting to know your students will only excite you more about the job!
- **Display a genuine interest in your students' work.** Being a student leader is a major time commitment and can be very stressful. Simply showing that you care about their work is a major support for students. Offer support, effective criticism, and be excited about their work. It is our hope that you chose to be the organization's advisor because you share the same passion as the students with regard to the organization.
- **Provide constant positive reinforcement for students.** One of the biggest problems our students face is burnout. Within months, student leaders begin to wonder exactly why they are dedicating so much time and effort to the organization. Positive reinforcement can help stave off burnout and keeps student leaders energized and positive about what they are doing.

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- **Be patient.** Remember that we are working with students and students tend to make many mistakes. Resist the urge to simply give students the solutions to all of their problems. Student leaders are still growing into their roles and often need to find solutions on their own.
- **Decide what type of advisor you are going to be.** The job description for advisors is purposely vague. You have the opportunity to determine what sort of advisor you want to be to an organization. As mentioned, every student leader has different needs that require attention. It is up to you to determine the amount of attention you are willing to dedicate to the organization.
- **Help student leaders determine their goals.** It is important to understand what the goals of the students are. Ask them what is important to them and why. What do they see as obstacles or limitations? Part of your role as an advisor is to help students define their goals and help provide the resources they need to enable them to attain their goals.
- **Determine your own goals.** What are your hopes for the organization? How do they compare with the students' goals? Outline what you want to take out of being the organization's advisor; it will guide your focus.
- **Do not be afraid of the unknown.** There will always be new challenges for advisors. It is fine to not know all of the answers. One of the best parts of being an advisor is that often you are learning along with the students.
- **Enlist the support of the people around you.** Because you do not have all of the answers, use other resources. Whether it is Student Involvement and Leadership or someone within your own department, be willing to ask questions or seek advice. We are here to support each other!
- **Do not sweat the small stuff!** An organization can easily be bogged down by the small problems surrounding them. Stay focused on those end goals and what the students are learning in the process!

(Excerpts taken from "Tips for New Advisors," by Chris Carroll, Vanderbilt University and "Tips for Surviving the Early Years," by Kimberly Steen, University Wisconsin-Stout.)

# Month by Month

The following outline will help you be prepared for the academic year of a student organization:

## August

- Review the organization constitution and bylaws. Make sure you and the ASSMC have the most current copy of these documents.
- Review club policies and procedures as outlined in the Student Organization Handbook.
- Attend the Involvement Fair with your organization.

## September

- Attend the student organization advisor reception to meet other advisors and prepare for the year.
- Make sure organization leaders attend the Leadership Summit.
- Ensure that the *Student Organization Registration Form* is returned to SIL by the specified date.
- Ensure that students are attending ASSMC All-Club Meetings.
- Review or establish a budget with club officers.

## October

- Monitor officers' academics; are students studying and managing time well?

## November

- Begin to discuss plans for Jan Term and Spring Semester.

## December

- Begin to identify future leadership. Encourage current leaders to begin to mentor younger members if they have not been doing so already.
- Meet with officers to evaluate the Fall Semester.
- Determine how active the club will be (or not be) during Jan Term.

## January

- Review spring semester activities with officers. Have them review plans with members.

## February

- Talk with officers about elections for new officers.

## March/April

- Monitor the club election process and attend elections
- Assist with officer transitions.
- Assist officers with the club evaluation process. Review documents submitted to ASSMC and sign the club review paperwork.
- Ensure that members continue to study and balance academics and co-curricular activities.

## May

- Evaluate the year with club members. Discuss areas of strength and areas in need of improvement
- Begin planning for next year

## Summer

- Do a self-evaluation of your role as advisor.
- If you and officers are around for the summer, begin planning next year.
- Relax and enjoy!

# Numbers to Know

Student Involvement and Leadership.....	ext. 4704
Eté Martínez Anderson.....	ext. 8318
<i>Assistant Dean of Student Life for Student Involvement and Leadership</i>	
Katie Bringman Baxter.....	ext. 8162
<i>Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership</i>	
Alia Bana.....	ext. 8508
<i>Associated Students Vice President for Finance</i>	
Arthor Curley.....	ext. 8507
<i>Associated Students Vice President for Student Affairs</i>	
Carol Firestone.....	ext. 4030
<i>Events and Conferences</i>	
Shane Keane.....	ext. 8509
<i>Associated Students President</i>	
Legacy Lee.....	ext. 4852
<i>Coordinator of Student Involvement and Leadership</i>	
Lisa McRipley.....	ext. 8317
<i>Director, Delphine Intercultural Center</i>	
Elia Moreno.....	ext. 8545
<i>Coordinator, Delphine Intercultural Center</i>	
Dan Rott.....	ext. 8617
<i>Coordinator for Programming</i>	
Physical Plant.....	ext. 4286
Danny Wecks.....	ext. 4271
<i>Associated Students Vice President for Administration</i>	

# Student Organization Advisor Quiz

1. Where is SIL located?
2. What does SIL stand for?
3. Where is the ASSMC office located?
4. What does ASSMC stand for?
5. Who is your primary contact in SIL?
6. Can you name two other SIL staff members?
7. Where are student organization mailboxes located?
8. How do organizations make room reservations for meetings or events?
9. What form must organizations complete for each event or program they plan (hint: other than a fundraiser or weekly meeting)?
10. What training opportunities are available for club members?

# Advisor Quiz Answers

1. Where is SIL located?  
*Ferroggiaro Hall, first floor*
2. What does SIL stand for?  
*Student Involvement and Leadership*
3. Where is the ASSMC office located?  
*Within Student Involvement and Leadership*
4. What does ASSMC stand for?  
*Associated Students of Saint Mary's College*
5. Who is your primary contact in SIL?  
*Katie Baxter, Assistant Director*
6. Can you name two other SIL staff members?  
*Eté Martínez Anderson, Assistant Dean of Student Life for SIL*  
*Legacy Lee, Coordinator of SIL*  
*Dan Rott, Coordinator for Programming*
7. Where are student organization mailboxes located?  
*In SIL*
8. How do organizations make room reservations for meetings or events?  
*Online using the Facilities Request Reservation Form*
9. What form must organizations complete for each event or program they plan (hint: other than a fundraiser or weekly meeting)?  
*Student Event Planning form*  
*Available in SIL or at [www.stmarys-ca.edu/sil](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/sil); click on the "resources" link*
10. What training opportunities are available for club members?  
*Leadership Summit each fall*  
*Leadership workshops; one offered each week*  
*All-club meetings*  
*Other trainings and resources available upon request through SIL*

# Advisor's Checklist

This worksheet is designed to help advisors and officers determine the role of advisors in student organizations. **Directions:** The advisor and each officer should respond to the following items, then meet to compare answers and discuss any differences. For any items which are determined not to be the responsibility of the advisor, it would be valuable to clarify which officer will assume that responsibility. For each statement, respond according to the following scale:

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| A. Essential for the advisor           | D. Would prefer they not do         |
| B. Helpful for the advisor to do       | E. Absolutely not an advisor's role |
| C. Nice, but they do not have to do it |                                     |

## THE ADVISOR IS EXPECTED TO:

1. Attend all general meetings
2. Attend all executive committee meetings
3. Attend all other organizational activities
4. Explain college policy when relevant to the discussion
5. Help the president prepare the agenda before each meeting
6. Serve as a parliamentarian for the group
7. Speak up during discussions with relevant information or when the group is likely to make a poor decision
8. Speak up during discussion with relevant information
9. Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon
10. Assist organization by signing forms
11. Attend advisor programs sponsored by Student Involvement and Leadership
12. Take an active part in the formulation of the group's goals
13. Initiate ideas for discussion when he/she believes they will help the group
14. Be one of the group except for voting and holding office
15. Require the treasurer to clear all expenditures with him/her before making financial commitments
16. Request to see the treasurer's books at the end of each semester
17. Have regular one-on-ones with the president
18. Attend organization's social events
19. Check the secretary's minutes before they are distributed
20. Receive a copy of all official correspondence
21. Store all group paraphernalia during the summer and between changeover of officers
22. Keep official organization files in his/her offices
23. Inform the group of infractions of its bylaws, codes, and standing rules
24. Keep the group aware of its stated objectives when planning events
25. Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise
26. Be responsible for planning a leadership skill workshop
27. State perceptions of his/her role as advisor at the beginning of the year
28. Let the group work out its problems, including making mistakes and "doing it the hard way"
29. Insist on an evaluation of each activity by those students responsible for planning it
30. Take the initiative in creating teamwork and cooperation among officers
31. Let the group thrive or decline on its merits; do not interfere unless requested to do so
32. Represent the group in any conflicts with members of the College staff
33. Be familiar with College facilities, services, and procedures
34. Recommend programs, speakers, etc.
35. Take an active part in the orderly transition of responsibilities between old and new officers
36. Meet with treasurers monthly to reconcile financial statements
37. Plan organization retreats