



Registered Student Organization Advisors

Congratulations on being an advisor to a student organization! This is a wonderful experience for you and the students you will guide in their leadership development. Over the years, CAIC has discovered trends of frequently asked questions and challenges met by advisors – thus, we have created a series of resources as a guide. For additional questions or scenario-specific needs, please contact CAIC at (910) 962-3553, activities@uncw.edu or visit us in the Fisher Student Center Room 2029.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is an advisor?

Advisors are faculty and/or staff that assist in the skill and leadership development of a student organization.

Are student organizations required to have advisors?

No, CAIC does not require student organizations to have advisors in order to be active and registered on the UNCW campus. Several reasons accompany this decision:

- As UNCW values the freedom to affiliate so greatly, we do not want to prevent a group of interested students from starting a student organization simply because they cannot find an advisor who is interested and able to work with them.
- Other colleges and universities have found to struggle with their advisor requirement as it often leads to having an advisor “in name only,” meaning all they do is sign paperwork when necessary.
- CAIC hopes that advising relationship is established out of mutual desire between the student members and the potential advisor – not out of necessity.

What are the expectations of advisors?

The minimum expectations of advisors are as followed:

- Maintaining regular communications with the organization officers.
- Assisting the organization in following UNCW policies and procedures.
- Providing support, guidance, and learning opportunities as necessary.
- Guiding the organization to available resources.
- Specific duties and expectations agreed upon by officers and advisor.

What makes a “great advisor?”

A great advisor is active and engaged with good intentions for the student organization. The advisor is someone who consistently contributes their time and energy for the betterment of the organization. They go above and beyond the responsibilities established for the within the organization’s constitution. This person assists the group into realizing their potential, helping them achieve their goals, mentors’ individual members, and leads by example. *These characteristics define the qualifications nominees of the RSO Advisor of the Year Award – presented at the Dub Awards.*



RESOURCES (ADVISING)

Advisors should...

1. Reach out to CAIC for assistance. We are here to help you in your role just as much as we help student leaders. We are all learning together!
2. Assist the student organization officers follow policies and procedures. They may understand the rules at a student organization and departmental (CAIC) level, but you may need to expand their knowledge to the university level.
3. Understand the group's purpose, responsibilities, and goal sets found in their constitution. If the student organization goes off track, round them back in to take time to review their constitution. Make sure these goals are realistic.
4. Empower students and provide them with the opportunities to succeed... but also, allow students to make decisions on their own so they can grow.
5. Develop clear expectations on the advisor and student leader relationship.
6. Be visible and choose to attend organization meetings and events that work for your schedule.
7. Mediate conflict within the organization – it happens, and sometimes may get personal. It is crucial for advisors to be present, recognize conflict, and intervene prior to it escalating.
8. Have fun!

Advisors should not...

1. Be the leader of the student organization or run the meetings. *Be present by observing.*
2. Manipulate, impose, or force personal opinions on the organization. *Let them find their voice.*
3. Take ownership of the group. *Student organizations are student-led, not advisor-led.*
4. Be afraid to let the organization try new things. *Allow them to experience success or failure.*
5. Allow the organization to become a one-person organization. *Assist them in expanding.*
6. Assume the organization is handling everything great. *Check in with them frequently.*
7. Assume the organizations needs and personalities will remain the same. *Group dynamics change quick.*
8. Take away from the positive experience. *Make sure they have fun, too!*

RESOURCES (EVENTS)

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Student organizations frequently plan events to provide engagement opportunities for students and promote their organization to the rest of campus. Below are key resources and tips for event planning that you can refer to and keep in mind as you assist in the event planning process. For a detailed review on how to plan events, review the Student Organizations Resources or Event Planning 101 pages at the Involvement Center main page.

Involvement Center Resources

- The Involvement Center provides various resources such as flyer/poster printing, art materials, chalk for chalking on campus sidewalks, and spray paint for the spirit rock. Other options include button making, balloons, and reserving tech supplies such as card swipes (attendance tracking), extension cords, and projectors. *All of these resources have specific per-semester/per-event limits and reservation policies.*

Catering

- If the event is on campus with food, the food must be ordered through Aramark Campus Dining. A limited-pick up menu for student organizations with reduced prices is available. *For safety protocols, please do not allow organizations to provide their own food.*

Reservations

- For potential event venues, please review the Campus Life Events & Reservations website. Here, you will discover room and technology information for academic spaces, campus life facilities, campus recreation, athletic facilities, solicitation tables, and outdoors. *Do not wait until the last minute for reservations. This step should take place weeks, if not months, in advance.*

Marketing

- Many student organizations utilize social media as outlets to connect with the student body (i.e., Instagram). Without marketing, no one will know about events. Advertising materials should always include event and contact information. Events should always be uploaded onto WaveLink for consideration on major advertising platforms such as Hawk eNews. *Review the organizations marketing materials – ensure they are appropriate.*

Finances

- Budgeting is essential. Prior to planning, collect information on event planning costs such as catering, decorations, equipment rental, flyers – anything. *This is where student organizations will likely need you the most in the event planning process.*

UNCWelcome, UNCWelcomeBack, Involvement Fairs

- Student organizations are encouraged to organize events in the first few weeks of the fall (UNCWelcome) and spring (UNCWelcomeBack) semester as opportunities for incoming students to learn about their organizations. As well, the Involvement Carnival (Fall) and Involvement Fairs (Spring/Summer) provide direct opportunities for student organizations to engage one-on-one with incoming students to tell them about their organization. Keep an eye out on CAIC websites and WaveLink for registration information.



For additional questions, please email Campus Activities & Involvement Center at activities@uncw.edu.