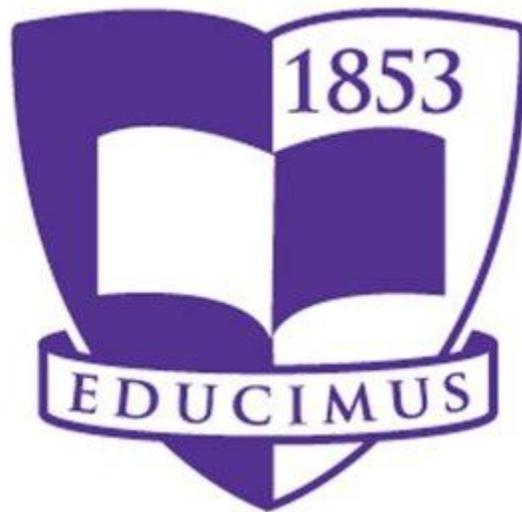


Cornell College



Student Organization Advisor Handbook

Student Organization Advisor-

Student Life would like to thank you for your commitment to student organizations by becoming a student organization advisor. By serving in this capacity you are demonstrating your commitment to the holistic development of students here at Cornell College. This truly is an opportunity to enrich the experiences of our students, and we hope that you will enjoy the experience as well.

This handbook was designed to help you be successful as an advisor and address some frequently asked questions.

Again, thank you for your willingness to volunteer your time towards the student organizations at Cornell College.

Sincerely,

Tera Kringle

Director of Student Activities

Advisor Role & Responsibilities

Every Cornell College recognized student organization is required to have a faculty or staff advisor that is employed by the institution. The organization members are responsible for identifying a faculty or staff member they believe would be a good fit for their group. Each student organization will have different expectations of its advisor; some will prefer constant involvement while others will seek out their advisor only when needed.

So how do faculty and staff members know what is expected of them if they are to become a group's advisor? We strongly recommend the advisor and the current leaders of the organization have a meeting to discuss this exact matter. Some topics might include:

- History of the organization
- Current state of the organization
- Current organization members share what they *need* from an advisor
- Current organization members share what they *want* from an advisor
- Advisor shares what they need from the organization members
- Advisor shares how they would like information communicated to them
- Organization's constitution
- Organization's budget/finances

To further assist with the conversation, we have included forms the potential advisor and current organization leadership can fill out together. Only use these forms if you feel it is necessary and will assist with the conversation. The end goal of this conversation is to have both parties have an idea if this relationship will be a fit or not.

Ideally, this discussion would happen every year between the advisor and the new leadership within the student organization. An active and knowledgeable advisor can often aid in the transition process of a group's leadership. The conversation also provides an opportunity for both parties to have continued knowledge of expectations held for one another.

Every year advisors will be asked to sign the [Advisor Agreement](#) to ensure faculty and staff agree to continue to serve in an advisor capacity. This could be an opportunity to engage the current student leaders in developmental conversations.

There are many benefits associated with becoming an advisor to a student organization. Here are some:

- The satisfaction of helping students learn and develop new skills
- Watching a group come together to share common interests and work toward common goals and an understanding of differences
- Developing a personal relationship with students
- Furthering personal goals or interests by choosing to work with an organization that reflects one's interests

- Sharing one's knowledge with others

Responsibilities of Organization to Advisor

As advisors have responsibilities toward the student organization they advise, the organization members also have a responsibility to their advisor.

- Showing respect and value for the advisor whom the organization chose to serve as a mentor
- Considering all advice and guidance provided with an open mind and a sincere interest for the improvement of the organization
- Establishing and sharing expectations that clearly define responsibilities and anticipated lines of communication
- Notify the advisor of all meetings, activities and programs that require the advisor's attendance in advance
- Meeting regularly with the advisor to discuss organization matters
- Consulting with the advisor when any significant policy changes are made
- Allowing the advisor to share their thoughts and ideas

Liability and Risk Reduction

As an advisor of a student organization, you are the college's representative regarding the organization's activities. As such, you are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to your organization about programs, use of facilities, and operational procedures. If you have reason to question an action taken by the organization, express your concern directly to the organization.

There is no way to completely eliminate risk and legal liability associated with a program or event, there are ways to reduce risk and provide a safer environment for program participants. Here are some tips:

- Clarify the expectations of participants
- Identify specific risks involved with the event (physical/psychological risk and liability)
- Assess the capability of the group to manage risk
- Develop a plan of action in reducing risk
 - Preparing liability waivers
 - Providing advanced training
 - Hiring a third party
 - Canceling the event if conditions are too dangerous or if the group is not prepared to assume full responsibility for the risk involved

If you have concerns about a situation unique to your organization, please contact the College Controller, Lois Mulbrook.

The College does ask that all student organizations traveling for the purpose of their organization complete the [Travel Plan](#), as well as have each individual complete the [Trip Waiver](#).

Additional information regarding liability concerns can be found in several of the policies already in place. Please visit the Waivers & Policies site:

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-activities/waiver-policies/index.shtml>

as well as the Cornell College Compass: <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-affairs/compass/index.shtml> for this information.

Financial Responsibility

As an advisor your financial responsibility will include approving all transaction requests submitted by the organization. While there are no specific requirements for how active advisors must be with the organization they advise, it is important that advisors are aware of the group's finances.

To approve transactions please follow the instructions outlined on [this tutorial](#).

Student organization members may receive funding for their organization from the following sources:

- Student Senate (Student Activity Fee)
- NRHH (National Residence Hall Honorary)
- Fundraising

The most common form of student organization funding is the Student Activity Fee, which is distributed by Student Senate. Guidelines for these requests are outlined below, and are also available on the [Student Senate website](#).

- If funds are needed groups must write an appropriation request.
 - Request forms are available and submitted via the Senate website.
 - If groups are unsure of their request they should direct their questions to the Chair of Appropriations or other Executive Board members of Senate. They will serve as a resource both before and during the process.
 - It is strongly recommended that groups provide a detailed funding request. (Exact pricing, where items will be purchased and purpose of item) Example requests can be found on the Student Senate website.
 - Fundraising is always helpful as well- ideas are available on the Student Organizations page and on the Organization Resources Guidebook.
 - The Chair of Appropriations is the liaison between Student Senate, student organizations and the Cornell Business Office- direct any financial questions to the current Chair.
- If groups violate their constitution, by-laws, Student Senate constitution or by-laws, College policy or civil law you will need to advise your group.
 - The Student Senate constitution and all by-laws are available on the Senate website. (Contact either the President, VP or Chairs on Executive Board of Student Senate with questions or concerns).
 - College policies are available in *The Compass*.
 - Other resources such as information about movie rights are available on the student organization website. Or contact the Chair of Organizations or Student Activities Director.

NRHH funding guidelines are similar to Student Senate's and are listed on the [NRHH website](#). Fundraising monies are used at the group's discretion. However, the act of fundraising must be approved by appropriate parties, which are outlined in the Organization Resource Guidebook.

Advisor Transition

If, for whatever reason, you decide to leave your role as the organization's advisor we recommend the following:

- Inform the leaders of the student organization as soon as possible of the date you will leave your role since the organization will need to find a new advisor
- Let the organization know what you believe it needs in an advisor. This will assist in their search for a replacement
- Pass on your experience with the organization to the new advisor (success and challenges, suggestions for goals, etc.)

Additional Resources

For a list of current student organizations, please visit this site:

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/organizations/>

Do you have questions about student organizations and Student Senates role? Please visit their website or contact Student Senate's Executive Board with any questions.

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/senate/>

If questions do arise that are not answered by this handbook, many members of the Student Affairs staff are available for individual consultations and support to organization advisors.