



# chatham UNIVERSITY

Student Organization Advisor Manual



# Student Organization Manual 2023-24

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# Thank You for Your Interest in Advising a Student Organization!

We know that this is a task that charges you with additional responsibilities and demands on your time, but we are equally aware of the benefits and rewards that come with advising on-campus student groups. Our hope is that you will find this experience as satisfying as those you have in the classroom.

This guide will outline some key elements of serving as an advisor: the different roles advisors may be expected to fulfill, expectations for recognized student organizations at Chatham University, important information and deadlines the student organization you advise will need to know, and resources for your development offered by The Office of Student Engagement.


Please know that you always have a resource in our staff—we look forward to working with you in this role to assist our students in building a vibrant campus community!

Warm regards,

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# Roles and Responsibilities of Student Organization Advisors

Like many of the professionals involved in student life on a university campus, student organization advisors are expected to wear a number of hats in their day-to-day work. Here are some of the roles your student organization may expect you to assume this year:

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- **Ever-Present Communicator:** student organizations are one of the many quickly-moving parts of life on a university campus, so the students you advise may reach out to you early and often regarding organizational developments—keep the channels of communication open to guarantee they stay engaged with you.
  - **Mentor:** from ways to serve as a better leader within to organization to issues of personal and professional development, students in your organization will likely come to you for advice!
  - **Team Builder:** especially in times of leadership transition or at the beginning of a new year, students in your organization will look to you to establish continuity in the organizational goals and mission and bring the team together.
  - **Conflict Mediator:** you will serve as the first point of contact in mediating student conflict within your organization, whether it be over differing agendas and ideas or interpersonal disagreements—the Office of Residence Life & Student Activities – Student Affairs is here to help with these issues as well.
  - **Policy Interpreter:** working as a liaison between your student organization and professional staff in the Office of Residence Life & Student Activities – Student Affairs, you will be expected to remain well-informed of institutional policies and procedures and to ensure your students are following them appropriately.
  - **Reflective Agent:** students within your organization will often seek your professional opinion in evaluating organizational goals and performance—give them the opportunity to discuss their own thoughts on their strengths and areas for improvement and weigh in with your ideas to ensure their success!
  - **Educator:** from role modeling behaviors to stepping back and letting students fail and reflect, many of your skills from the classroom will be integral pieces of your role as a student organization advisor.

- **Motivator:** member recruitment, event planning efforts, and inspiration to continue pursuing their organizational plans and goals are just a few of the areas of student organization leadership that your students may require from you—serving as a cheerleader in these moments who recognizes their efforts and appeals to their desire to create campus community will help to develop following them appropriately.



**A key idea to keep in mind is that you serve your students as an advisor, not a leader.**

While students will come to you for guidance and insight, you should also seek to encourage their own growth, professional development, and ideas toward solutions or creative organizational approaches to issues.

But what do these roles look like, tangibly, in your day-to-day efforts as a student organization advisor? Below is a list of responsibilities that both the students within your organization and professional staff in the Office of Student Engagement will expect you to undertake:

- Assist the organization as the students see fit
- Ensure the organization follows the University’s protocols
- Be aware of any key information regarding the history of the organization
- Be aware of the organization’s plans, events, activities, programs, etc.
- Support and encourage personal and professional development
- Amplify the voices of underrepresented students
- Provide appropriate feedback on programming
- Provide resources and advice when asked
- Help connect students with opportunities
- Foster a positive and welcoming environment
- Ensure the success of the organization
- Ensure that they will not overstep their responsibilities

In return, student organizations have four major responsibilities to their faculty or staff advisors:

- Recognizing the advisor as an integral member of the organization, and thereby keeping them fully informed of the organization's ideas, plans, practices, and concerns
- Notifying the advisor of the time and place of organization meetings and events
- Consulting the advisor in a timely matter to address any areas of concern within the organization
- Soliciting counsel from the advisor in the areas of program planning, financial requests, University policy, organizational conflict or development, leadership development opportunities, and other areas of interest

All student organizations should submit an updated Advisor Agreement annually by the fourth Friday of the fall term to ensure that new student leaders and advisors are working with clear expectations.

The form can be located at this link:

<https://chathamureslife.wufoo.com/forms/x1460efo02xg9mm/>

# Information and Dates to Be Aware Of

In order to ensure successful programmatic planning and organization operations, the Office of Student Engagement requires student organization leaders to submit certain information to us at particular times during the term. To help you be able to advise your student organization in these processes, we'd like to keep you aware of the following:

- All event requests that require Undergraduate Budget Committee (UBC) or Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) funding must be submitted to our office no later than four weeks prior to the proposed event date. Event requests that will not require Undergraduate Budget Committee (UBC) funding must be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the proposed event date. Please encourage the leaders of your student organization to submit all event requests for the term at one time whenever possible.
- Our office will assist in coordinating any necessary catering requests, space reservations, and technology requests once we have received a student organization's event requests. For large events or events that will include a high number of off-campus guests, please ensure that your student organization plans a meeting with our office to discuss event needs.
- Please be aware that UBC meets to review funding requests bi-weekly and GSA meets to review funding requests monthly. Funding requests submitted within four weeks of the proposed event date may be subject to a 30% deduction penalty.
- The Office of Student Engagement can help you and your student organization track both allocated funds and funds raised by donation or solicitation. These are kept in separate University accounts attached to your student organization and housed in our office's budget accounts. For the full Fundraising and Donation Solicitation policy, please refer to the Student Organization handbook.
- As many student organizations operate in a relatively independent manner, we rely on student organization advisors to be our liaison in matters of group conflict or confusion. Please make us aware as soon as possible of any issues with organization leadership, conflict, or other needs that arise.

In addition to these key reminders, a full list of University policies and procedures that affect event planning and budgets, as well as other advice from our office in these matters, can be found in the Student Organization handbook.



## Undergraduate Budget Committee (UBC)

All requests for UBC funding must be reviewed minimally 4 weeks prior to the event date and must be electronically submitted to the Office of Student Engagement with all required attachments by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before an upcoming UBC Hearing. UBC will request late requests (subject to a 30% penalty), but requests may be automatically declined if not submitted a minimum of 18 days in advance of the event date.

All UBC Hearings will take place via zoom every other Tuesday at 11:30 am.

## Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)

GSA meets TBD

Requests must be submitted by the first of each month to be reviewed at the next GSA meeting.

## Advisor/ Student Leader Checklist

Listed below are actions related to student organizations designed to help advisors and organization officers arrive at clear and mutually agreed upon roles for organizational leadership. Advisors and student leaders should complete the form and review it together to clarify group expectations. For items that are determined to be the responsibility of student leaders, it is important to establish which officer's responsibility it will be.

For each statement, respond according to the following scale:

1 = Essential for that party to undertake

2 = Helpful for that party to do

3 = Nice, but they don't have to

4 = Would prefer not to do

5 = Absolutely not that party's role

Advisors	Responsibilities	Student Leaders
	Attend all general organization meetings.	
	Attend all executive committee meetings.	
	Call meetings with the executive committee when believed to be necessary.	
	Explain Chatham policy when relevant to the discussion.	
	Explain Chatham policy to the entire group once a year.	
	Meet with the chief student leaders before each meeting.	
	Prepare an agenda before each meeting.	
	Speak up during discussion when they think the group may make a poor decision.	
	Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon.	
	Exert influence with organization officers between meetings.	
	Take an active part in formulating the goals of the group.	
	Initiate ideas for discussion that may be helpful to the group.	
	Be one of the group, except for voting and holding office.	
	Attend all group activities, meetings, events, etc.	
	Request to see the treasurer's books at the end of each semester.	
	Check the secretary's minutes.	
	Check all official correspondence before it is sent.	
	Be a custodian of all group paraphernalia, records, etc. during summer and between officer transitions.	
	Keep the official files of the organization.	

Advisors	Responsibilities	Student Leaders
	Inform the group of infractions of their bylaws and University policies.	
	Make the group aware of its stated objectives when planning events.	
	Veto a decision when it violates a stated objective, the bylaws, or Chatham policy.	
	Mediate interpersonal conflicts that may arise.	
	Let the group work out its problems; allow for mistakes and “doing it the hard way” unless assistance is requested.	
	Be responsible for planning leadership skills workshops.	
	Insist on an evaluation of each activity by those students responsible for planning it.	
	Take the initiative in developing teamwork and cooperation.	
	Represent the group in any conflicts with members of Chatham staff.	
	Be familiar with Chatham resources and procedures that affect group activities.	
	Recommend programs, speakers, etc.	
	Take an active part in the orderly transition of responsibilities between old and new officers at the end of the year.	
	Cancel any activities when you believe they have been inadequately planned, violate Chatham policies, or are unsafe.	

*\* Adapted from Ball State University Downloads for Student Organizations and Advisors and St. Thomas Aquinas College's Club & Organizations Advisors' Manual*

