WCU
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

Student Leadership & Involvement

Student Organization Advisor Resource Guide

West Chester University

Office for Student Involvement and Leadership

Division of Student Affairs

Introduction:

The Office of Student Leadership & Involvement has compiled this manual to assist in your advising endeavors. Advisors ensure the success and longevity of organizations by helping develop programming that centers the organization's mission. As important additions to the organization, advisors guide student organization members by enhancing this experience, and effectively operating the organization. In addition, advisors often act as confidants in both individual and organizational-related matters, providing knowledge about the organizations' history and tradition, and providing valuable context to the operations of student organizations. This is done through advising, educating, and serving as a resource to the organization. Advisors are required for all Recognized Student Organizations and must be full-time West Chester University faculty or staff. We hope you find the information provided helpful and encourage you to contact the Office of Student Leadership & Involvement with any questions or concerns.

What is a Recognized Student Organization?

A recognized student organization at West Chester University is defined as any student club or organization that meets the following standards:

- Officers and members consist of students currently enrolled at West Chester University
- Organization's purpose is to contribute to students' personal interests and development
- Meets all registration requirements as outlined by the Student Government Association and by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement
- Understands and adheres to policies and procedures

Responsibilities of a Recognized Student Organization:

The complete "Student Organization Policy and Procedure Manual" established by the Student Government Association, can be found by clicking this link:

https://www.wcupa.edu/_services/STU/studentLeadershipInvolvement/documents/Student%20Organization%20Policies%20and%20Procedures%20Manual%20SOPPs%20Fall%202023.pdf

A summary of these procedures as it relates to your role as an Advisor is below. To remain a recognized student organization at WCU, each student organization is responsible for the following:

1. Approved by SGA through the formal approval process
2. Abide by the University policies and regulations of the Student Code of Conduct:
    a. https://www.wcupa.edu/_services/STU/ramsEyeView/codeOfConduct.aspx

3. A student organization must have a full executive board, consisting of a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary.

4. A student organization must maintain at least four students, undergraduate or graduate, not on the executive board that has expressed an interest in joining the organization as a member. Any West Chester University undergraduate student may join the organization, provided they have paid their student activities fee in full.

5. A student organization must have an organization advisor, who may be a full-time or part-time university staff member, faculty member, or administrator of West Chester University.

   a. The purpose of this advisor is to remain in contact with the organization's executive board, attend organization events, when necessary, remain in communication with the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement with regards to the standing and performance of the organization, and provide overall support to the organization in decision making in accordance with university policies and procedures.

6. A student organization must maintain a current list of members on file with the Office of Student Leadership & Involvement.

7. A student organization must have current bylaws on file with the Office for Student Leadership and Involvement and include the SGA requirements for these documents. All organizations undergo a regular review of their bylaws every three years.

8. All student organization officers must maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.0. Officers who fall below a 2.0 cumulative grade point average will be on academic warning with the University and must adhere to their Academic Progress Plan.

9. All student organizations must complete the re-registration process (via RamConnect and as outlined by SGA policy) at the end of every spring semester.

10. Any organization requesting funding from SGA will submit budget requests annually, around the end of the fall semester.

Benefits of Advising:

Becoming an advisor can be very beneficial to both the advisor and the students of the organization. These benefits include but are not limited to:

- Working with students as they learn and develop new skills.
- Sharing one's knowledge and experiences with others.

- Developing a personal relationship with students.

- Furthering personal goals or interests by choosing to work with an organization that reflects one's interests.

- Helping a disparate group come to an understanding of differences.

- Coming together to share common interests and working toward a common goal.

Who Can Become an Advisor:

<mark>Advisors to student organizations must be full-time WCU faculty or staff members.</mark>

Undergraduate students & Graduate students may not advise other student organizations. *(It is important to note an individual does not need to be an employee of the University to serve in a co-advisory role for a student organization.)*

The Role & Responsibilities of an Advisor:

An advisor plays a key role in the development and continuation of student organizations for the students as individuals and the organization. The work of the faculty/staff advisor is important to the success of our WCU campus-based student organizations. Your ability to mentor, interject when needed, praise, and assist your group members as they provide student engagement opportunities for the greater West Chester University community is a vital role that significantly increases the overall effectiveness of our organizations.

The role of the Advisor is to help the group meet its stated goals.

- The Advisor should review the club or organization's constitution and/or bylaws to clearly understand its purpose and determine how they can best assist the group.

- The officers of the club or organization should discuss their specific roles and responsibilities with their Advisor and keep their Advisor alongside of any issues or situations that might warrant their attention.

- The Advisor and the student organization should have a mutual understanding of support being offered by the Advisor

- The Advisor should challenge and support the students when necessary, reminding them to remain true to their organization's purpose, goals, by-laws, mission, etc.

This is an important Faculty/Staff Advisor role, and understanding the expectations and responsibilities listed below will greatly enhance your overall effectiveness. Some of the responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Familiarity with all applicable [University regulations,](#) as well as any applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances in order to provide advice to student members.

2. Oversee that the student organization meets its own internal bylaws, as well as ensuring its compliance with the Student Organization Policy and Procedures Manual (SOPPs).

3. Regularly attending general organization meetings and committee meetings of the organization as your schedule permits; your active participation is highly encouraged.

4. Being a full-time or temporary faculty or staff member at the University.

5. Helping to organize fair elections of officers based on the bylaws of the organization.

6. Assisting with the installation and training of new officers to provide guidance and continuity.

7. Assisting with the administration of organization financial affairs. Special attention should be given to the monitoring of all organizational bank accounts per the SSI Financial Guidelines on expenditures to ensure that funds are being spent appropriately. If the organization is a Student Services, Inc. (SSI) funded organization, it is extremely important that the faculty/staff advisor understand the SSI Payment Procedures on expenditures   and the Student Government Association Financial Policies & Procedures.

8. Assisting the group in planning special programs and events and attending those events if required by the space manager.

9. Meeting regularly with organizational officers to discuss goals and direction of the group.

10. Assisting with the recruitment and selection of new members and overseeing the process by which students become full members.

11. Being available to members requiring assistance or counsel and referring those students to appropriate staff members and/or University offices as needed.

12. Ensuring accurate re-registration of the organization with the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement by the end of Spring semester each year.

13. Working with members who might be struggling academically and providing them with information concerning the academic support systems in place at West Chester University.

14. Understanding that faculty/staff advisors to student organizations are University officials that qualify as Campus Security Authorities (CSA) and must understand and comply with the Department of Education's Clery Act found in the Clery Act Appendix for FSA Handbook (2020), https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/cleryappendixfinal.pdf on page 3. Further, organization advisors must complete Campus Security Authority training

on an annual basis. Additionally, you can review the University's CSA page here: https://www.wcupa.edu/dps/clery/csa.aspx

The organization should expect their Advisor:

- To not let personal or professional goals interfere with or influence group decisions, activities, or goals.
- To clarify their role as an Advisor to the group members as they see fit. Once understood, there should be fewer problems due to misunderstandings regarding roles and responsibilities.
- To be aware of and able to interpret university policies that govern registered student organizations.
- To manifest the enthusiasm necessary to help the organization work toward its potential.
- To understand the organization, to be aware of its purposes and to assist in formulating goals and in planning for the organization.
- To assist members in improving leadership skills.
- To serve as liaison with the university when necessary.
- To encourage and support them during periods of trial and stress.
- To help them evaluate group projects and their individual performance.
- To be familiar with the financial procedures of the Student Government Association Appropriations Committee.
- To serve as a resource and provide ideas and constructive feedback.
- To stay up to date on what is occurring within the organization and be mindful of any future areas of difficulty or avoidable problems.
- To promote involvement, discussion, and diversity within the organization.
- To discourage group domination by one individual; encourage all group members to participate.
- To challenge the students to leave their comfort zones and take risks and support them in their efforts.
- To be a facilitator of creativity and innovation for the organization.
- To recognize that failure is as much of a learning process as is success in many instances.
- To incorporate classroom learning into group activities when possible.

We know that students learn a lot about themselves and others by participating in the co-curricular experiences here at West Chester University. In many cases, loyal and committed advisors are the one constant, the one person who has the "treasure chest" of knowledge that, when shared with each incoming group of student club and organizational leaders, will ensure their overall success.

Guidelines for Advising Student Organizations

The amount of attention student organizations need from their advisors will vary. It is helpful to discuss expectations that the organization has of you, and vice versa, at the beginning of the academic year. The information below includes suggestions and general guidelines to use when advising your student organization.

Liability Concerns:

A common question among advisors is, "What are the liabilities associated with advising a student organization?" Engaging in any activity entails assuming a degree of risk. Just like driving a car exposes us to risks from other drivers, construction, weather conditions, and more, advising a student organization similarly involves risks.

It is important to note that participating students and advisors/volunteers are extended select liability protection while acting on behalf of SGA funded groups. The level of risk that student organizations pose relates directly to the activities they engage in. The type of liability assumed varies greatly depending upon the type of organization and what activities are involved.

However, this might change depending upon the level of active risk management within the organization. An arguably dangerous activity could be rendered extremely safe if the student organization takes the appropriate steps to mitigate all unnecessary risks. Your level of involvement can contribute to this risk-mitigation.

1. You should anticipate risks that may arise out of any decision or situation. Regardless of what organization or activity is involved, there always will be an opportunity for something out of the ordinary to happen – a risk. However, if decisions are made with consistency and in good faith, and reasonable precautions are taken, the risk involved can be minimized.

2. Be aware of the scope of your authority. The University grants student organization Advisors the authority to make certain decisions or take certain actions within their stated responsibilities as an Advisor, including signing vouchers for reimbursement for club expenses. However, the University also reserves certain rights (for instance, the signing of any contracts must be executed by our Student Services, Inc. office). If you remain within the designated responsibilities of this position, you will be able to avoid many unnecessary risks.

Definitions:

- Risk: The possibility of suffering harm or loss; (mental, physical, social).
- Liability: The state of being legally obligated; responsible.
- Risk Management: The act, manner, or practice of controlling risk. To minimize liability, student leaders and their Advisors need to consider various methods of managing risk. These include:
  - Risk Avoidance: the elimination of the problem or the risk.
  - Reduction Control: controlling the frequency and/or severity of the problem or incident that is threatening libelous action.
    - Implementing "Due Standards of Care" is key to reducing risk.
  - Risk Transference: transferring risk through contractual arrangements, disclaimers, waivers, or insurance.

Advisors should encourage student leaders to act responsibly and make reasonable and prudent efforts to manage risk. This is your best defense; but more importantly, it is the key to providing a safe environment for organization members, participants, residents and others.

Please remember that in this role, like all other roles here at WCU, you are a campus resource and a mandated reporter of all known inappropriate conduct. You may consult our Office of Student Conduct, Student Services, Inc., or the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement with further questions.

Clery Act Information:

One particular requirement of student organization advisors falls within the purview of The Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, or more widely known as the Clery Act. This piece of federal legislation the West Chester Police Department is required to report

"statistics concerning the occurrences of certain criminal offenses reported to the local police agency or any official of the institution who is defined as a 'Campus Security Authority.' Student Organization advisors are considered a campus security authority because they have "significant responsibility for student and campus activities".

What does this mean for advisors?

This means advisors have the authority and the DUTY to take action or respond to particular issues on behalf of the institution should they know of a crime that has taken place.

For detailed information and documentation, please visit the Department of Education's Clery Act found in the Clery Act Appendix for FSA Handbook (2020), ://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/cleryappendixfinal.pdf on page 3. Further, organization advisors must complete Campus Security Authority training on an annual basis. Additionally, you can review the University's CSA page here: https://www.wcupa.edu/dps/clery/csa.aspx

What kind of Advisor do you strive to be?

Given the myriad purposes, activities, and objectives of various student organizations, the Advisor's role will vary between organizations. This section outlines the basic roles of an Advisor. As student organizations vary in their expectations and needs, it is important that you, as an Advisor, develop an understanding of the organization you are to represent as to the nature of your involvement. The Advisor and student organizations should agree on a set of expectations of one another from the start and should write this list down as a contract between the student organizations and the Advisor.

- Mentor: Many students will come to see their Advisor as a mentor and the success of these relationships can last many years and be rewarding for both the student and the Advisor. If the student is seeking an education and a career in your field, you may be asked to assist in their professional development. To be effective in this capacity, you will need to acknowledge their academic program and profession, a genuine interest in the personal and professional development of new professionals, and a willingness to connect students to a network of professionals. You may be approached to review resumes, to connect students with community resources, or to be a sounding board for their ideas of what they want to accomplish in the field.

At times, students will seek out someone to assist with their personal development. In this capacity, a mentor will have a basic understanding of student needs and perspectives, a desire to challenge students intellectually and emotionally while providing support to meet the challenge, and the ability to listen to students' verbal and nonverbal communication. Students may want to talk to you about family or relationship issues, conflicts they are having with other students, or to have conversations about their ideas and thoughts on different subjects.

- Team Builder: When new officers are elected or new members join the organization, you may need to take the initiative in turning the students from individuals with separate goals and expectations into a team. Team building is important because it enhances the relationships of the students between one another and the Advisor. Positive relationships help the organization succeed and to work through conflicts and difficult times.
To accomplish the goal of creating an effective team, it is necessary to conduct a workshop (if you and the students have process. As the Advisor, you may consider working with the student officers to develop a plan and to have the students implement it. Training students in effective techniques for team building will keep students invested in the organization and give them the opportunity to learn what it takes to build a team.

- Conflict Mediator: Inevitably, students are going to join the organization with different agendas, goals, and ideas about how things should function and the direction they should be taking. When working with students who have come into conflict, it may be necessary to meet with them and have them discuss their issues with each other. In many cases, it may be necessary to remind them that they both want what is in the best interest of the organization. Ask them how they think they can work together, point out the organization's mission, and ask how their conduct is helping the group achieve its mission.

Sometimes, one student may be causing problems with other students. In many cases, this student may not realize that his/her/their actions are causing a problem. In this case, speaking with the student individually could be helpful. Chances are that no one has met with the student previously and discussed how his/her/their attitudes are affecting other people and how those attitudes or actions can be changed to make everyone feel better. In many cases, the student will appreciate honest feedback.

- <u>Reflective Agent:</u> One of the most essential components to learning in "out of classroom" activities is providing time for students to reflect on how and what they are doing. As an Advisor, you will want your officers to talk to you about how they think they are performing, their strengths, and their areas for improvement. Give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on their performance. Then be honest with them. Let them know when you agree with their self-perceptions and in a tactful manner, let them know when you disagree. Remember, any criticism you provide students should be constructive and you will want to provide concrete examples of actions the student took that seem to contradict their self-perceptions. When students discuss their growth areas, ask them how they can improve those areas and how you can help them. Students usually have the answer to what they need; they just might not ask for help. Remember to have students reflect on their successes and failures.

- <u>Educator:</u> As an Advisor, your role of educator will often come through the role modeling of behavior, guiding the student in reflection of their actions, and being there to answer questions. One of the most difficult actions to take as an Advisor is to do nothing, but sometimes this can be the most important action of all. Allow the students to make their decisions even if they do not agree with your ideas. Sometimes, students will succeed; other times, they may fail. The key is to return to the role of the reflective agent and give the students a safe place to reflect on their experiences.

- <u>Motivator:</u> As an Advisor, you may have to motivate students to excel and to carry out their plans and achieve their goals. Some students are easily discouraged and at the first sign of difficulty, they may want to quit. You will need to be their "cheerleader" to keep them excited about all the potential successes they will experience. You can motivate students through the recognition of their efforts, appealing to their desire to create change, and to connecting their experiences here at the University to the experiences they will have in the community.

- <u>Policy Interpreter:</u> Student organizations operate under policies, procedures, and rules. At times, students may not be aware of these policies, and they will do things in an inappropriate manner. The more you know about these policies the better advice you can give to the students on their plans. As an Advisor, you will assume numerous roles and all possible roles are not mentioned here. A key idea to remember is that you are an Advisor not the leader. You provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students as they work on projects, **<u>but you</u>**

should not be doing the work. Students will learn if they are engaged. Be careful of being challenged into doing the work for a student project. The students make the decisions, and they are accountable for those decisions, and for the successes and failures of their student organizations.

What is your Advising Style?

There are multiple styles of advising student organizations, and those styles can be fluid and change based on the readiness of the organization leaders and members. Here is a synopsis of these different advising styles:

- Developmental: The advisor provides guidance in the decision-making process and opportunities for growth.
- Administrative: The advisor provides the organizational structure of events and focuses on policy and budget.
- Delegator: The advisor empowers the students to conduct their own decision making, problem solving, and delegating. Use this style with students/groups that are at a high level of readiness.
- Coach: The advisor continues to direct and closely supervise task accomplishment, but also explains decisions, solicits suggestions, and supports progress. Use this style with groups that have a few leaders that are at a higher readiness level who will need your support with the rest of the group to get things accomplished.
- Supporter: The advisor facilitates and supports the efforts toward accomplishments, and shares responsibilities for decision making with the students. Use this style with groups that are just starting to understand the concept that will lead to success - with a group that is just starting to "get it."
- Director: The advisor provides specific instructions and closely supervises task accomplishments. Use this style with students/ groups that are at a low level of readiness. Use this style with newly formed organizations or organizations that did not have a smooth officer transition from the previous year.
- Programmatic: The advisor provides skill development for students and event planning.

Advising Dos & Don'ts

DO Follow General Procedures

- Be knowledgeable of the organization's purpose and bylaws, and help your members to adhere to these policies and procedures.
- Learn and comply with federal, state, and local laws/ordinances, in addition to campus policies.
- Keep members up to date on pertinent policies. See Student Organization Policy and Procedure Manual
- Address situations that might lead to a poor public perception of the student group or University.
- Plan and encourage member attendance at leadership training offered by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
- Familiarize yourself with the group's financial structure, including the student organizations SSI Account, how the money is allocated and used, and how the money is budgeted, as well as assisting in budget requests.
- Develop clear expectations about the role of the advisor, and your relationship with the organization.

DO Provide Effective Leadership within the General Body

- Empower students to take action in seeing the student organization succeed or fail.
- Remember to let the students make their own decisions while you support them with guidance and advice.
- Represent the group and its interests in staff and faculty meetings. Reach out to other advisors or departments for assistance.
- Strive to know as many of the members as you can on an individual level. Learn what the students want to get out of the organization.
- Know your group's limits:
    - Assist students in finding a balance between activities and their academic responsibilities.
    - Be visible and attend group meetings and other related events.

- Establish attendance schedules at organizational meetings that are mutually agreed upon between you, and the student organization.

DO Develop an Effective Board and Officers

- Develop a strong working relationship with all the officers to help develop leadership potential within the group.
- Establish meetings (as needed) with individual organization members who need more guidance in their respective officer or committee positions.
- Discuss concerns with officers in private while praising them in public.
- Encourage the Executive Board to release important statements, such as financial reports, to the general membership on a frequent basis.
- Introduce new officers and members to the history and purpose of the group and help them to build upon it throughout their terms.
- Assist members in looking toward the future by developing long-term goals and communicating those plans to future members.
- Guide and assist students in becoming responsible leaders.
- Encourage integrity among all involved members.

DON'T

- Be afraid to let the group try new ideas.
- Become such an advocate that you lose an objective viewpoint.
- Assume that the group handles everything okay and doesn't need you.
- Do everything.

DO Continue to Support Operations

- Be consistent with your actions.
- Exhibit and encourage good communication and listening skills.
- Share creative suggestions and constructive feedback for activities planned by members.
- Introduce new educational program ideas.
  - Point out new perspectives and directions to the group.

- Supply the knowledge and the insight of experience.
- Encourage feedback and a continued evaluation process.
- Facilitate different avenues for resolving intergroup conflict.
- Learn the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Officer support, when necessary, but also allow people to learn from making their own mistakes.

DON'T

- Say I told you so.
- Manipulate or impose/force your opinions on the group.
- Close communications.
- Take everything so seriously.
- Miss group meetings or functions you committed to attend.

Managing Your Student Organization

A key idea to remember is that you are an advisor, not the leader. It should be conveyed to the students that the advisor can provide guidance, insight, and perspective to students as they work on projects, but he/she should not be doing the work. The advisor should be careful of being left to do the work for a student project. The students make the decisions; they are accountable for those decisions and for the successes and failures of their group.

Working with Student Organization Officers

While you may wish to attend all organization meetings, you should meet on a regular basis with the executive officers of the organization(s) you advise to:

- Assist with the development of organizational programs.
- Discuss the direction and goals of the organization.
- Discuss the financial status of the organization, including the identification of problems and their potential solutions.
- Discuss internal organizational difficulties (communications, delegation of responsibilities, etc.), and assist the leadership with their resolution.
- Familiarize yourself with the organizations' national structure and services, if applicable.

- Articulate campus policies and procedures of the University and assist the organization in understanding these policies.
- Provide constructive criticism when it is deemed necessary.
- Acknowledge positive organizational accomplishments.
- Be aware of the fact that, at times, you will be called upon to serve as a personal confidant in organization-related matters.
- Provide assistance to the person seeking advice (usually regarding a problematic situation). However, the advisor cannot compromise their relationship with the group by showing favoritism to one or a small group of persons.
- Understand that the association between you and the students should continue if all parties believe the relationship is productive and mutually beneficial.

Communicating with Your Student Organization

The basis for a strong student organization is good communication. Below are a few suggestions that can help you communicate effectively with the organization:

- Be sure the organization's mission and vision are clear and well-known.
- Request regular updates on budget, events, etc.
- Appropriately discuss conflicts with the organization's leadership to solve problems before they worsen.
- Make yourself visible and available by attending events/meetings, posting open office hours, etc.
- Show appreciation for the work students put into the organization on a regular basis.
- Discuss appropriate email communication and online presence. People are open to interpret electronic text how they wish, so make sure this doesn't hinder your organization's operations.

Officer Transition

One of the key elements to ensure an organization's smooth transition from academic year to academic year is how well they transition their officers. An advisor can and should play an active role in the transition process. There are many methods of transition, including passing on electronic records, having one-on-one meetings between incoming and outgoing officers, or

planning day long or overnight retreats. When your organization transitions, acting on the following elements is important:

- Selecting new officers.
- Identifying key information to be shared.
- Communicating key information to new officers.
- Officers assuming their new roles.

In addition to these four key elements, some very helpful hints to utilize during and/or after your transition process are:

- Review the organization's leadership roles.
- Plan a retreat
- Create a map of the organization's journey.
- Be honest about the past and realistic about the future.
- Take time to learn your available resources.
- Build a relationship between group members and the advisor(s).
- Don't be afraid to try something new in the organization.

Remind your officers of re-registration requirements (every spring semester, by the last day of classes) and mandated election deadlines of March 31st so they can remain in good standing with SGA. It is good practice to discuss legacy and transition of officers all year to gauge the organization's interest and longevity.

Managing Finances

Review the following Financial Policies and Procedures

- [SGA Financial Policies and Procedures](#)
- [SSI Financial Policies and Procedures](#)
- **Make sure your treasurer attends a 1) treasurer training workshop and 2) a budget submission workshop** in mid-late fall. More information will be sent directly to treasurers from SGA.

- **Stay informed of SGA's bylaws, budget proposals, Council of Orgs meetings, requirements, standard operating procedures, and much more on the SGA website.** Budget information is under the "Documents/Minutes" tab.

- **Budgets are produced annually** and are due in December for the following year (information sent from SGA in the fall). New and forming organizations are probationary and cannot apply for funding immediately but only at the next available budgeting semester. New and forming organizations have a $300 maximum budget limit in their first calendar year of recognition.

- **Vouchers for organization expense invoices, reimbursements, and a credit card for ordering through sites like Amazon.com** are available for organization treasurers in the SSI office, 259 Sykes. All vouchers for expenses must be signed by the Advisors. They must be turned in with original receipts to the SSI office.

Administrative Operations

Reserving Event and Meeting Space

- **Room reservations** should be made through the organization's account in 25Live. An account is provided to the organization upon their official recognition. **Please do not make reservations on behalf of your student organizations under your personal or departmental 25Live account; all space reservations should be made through the student organizations itself.**

- **Equipment use in classroom space** is often required to have Advisor or professional staff support. It is a technology requirement of the institution that an Advisor or professional staff member utilize technology equipment in classroom spaces. This requirement does not stand for collective spaces such as Sykes Student Union.

Getting Started with RamConnect:

RamConnect is the University supported place for managing your student organization. Send email communications, manage rosters, create a website, advertise events and more. Each organization on campus is provided with their own online portal to communicate with members and manage their events, calendars, files, websites and much more. Campus administrators have many of the same tools but with an additional governing ability over the organizations, which allows them to centrally manage the activities of student organizations on campus.

RamConnect will be used to learn about campus and organization events, communicate with organization leaders, participate in campus-wide polls and discussions, generate verified records of your involvement with co-curricular transcripts, and much more!

For RamConnect general training or additional information please view the below links:

- **RamConnect For Organizations**
- **Getting Started with RamConnect**
- **SLI Youtube Trainings**

Ways Student Organization can utilize RamConnect:
Create a Sustainable Organization: • Create an organization knowledge base to ease officer turnover and workload • Store contact information to create lasting relationships with vendors and partners • Build and host your public website using RamConnect's website builder • Archive an unlimited amount of organization documents, pictures and videos
Manage Organization and Memberships: • Maintain a web-based portal to centralize organization data and member records • Delegate officer responsibilities and provide members with privileged based access • Maintain accurate, up-to-date member rosters and profile directories • Market your organization online to increase awareness and participation
Plan and Schedule Events: • Publish event details and involvement opportunities on the organization calendar • Send out invites and track RSVPs to prepare for upcoming events • Track involvement hours & attendance for events and meetings • Allow members to share events.
Communicate with Members: • Streamline communication between officers, members, alumni, and committees • Send mass text messages for last minute reminders or changes to events • Target information to members with messages, emails and news posts

- Survey members to collect feedback via polls and discussion board

Student Organization Communication Listservs

- The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement maintains listservs of all student organizations, executive leadership and all advisors. These lists are used to maintain communication about information critical to the operation of a student organization and other important student organization updates. We only use the lists for important information to maintain their significance. If you are not receiving this information and are an executive board member, please contact involvement@wcupa.edu.
- **Advisor Contact Information** – The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement sends an annual appointment notification to every Advisor. If the Advisor changes, a new appointment notification will be sent when a replacement Advisor is appointed.

Advisor Tips:

- **Read the Organization's Constitution/By-Laws** – it is the most important organizational document. It gives the organization and membership purpose, direction, and guidance. The document is not intended to be static; rather it should be reviewed periodically so that it fits the needs of the student group.
- **Check Officer Grades** to make sure that they meet the SGA requirement, which is a 2.25 cumulative GPA for all Executive Board Officers of clubs and organizations. Membership GPAs may be set by by-laws of certain recognized organizations specifically. *Please remember FERPA guidelines for checking grades; they cannot be released to anyone (other club members included) without written consent from the student in question.*
- **Review Robert's Rules and Parliamentary Procedure** – this is how most student organizations conduct business meetings.
- **Nominate your students for the Student Leadership Awards** – held annually each spring.
- Meet regularly with officers and members.
  - Discussions about agenda, projects, goals, etc. offer an opportunity to develop a rapport and provide an opportunity to make suggestions to members.
  - Informal meetings often allow members and the Advisor to share information not directly related to the organization and become better acquainted.

- Let the situation determine the advising style.
  - Often it will be necessary for the approach to range somewhere between non-directive and very directive. As the skill level of the organization's leadership increases, the need for a directive style of advising decreases.
  - Strive for the group to be self-sufficient where the members resolve their own conflicts and solve their own problems. Students grow more from their own choices than following orders.
- Offer feedback to members.
  - Suggest alternative approaches when planning a project. Constructive feedback or praise presented at the appropriate time can be very instrumental in the development of members and of the organization.
- Stay up to date on university policies, procedures and resources.
  - Review Student Organization Event Planning Resource
  - Develop a referral system; it can save time and energy.
- Let officers and members know what is expected of them and determine their expectations of you.
  - Develop a written understanding and review it often – a good understanding of your relationship with organizations can make the advising experience more rewarding.

Important Contact Information

University Policy Documents

Policies pertaining to student clubs (including Anti-Hazing, Academic, Student Code of Conduct, Commercial and Non-Commercial Advertising, and more) can be found here: https://www.wcupa.edu/_services/STU/ramsEyeView/policies.aspx

Student Government Association (SGA)

All student clubs that are funded by our Student Government Association are also governed by the SGA. The SGA website contains a lot of helpful information, and their documents/minutes section shares information about their Standard Operating Policies and Procedures, the SGA's bylaws, Officer training modules, Robert's Rules of Order, Privileges of being a recognized student organization, and more: https://www.wcupa.edu/_services/STU/sga/documentsMinutes.aspx

Student Services, Inc. (SSI)

SSI is involved in "all things financial" for our student clubs and organizations. Explore the SSI website for information about financial policies and procedures, mandatory treasurer trainings, reimbursements, vouchers, organization account numbers, and much more: https://wcustudentservices.com/

Office of Student Leadership & Involvement Contact Information

Cara Jenkins - Director, Student Leadership and Involvement

- Sykes Student Union, Suite 238 - CJenkins@wcupa.edu

Kimmy Farrer – Associate Director, Student Leadership and Involvement

- Contact for Leadership Development and Customizable Programs, RamConnect
- Sykes Student Union, Suite 238 – KFarrer@wcupa.edu

Kiara Guzman-Ramos - Assistant Director, Student Leadership and Involvement

- Contact for Student Clubs and Organization Operations and Management and Advisors
- Sykes Student Union, Suite 238 - KGuzman-Ramos@wcupa.edu

General Inquiries & RamConnect Inquiries - Involvement@wcupa.edu & RamConnect@wcupa.edu