



St. Louis Community College  
Campus Life

# STUDENT CLUB ADVISOR'S HANDBOOK

Dear Student Club/Organization Advisor:

Thank you for donating your time and assuming the role of advisor of a student club/organization at St. Louis Community College. The position of advisor is not just another job, it is an honor. Advisors serve the important role of assisting our students in the development of valuable skills such as leadership, teamwork, community service, event planning, project management, and networking.

Members of the faculty and staff are selected for these positions based on respect, trust, and the belief that you will serve the student organizations well. By asking you to take on the role of advisor, these students are acknowledging your ability to be a positive influence in their lives, as well as recognizing your capacity to serve as a role model, mentor and a person who is committed to helping them grow as leaders.

Although it is an honor to be asked to serve as an advisor, it is also important that you understand the additional demands that will be placed upon your time and energy. Your role will be multifaceted, and your participation will help prepare our students to achieve career goals as they learn to balance their co-curricular involvement with their academic pursuits.

This handbook outlines the advisor roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures established by the Campus Life department, and techniques to enhance your effectiveness as an advisor.

The Campus Life Department wishes to extend our gratitude and appreciation for your commitment and dedication to our students. We are confident that you will provide our students with proper guidance while leading them through a successful year. You are truly living out the mission of STLCC by volunteering your time and expertise. Good luck on a successful academic year!

Sincerely,

Campus Life Staff

# Part One

## Advisor's Role and Responsibilities

The advisor is an integral part of every student club/organization. As a member of the faculty/staff of the college, the primary functions of the advisor are to actively advise, to counsel and to serve as a resource person. By asking appropriate questions or making insightful, informed suggestions, the advisor will assist in the personal development of students while aiding in the growth of the organization. The advisor should encourage mature thinking and responsible action that will strengthen the organization while contributing to the quality of the campus community.

It is difficult to define the specific role of an advisor to a student club/organization because the role can be structured in a variety of ways. The pattern of teamwork between an advisor and the organization must be tailored to the personalities and needs of those involved. This handbook was designed to provide some guidance in developing such a relationship.

## Being the Best STLCC Advisor Involves

**Justifying** - Justify your time, commitment, and efforts, as well as those of your students. If you show them that you believe in what they are trying to accomplish and help them, they will see that their efforts are worthwhile.

**An open mind** - Always have an open mind. It will make your job and the job of the student leaders who look to you for direction a lot easier.

**Support** - Advisors who provide a warm and supportive atmosphere find that students are much more willing to be supportive to others and to you. Creating support systems within the organization will invite others to join and become part of the team.

**Evaluation** - Communication is the key to any group. Advisors should take the time to provide feedback. This will help to facilitate the sharing of ideas and solutions to problems.

**Realizing potential** - Every student and advisor can achieve the goals they set forth for the organization. Sometimes the advisor will need to help students in these endeavors, and sometimes the students may be able to do it alone. Strive to assist students achieve their potential, as well as reach the organization's purpose. Sometimes a positive word from the advisor is all the students need to inspire them to go the extra mile.

**Giving help** - Every student and advisor can achieve great things, but sometimes we could all use a little help! Don't be afraid to ask for, to offer, or to solicit assistance if you are feeling stressed. Also feel free to advise students to contact the Campus Life department for help!

## How to Become an Advisor

1. All STLCC recognized student clubs/organizations are required to have an approved advisor who is a full-time employee of St. Louis Community College. Part-time faculty and staff members may serve as an advisor to the organization upon approval of the employee's supervisor.
2. The organization is free to select any eligible STLCC employee to serve as their advisor. Upon selection, the advisor must complete and submit the Advisor Consent Form to the Campus Life department.
3. All advisors must be approved by the Campus Life staff.
4. No advisor can serve as advisor to more than two organizations during any academic year.
5. This is a non-paid position. All advisors are volunteers.

## How to Be the Best STLCC Advisor

### *General Advising*

1. Effective advisors are those who render advice, offer counsel, and serve as a resource person. Advisors should offer ideas and suggestions that students can consider. Advisors should realize that, on occasions, students might not accept his/her advice and should expect to be respectfully challenged; however, this should not be interpreted as an indication that his/her services are no longer desired.
2. Advisors should refrain from taking charge of the group, and making decisions for the group without student involvement, feedback, and agreement.
3. Advisors should attend workshops, meetings, and social events to become acquainted with members of the organization, its mission, and operations. These opportunities are designed to bring members of the group together.
4. Advisors should provide input when organizations are planning events. They should point out the difficulties inherent in the plan, suggest other ideas, and ensure that the group is following college policies. Advisors should always seek clarification from appropriate members of the Campus Life department when needed.
5. Advisors should provide constructive criticism when it is deemed necessary; however, positive organizational accomplishments should be appropriately acknowledged as well.
6. Advisors should not hesitate to contact the Campus Life staff to discuss organizational problems, changes in organizational membership, or any other concerns that may be of interest or importance to the college.

### *Attendance at Events*

1. Advisors must approve all events hosted and facilitated by the student organization. Advisor's signature of approval must appear on ALL appropriate documents related to that prospective student organizations requested activity.
2. Advisors are required to attend all approved student club activities (i.e., social events, workshops, parties, retreats, information tables, community service events). For parties, retreats and some social events, advisors are expected to attend for the ENTIRE duration of the event.
3. If an advisor cannot be present at an approved activity, he/she must submit the Event Substitute Chaperone form to the Campus Life department. This form must be submitted at least two (2) business days prior to the date of the approved activity.
4. Failure of the advisor or substitute chaperone to attend for the duration of the event, could result in cancellation of that activity by authorized college personnel (i.e., Campus Police, the Campus Life Manager, and/or the Vice President of Student Engagement) and suspension of the student organization for the remainder of the academic year.

### *Liability*

It is natural for advisors to be concerned about liability as it relates to advising student organizations. To reduce risk, advisors should promote the "Reasonable Standards of Care" principles within the organization. This requires that those responsible for an event or activity know and adhere to guidelines and standards of safe conduct. Advisors are expected to ensure that they and others behave in such a manner as to reduce risk, thus, protecting both the student group and the advisor.

Below are some key considerations to know to limit potential liability issues.

1. Common negligence law states that liability can be established when there is some duty of care to the person or situation; that duty is breached; the breach results in injury, harm, or loss; and the breach is the direct cause of the damage.
2. An advisor can be found responsible for the negligence of the student organization if the advisor does not act as a "responsible competent person" would.
3. No student organization or advisor can bind the university to a contract. To avoid instances of financial liability, advisors should not sign his/her name nor the school name on agreements or contracts on behalf of their organization. This could lead to individual liability issues.
4. Advisors should pay close attention to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and disability laws. Within the campus environment, student organizations must adhere to these laws. Membership practices or activities that could be perceived as discriminatory are prohibited and could result in the suspension of the student organization for the remainder of the academic year.

5. **The purpose of faculty/staff attendance at student functions is two-fold.** **First**, the presence of faculty/staff members affirms the desire of the college to create a meaningful co-curricular program with full faculty and staff support and participation. **Second**, the presence of faculty/staff members fulfills the requirements of responsible supervision incumbent upon the institution. The faculty/staff advisor assumes the role of official institution representative at the function and has responsibility for making decisions that affect the safety, welfare, and proper conduct of those in attendance.
6. The faculty or staff member who accepts the position of advisor must be aware of the responsibilities inherent in the function. Generally, it can be stated that the advisor is a college authority and is responsible for making decisions during the function that affect the safety, welfare and conduct of those attending. ***Such authority extends even to the decision to terminate the event.*** Advisors should consult with Campus Police to make the final determination with regards to safety and welfare of others.
7. Specific decisions that might arise could relate to such matters as overcrowding, possible fire hazards, requests to extend or curtail the hours of the event, admission of undesirable person (s), (i.e., obviously impaired individuals) and improper use of college equipment. In these and other similar matters, the Advisor (s) will consult with Campus Police to act in the best interest of those present and the college.
8. Advisors are expected to be present at the location of the event when the scheduled building/room is first opened. Before the start of the event, the advisor should familiarize themselves with any equipment being used.
9. For events where security personnel have been secured, advisors should meet with members of the security team and discuss their duties. The number of security required at an event is pre-determined by Campus Police and the Campus Life Manager, with approval by the Vice President of Student Engagement or designee.
10. To ward off any potential problems, it is strongly suggested that advisors remain in frequent communications with the security personnel and the sponsoring student organization during the event. In case of an emergency, such as fire, disorderly conduct or personal injury, the advisor or student group should notify the proper authorities, who will take charge of the situation.
11. If an emergency or incident of a serious nature takes place, such as a personal injury or loss of property, the advisor should prepare a written report and submit it to the Campus Life department and Campus Police the next business day.
12. At the close of the event, security personnel and the advisor should inspect the room/building to ensure that the room is returned to its original state and that all persons have exited the event.

**PLEASE NOTE!** If neither the advisor nor the substitute chaperone can be present during an approved sponsored event, that event will be canceled.

### ***Withdrawing from Being an Advisor***

1. If at any time a student organization feels that it would be in the best interest of the organization to recommend a new advisor, it may do so after meeting with the Student Activities Assistant to seek mutual understanding. The final decision rests with the Campus Life department.
2. If for any reason an advisor is unable to continue to serve, they must verbally notify the student organization and submit a written resignation to the Student Activities Assistant, indicating the reason(s) why they are stepping down and the effective date.

## **What the College Expects of Advisors**

The following are provided as basic and rather obvious areas of responsibility. It is assumed that one who accepts the role of advisor:

1. Is a current employee of St. Louis Community College and must retain this status to continue to serve as an official advisor.
2. Will not accept an invitation to serve as an advisor (or continue to serve) if he/she is not prepared to fulfill the expectations of such appointment.
3. Assumes the advisor's role voluntarily and is expected to uphold the best interest of the college and student organization.
4. Is interested in the organization and is knowledgeable about its purpose, programs, and constituency.
5. Serves as a consultant and a resource to the members of the organization.
6. Assists the organization in developing and achieving performance objectives and facilitating programs that will provide educational and leadership experiences for members.
7. Understands the financial procedures of the organization and the college.
8. Assures that the organization takes reasonable precautions in its activities to ensure that college policies and federal laws are not violated, nor the welfare of members are jeopardized.



## What Student Organizations Expect of Advisors

The members of student organizations need the services of the advisor. The decisions that must be made and the planning that must be done often require advice from someone with experience. Members will expect the advisor to:

1. Know them by name and show interest in them as individuals. Encourage and motivate them.
2. Believe in the organization and manifest the enthusiasm necessary to help the organization work towards its potential.
3. Understand the organization, be aware of its constitution and assist them in formulating goals, planning activities and programs, and improving their leadership skills.
4. Assist them with developing procedures and methods for maintaining an effective organization. Guide the organization in maintaining records, facilitating, and managing meetings, adhering to established college financial procedures, as well as, evaluating group projects and individual performance.
5. Encourage and support them during challenging situations. Be available when emergencies arise and when necessary, serve as a conflict management mediator.
6. Attend/participate in regularly scheduled meetings, programs, and activities of the organization to the greatest extent possible. Encourage members to attend these activities as well.
7. **Sign all required forms and paperwork. The advisor's signature must be on all appropriate documents. No activity will be scheduled without prior approval of the advisor.**
8. Be in attendance for the duration of organizational events, both on and off campus. Arrive 30 minutes before the start of the event to help with set-up, meet with club members, and review event responsibilities.
9. Refrain from taking charge of the group, and making decisions for the group without their involvement, feedback, and consent.
10. Be aware of resources at the college and within the surrounding community.

## What Advisors Expect of Members

For the advisor to serve effectively, the members must also meet certain expectations. The advisor should expect members to:

1. Keep them informed of all organizational activities, meeting times, event locations, and agendas. Provide them with copies of meetings minutes, as well as any other materials that are sent to the membership.
2. Meet regularly with the advisor to discuss all plans, potential problems, and changes in membership.
3. Develop and use good records and sound financial procedures. Adhere to all college policies and guidelines.
4. Make no commitments for the advisor without his/her consent. An organization must not assume an advisor will attend all events or continue to serve as their advisor unless the advisor has agreed to.

## Characteristics of a Good Advisor

AWARE	Always knows what is happening with the group, including problems, calendar of events, meeting times, etc.
DEDICATED	Willing to assist the organization when necessary. Enjoys being associated with the group and is very involved.
VISIBILE	Attends meetings, social functions, and other special activities of the group.
INFORMED	Is familiar with the rules, policies and regulations of the college and the Constitution of the organization.
SUPPORTIVE	Provides encouragement and praise to group members.
OPEN-MINDED	Is willing to consider new ideas and approaches.
RESPECTED	Is trustworthy and honest. Demonstrates a genuine interest in the group.

# Part Two

## Administration

### Policies and Procedures

## DEFINITION OF A STUDENT ORGANIZATION

A student organization is defined as any recognized group/organization at STLCC which is directed and controlled by students and whose programs and activities are well-matched with the college's mission, vision, and core values. The relationship between the institution and recognized student organizations generates neither a contractual relationship between the college and the organization, nor a property right or expectancy in the organization of any sort.

**Please note:** The name, logo or symbol of student organizations cannot duplicate that of an existing organization or college department.

## MEMBERSHIP

All student organizations (except for fraternities and sororities) shall be open to all STLCC students regardless of race, creed, disability, sexual orientation, age, and sex. All student organizations must adhere to the rules and procedures set forth in the organization's constitution, including the non-discrimination requirements for membership. Active membership in recognized student organizations shall be limited to currently enrolled, full-time, and part-time STLCC students. STLCC faculty and staff are not eligible for membership, nor can they hold an office in student organizations.

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION

Recognition is the process through which a student club/organization receives an "active" status within the Campus Life department and the college. Only recognized student clubs/organizations will be able to utilize the college facilities and receive college funds. Recognition is a privilege given to student organizations that successfully complete the registration process and always comply with college guidelines.

- Organizations apply to be recognized each semester. The Campus Life department reviews all applications and determines recognition.
- Each organization must always have and maintain a minimum of five (5) currently enrolled STLCC students, to be considered "active." Organizations that fall below the minimum of five (5) members will be considered "inactive" and will lose all programming and funding privileges.
- Registration of student organizations shall not be construed as agreement, support, or approval by the college, but only as recognition of the rights of the organization to exist at the college, subject to the conditions established herein.
- No organization shall obtain or maintain recognition that discriminates based on race, color, creed or religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental handicap, or veteran status with respect to its membership, programming, or operations.

## **CHANGE OF OFFICERS DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

When new officers are elected or there is a change mid-year, organizations must complete a new *Organization Officer and Membership Form* and submit it to Campus Life. If a new officer is selected after the mandatory Student Organization Summit, it is the responsibility of the new officer to thoroughly review the Student Club Handbook to learn important regulations related to successfully running an organization. New officers are also encouraged to visit Campus Life if there are any questions or concerns, and to work closely with the organization's advisor, who is knowledgeable about the organization and college policies.

## **OFF CAMPUS ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMS**

Clubs/Organizations must get approval from Campus Life to host an event, program, trip, or attend a conference off campus. All requests are to follow the same process as on campus events.

## **DUES**

Student organizations are permitted to charge dues from participating members as a requirement for membership in the student organization. All guidelines related to dues must be clearly stated in the organization's constitution and all monies collected must adhere to the policies and procedures outlined by Campus Life.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Student Organizations are only permitted to fundraise on behalf of 501 (c)(3) organizations (example: Stray Rescue, Children's Miracle Network, Shriners, etc.). All fundraising activities must adhere to the policies outlined in the *Student Club/Organization Fundraiser Guidelines*. Raffles and contests for fundraising purposes are permitted on a case-by-case basis.

### **ETHICS IN FUNDRAISING & SOLICITATION**

If a student organization makes a commitment to raise funds on behalf of a charitable organization, the organization is obligated to uphold its commitment. When fundraising on behalf of a specific charity, the organization is required to disclose what percentage of the proceeds will be donated to charity and where the rest will be distributed.

### **PRIZES FOR FUNDRAISING**

In many cases, students winning prizes may incur tax obligations. Student organizations wishing to purchase prizes, gift cards, etc., must gain approval from Campus Life. Upon receiving such prizes, the winner may be required to provide personal information, which may be reported to the IRS.

### **GIFTS IN KIND FOR FUNDRAISING**

Student organizations are permitted to receive donated gifts (separate from cash donations) from non-STLCC organizations. This is a great way to solicit companies or organizations to donate items to be raffled off, used as prizes, etc. However, prior approval must be granted from Campus Life.

## **COLLEGE BOOKSTORE**

To avoid direct competition with the College Bookstore, student organizations are **not** permitted to sell books or paraphernalia already being sold in the bookstore.

## **MEDIA OUTLETS**

STLCC requires that all contact with media be arranged through the Marketing and Communications department. They will work with your organization to effectively attract and work with the media.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS**

Student organizations are encouraged to use social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc., to promote their events and programs. In doing so, student organizations should create accounts under the name and likeness of their respective organizations. At no time will organizations be permitted to use social networks in a way deemed derogatory to any on-campus or off-campus entity. Additionally:

- Messages that violate college policy, local, state and federal statutes are prohibited
- Messages of explicit sexual nature are prohibited as well as information, which may be viewed as demeaning or degrading to a person or group of persons are prohibited
- Use of the network for the solicitation or sale of items is prohibited
- Announcements about APPROVED parties or events may not refer to or promote alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or drug usage

The above guidelines apply to student organizations collectively and individually. This means the organization will be held responsible for violations committed by individual members of the organization.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

All student organizations are required to submit a monthly report. Reports are due the first Friday of every month by 4:00pm. Reports must be submitted electronically by completing the Club and Organization Monthly Report form, which can be found on the Student Clubs and Organizations website.

## **VENDOR REQUESTS & PURCHASES**

Student organizations are allowed to purchase goods and services from those vendors that have been approved by the college. Campus Life will serve as liaison between the vendor and the student club. Campus Life will assist you with obtaining quotes, approving artwork, sending payment, and receiving shipments. **Students cannot sign contracts on behalf of the college and are not allowed to personally enter into purchasing agreements or receive shipments.**

All quotes must obtain the following:

- Official Company Name
- Company Address and Contact Information
- Quote Number
- Billed to and shipped to must be to STLCC Campus Life

**Please Note! Students and advisors will NOT be reimbursed for purchases made or money spent on items on their own. All purchases MUST be made through the Campus Life Office from college approved vendors. Campus Life must approve all club/org spending and purchases.**

## FINANCIAL REQUESTS

All financial requests must be submitted via the online SABC form, which can be found on the Student Clubs and Organizations webpage.

## RECORD KEEPING

The advisor should encourage an organization to keep good records. These may include minutes, records relating to programs, scrap books, historical records, financial records, reports, and evaluations. Not only should these be maintained, but they should also be reviewed and catalogued in some fashion.

### **Finances**

Advisors should discuss the financial status of the organization including identification of problems and their potential solutions and identification of financial strengths and means of perpetuating such. Organizations receiving funds from the College must maintain records. Advisors to these organizations should be familiar with the procedures and policies and should assist with budget requests. Advisors should insist that proper financial procedures be followed and that records be kept.

### **Constitution**

The constitution is the document that maintains the structure and procedures of the organization. Advisors should encourage their organization to make an annual review and to amend or revise when necessary. When changes are made, copies of the revised constitution are to be submitted to the Campus Life department.

## OTHER

**Please be advised:**

Nothing in this document shall prohibit the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Campus President, Chief Student Affairs Officer, or designee from taking immediate emergency action concerning all organizations whenever the interest and public image of the college is at stake. In addition, individual members of organizations are subject to all judicial policies relating to student misconduct.

The college's policy on HAZING applies to all student groups and organizations. Missouri statutes prohibit students from engaging in any kind of hazing action or situation on or off campus which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into, affiliation with, or participation in any student organization. The hazing policy can be found at [Student Conduct Rights and Responsibilities \(stlcc.edu\)](http://stlcc.edu).

The Campus Life department may suspend or revoke an organization's recognition at any time for violating any of these regulations. Campus Life can also bring charges against organizations and/or its members through the judicial system for violations of the Student Code of Conduct. Sanctions for violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in suspension or termination of an organizations' existence at the college.