

Seven Keys to Advising Hall Government

Educational leadership begins with a vision of the educator. Being the advisor to your hall government requires that you clarify that vision. Determine what values you hope to instill, what skills you hope to develop and what knowledge you hope to impart. Then, set out to challenge and support your hall's leaders.

Do three things to succeed:

- First, be a person whose example as a human being provides direction and hope.
- Second, get to know students as individuals who are two-dimensional: the unique person in the role and the role they are attempting to fulfill.
- Third, pay attention to eight areas that will inform your advising priorities. Approach them thoughtfully, connecting your efforts in a strategic plan that builds a community of leaders throughout your building. In doing so, you will significantly impact your residents, your hall government and you.

Seven Key Areas

The following areas include the key question you should address, as well as suggested answers. They are starting points for developing your plan for being an effective advisor to hall government.

Recruitment

What are we doing--all year and during recruitment "season"--to interest new members?

Clearly communicate the following:

- Short-term benefits for the individual (e.g. friendships, making a contribution, being a part of making things happen, developing new skills, identity development, confidence)
- Long-term benefits for the individual (e.g. preparation for job, community involvement, future memories of friendships developed, confidence)
- How the individual might contribute (e.g. talents, skills, experiences, personal characteristics needed by the organization)
- Purpose and traditions of the organization
- How things work (e.g. structure, calendar, routine, typical projects, opportunities, recognition, assistance available)

Methods:

- Personalized letters
- Handwritten notes
- Brief presentations
- Personal contacts!

Orientation

What do we do to help members get off to a good start?

Include the following:

- Invitation to orientation "event"
- Brief, printed overview of organization, with information on advisor name, availability, etc.
- General welcome, including identification of welcomer and a few key individuals
- Purpose of the orientation
- Agenda for orientation
- Overview of the organization (purpose, traditions, recognition, structure, calendar, routine)
- Expectations (of leaders by members and vice-versa)
- Teambuilders/ice-breakers (dyads, then combining into larger groups)!
- Sign-up (if needed)
- Next meeting (date, day, time, agenda)
- Assignments!
- Thanks for involvement

Goal-setting

What do we do to help members decide what to do?

Include the following:

- VERY BRIEFLY introduce general concepts of goal-setting (measureable, time-specific, etc.)
- Review traditions (basis for new "cycle")
- Brainstorm possibilities (including desirable traditions to possible retain)
- Critique possibilities (including financial estimates and limitations) to narrow to final projects
- Define each project as specifically as possible (what, when, where, how, who?)
- Set deadlines, chairs, sub-committee members
- Each group establish a timeline for completing the project, with assignments for members
- Determine how and when to "celebrate" the fulfillment of each project

Member Development

What are we doing to help members grow and feel valued?

Personal Goal-setting

- Chances to define personal goals (i.e. skills, relationships, perspectives, achievements) they want from their involvement
- Chances to check-in on goals' progress and make adjustments
- Chances to celebrate fulfillment of goals

Lots of recognition:

- Know and use individuals' names
- Frequent personal contacts (notes, comments) with individuals about their efforts (including caringly-presented constructive feedback)
- Frequent public comments about individuals' efforts and achievements
- Frequent public comments about the organization's efforts and achievements
- Periodic (semesterly, annual) public honors, awards, ceremonies

Workshops and Conferences

- Attend
- Present

Leader Development

What are we doing to help leaders grow and feel valued?

Personal Goal-setting

- Chances to define personal goals (i.e. skills, relationships, perspectives, achievements) they want from their involvement
- Chances to check-in on goals' progress and make adjustments
- Chances to celebrate fulfillment of goals

Regularly scheduled meetings

- With president/chair (assess last meeting, consider "situations," set agenda for officers' meeting)
- With officers (progress reports, set agenda for next organization meeting)

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Support

What are we doing to support individuals, beyond their roles in the organization?

Express interest by:

- Providing regular opportunities in meetings to briefly share personal side of life
- Following up on individuals' comments with supportive personal comments and notes
- Looking for and commenting on positive things done by individuals that are unrelated to their role or the organization
- Seeking out "missing" individuals to tell them of your interest in their involvement

Transitions

What is done to help transfer knowledge and traditions from one year to the next?

Great Files

- Have organized filing system
- Encourage regular use and maintenance of those files

Meetings

- A meeting of all incoming and outgoing officers: "What we've learned and would recommend..."
- Status reports from individual outgoing to individual incoming officers of the same title (e.g. the outgoing treasurer gives the incoming treasurer a report on financial status and procedures for keeping track of and spending money)

Closure

- What do we do to bring a sense of completion to the year/semester?

Feedback

- Officer and advisor opportunity to give appreciative feedback to one another
- All-group opportunity to give appreciative verbal and written feedback to one another
- Notes to key individuals (including advisor) who have contributed a lot

Celebration

- A no-business social conclusion to the year/semester

Drake Martin
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