

College of Marin Office of Student Activities and Advocacy

Club Advisor: Role and Responsibilities

All registered student clubs, activities and events must be advised by a current member of the College of Marin employee. Many members of the COM faculty and staff enjoy volunteering their time; advisors volunteer to work with student clubs because they want to support the student experience beyond the classroom to develop student leaders, and because they feel they can make a contribution to the organization's success.

Every advisor will have a different relationship with their respective student club. Given the diversity of students and student groups, the roles of the advisors will vary accordingly.

Clubs may choose to have more than one advisor so that advisor responsibilities may be divided.

Advisor's responsibilities include:

- Attend regularly scheduled meetings of their club, when possible. If you are unable to attend club meetings, schedule regular meetings with the Club leadership to keep abreast of planning, club activities, team dynamics, areas for support, and needs.
- The advisor must attend and supervise functions, activities, and events of their club. If the club event is held on-campus, Advisors need not be present for the entire event, but they need to make sure the event is set-up and cleaned up accordingly. If you are unable to attend, appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure that procedures and protocols are followed, and plans are clearly documented.**
- The club advisor must be present for off-campus field trips, events, and conferences of the club. If you are unable to attend, appropriate arrangements should be made for support and regular check-ins with the club.**
- See that the club adheres to the policies and procedures of College of Marin, as well as obey local statutes and state laws. <https://policies.marin.edu/policies-procedures/chapter/chapter-1>
- Ensure that a club representative attends the weekly ICC meeting so that the club remains in active status.
- If a club does not consistently have an ICC Representative attend the weekly ICC meeting, the club will not qualify to receive funding.
- Make sure copies of club meeting minutes are maintained and filed.

In this section, a basic list of roles and responsibilities an advisor may take are listed.

Equity Practices

Students get involved and participate in activities from many different backgrounds and with multiple identities. Advisors play an important role in cultivating a space for safety, belonging, and a community that appreciates and empowers the various identities of the students involved in the club. Additionally, providing space for differing perspectives and lived experiences is key to supporting all students.

Mentorship

Many students will come to see their advisor as a mentor. 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.

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 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 their actions are causing a problem. In this case, speaking with the student individually could be helpful.

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 amongst each other, and with the advisor. Positive relationships help the organization succeed and work through conflicts and difficult times.

To this end, it may be helpful to organize workshops and/or retreats to engage students in this 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.

Reflective Agent

One of the most essential components to learning through co-curricular 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 weaknesses. 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 feedback you provide students should be constructive and you will want to provide concrete examples of actions for their improvement.

Motivator

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 of 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 COM – to the experiences they will have in the community.

Educator

As an advisor, your role of educator will often come through modeling of behavior, guiding students in reflective thinking and assessment 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 and serve as a support when they may need someone to talk to. 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.

Policy Interpreter

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 you can inform the students about their plans and help them avoid frustration and disappointment. <https://policies.marin.edu/policies-procedures/chapter/chapter-1>

The advisor’s signature is required on the *Club Activation form*, *Funding forms*, and possibly other forms.

You are not alone. For support and questions, the Office of Student Activities and Advocacy is here to help. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Email: Studentactivities@marin.edu

Visit us in Student Services, room 254.

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