



**Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion
Student Organization Advisor Handbook**

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THE CENTER FOR MULTICULTURAL ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION

The Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion (CMEI) supports students' sense of belonging in college and affirms their identities by building community through participation in student organizations (over 90 options), First-Generation Initiatives, Met Media, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Racial Equity and Leadership Programs, Student Travel and Professional Development, Student Government, student gathering spaces, campus events, and much more!

The mission of the CMEI is to provide a student centered, accessible, intersectional, anti-racist, and equitable experience that prioritizes community engagement, servingness, and cultural appreciation. To fulfill its mission, the CMEI will engage in leadership and community development as well as co-curricular activities through a process that combines the application of scholarly research, programming, experiential activities, and student activities and learning.

Contact Information

Location: Tivoli 305 & Jordan Student Success Building 237

Phone: 303-615-0606

Email: Orgs@msudenver.edu

CMEI Student Organization [Website](#)

Dear Prospective Club Advisor,

Serving as an advisor for a student club/organization, fraternity, or sorority is a rewarding experience that enriches the lives of both the advisor and members of the student group. We are pleased that you have made the decision to support one or more of the 90+ student organizations here at MSU Denver. Whether you are a first-time advisor or a seasoned advisor, this handbook aims to provide you with the foundational aspects of your role, what advisors do, and what they should not do.

We cannot take full credit for this handbook. Like many aspects of higher education, it is the hard work and labor-intensive effort of many student affairs professionals throughout the nation. In fact, In the Spring of 2005, the Commission for Student Involvement through the Association of College Personnel Administrators (ACPA), determined the need for a “standardized” Advisor Manual that would be available online for advisors and practitioners to download and personalize. Over the course of a year, committee members consulted with Commission members; researched online manuals and other resources; and compiled and edited reams of information. The results of these efforts are presented in the handbook by the ACPA Commission for Student Involvement.

We would like to thank the commission for taking the time to compile this information and allowing the MSU Denver Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion (CMEI) to use and personalize it. We hope that the advisors of MSU Denver student organizations will find this information helpful in providing guidance, mentorship and coaching to your student organization(s).

Finally, please know that the safety and wellbeing of MSU Denver students, faculty, and staff is paramount. As the club or organization advisor, ensures that the club, organization, fraternity, or sorority follows MSU Denver policies and procedures, the organizations constitution, and bylaws, and local, state, and federal laws and ordinances. What follows is not an exhausting list of examples of actions advisors should take and should not replace sound judgement. If at any time you are in doubt, need additional support, or have a question, please do not hesitate to reach out to reach out to orgs@msudenver.edu.

Again, thank you for stepping into the role of student club or organization advisor. We in the CMEI hope that this is a rewarding experience that deepens your already strong connection with the MSU Denver community.

SECTION ONE: GETTING STARTED AND THE ROLE OF AN ADVISOR

All registered student organizations at MSU Denver are required to have a full-time MSU Denver faculty or staff advisor. Advisors have a variety of roles within an organization including a mentor, teacher, leader, and follower. The advisor and students must have regular communication for them to advise the organization on its day-to-day operations and activities. Ideally, the advisor assists the organization members and officers in staying in compliance with their national organization requirements, constitution, and bylaws, MSU Denver policies as well as local, state, and federal laws and ordinances. Advisors should also assist student leaders in developing critical thinking skills in the areas of event planning, risk management, organization management, group processes and ethical decision making among other areas for personal development.

An advisor can help provide continuity and support for student organizations, which will take them through the tough times and enhance the good times. This handbook is for current advisors at MSU Denver to provide the support and information you need to find success and satisfaction in your role, as well as for potential advisors so you can get an idea of what advising entails. The goal of a student organization advisor is to assist in the development of students involved in the club or organization through meaningful and intentional coaching and mentorship. This advisor handbook is intended to help in this endeavor. It is an assortment of suggestions, tips, expectations, and procedures that have been consolidated into one resource. It is not, however, all-encompassing of and will not have all the answers to every situation an advisor might face. However, it is a good place to start in your journey towards becoming a successful club, organization, fraternity, or sorority advisor here at MSU Denver.

The following pages provide a framework for advisors to use when working with their student organizations. The most important thing to remember as an advisor is that every organization, and every student, is different. Therefore, part of your role is to assist members as they develop their unique foundation for productivity, goal setting, and decision-making-skills that will prepare them for life beyond the University. Finally, it is important to remember that student clubs and organizations should be student initiated, student driven, and student focused. This means advisors should coach and mentor where appropriate, especially regarding compliance with policies, procedures, and laws, but organization members should ultimately establish the mission, vision, and agenda of their student group.

Questions Advisors May Want to Ask the Organization Before Committing

Before accepting the role of club or organization advisor, you may want to ask organization representatives some of the following questions but are not limited to:

- How much involvement is expected or needed?
- How often does the group meet?
- How many major activities does the group plan per semester?
- How experienced are the student leaders?
- How do your skills match the needs of the organization?

- What are some of the problem areas that your organization specifically needs advisory assistance in dealing with? Ask for past examples.
- What are some of the ways the Advisor can be more helpful to the group?
- Will the Advisor be a silent observer at meetings or an active participant?
- Should you interrupt meetings if you think the group is getting off track? How? When?
- If things get unruly, should you interrupt or remain silent?
- Is the Advisor expected to give feedback? How? When?
- Are there areas of the organization that are “hands off” to the Advisor?

Advisor Expectations and Getting Started

The following list covers some of the required reading and expectations in getting started for the new registration year. While this list of “To-Do” items may not be all-inclusive it will at least provide you with the foundation for a successful year as a student organization advisor. Advisors should:

- Read Club Advisor Handbook (this document) in its entirety
- Read Student Organizations Officer Handbook
- Read the Student Club Financial Handbook
- Complete the Student Organization Advisor Training
- Create a “RoadrunnerLink” account (if not already created) and join the MSU Denver Orgs Community - RoadrunnerLink or RRL is used for student organization registration and communication. All student organization forms, files, policies, and handbooks are located on RRL. As a member of the MSU Denver community on RRL you will also receive the Weekly Blog, a weekly newsletter emailed to all RRL users. If you already have an RRL account, log in and reacquaint yourself with the platform as upgrades occur frequently. Don’t forget to “join” the student organization portal(s) you advise so you can stay informed.

The Role of an Advisor

Each advisor has a unique relationship with the student organizations they advise. This relationship varies from advisor to advisor. Some advisors play a very active role by attending meetings, working with student officers, and assisting in program planning and development. Others maintain a more distant relationship to the organization. The best advisors are those who adapt to the needs of their organization, regularly communicate with their organization, and serve as an advocate for their organization to the broader MSU Denver community. Additionally, advisor accepts responsibility for being kept informed about the activities of the organization and for advising officers of the organization on the appropriateness and general merits of policies and activities.

Furthermore, organization members should know who their advisor is and how to get in touch with them. Advisors should model acceptable community standards, inclusivity, and effective communication. Additionally, advisors must stay informed about MSU Denver policies and procedures, CMEI policies regarding student clubs and organizations, and appropriate local, state, and federal policies. Advisors should be

proactive in mitigating risk and strongly discouraging unacceptable behavior. With that said, given the numerous purposes, activities, and objectives of various student groups, the role of the Advisor will vary to some degree between groups.

As discussed, groups vary in their expectations and needs, and it is important that advisors develop an understanding with the organization as to the nature of their involvement. With that said, advisors should hold at least one meeting at the beginning of the fall and spring semester with the group where they agree on a set of expectations from one another from the onset and should write this list down as a contract between the group and the Advisor.

The Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion (CMEI) has identified and defined a list of core roles and responsibilities for student organization advisors. While the advisor of a student organization may take on many roles and responsibilities, the following list highlights five foundational roles and responsibilities that every advisor should incorporate into their position. These core roles and responsibilities should help identify clear expectations between the advisor and the student organization.

- **Education.** Sharing of knowledge, promoting critical thinking about decisions, and developing new understandings and skills related to leadership. As an advisor, your role as educator will often come through role modeling, guiding the student in reflection of their actions, and being available 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.
- **Liaison.** Liaison between the University and members of the student organization. Interpret University policy for the organization. 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, but you 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 groups.
- **Mentor.** Student development is defined as having knowledge of and working to integrate the students' personal, academic, and professional interests. 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 students and the advisor. If the student is seeking 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 knowledge of 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. Finally, because of their trust in you, students may bring serious issues related to them or their peer's health and wellbeing. Please review the Campus Security Authority Video and Appendix A for further information.

- **Motivator.** Help the group with decision-making and keep the group aligned and focused on their mission statement and goals. As an advisor, you may have to motivate students to excel, 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 college to the experiences they will have in the community
- **Risk Minimizer.** As the club/organization advisor, you will identify and mitigate the risks involved with the student organization's activities and actions. Additionally, you will ensure that the club/organization complies with the policies outlined in the club officer handbook, student code of conduct, and all applicable university policies, local, state, and federal laws. The safety and protection of the MSU Denver campus community is paramount. Avoiding unnecessary risk and mitigating appropriate risk is essential to ensuring the success of the group(s) you advise.

Responsibilities of Student Organization Advisor

The CMEI believes that active participation in student clubs, organizations, fraternities, and sororities is a student development and learning opportunity. A major component of this learning is the support provided by a student organization advisor, who acts as a consultant, resource, and support system for an organization. The advisor provides support and direction through advice, understanding and clarification.

The advisor handbook provides the most comprehensive information about the roles and responsibilities of advisors.

- Advisors must be full-time, permanent MSU Denver faculty or staff members.
- Model acceptable community standards for student leaders.
- Be aware of the rules and regulations that pertain to a student organization and its members.
- Be available to organization members for consultation and mentorship.
- Stay up to date on what is occurring within the organization and in the campus community.
- Provide constructive feedback.
- Assist in developing programs and organization events.
- Incorporate “classroom” learning and “co-curricular” activities into student organization's programming and/or events whenever possible.
- Serve as a liaison between the University and the student organization.

- Aid CMEI and University leadership in enforcing all applicable policies, procedures and laws that govern students and student groups at MSU Denver.
- Be aware of and assist the organization in the management of its financial operations.
- Consult periodically with the Associate Director of the CMEI for Student Organizations and Leadership Programs or designated staff concerning the student organization's direction, programs, and function; advisors should also notify designated staff if the organization has decided to or has ceased to function as a student organization.
- Assist the organization in the periodic examination of its progress toward the goals specified in its constitution.

Required Advisor Attendance at Events/Functions

Advisors must attend student organization functions that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Any on-campus event where alcohol is served.
- Any event that a reasonable person would determine to have more than minimal potential for risk to student health, safety and/or wellbeing.
- Any protests or public demonstrations in which there is a potential risk to student health, safety and/ or wellbeing.

Advising Styles

The following are some examples of student club and organization advising styles. You will need to vary these based on your assessment of the organization's style and personality. Many times, Advisors may struggle with students because they believe that they need a higher level of interaction or direction when the student is able to accept more of a supervising style and vice versa.

- **Motivating**
 - Providing structure and supervising tasks.
 - Helping the organization maintain momentum throughout the year.
 - Good for organizations that require more hands-on guidance and support.
- **Coaching**
 - Continue to provide structure and supervision and explain decisions and solicit suggestions.
 - Good for organizations who are more motivated, but still need more hands-on guidance and structure.
- **Supporting**
 - Facilitates and supports efforts toward goals/ accomplishments and aids in the decision-making process.
 - Good for organizations that are motivated and don't require as much hands-on guidance and structure.
- **Supervising**
 - Empower students to conduct their own decision making and problem solving
 - Remain available as a resource and guide.

- Good for organizations who are very motivated and need little hands-on guidance and structure.
- **Flexibility**
 - You must be able to move from one style to another to meet the needs of the different types of students and the multiple circumstances you will encounter.
- **Diagnosis**
 - You must learn how to diagnose the needs of the students you advise. Determining what is needed as opposed to what is wanted is sometimes a difficult task. It is also important to note that what is needed is not always the thing that will get the most positive response.
- **Contracting**
 - You must learn how to come to agreements with students. It can be helpful to work together to reach an agreement as to which advising style, they seek from you.

Advisor Resignation and Replacement Procedures

If an advisor chooses to resign their position, they have the responsibility of notifying CMEI, as well as the student organization, as soon as possible. Upon receipt of notification, the student organization has one month to find a replacement advisor. If no advisor is identified, a meeting with the Associate Director of Student Organizations and Leadership Program and Student Organization Consultants will be held. The following procedures must be followed when a student organization replaces its primary advisor:

- Verify the new advisor meets the qualifications – full-time, permanent MSU Denver faculty or staff member.
- Have the new advisor complete the [Student Organization Advisor Training](#).
- An officer of the organization completes the re-registration [form](#) and updates it with the new advisor's information.

Officer Transition

One of the most important functions of an advisor is to assist in the transition from one set of organization officers to the next. This usually happens each year; however, it may happen sooner. As the stability of the organization, the advisor has seen changes, knows what works, and can help maintain continuity. Investing time in a good officer transition early on will mean less time spent throughout the year onboarding new officers and flattening the learning curve. The key to a successful transition is making sure new officers know their jobs BEFORE they take office. Expectations should be clearly defined. There are several ways to conduct the officer transition. The following are some helpful tools for effective officer transitions:

- **Transition Binders/E-Folders.** Each officer should prepare a binder/e-folder with relevant information regarding their term in office. Items to include are program descriptions, marketing materials, budgets, and key campus points of contact.
- **After Program Reviews.** After each program, activity, or event, responsible club officers should lead the organization membership in an After Program Review.

During this review, the following will be discussed and written down for future officers:

- **An After Program Review is Centered on Four Questions.**
 - What was expected to happen?
 - What actually occurred?
 - What went well and why?
 - What can be improved and how?
- **An After Program Review Features:**
 - An open and honest professional discussion.
 - Participation by everyone on the team.
 - A focus on results of an event or project.
 - Identification of ways to sustain what was done well.
 - Development of recommendations on ways to overcome obstacles.
- **The Team Effort.** The team effort involves the outgoing officers, the advisor, and the incoming officers. This method involves a series of meetings where outgoing officers work with incoming officers on:
 - Completed projects for the past year
 - Upcoming/ incomplete projects
 - Challenges and setbacks
 - Anything the new officers need to know to do their job more effectively.
- **The Advisor's Role in the Team Effort Transition May Be to:**
 - Facilitate discussion and be a sounding board for ideas.
 - Offer suggestions on various questions.
 - Refrain from telling new officers what they should do.

Responsibilities of the Organization to the Advisor

The responsibilities of student organizations to their advisor include but are not limited to:

- Establishing and sharing a job description for the advisor that clearly defines the responsibilities and anticipated lines of communications.
- Notifying the advisor of all meetings, activities, and programs.
- Establishing an attendance schedule at organization meetings, which is mutually agreed upon by the advisor and the student organization.
- Providing copies of meeting minutes in a timely manner.
- Meeting regularly with your advisor to discuss organization matters.
- Consulting with the advisor prior to making significant changes to the structure of the organization.
- Consulting the advisor when any significant organizational policy changes are made.
- Allowing the advisor to share their thoughts and ideas.
- Showing respect and value for the advisor whom the organization chosen to serve as guide and mentor.
- Considering all advice and guidance provided with an open mind and a sincere interest for improvement of daily operational and special event/activity needs.

SECTION TWO: SAFETY AND SECURITY

Club and Organization Advisors have responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the MSU Denver students in their organizations. One way that you can do this is by maintaining consistent communication with club officers and members. Additionally, as officers and members begin to plan events, programs, and activities, mitigate risk where appropriate and avoid unnecessary risk. Some student clubs and organization activities will have associated risks. In deciding if you will permit the activity, it is important that you revisit this handbook, student code of conduct, university policies, and any applicable local, state, or federal laws. If you feel uneasy about an event, activity, or program, feel free to reach out to orgs@msudenver.edu. Finally, if you are unsure about the program or activity, it is ok to not approve or push pause until further information is gathered.

Hazing Policy

No chapter, student club/organization, re-established group, interest group, governing council, student, or alumnus shall conduct nor condone hazing activities. Permission or approval by a person being hazed is not a defense. Hazing activities are defined as:

“Any action taken, or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off chapter premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Such activities may include, but are not limited to the following: forced consumptions of food, beverages, or alcohol, paddling in any form, creation of excessive fatigue, physical or psychological shocks, quests/treasure hunts/scavenger hunts, stranding pledges far from campus, road trips, wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste, engaging in public stunts and buffoonery, morally degrading, humility games and activities, late work sessions which are not consistent with scholastic activities, and any other activities which are not consistent with fraternal law, ritual, or regulations and policies of the educational institution or applicable state law.”

Hazing as Defined by Metropolitan State University of Denver

The term “hazing” is defined as an act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Hazing can be defined further as any action that produces physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. To review the MSU Denver policy on hazing please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

- **Examples of Hazing.** The following are examples of hazing in Greek-letter organizations. It is impossible to list all hazing activities, so this list is not intended to be all inclusive. Each activity can be measured against the definition for each category.
 - **Subtle Hazing.** Actions that are against accepted fraternity or sorority standards of conduct, behavior, and good tastes. An activity, action or attitude directed toward a new member which ridicules, humiliates, or embarrasses (whether intended or not and generally judged by an outside party).

- **Harassment Hazing.** Anything that causes mental anguish or physical discomfort to the new member. Any activity or activity directed toward a new member or activity which confuses, frustrates, or causes undue stress, requires an unreasonable or inordinate amount of the individual's time, or in any manner impairs the individual's academic efforts.
- **Violent Hazing.** Anything that causes physical and/or emotional harm.

How to Report Hazing at MSU Denver

Anyone with knowledge of hazing should immediately report the matter to MSU Denver by completing an online report. MSU Denver will investigate ALL reports of hazing involving students, whether the alleged misconduct took place on or off-campus and regardless of the victim's acquiescence to the alleged misconduct. You may also contact the following on-campus departments:

- In the event of an emergency call 911
- [Auraria Campus Police Department](#) | 303-556-5000
- [Dean of Students Office](#) | 303-615-0220

You can also call the National Anti-Hazing Hotline toll-free number at 1-888-NOT-HAZE (1-888-668-4293).

Campus Security Authority

According to a federal law known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, often referred to as the Clery Act, MSU Denver is required to disclose “statistics concerning the occurrence of certain criminal offenses reported to local law enforcement agencies or any official of the institution who is defined as a 'Campus Security Authority’” (CSA).

- **Mandatory Training for CSAs.** All student club and organization advisors are considered Campus Security Authorities and MUST complete the Campus Security Authority training: [Campus Security Authority Video](#) [Video Password (20csa#110) Case sensitive#]. Once you finish watching the video, you will need to complete the [training assessment](#).
- **Who are CSAs?** The law defines “Campus Security Authority” as: “An official of an institution who has significant responsibility for student and campus activities, including, but not limited to, student housing, student discipline, and campus judicial proceedings.” An example would be a dean of students who oversees student housing, a student center, or student extra-curricular activities and has significant responsibility for student and campus activities. Similarly, a director of athletics, team coach, and faculty advisor to a student group also have significant responsibility for student and campus activities. A single teaching faculty member is unlikely to have significant responsibility for student and campus activities, except when serving as an advisor to a student group. Clerical staff, as well, are unlikely to have significant responsibility for student and campus activities. If you have been identified as a Campus Security Authority, please read the [Campus Security Authority Notification Memo 2020](#) which outlines your obligations. In addition to explaining your role as a CSA, this

notification memo outlines a training and assessment that you are required to complete.

- **What to Report?** Please report any crime that is reported to you. The criminal offenses for which we are required to disclose statistics are murder/non-negligent manslaughter, negligent manslaughter, sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, liquor law violations, drug abuse violations and weapons: carrying, possessing, etc.

We are also required to report statistics for bias-related (hate) crimes for the following offenses: murder/non-negligent manslaughter, sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, larceny-theft, vandalism, intimidation, simple assault, and damage/destruction/vandalism of property.

We are required to disclose statistics for offenses that occur on campus, in or on non-campus buildings or property owned or controlled by our school, and public property within or immediately adjacent to our campus. This includes the MSU Denver South Campus and DIME-Detroit location. Also please be aware that our Student Code of Conduct requires that violations that occur off campus while in an official university capacity must also be reported. Please refer to the full policy at: msudenver.edu/conduct.

For additional information on your obligations under the Clery Act, please reference the [Campus Security Authority Role page under the Dean of Students page](#).

SECTION THREE: WHAT ADVISORS SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO

What Advisor Should Do

The advisor, along with the student organization leadership should openly discuss what kind of role the advisor will assume with the organization. Some advisors have a high level of involvement with every aspect of the organization while others have a very limited role. It is up to the organization and the advisor to set the parameters of involvement. CMEI requires that advisors take a very active role regarding programming, activities, or events where there is any level of risk to the wellbeing or safety of students. With those thoughts in mind, the following list is a guideline to the “dos” of student organization advising:

- Assist officers with procedural matters. Be knowledgeable of the organization’s purpose and constitution and help the general membership adhere to them.
- Be knowledgeable about and comply with federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, as well as campus policies. Inform the group of pertinent policies.
- Empower students to act and to take satisfaction in seeing the student organization succeed.
- Allow the group to succeed and allow the group to fail. Learn when to speak and when not to speak. Remember to let the students make the decisions while you provide guidance and advice.
- Reach out to other advisors, departments, or the CMEI club and organizations team at orgs@msudenver.edu for assistance.
- At the beginning, develop clear expectations about the role of the advisor and your relationship to the organization.
- Read the organization’s constitution.
- Represent the group and its interests in staff and faculty meetings.
- Get to know all the members on an individual level. Learn what they want to get out of the organization. Maintain a complete officer and membership list with addresses and phone numbers (or know where to easily find this information).
- Develop a strong working relationship with all the officers. Establish meetings as needed with individual members of the organization who need additional guidance in their officer or committee positions.
- Discuss concerns with officers and help them set goals. Encourage these officers to disseminate reports (such as financial reports) to the general membership on a regular basis.
- Orient new officers and members to the history and purpose of the group in order to help them build upon it. Help members look toward the future by developing long-term plans, goals, and communicating those plans to future members. This includes succession planning for club officers.
- Help to resolve intro-group conflict or reach out to [Student Conflict Resolution Services](#) 303-605-7018. If you have questions, please contact Elise Krumholz at ekrumhol@msudenver.edu.
- Enjoy the impact you can have on the students’ development. Help to develop the leadership potential within the group.

- Be visible and choose to attend group meetings and events. At the same time, know your limits. Establish attendance schedule at organization meetings, which is mutually agreed upon by the advisor and the student organization.
- Know your group's limits. Help students find a balance between activities and their academic responsibilities.
- Keep your sense of humor and enthusiasm. Remember the members of the club are volunteers and students. Share creative suggestions and provide feedback for activities planned by students.
- Serve as a resource person. The advisor does not set the policy of the group but should take an active part in its formulation through interaction with the members of the group. Since members and officers in any organization are ordinarily active only if they are students, the advisor can serve as a continuity factor for the group.
- Be consistent with your actions. Model good communication skills and listening skills. Develop a good rapport with the organization members, other organization advisors, and members of the CMEI student organizations team.
- Be available in emergency situations. It is advisable that you provide your student club president with a cell number or other means of communicating with you should an emergency arise.
- Head of situations that might give rise to poor public relations for the student group or MSU Denver.
- Introduce new program ideas with educational flavor; point out new perspectives and directions to the group; and supply the knowledge and the insight of experience.
- Carefully review monthly financial reports from the organization treasurer or business manager. Familiarize yourself with the group's financial structure, from where the treasury is derived (dues, fundraising, etc.), for what the money is used, how money is allocated, and how the money is budgeted; assist in budget development and execution.
- Learn the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Offer support when necessary; but also allow people to make their own mistakes and learn from them.
- Encourage feedback and the evaluation process.
- Plan and encourage attendance at leadership training.
- Do things right and do the right things. Guide and assist students in becoming responsible leaders.
- Provide support. Give the group autonomy but offer feedback even when it is not solicited. Let the group work out its problems but be prepared to step in when called upon to assist.

Special Note: This is not meant to be totally inclusive or applicable to every organization, but it may serve as a guideline when determining the role that you will play. It is also important to bear in mind that the role of an advisor is not always an easy one. At times you may have to make a difficult decision or take an action that is not popular with the organization. It is important to realize that your first responsibility is to the health and well-being of the students and to uphold campus and community policies and regulations. It may be necessary on occasion to use your authority to ensure that you meet these responsibilities.

What Advisor Should Not Do

Below are some suggestions of what you should avoid doing in your capacity as an advisor. Again, these are suggestions designed to ensure that you are supporting the students and their organizations. The aim of CMEI and club/organizations advisors should be to help students develop their own leadership style and voice. This is not an exhaustive list of what should be avoided:

- Do not act like you have all the answers or that you know it all.
- Do not attempt to serve as the leader of the organization or run the meetings, activities, events, or programs.
- Do not make statements like “I told you so”. Good advisors coach and mentor through problems.
- Do not impose any bias that you might have on the organization members, their decisions, or programming.
- Do not manipulate the group and/or impose by forcing your opinions.
- Do not tell the group what to do or do the work of the president or other members of the organization.
- Remember, you are working with volunteers, thus, it is important that you not take everything so seriously.
- Do not take away responsibilities from students within the student organization.
- Do not miss group meetings or functions.
- Do not be afraid to let the group try new ideas.
- Do not become such an advocate that you lose an objective or viewpoint.
- Do not allow the organization to become a one-person organization.
- Do not be laissez-faire or autocratic.
- Do not assume the organization’s attitudes, needs and personalities will remain the same year to year.

SECTION FOUR: ORGANIZATION TROUBLESHOOTING

The following lists are examples of the types of conflicts an advisor may face with their organization (Lorenz and Shipton, 1984). Conflict is a normal part of organizational interactions. As an advisor, you have an outside perspective to help resolve or diffuse these conflicts.

- **Officer Conflicts**
 - The officers do not consult with the organization before making significant decisions.
 - An officer appears to lack self-confidence, is non-assertive, and lacks interest in the organization.
 - A rivalry exists between officers in the organization.
 - An officer has work overload, and too many time-conflicts.
- **Membership Conflicts**
 - Low attendance at meetings.
 - Members have low satisfaction and morale, are bored, do not communicate well, feel left out or are apathetic.
 - Members compete for attention.
 - An individual member's goals differ from those of the organization.
 - There exists a lack of trust among members.
 - Programs fail.
 - There is a lack of ideas.

Special Note: It is important to get to know all the officers and members of the organizations. It is important as the advisor to be excited and involved in organization activities. There are many team-building exercises that the whole club/organization can do together. Here are a couple websites that have examples of these activities:

- [Team Building Exercises and Activities](#)
- [Team Building Activities](#)
- **Organizational Conflicts**
 - Meetings are disorganized.
 - Meetings are too long.
 - The organization suffers from financial problems.
 - There is no continuity from one year to the next.
 - The organization has no “plan of action.”
- **Advisor Problems**
 - Organization members avoid the advisor.
 - Organization members do not pay attention to the advisor's advice.
 - The advisor is overwhelmed by his/her responsibility.
 - The advisor assumes leadership functions.
 - It is important to keep communication open between members, officers, and advisors.
 - Setting up expectations between the organization and the advisors is key.

Special Note: Help to resolve inter-group conflict or reach out to [Student Conflict Resolution Services](#) 303-605-7018. If you have questions, please contact Elise Krumholz at ekrumhol@msudenver.edu.

SECTION FIVE: LIABILITY AND RISK REDUCTION

As an advisor of a student organization, you are the university's representative regarding the organization's activities. As such, you are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to your organization about such things as programs, use of facilities and operational procedures. If you have reason to question an action taken by the organization, express your concern directly to the organization in writing, including the date, a suggested alternative to the questionable action, a warning, etc.

If you have concerns about a situation unique to your organization or to a specific event sponsored by the organization you advise, please contact the Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion, and we will put you in contact with the appropriate liability and risk management staff member.

Categories of Risk

Understanding that there are no definitive ways to eliminate risk and legal liability associated with a program or event, there are ways to reduce risk and provide a safer environment for program participants. CMEI believes that risk can be categorized into 5 areas. Each area and even subtype of risk will require its own mitigation practices.

- **Physical** – risk related to physical activities, travel, food illnesses, etc.
- **Reputation** – risk related to damaging the character or image of individuals, the organization, or institution.
- **Emotional** – risk related to the discomfort or damaging to an individual's personal feelings and well-being.
- **Financial** – risks that negatively affect the fiscal strength of the organization or related parties.
- **Facilities** – risks that inhibit the activity from taking place including weather, space, property damage, equipment, etc.

Risk Management

Risk management should be an integral part of the event planning process. When planning events, programs, or activities, it is important to think about anything that could unexpectedly occur and then anticipate worst case scenario and plan for those possibilities. Take time to consider the risks and develop a risk management plan. Follow established policy guidelines. Each advisor has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and ensure student organizations comply with the [Code of Conduct](#), and the [AHEC Facilities and Events policy](#). These documents provide great information for your students and you as you go through the event planning and management process.

Risk Management Process

Prior to an event clarify your needs & expectations. Identify specific risks involved in the event. These could include physical risks (such as an event with physical activity) & liability risks (such as events involving minors, or travel). Identify options for reducing risks, including but not limited to:

- Hiring a third-party vendor or contractor.
- Purchasing additional liability insurance.
- Preparing liability waivers, if necessary.
- Assuming a 'worst case scenario' and preparing for it to reduce likelihood of it occurring.
- Providing advanced training.
- Utilizing waivers that outline the specific nature and risk associated with the event.
- Canceling the event if the conditions are dangerous or the group is not prepared to assume full responsibility for the risk involved.
- Assess the capability of the group to manage risk.
- Identify the challenges in managing risk, as well as resources to assist in your planning.
- Develop a plan of action in reducing risk.
- Communicate with everyone involved (officers, members, advisors, participants, facilities staff)

Alcohol Policy

The possession, sale, use or consumption of alcoholic beverages during a student club, organization, fraternity, or sorority event/council event/co-sponsored function, in any situation sponsored or endorsed by an MSU Denver organization, or at any event an observer would associate with an MSU Denver student organization, must be in compliance with any and all applicable federal, state, county, city, and Metropolitan State University of Denver laws and policies, and must comply with MSU Denver's Student Organization Alcohol Policy (2016) covering the areas of:

- Scope
- Policy Statement
- Responsibility and Liability
- Criteria and Polices, On and Off Campus Events
- Procedures and Criteria, On Campus Event
- Procedures and Criteria, Off Campus Event at a Third-Party Vendor
- Policy Violations; and
- Definitions

To review MSU Denver's Student Organization Alcohol Policy, please visit [RoadrunnerLink](#).

Drug Policy

For a complete copy of the University's policies governing drugs and alcohol please visit: [MSU Denver Policy Library for Drugs and Alcohol](#). Students seeking assistance with concerns about alcohol or other drugs are encouraged to talk with a staff member, or other employees of MSU Denver. The [Counseling Center](#) can provide confidential counseling, assistance, and support to students with alcohol and other drug concerns.

Joint Policy on Risk Management

Organizations that have a selective membership process are to follow the Joint Policy on Risk Management, that outlines the inter/national organization policies, the chapter shall follow whichever guidelines are more strictly enforced. In the event of co-sponsored events, the most stringent policies of the participating organizations must be followed by all chapters and organizations.

APPENDIX A: MSU DENVER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Below is a list of MSU Denver Community Resources that advisors can provide students should the need arise.

- The Crisis Hotline | 303-615-9911 | <https://healthcenter1.com/contact-us/>
- The Counseling Center | 303-615-9988 | <https://www.msudenver.edu/counsel/>
- The Health Center at Auraria | 303-615-9999 | <https://healthcenter1.com/>
- The Phoenix Center | 303-315-7250 | <https://www.thepca.org/>
- The Student Care Center | 303-615-0006 | <https://www.msudenver.edu/student-care-center/>
- The Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion | 303-605-7019 | or cmei@msudenver.edu | <https://www.msudenver.edu/multicultural-center/>

APPENDIX B: THE ROLE OF THE ADVISOR CHECKLIST

This form is designed to help advisors and student officers determine a clear role for advisors in matters pertaining to student organizations. This is not required but may be used as a guide to help define the advisor's role in the organization.

Directions: *The advisor and each officer should respond to the following items and then meet to compare answers and discuss any differences. For any items which are determined not to be the responsibility of the advisor, it would be valuable to clarify which officer will assume that responsibility. For each statement, respond according to the following scale:*

- 1 = Essential for the advisor 2 = Helpful for the advisor to do**
3 = Nice, but they don't have to 4 = Would prefer not to do
5 = Not an advisor's role

Statement	Scale Points	Statement	Scale Points
1. Attend general meetings		19. Attend advisor training offered by the college	
2. Store all group paraphernalia during the summer and between changeover of officers		20. Take the initiative in creating teamwork; cooperation among officers	
3. Attend all executive committee meetings		21. Speak up during discussion when advisor has relevant information or feels the group is making a poor decision	
4. Keep officer files		22. Let the group thrive or decline on its merits; do not interfere unless requested to do so	
5. Attend all other organization activities		23. Take an active part in formulation of the creation of group goals	
6. Inform the group of infractions of its bylaws, codes and standing rules		24. Represent the group in any conflict with members of the college staff	
7. Explain college policy when relevant to the discussion		25. Indicate ideas for discussion when advisor believes they will help the group	

8. Keep the group aware of its stated objectives when planning events		26. Be familiar with college facilities, services, and procedures for group activities	
9. Help the President prepare the agenda before each meeting		27. Be one of the group except for voting and holding office	
10. Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise		28. Recommend programs and speakers	
11. Serve as a parliamentarian of the group		29. Request to see the treasurer's books at the end of each semester	
12. Be responsible for planning a leadership skills workshop		30. Take an active part in the orderly transition of responsibilities between old and new officers	
13. Speak up during discussions		31. Check the secretary's minutes before they are distributed	
14. State perceptions of their role as advisor at the beginning of the year		32. Cancel any activity when advisor believes it has been inadequately planned	
15. Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon		33. Receive copies of official correspondence	
16. Let the group work out its problems, including making mistakes		Total	
17. Assist organization by signing forms only			
18. Insist on evaluation of each activity			

APPENDIX C: ADVISOR AGREEMENT SAMPLE

The members of _____ has requested _____ to serve as advisor from _____ to _____ .

By signing this agreement, the above-named advisor and officers of the above-named club agree to abide by the following pertaining to the role of the organization’s advisor.

The purpose of this agreement is to define the role of the advisor clearly and concisely and to provide a guideline for the advisors on their involvement in the organization.

The advisor(s) should be involved by (resources provided, times of availability, methods by which they can be reached, etc.): _____

Advisor(s) attendance at events and meetings (minimum required meetings they should be at, when and how often meetings occur): _____

During the meetings, the advisor(s) may participate by (interruptions, input ability to step in, etc.): _____

The advisors(s) role is not (when they should be hands-off, portions of club activity that will be left solely to officers and members): _____

President Name

President Signature

Second Officer Name

Second Officer Signature

Primary Advisor Name

Primary Advisor Signature