**Student Organization Advisors**
The student organization advisor, the vast majority of who are volunteers, serves a critical role in the successful diffusion of a more proactive approach to risk management within the student organization culture. Faculty and staff who advise recognized student organizations are impacted by the enhanced expectations placed on their roles and the additional resources available to help them advise more effectively based on a proactive approach to risk management. The intentionality of serving as an advisor to a student organization has been more clearly communicated through the creation and implementation of an advisor-student leader agreement letter. Further, each advisor is required to attend training designed to sustain and enhance knowledge and skill development within the broader context of the Performance Management Model and the philosophy of a Facilitator University. Student organization advisors are required to attend a 2-hour developmental seminar as a condition of maintaining the organization’s recognition status. Advisor seminars focus on the development of basic advising skills and requirements as outlined in The Advisor Agreement Letter. Program content is based on information obtained in assessments conducted by the Risk Management Task Force, insight of seasoned advisors from across the campus, and Bickel and Lake’s facilitator model. Material covered in the seminars includes:

- An overview of the changing legal environment for higher education
- Appropriate role of an advisor
- Resources available to assist with organization advising
- Purpose and benefits of pre-event planning
- University Student Rules and the adjudication process

In order to appropriately support volunteer advisors, current efforts are focused on the development of web-based seminars to supplement initial development obtained in the required seminar, allowing for attendance at the required classroom session to be limited to one time.

*Advisor Agreement Letter – signed annually as part of registration process for student organizations:*

**Recognition Calendar Cycle 2004 – Affiliated**

**RE:** Advising a Recognized Student Organization at Texas A&M University

Dear Student Organization Advisor:

The Department of Student Activities appreciates your commitment to serve as an advisor to a recognized student organization at Texas A&M University. The advisor plays an integral role in helping student leaders create an environment within their organizations that is productive, safe, enjoyable, and educational. To this end, we believe it is important to provide clear guidance and support regarding the expected role you will play as you interface with the organization.

**Advisor Expectations**

- When serving as an advisor, you must be a Texas A&M University employee as defined by the Human Resources Department and must advise at level consistent with the categorization of the organization you advise. To advise an affiliated organization, you must be a full-time university
employee (faculty or staff) with the skills and/or training necessary to advise the organization. It is critical that you be familiar with the activities of the organization and have (or be willing to obtain) an appropriate level of experience, resources, and knowledge related to those activities and the mission of the organization.

- You should meet with the officers of the organization you advise to discuss expectations for roles and responsibilities. In order to stay connected with the organization, you should regularly attend executive as well as general meetings and be available outside those meetings for advice and consultation related to the operations of the organization. Additionally, you should assist the organization in developing realistic goals for the academic year. This will contribute to the educational and personal development of the students involved.

- As an advisor, you will perform your greatest service by facilitating opportunities for students to exercise initiative and judgment within a proper measure of autonomy when coordinating events and activities. In keeping with this approach, you should participate in event planning and attend events when possible or when identified as necessary through the planning process.

- Recognized student organizations at Texas A&M University are required to coordinate financial transactions with the Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC). As an advisor you will regularly receive statements from the SOFC and should be aware of the organization’s financial status via review of these statements and approval of expenditures. Valuable information regarding fiscal management procedures and guidelines can be accessed online at http://sofc.tamu.edu.

- As an advisor, you should be aware of the University Student Rules and other institutional guidelines that establish expectations for student behavior and activities. You should ensure that the group and its officers know where rules and guidelines are published, what the rules are, why they exist, and the consequences for choosing to operate outside their parameters. As an employee of Texas A&M University, you are expected to report all rule violations or potential violations to the appropriate university official. You should be familiar with the organization’s constitution and all other governing documents, so that you may advise effectively.

- All advisors are required to attend a developmental seminar during their tenure as an advisor. This seminar is aimed at enhancing your advising skills, introducing resources available to student organizations, and helping you meet the expectations outlined in this agreement. Topics addressed in the session include serving as a facilitator, event planning, University Student Rules governing organization operations, Student organization Finance Center services and procedures as well as strategies for success in your role.

The Department of Student Activities will continue to be a resource for you as an advisor in a variety of capacities. Aside from required education sessions, you will have the opportunity to attend supplemental sessions related to specifically to student organization advising issues. Web-based resources will be regularly developed and periodically you may receive communication regarding important updates related to University policies and procedures as well as new resources available to support your work with student organizations.

The organization-advisor relationship is not a one-way street, in that the student organization and its leaders also have responsibilities. These responsibilities include an appropriate level of communication, providing opportunities for advisor interaction, and a commitment to the success of the organization as a whole. Both you and the student leaders should spend time early in the advising relationship establishing a clear understanding of the roles each will play. Should there be a time when you as an advisor feel that you are unable to function in this vital capacity, please provide advance written notification to the Department of Student Activities and the organization’s officers.

By signing below, you affirm that you have read and understand these expectations and are willing to serve as advisor to the student organization named below. A space has also been provided for the signature of
the student organization president, to indicate that a discussion regarding these expectations has taken place between the student organization and the advisor. If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this document, please contact the Department of Student Activities at (979) 458-0697 or student-activities@tamu.edu. Additional information may be found on the Department of Student Activities website at http://studentactivities.tamu.edu. Thank you for your time and effort in support of student involvement at Texas A&M University.

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Student Organization Advisor Signature  Date

________________________  _____________
Student Organization President Signature  Date

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Name of Student Organization

*Some sections adopted from Resource and Policy Manual, Virginia Commonwealth University