



ADVISING STUDENT GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

SECOND EDITION

NORBERT W. DUNKEL, JOHN H. SCHUH,
AND NANCY E. CHRYSTAL-GREEN

Advising Student Groups and Organizations

Second Edition

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**Norbert W. Dunkel, John H. Schuh,
and Nancy E. Chrystal-Green**

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Dunkel came to the University of Florida after holding administrative positions at South Dakota State University and the University of Northern Iowa. He holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. At the University of Florida, Dunkel is a member of the UF Budget Advisory Council, Crisis Response Team, University Counseling Resources Network, Emergency Policy Group/Executive Management Team, Food Service Advisory Council, and Land Use and Facilities Planning Committee.

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John Schuh also is distinguished professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State, where he was department chair for six and one-half years. Previously he held administrative and faculty assignments at Wichita State University, Indiana University (Bloomington), and Arizona State University. He received his Master of Counseling and PhD degrees from Arizona State. He served for more than twenty years as a reserve officer in the United States Army Medical Service Corps, being assigned to the retired reserve with the rank of major in 1991.

Schuh is the author, coauthor, or editor of over 235 publications, including 29 books and monographs, 80 book chapters, and over 110 articles. Among his books are *Assessment Methods for Student Affairs, One Size Does Not Fit All: Traditional and Innovative Models of Student Affairs Practice* (with Kathleen Manning and Jillian Kinzie), *Student Success in College* (with George D. Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, and Elizabeth Whitt). Currently he is associate editor of the *New Directions for Student Services Sourcebook Series* after serving as editor for thirteen years. He was associate editor of the *Journal of College Student Development* for fourteen years and was book review editor of *The Review of Higher Education* from 2008 to 2010. Schuh has made nearly three hundred presentations and speeches to campus-based, regional, national, and international meetings. He has served as a consultant to more than eighty institutions of higher education and other educational organizations.

Schuh has served on the governing boards of the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (twice) and the Association of College and University Housing Officers (twice), and the Board of Directors of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Foundation. He is a member of the Evaluator Corps of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools where he also serves as a Team Chair for accreditation visits.

Schuh has received the Research Achievement Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education, the Contribution to Knowledge Award from the American College Personnel Association, the Contribution to Research or Literature Award and the Robert H. Shaffer Award for Academic Excellence as a Graduate Faculty Member from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and the S. Earl Thompson Award, Association of College and University Housing Officers-International. The American College Personnel Association elected him as a Senior Scholar Diplomat. Schuh was chosen as one of seventy-five Diamond Honorees by ACPA in 1999 and as a Pillar of the Profession by NASPA in 2001. He is a member of the Iowa Academy of Education. He has received a number of institutional awards including the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, his undergraduate alma mater.

Schuh received a Fulbright award to study higher education in Germany in 1994, was named to the Fulbright Specialists Program in 2008, and had a specialists' assignment in South Africa in 2012. In 2013 he was named to the Peer Review Committee for the Fulbright Specialist Program. He has

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Nancy E. Chrystal-Green currently serves as the director of Student Activities and Involvement at the University of Florida having responsibility for Sorority and Fraternity Affairs, advising student government, campus programming, event management, student organization advising, and the Travel and Recreation Program. She is also an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy. Chrystal-Green received her bachelor's degree in Political Science from McMaster University in Hamilton, ON, Canada (1993), a master's degree in Recreation Administration from Georgia Southern University (1996), and a doctorate in Student Affairs Administration from the University of Georgia (2004).

Chrystal-Green has spent her twenty-year career advising students and student organizations as a student affairs administrator in the fields of residence life, campus recreation, and student activities. Prior to joining the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Florida, she held administrative positions at Coastal Carolina University, Oxford College of Emory, and the University of Georgia. She has been recognized for her service to national student affairs organizations for a variety of capacities including chairing the faculty for the School of Recreational Sports Management. Chrystal-Green has also been recognized by students by being awarded the James E. Scott Bridging the Gap Memorial Award from the University of Florida and being inducted into Florida Blue Key Leadership Honorary. She has presented over thirty sessions at regional and national conferences, facilitated dozens of skill development sessions with student leaders, been a keynote speaker for many awards banquets and leadership retreats, and served as an external reviewer. Her research interests include staff supervision, leadership development, cocurricular learning, and legal and ethical issues in student affairs practice.

Preface

IN WRITING THE second edition for this book, we reviewed the changes in advising over the past fifteen years. The exponential increase in the use of technology, the evolving legal landscape, and the increasingly challenging financial environment are just a few of the broad, contextual areas that advisers have had to stay abreast of in providing the information, materials, and support needed by student organizations.

We continue to be amazed by the energy, excitement, and drive that each year's new class of students brings to our campuses. We know many of them will develop into mature, sophisticated leaders by the time they graduate while a few will at times challenge our patience. Most important, we take pride in their development and have a renewed sense of energy when our new students walk through the door to attend their first student organization meeting.

Over the years higher education has continued to receive criticism for not putting student learning first (for example, Wingspread Group on Higher Education 1993; Association of American Colleges and Universities 2002), and, at times, that criticism could be justified. Sometimes other priorities get in the way of student learning, but we need to continue to analyze how faculty and staff use their time (see Boyer 1990). Many of us continue to draw our vision in part from *The Student Learning Imperative* (American College Personnel Association 1994) and *Learning Reconsidered* (National Association of Student Personnel Educators and the American College Personnel Association 2004), which proposed that faculty and educational leaders in higher education, including student organization advisers, need to develop conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote more time and energy to educationally purposeful activities both in and outside the classroom. Student organization advisers have the

opportunity to link classroom learning to practical applications through the experiences students have in their organizations. Although the role of adviser is different from that of classroom instructor, Love and Maxam (2011) point out “Group advising also involves the role and skills of a teacher” (419).

This book was written to help student organization advisers have the information to perform their essential role and assist students to obtain the best educational experience possible from their membership in a student organization.

For student affairs professionals, serving as an adviser to a student organization often is a job expectation and having the opportunity to advise key student organizations is sought out, in part, to broaden one’s array of professional experiences for future advancement. Student affairs staff, as a consequence of their graduate education, typically recognize the amount of student growth and development that takes place with their involvement in a student organization. These staff have a foundational understanding of the students’ lives, the fads and practices that students engage in, and know the music and social networking that attract students. For many advisers, this is why they keep coming back year after year to advise an organization. For advisers outside of student affairs, their role may have been undertaken with little training or understanding of the substantial responsibilities that are part of advising a student organization. They may not understand that they have little authority over the organization they advise. We believe that being an adviser requires specialized knowledge and skill to understand the difficult legal situations, financial considerations, and travel and transportation circumstances. We hope these negative aspects of advising are counterbalanced when one considers the advantages that advisers accrue from working with students in organizations.

The value to students of belonging to a student organization is well established in the literature. Astin (1993) asserts that student-to-student interaction, including participation in student clubs and organizations, produces positive outcomes for students. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded that students involved in diversity experiences positively affected their student learning. They also state that “the more the student is psychologically engaged in activities and tasks that reinforce the formal academic experience, the more he or she will learn” (119). Van Etten, Pressley, McInerney, and Liem (2008) identified college seniors who listed extracurricular activities as an important factor in their college persistence. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE 2012) found that students

who are involved in the life of their college or university by participating actively in student organizations will devote more time and energy to academics, spend more time on campus, and have more positive interactions with faculty and staff.

Many large campuses now have hundreds or even thousands of different student organizations in which students can become involved. Considering that membership in student organizations has such tremendous value for students in terms of contributing to their growth and development, institutions of higher education are obligated to provide advisers with the tools they need to enhance the development of the organizations with which they work. McKaig and Policello (1987) underscore this point: “The role of the adviser can be an integral element in the success of the student organization and in ensuring that the educational potential of the extracurriculum is realized” (45). Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991) identified examples of organizational advisers playing roles in their study of the factors and conditions that lead to high-quality out-of-class learning experiences for students. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010) found that accessible faculty contribute in numerous ways to student learning. Serving as an organization’s adviser is one way for faculty to be accessible to students and influence their educational experiences.

To summarize, we draw three important conclusions: (1) students benefit from participating in student organizations; (2) advisers can play a key role in advancing student organizations, and (3) advisers, too often, are not well equipped for their role. We have written this second edition to address the concern implied by the third conclusion.

Audience for This Book

This book was completed for several targeted audiences. Our priority audience includes the tens of thousands of faculty and staff who serve as organization advisers but who assume these roles with limited background. These faculty and staff may be at four-year universities and colleges, two-year colleges, or community/junior colleges. They include faculty who may have teaching, research, service, outreach, and economic development as their primary assignments; institutional staff working in numerous campus offices who do not have advising as a primary job priority; and new student affairs staff who have recently started their positions with little advising experience as a graduate student or entry-level professional staff member in student activities, leadership and service, campus housing, multicultural affairs, and sorority and fraternity affairs.

The secondary audience includes staff members who possess responsibility for training and providing consultation to student organization advisers. Typically, these staff have worked for several years traditionally in the area of student activities and sorority and fraternity affairs. We believe these staff will benefit from the materials provided, examples and samples of forms and documents, approaches to training, and the like. These are also the staff who should call regular meetings of student organization advisers to discuss issues and concerns they are experiencing as advisers.

An additional audience for this book includes senior administrators who provide supervision and oversight for student affairs areas including student activities, campus housing, sorority and fraternity affairs, leadership and service, student government, recreational sports, and multicultural and diversity affairs. These administrators include directors, assistant and associate vice presidents, vice presidents, provosts, and even the president. Increasingly, the senior student affairs officer reports to the provost, who likely has limited student affairs experience. We believe it is important for provosts with limited student affairs experience to read this book as a useful approach to becoming familiar with campus organizations. Although we understand that provosts may not read the book from cover to cover, it would be reasonable for them to read those parts of the book that address the challenges advisers face in their daily work with student organizations, and to understand that good advising is no different than good teaching or good research. This book emphasizes the connections between curricular and cocurricular learning by showcasing opportunities for students to demonstrate both cognitive and psychosocial development. We hope that one of the learning points from this book is that work with student organizations helps institutions produce individuals who are well educated and skilled in working with others in a complex community.

Finally, we believe this book will be a useful resource for graduate students who are preparing for a career in student affairs. Most graduate students will advise a student organization such as a hall government, programming board, spring break trip, or speakers' bureau.

We must emphasize that this book was not prepared to provide information on academic advising, nor has it been prepared for staff who serve as counselors or who provide other forms of educational or personal assistance. It is written solely for faculty and staff who advise student organizations on college and university campuses. There are many other sources available on academic advising and counseling for persons interested in learning more about how to assist students to develop their careers or providing help with student development problems.

In addition, we would like to briefly clarify a few terms. We will use the terms “institution,” “college,” and “university” interchangeably in this book to mean all institutions of higher education. We also use the terms “student organization” and “student group” synonymously; by these we mean student organizations that are recognized, sponsored, or registered on campus. We also occasionally use “faculty” adviser because of its historic roots to describe the person who directly advises a student organization. However, a more inclusive term that is more representative of current practices is “student organization adviser” as there are many people in nonfaculty positions working with student organizations.

Purpose of the Book

This book was written to provide advisers with the knowledge, skills, and materials necessary to effectively advise a student organization. Our specific purposes are as follows: (1) to provide advisers the foundational knowledge and basic concepts of working students and student organizations, (2) to provide the day-to-day details that advisers need to accomplish their assignments, and (3) to provide information on ensuring quality in advising.

Overview of the Contents

The book can be divided into three general sections. The first four chapters of the book provide advisers with foundational knowledge. Chapter 1 identifies the rewards and challenges of advising student organizations from the individual, institutional, and community perspectives. Chapter 2 provides advisers with an overview and history of student organizations. The chapter reviews the many types of student organizations present on college campuses and how advisers may have to adjust their approach in working with these organizations. This chapter also includes a history of when and where the categories of student organizations began. Chapter 3 is dedicated to Greek organizations. This chapter discusses the history and taxonomy for the various types of Greek chapters and provides details on the organizational structure, funding, and relationships Greek organizations have with their institutions. Chapter 4 includes information and several theories and models on group dynamics, leadership development, and learning. We include practical examples of working with student organizations in different stages of organizational development.

The next six chapters in the book provide information on the day-to-day details that advisers need to accomplish their roles. Chapter 5 includes

the knowledge, skills, and qualities essential to advisers. Position descriptions, constitutions, roles, the motivation of students, and understanding mission and purpose of an organization are identified. Chapter 6 discusses how an adviser can provide academic and career assistance to students. This chapter also presents information on the academic nature of the institution, how to refer students, what basic academic information to know, and performance as a student. This chapter also supplies numerous materials to assist students in understanding values, morals, and ethics as well as their level of involvement in the organization. Chapter 7 provides information on representing institutional and organizational needs. This information includes policies and procedures, service learning, and traveling. Chapter 8 introduces budget management to advisers. The chapter provides essential information on budget development, software available to track budgets, types and sample budgets, funding sources, audits, and tax information. Chapter 9 offers rudimentary information to advisers on legal issues and strategies for managing risk. Understanding the Clery Act, hazing, dealing with issues related to alcohol, managing money, and the like are essential knowledge for advisers of student organizations. Chapter 10 describes how to work with students and organizations when issues and conflicts arise. The chapter provides approaches and tools to use to minimize these difficulties.

The final three chapters provide information on ensuring quality in advising, approaches to training, and development of adviser personal effectiveness. Chapter 11 introduces how to ensure quality in advising. This chapter offers information on how to evaluate adviser and the organizational effectiveness. Chapter 12 discusses detailed information on training advisers and on advisers training students. This chapter shares training topics, approaches, and schedules. Chapter 13 introduces recommendations for professional practice, keeping advising activities rewarding, and suggestions for continuing education and professional development.

How to Use This Book

We believe the book captures important elements of advising a student organization. Reading the book in its entirety will provide you with the foundational information you need in developing a yearlong approach to advising a student organization. The information also will provide you with strategies and approaches to use when issues and concerns arise, as well as helping you to understand potential legal and financial problems before they arise, and describing how to work with and better understand your students.

The book includes numerous case studies, checklists, examples of forms, sample letters, and many other materials to support your work as a student organization adviser. We encourage you to meet with other student organization advisers on your campus. We have found that regular meetings with other advisers to discuss issues and concerns, recognition, schedules, institutional procedures and processes, and the amount of time spent on the organization is incredibly beneficial to those advisers. No one adviser should be without a group of colleagues on campus. You may want to bring your copy of this book with you and pick various aspects of the book to discuss openly among your colleagues. Better approaches and methods always come from discussions about challenges, solutions to problems, and how to help students advance their organization.

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successful in this profession and her daughter, MacKenzie, who reminds her daily of what is really important in life. Nancy would also like to thank John Schuh and Norb Dunkel for being willing to share this experience and their wisdom. Nancy wants to extend a special thank-you to all the student leaders she has worked with over the years. Advising students is both inspiring and challenging, and each interaction has contributed to how she approaches her work.

April 2014

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Advising Student Groups and Organizations

Second Edition

Chapter 1

Challenges and Rewards of Advising

STUDENTS BENEFIT SUBSTANTIALLY from being involved in campus organizations. Astin (1985) states that “students learn by becoming involved” (133). He defined a highly involved student as “one who . . . devotes considerable energy to studying, spends a lot of time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students” (134). The Student Learning Imperative adds that “serving as an officer of a campus organization or working offer opportunities to apply knowledge obtained in the classroom and to develop practical competencies” (American College Personnel Association 1994, 2).

Involvement in student organizations also provides challenges and rewards for you as the adviser. On the one hand, some advisers are actively involved with their students and enjoy their interaction immensely. Some advisers work with debate teams and travel every weekend to various contests; others enjoy white-water rafting with their organization or having lunch at the dining center with the executive officers. On the other hand, some advisers have such a negative experience that after one term they refuse to advise another student organization.

Regardless of why you have become an adviser—be it a role freely chosen or one thrust upon you—an understanding of the benefits gained by student involvement and the challenges and rewards of advising will help you fulfill your responsibilities more effectively.

This chapter summarizes Astin’s Theory of Involvement (1984) and how various institutions have utilized the research to promote student involvement in organizations. The chapter then identifies the challenges and rewards—for the community, the institution, the organization, the adviser, and the student—of being involved in and working with student

organizations, and at several points directs your attention to other chapters for in-depth discussion of specific issues.

Astin's Theory of Involvement

The core of any student group or organization is the student. The student's time, commitment, and energy to be involved in the organization helps drive the organization's membership, excitement, and interest by other students. Students gain a number of benefits from being involved in a student organization. Astin's Theory of Involvement provides evidence of these benefits. Hutley (2003) has provided an excellent summary of Alexander Astin's Theory of Involvement:

The most basic tenet of Astin's Theory of Involvement is that students learn more the more they are involved in both the academic and social aspects of the collegiate experience. An involved student is one who devotes considerable energy to academics, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations and activities, and interacts often with faculty (Astin, 1984, p. 292). . . .

Astin states that the quality and quantity of the student's involvement will influence the amount of student learning and development (Astin, 1984, p. 297). True involvement requires the investment of energy in academic relationships and activities related to the campus and the amount of energy invested will vary greatly depending on the student's interests and goals, as well as the student's other commitments. The most important institutional resource, therefore, is student time: the extent to which students can be involved in the educational development is tempered by how involved they are with family, friends, jobs, and other outside activities (p. 301).

Montelongo (2002) summarized in his review of literature as follows:

Participation in college student organizations promotes affective and cognitive changes within college students. Involvement in extracurricular activities, especially in college student organizations, has benefits extending beyond classroom learning. Participation in extracurricular activities contributes to the intellectual, social, and emotional changes in a person over time. Outcomes associated with participation in college student organizations includes cognitive development or higher intellectual

processes such as critical thinking, knowledge acquisition, synthesis, and decision-making, as well as personal or affective development of attitudes, values, aspirations, and personality disposition. . . . Participation in college student organizations has been shown to have an influence on affective outcomes of the college experience, such as cultivating a student's sense of satisfaction with the college experience and in increasing participation and involvement within campus and community. College student organization participation also was an influential component in a student's total co-curricular experience as shown by enhancing intellectual development and by allowing students to become aware of and involved with the educational environment. Students were able to assess campus resources to achieve their educational goals. (61–62)

Institutions have drawn from the considerable research to promote the benefits of student organization involvement. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha (2013), the student activities and leadership programs office website includes a list of benefits: “academic enhancement, communication skills, scholarship incentives, personal/professional growth, career development, community service, leadership skills, self-confidence, and life-long friends.”

At California State University San Marcos (2013), the student life and leadership website states that as a result of getting involved leaders “develop a campus support network, grow their leadership skills and plan fun activities for their group. . . . Current student leaders report their communication, interpersonal and social skills have improved as a result of being involved on campus and in the San Marcos community.”

The website of Bethany College (2013) in West Virginia lists benefits of joining a student organization that include “making new friends, career exploration, career information, getting involved, gaining a sense of being, a chance to share common interests, learning to work in a group, learning to manage your time, an opportunity to learn and practice leadership skills, learning to organize meetings, events, and programs, and recognition for achievement.”

At Rutgers New Brunswick (2013), the website's list of benefits to students includes “providing students with an opportunity to explore interests, sharpen skills, and learn about themselves and others while enhancing the academic mission of the college. Organizational involvement allows students to develop those skills that will prepare them for their career and civic responsibilities beyond the University.”

The RedbusUS site (2013) identifies eight reasons why students should join a student organization. These include networking, social skills, professional experience, personality development, leadership skills, alumni networking, organization and management skills, and friendships and fun.

Whether an institution selects to identify student benefits gained based directly on a theory or model, by using institutional values or mission, or by using anecdotal or testimonials from students, student activities and involvement offices will commonly couch these benefits and publicize them through their student organization registration processes, student and adviser training, and leadership development programs. We believe it is important to select and promote a list of benefits that students will gain through their student organization involvement.

Challenges

The community, institutions, organizations, advisers, and students face a variety of challenges related to student groups. We look at each of these challenges in detail.

Community

There are few challenges to the local community from student organizations. Most of the challenging situations in the community are from the result of individual student behavioral issues. The community may also be challenged by student celebrations following final examinations or winning a championship sports game. These issues are typically remedied by local city codes and standards, law enforcement, or the institution's off-campus housing or dean of students offices.

Student organizations whose activities run counter to the local community environment can be seen as challenging. Some examples of such activities include a student organization creating a farmer's market to occur at the same time as a local farmer's market, a student organization protesting local restaurants whose practice or purchasing of materials may be viewed as against their wishes, or a student organization speaking to the city or county commission about their political position or decisions made.

Institutions

Faculty and practitioners in student affairs units know the benefits students experience by being involved in campus organizations, but it is nevertheless an institutional challenge to educate the greater campus community about the benefits of student involvement in organizations. We