INCOMING OFFICER GUIDE

Your Role as a Student Leader

1. **Work on the morale of your group members.** Unless they feel good about their roles, your group members will not be as cooperative and productive as they could be.

2. **Expect any changes to be accepted gradually.** Sometimes we expect people to accept changes overnight that we have been thinking about for months. Remember that it is almost impossible to change people... they usually must change themselves.

3. **Be available to help those who want your help.** When we attempt to force our ideas of assistance when it hasn’t been solicited, we risk building resistance among our group.

4. **Let your group members determine the group's purpose.** Unless group members have a say in what is to happen, their participation will be half-hearted at best.

5. **Emphasize the process for working through problems rather than the final result.** Your desired results may change as your group changes. An open channel of communication involving all group members will help you incorporate these changes.

6. **Approach change through cooperative appraisal.** When change is based on evidence, it reduces the chances for a win-lose situation. The decision will be based on what is right, rather than who is right.

7. **Encourage brainstorming and creativity.** Provide feedback and support for new ideas and avoid penalizing for mistakes made for the sake of experimentation.

8. **Share decision regarding policies and procedures.** By emphasizing how to solve problems, and involving your members in these decisions, you will created deeper commitment in your members.

9. **Recognize criticism as the first step individuals take in assuming responsibility.** Use criticism as a chance to solicit suggestions for improvement.

10. **Share the glory.** You cannot expect enthusiastic participation if you take all the credit.

11. **Have faith and confidence in the ability of your group.** People tend to live up to our expectations, be they high or low.

12. **Be sure your group has a common purpose.** Structure meetings so that issues of common interest are discussed with the whole group, and individual concerns are addressed at other times.

13. **Trust the motives of all group members.** Attend to every suggestion as a sincere one which deserves a sincere response.

14. **Don’t set yourself up as infallible.** Be honest and admit when you lack an answer. Don’t be afraid to be human.

15. **Be specific.** Communicate exactly what you expect and think.

16. **Be socially sensitive.** Avoid being witty or funny at the expense of group members.

17. **Use the inquiry method.** Use questions to get information and define issues.

18. **Be impartial.** Play no favorites and give all group members equal chance to participate.

19. **Promote group cohesiveness.** Make all group members feel as if they belong.

20. **Manage conflict, don’t ignore it.** Bring conflict into the open, and concentrate on issues, behaviors and facts rather than personalities.

*Adapted from: Student Organizations' Handbook - The Wichita State University (1992-1993)*
Incoming Officer’s Transition Worksheet
[Questions to ask during transition]

Please think through and respond to the following questions regarding your responsibilities. This information will be helpful to your successor.

1. Things specific to the position I want to know about (forms, duties, etc...)

2. Things I should do right away...

3. People (positions) that I should get to know...

4. Services that I need to know about...

5. Things I need to know about working with my advisor...

6. Other questions I want answered...
Maintaining Continuity: Transition Questions
New Officers

**Directions:** Many of these questions are geared toward former, or out-going officers, though new officers are encouraged to use these questions to brainstorm ideas or goals for the upcoming term of office. Take some time to sit down with those you’ll be working with this year to create a shared vision and common goals & steps to achieve those objectives.

1. What do you perceive to be your organization’s objectives or goals?

2. What do you consider to be the responsibilities of your office?

3. What are your expectations of yourself in the office?

4. What expectations do you have of the executive council?

5. What expectations do you believe your members have of you?

6. What problems or areas will require attention within the next year?

7. What should be done immediately in the fall?

8. Who do you anticipate will be most helpful in getting things done? (People outside your organization such as advisors, professors, administrative staff, etc.)

9. Write down one specific problem you anticipate you will encounter during your term.
## Visual Mapping: Goals, Objectives, & Priorities

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<tr>
<th>Things We Would Like To Accomplish</th>
<th>Barriers / Limitations</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Unknown Questions</th>
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GOAL SETTING GUIDE

GOAL SETTING

Considerations:
Are my goals consistent with my understanding of the purpose of the group?
Will the members of my organization agree with my goals? Check with them.
Am I being realistic? Can I accomplish my goals during my tenure as organization leader?

Goals I want to Accomplish During my Tenure:
1. Projects
   A.
   B.
   C.

   2. Process or manner in which we go about projects (i.e., involving people in decisions, having more members participate in meetings, having more interesting meetings, etc.)
      A.
      B.
      C.

Where Can I Begin?
Which goal seems most important to me?

Do I have the skills necessary to accomplish my goal? Who else in my organization can help me? Are there outside resource people who might help?

Is there anything I can do before tomorrow to help me reach my goal?

What can I accomplish next week?

What specifically can I do within one month to reach all my goals?

WILL I DO IT?
Incoming Officer’s Keys to the Future

Before you begin goal setting with the members of your organization, you may benefit personally by developing your own goals. The goals may vary in terms of being long or short in range. Some things you may want to think about for yourself might be: the tone you would like to create in your organization, programming ideas, personal growth, the people you will be working with, budgeting, leadership training, etc.

Begin your own goal setting now by brainstorming for possibilities of what you would like to be about during the upcoming year.

______________________________________________________________

Now list things you can do right away:

Things I want to do starting right now (be specific): Ask Questions like:

1. HOW?

2. WHEN?

3. WHERE?

Things I want to get started on soon:

1. By: ____________________

2. By: ____________________

3. By: ____________________

How do I get started? Is there anything I can do before tomorrow? What specifically?

What can I realistically have accomplished one-week from today? One-month?
WORKING WITH YOUR ADVISOR
The Role of the Advisor

As Viewed by the Advisor:
- Resource Person
- Friend / Counselor
- Pick up the pieces when necessary
- Assist in planning
- Play devil’s advocate
- Help set goals
- Help maintain direction and provide continuity
- Stimulate creativity and motivation
- Serve as a sounding board for students
- Facilitator for group process
- Be accessible

As Viewed by Student Leaders:
- Resource Person
- Positive reinforcement and support
- Constructive criticism
- Serve as liaison between organization and university
- Deal with legal and contractual matters
- Attend committee meetings
- Advise on specific University procedures
- Be available
- Discuss ideas, but don’t dictate
- Support events by attending
- Play devil’s advocate when needed
- Brainstorming
- Realize leaders are volunteers

Advisee / Advisor Relationships
1. The responsibility for building the relationship must be shared between advisor and student.
   - View this relationship as a partnership.

2. The relationship must be based upon open, direct communication.
   - Share needs, responsibilities, and expectations with each other.
   - Be prepared to negotiate.

3. Both must recognize the other’s various roles and responsibilities in / outside of their activities position.
   - Know each other’s commitments and let each other know their impact.

4. Both advisor / student are human beings who make mistakes, follow their own value systems, and work in individual, professional, person styles.
   - Accept, discuss, and learn from mistakes - then move on.

5. Both advisor / student are continually growing, changing, and learning; each within their own unique stages of development. Challenge and support each other.

The Role of Your Organization's Advisor

What is your advisor supposed to be doing? Your advisor can be a valuable resource, if you know what to expect and how to communicate with him or her. Below is a list of roles that your advisor may take in working with your organization.

1. **Problem Solving Agent**: Your advisor may be the impartial third party that helps you work through problems and conflict.

2. **Counselor**: You may find that your advisor is the type of person you can go to with your personal concerns.

3. **Information Resource Person**: Hopefully, your advisor has been around long enough to know some of the ins and outs of getting things done at ODU. Use their experience and expertise!

4. **Idea Resource Person**: Use your advisor to help discover new ideas when your creative juices dry up.

5. **Sounding Board**: If you want to try out a new idea on an impartial party before proposing it to the entire group, try it out on your advisor.

6. **Administration Liaison**: Rely on your advisor for advice on who in the administration can help you with your projects.

7. **Organization's Representative**: Hopefully, your advisor will represent your concerns to the administrative "powers that be."

8. **Interpreter of University Policies and Procedures**: Rely on your advisors expertise.

9. **Analyzer of the Group Process**: Use your advisor as an observer if things in your organization seem to be stuck.

10. **Role Model**: A positive one, of course!

11. **Attendee / Participant at Events**: Be sure to keep your advisor informed so that he or she can at least put in an appearance to show support.

12. **Continuity Provider**: Since the advisor is there from year to year as the student leaders change, he or she can provide a sense of the group's history.

13. **Educator Regarding Organizational Philosophy**: Your advisor can help you plan the training that your group needs to successfully accomplish its mission.

14. **Educator / Trainer of Student Members**: Your advisor can help you plan the training that your group needs to successfully accomplish its mission.

15. **Maintainer of Records**: Make sure that you give your advisor copies of all important documents so that they can be kept on file.

16. **Conflict Resolution Assistant**: Use your advisor as an impartial mediator.

17. **Financial Supervisor**: Use your advisor's experience with University procedures to help you keep on top of your organization's finances.

18. **Meeting Attender**: Be sure to inform your advisor of all meetings so that he or she can attend.

19. **Assistant in Evaluating the Organization**: Use your advisor as a resource to determine what you should be evaluating and when.

20. **Empowerer of Students**: Your advisor should be a valuable resource who helps your organization reach good decisions.

*Adapted from: The Wichita State University's Student Organizations' Handbook (1992-1993)*
MOTIVATION
Keeping Your Officers and Organization Members Motivated Throughout the Year

Ten Commandments for Student Leaders:
Taken from letter from Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C. President of Notre Dame dated 10/30/95

1. Look upon all of it as a learning experience.

2. Mistakes are inevitable. You have to learn to live with them, and so do others.

3. Don’t get caught up with global issues, such as remaking the whole University and outgunning the Trustees. Politics is the art of the possible; so pick out some realistic goals and really go for them.

4. Try to strike up a friendship with the administration. They aren’t really bad guys and you might have something to learn from them. Also, they are not automatic adversaries. Believe it or not, they like you and want to be helpful as you mature into real leaders.

5. The common good is terribly important. It means the common good for students, faculty, and for the whole University community. You are part of it, so work for it.

6. Be honest, especially with yourselves. Integrity is probably the best quality of a leader.

7. Be open-minded. No other attitude makes learning possible. As Winston Churchill said, “All complicated questions have simple answers. However, they are all wrong.”

8. Be fair, even with grown ups. Fairness will win them more than anything else.

9. Don’t be cynical. A cynic accomplishes nothing. All of us have to be shocked by the injustices we face in life. Cynicism will never conquer them and attain justice.

10. This will probably sound silly, but my bottom line is laughter and love. It is important to be able to laugh at ourselves, which means not to take ourselves too seriously, whether we are President or freshman. Somehow laughter gets us through the most difficult of solutions, but love is important, too, because in a very real sense, we can’t work together unless we respect and love each other, young and old.
How to Make an Impact as a Student Leader

1. Be a role model.
2. Confront unacceptable behavior.
3. Utilize training experiences.
4. Find the “teachable moment.”
5. Be supportive of others.
6. Actions should reflect words - be consistent.
7. Develop expectations.
8. Present programs that reflect your values and organization’s values.
9. Be consistent in your organizational promotions / advertisement.
10. Structure experiences.
11. Lead discussion sessions on values and ethics.
12. Develop an organizational and/or personal code of ethics.
13. Make a difference in all that you do!

NACA National Convention, February 1991