



## CSO Advising Tips

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On Saint Louis University's campus, student group advising is looked to as more hands-on and purposeful than years ago when advising held merely the responsibility of providing necessary signatures. Below are some tips for advising student groups that will hopefully help you in your role as an advisor. We first recognize that each student group at Saint Louis University is unique in their make-up and needs and will thus require different approaches from the advisor, but hopefully these general tips will help set the foundation in ultimately creating an individualistic advising approach.

### Know your group

- Find a time to sit down with the president or additional members of the group to gain insight into what the group's purpose is from their word of mouth
- Check out the group's constitution to gain insight into their written purpose, etc. Talk to your group's President about getting a copy of your group's constitution.

### Know yourself and your institution

- Reflect on what campus, city, etc. resources you are familiar with and would be comfortable providing information on to your group.
- If feeling a little unsure about different resources on campus, check them out online.
- Know your own limits.

### Expectations

- Set clear expectations with the group both for what they can and should expect from you as well as what you expect of them. It can be helpful to have both sides help each other in creating these expectations.

### Relationships

- It definitely helps to build a strong advising relationship with the President and executive board members of the group. This provides you stronger insight into how the group is doing, as well as helps your connection with the group as they will typically be your main liaisons with the larger group.

### Sense of Humor

- Sometimes you just need to laugh. Sometimes they just need to laugh. Don't lose sight of the small things.

- Communication
  - “Praise in Public” (or as you learn more about specific members, what their preference is)
  - “Criticize in private”
    - Be sure to communicate any concerns, feedback, etc. face to face and one-on-one as much as possible.
  - Honest
  - Open
- “With great power comes great responsibility”
  - Remember this is for the good of the student body and institution, so leave your personal agendas at the door and help the group accomplish what fits with their identity and purpose.
- Outside perspective, challenge thinking
  - You will bring a unique perspective to the group as an advisor, so help challenge them to really think about things in a new light and from as many perspectives as possible.
- Walk the Line of Friend v. Judge
- Be Visible
  - Try and get out to some of the events, meetings, etc. to help the group connect the name/position with a face as well as help them gain a better sense of who you are and what your purpose is.
- Be Yourself, Not a first time undergrad
  - As cheesy as it sounds, it usually works. The groups are looking for your support, guidance, etc. They are not looking for a peer, so don’t worry about “fitting in,” dressing in student style, etc. These actions usually just make things more awkward.
- Let Them Fall
  - Remember that advising at Saint Louis University is focused on helping develop the student group. Sometimes the best growth will come from learning from mistakes and nonsuccesses. Learn how to determine which situations will be the best to provide suggestions, but ultimately sit back and let them make the decision and learn firsthand.