

Prevention Plan

Review and use the checklists at the link below to gain a better understanding of how to build a relationship between student organizations and their advisers. Then, sit down together and use these lists to form the basis for an "Adviser Job Description" and a "Student Organization Job Description." Though this does require some additional work for all parties, the efforts necessitated later in trying to repair the damage are guaranteed to be much more stressful and time-consuming.

How do you do this? Read through the checklists on the preceding pages. Write down any additional comments or ideas as you think about the obligations each party has to the other. Begin thinking about related issues, such as terms of office for advisers and extent of power that may not be explained in your constitution. Good job descriptions will be specific, thus enabling all parties to understand expectations.

Next, make an appointment to sit down with your adviser/student organization and share ideas. You may be surprised at how differently each of you views these roles; therefore, it is important to discuss your concerns and feelings from the beginning. If you disagree, don't give up or get angry. Differences are natural and expected. Instead, negotiate and remain open to new ideas. Continue to discuss these points until both parties come to a workable agreement.

Several months from now, you may not remember the specifics of what was discussed at this time and what agreements were reached. Therefore, it is important to type these contracts. Everyone should review them to make sure they are correct before signing. Then, contracts should be given to all parties to keep for reference.

A FINAL NOTE

You may be one of those people who have read the above and are saying to yourself, "I can work well with people, therefore, I don't need a contract to tell me what to do. I don't want to be tied down by a piece of paper we wrote at the beginning of the year."

True, a job description may not be the answer for everyone in every organization. But it can serve many purposes. First, it allows you to sit down with whomever you are working and gain an understanding of their expectations, personality, etc. Next, it creates a framework for your role in the organization and an understanding of your position's responsibility. Additionally, it is a relatively non-threatening way to see how other parties in your group communicate and help you determine the best ways to communicate with them. No, not all contracts must be followed to the letter, though this certainly can be done. To be successful, you will need to create job descriptions that balance structure and flexibility as determined by the people for whom they are designed.

[CHECKLISTS OF ORGANIZATION OBLIGATIONS TO ADVISERS AND ADVISER OBLIGATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONS](#)