



## **Student Branch Faculty Advisor Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Role of the Faculty Advisor:**

The Faculty Advisor is the primary member of the university that represents AIAA to the student branch and serves as a conduit for student involvement in AIAA programs. The Faculty Advisor gives ideas, shares insight, provides a different perspective, and counsels the student branch.

The Faculty Advisor must understand and agree to the following responsibilities before a branch may be considered for provisional charter:

- Help with the growth and development of students.
- Encourage student members to become active in student-centered programs offered by AIAA, such as the Regional Student Conference, Design/Build/Fly Competition, scholarship programs, etc.
- Add to the continuity of the branch as members graduate.
- Assist the student leadership in program content and purpose.
- Meet regularly with officers of the branch to discuss goals, event planning, and other needs of the branch.
- Act as fiscal advisor of the branch if receiving funding.
- Ensure the branch files appropriate recognition and registration paperwork annually, and that officer forms are updated whenever any changes occur.
- Attend branch meetings when appropriate.
- Work with student officers to ensure the branch is inclusive in its recruitment of members and selection of officers.
- Act as a resource for members of the branch while directing them to appropriate institution departments or AIAA staff for assistance.
- Ensure that actions of the branch and its members are in accordance with the established policies and procedures of the institution and AIAA.

### **Responsibilities to the Student Branch:**



- The advisor should assist the branch in developing realistic goals for the academic year. This will contribute to the educational and personal development of the students involved. The advisor must take an active role, rendering advice and counsel as circumstances dictate.
- The advisor should be aware of all plans and activities of the branch and inform the branch that institutional policies may affect these plans. The advisor should see that the branch and its officers know where policies are listed, what the policies are, why they exist, and the channels to be followed for changes, revisions, or exceptions to policies.
- The advisor should discourage dominance of the branch by any one individual and should encourage students to take initiative. The advisor can help provide a balance by pointing out such concerns in a one-on-one setting with the students or the branch leadership.
- The advisor may need to refer students to counseling. Invariably, during interaction with the branch's members, the advisor will encounter students with personal problems. The counseling role might require individual consultation on a personal level or referral to the student counseling service.
- The advisor should provide continuity within the branch and should be familiar with the branch's history and constitution. Membership turnover in student branches is high and often the only link with the immediate past is the advisor. The advisor can steer branch members clear of mistakes and help them avoid the proverbial "reinventing of the wheel". Serving as the branch's memory and continuity link, the advisor can help new officers build on history and develop long term plans for the future of the branch.
- The advisor should offer ideas for projects and events. The advisor will perform their greatest service by providing opportunities for the students to exercise initiative and judgment and to enjoy a proper measure of autonomy in self-directed social, educational, recreational, cultural, and spiritual activities. He or she should not dominate the program planning process. However, advisors should ensure that the branch understands a program's complexity and has discussed and registered the event with the appropriate institutional division. The advisor should remember that it is the task of the active members to operate the branch. Removing this responsibility from the members would deprive them of an important educational experience.
- The advisor should assist the branch in assessment. This includes evaluating individual programs as well as doing a complete evaluation at the end of the academic year. The



advisor must be willing to give constructive criticism when necessary and offer words of praise for work well done.



### **Responsibilities to Individual Branch Members:**

- The advisor should help the students find a balance between their academics and their co-curricular activities. Student leaders often have the tendency to "burn the candle at both ends" and will overextend themselves if not held in check. The advisor has a unique opportunity to remind students of their academic obligations and personal needs.
- The advisor should encourage individuals to participate in and plan branch events. Some students fade into the background if not effectively encouraged. Being a member of a student branch can provide students with valuable interpersonal and/or leadership skills, but these will not develop if the student is not involved.
- The advisor should encourage students to accept responsibility for specific roles within the branch. The advisor should help them realize the importance of these roles. From officer positions to committee members, each student should feel invested in and accountable for their specific role.

### **Responsibilities to the Institution and AIAA:**

- The advisor should work with the branch, but not direct its activities. Although the advisor's role is not regulatory or disciplinary, the advisor has a responsibility to the university, the branch, and AIAA to keep their best interests in mind. At times, the advisor may need to remind the branch of institutional or AIAA policies so that violations do not occur. The advisor may also work with the branch's officers to establish and maintain internal branch standards and regulations for conduct.
- Occasionally, an advisor can help a branch during an emergency. Although this type of intervention is rarely necessary, the advisor's good judgment can be the saving grace in the event of mishaps, internal conflict, or personal crisis. Assisting the student branch chair as a spokesperson or serving as the main contact for the university can help in these cases.