

## SECTION III

# THE FACULTY ADVISOR

This section is designed to offer some suggestions without stifling creativity. Remember, to be a successful advisor one needs to implement the five classic management functions: Planning, Directing, Staffing, Organizing, and Controlling. If these functions are applied to the chapter, it should help in making it more successful.

### THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR

The first thing to develop is a positive attitude. Do not consider an advising position to be a chore. It does require time, however it is also an opportunity to test the management functions in the context of a small business. As time progresses, it will be easier to discover how to operate a SAM student chapter. Student SAM members depend on faculty advisors to get them started. All too often students say things like, "I can't find my advisor," or "I don't know what to do," or "My advisor is never around." These and other excuses are not problems, rather they are symptoms of faculty advisors who need to do things differently to help their student chapters be successful.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR

Serving as a faculty advisor has many benefits. It gets the faculty member closer to students and provides a satisfaction of helping students practice management and develop their leadership skills. Faculty advisors with paid membership of ten or more students get a complimentary SAM membership. The SAM Faculty Advisor performs many functions. With the rapid turnover of students in SAM, the faculty advisor provides a sense of continuity from year to year. The advisor spends some time promoting the SAM message in class, particularly at the start of a semester; talks to colleagues about SAM and about promoting it in their classes; distributes membership applications and always carries several to distribute around campus; attends most SAM functions, including general meetings, professional dinners, speakers, and socials; and distributes raffle tickets to assist the chapter's fundraisers. The faculty advisor also might be needed to arrange in obtaining audio-visual equipment from the school or meet regularly with the SAM Student President. It is important for the faculty advisor to provide advice but not to overrule a student decision regarding the chapter, even if the advisor thinks it is a poor decision (unless, of course, it goes against the college's policies and regulations). These are just some of the functions needed to assist the chapter. Remember, in order to do an excellent job, the faculty advisor will need to put in some hours to assist the chapter.

### PLANNING

Planning is the number one management function and the most important activity of the campus chapter. Left to their own devices, students may not begin planning until school starts.

The first several weeks of school are always chaotic. Trying to plan the SAM semester during that time only adds to the confusion. Planning for the fall semester or spring semester should occur prior to the start of the semester. Assembling a team, planning for funding, and overseeing logistics takes a lot of prior planning---not last minute chaos.

Directing student efforts towards attending the International Conference provides them with the necessary long-term objective that is always part of any planning process. Students must know why they are recruiting new members and why they are raising funds. Attendance at the conference is a noble goal for many reasons. First and foremost, it is a great experience for the student, particularly if the student participates in the Case Competition. Second, it provides the networking opportunity that can be essential in today's world. Third, it increases the chance that a student will continue in SAM after graduation.

Planning for the upcoming term must include scheduling of executive board meetings, general meetings, speakers/films, fundraising events, and socials. In order for the chapter to operate effectively, students should fill six executive board positions. There should be a President, Executive Vice-President, Vice-President of Membership, Vice-President of Fundraising, Vice-President of Promotions/Programs, and a Secretary/Treasurer. The relevant job descriptions of each officer are presented in section II of this manual entitled "Campus Chapter Management."

Often the faculty advisor must make a personal one-on-one effort to find students to fill the six executive board positions. Students with appropriate majors for the executive board positions are encouraged to fill such positions. For example, an accounting major for treasurer; marketing major for promotions and newsletter; finance or marketing major for fundraising, etc. Once persons have been found to fill these six positions, the holders should find their own replacements in their absence and learn their jobs for the next year if needed. Having "Assistant To" backups such as these ensures that knowledge will not be lost when the position holder graduates. Further, it provides the opportunity for additional SAM members to become involved in SAM activities. After the first year, the six executive board and assistant positions can be elected by the chapter.

Executive Board meetings prior to the fall or spring semesters must focus on recruitment activities for the first month of school. Secondly, the meetings must focus on publicity preparation, including recruitment posters, newsletter, orientation brochure, or even a slide presentation at the first meeting. Third, the fundraisers (two are recommended) must be planned for the upcoming semester.

### RECRUITMENT OF NEW SAM MEMBERS

SAM advisors sometimes begin a term in the fall semester with zero members. One must attract students into the SAM chapter. First, some of the previous year's remaining SAM members will be serving on the Executive Board. They are of tremendous importance because during the summer, hopefully they will have planned their fall recruiting campaign. Advisors will have motivated them sufficiently enough to have had them place their recruitment information in prominent places so that students will see this information upon their return to school.

Second, the Executive Board should schedule a general SAM orientation meeting for the second week of class. Students like to receive things for free, so the Executive Board members will have a newsletter along with orientation materials ready to distribute at the meeting.

Students can earn points for engaging in various SAM activities and points may be awarded to any student who encourages another student to join. These points can be tallied later in the year to determine which SAM members will have earned the right to attend the International Conference.

As a faculty advisor, one can take time out of early class sessions in order to explain why joining a professional organization is a good idea. Provide explanatory materials on the history of SAM. If the chapter has had a successful previous year, build on that by talking about the chapter's accomplishments. If one can identify students that have potential, talk to them individually about joining SAM. At each general meeting of SAM, the Vice-President of Membership should announce the new members, introduce them, and thank them for joining.

### PUBLICITY PREPARATION

When there are many students going to class at various times, communication can be difficult. Some schools have "dead" period time slots where clubs can meet. If the school does not have a "dead" period time, then the best time for the club to meet will need to be decided.

There needs to be a common time to schedule meetings and speakers. The President should be encouraged to work with the Vice-President of Promotions to communicate with students regularly. The web and e-mail provide great opportunities for communicating with members. The chapter president should send the web address to SAM office to link it to SAM headquarters. Website is essential tool for coordinating activities and e-mail lists also work. If members miss a meeting give them a copy of the minutes or the club newsletter. Newsletters make a SAM chapter look professional and tell everyone that the chapter is organized by keeping everyone current on chapter events. It is likely that someone will have access to a computer program that is useful in preparing newsletters. Events such as recruitment, fundraisers, professional dinners, socials, speakers, and films must be promoted extensively.

### SAM CHAPTER FUNDRAISING

No topic has generated more controversy than fundraising. Some faculty advisors are content to downplay this topic. In some colleges, money for events is given to student groups, so none must be raised by student efforts. Other colleges do not permit student groups to go out into the community in order to raise funds. Other advisors, knowing little about fundraising, advise their SAM students to devote their efforts to traditional events such as sandwich sales, plant sales, and bake sales. These events generally cannot raise enough money to finance the trip of students to the International Conference.

First, there should be planned a maximum of two fundraisers per term. The best times are from mid-September to mid-October and from mid-October to mid-November. Spring fundraisers can run from mid-January to mid-February and from mid-February to the middle or end of March. Having more than four fundraisers carries the risk of student "burning out." Second, fundraisers should not overlap. Finish one before you start another. Third, consider the raffle of either donated or low cost prizes to be the best fundraisers. Little SAM money is spent, cost of printing tickets is minimal, and no inventory investment is required. Fourth, do not start fundraising until a sufficient number of members have been recruited around Mid-September.

If a chapter has 25 members, try to be realistic about the size of the fundraiser. As a faculty advisor, tell members that they must have a membership recruitment goal and a financial goal. Once new members have been recruited, the financial goal should be to finance the trip of SAM students to the International Conference in the spring.

Some SAM Chapters reside in metropolitan areas that include professional baseball, football, and hockey teams. In the past one could solicit or buy tickets from some of these teams. In one chapter's experience actual dollars returned to the chapter from these fundraisers were as follows: football game \$893.56 and hockey game \$1,195.36. When one puts a game package together with two free dinners (generally donated), there is usually no problem selling a \$1 raffle ticket. One can also put a cinema package together, perhaps including dinner and roses for an event such as Valentine's Day.

### THE SAM STUDENT PRESIDENT

A faculty advisor needs to establish a strong working relationship with the SAM Chapter President. Until the SAM President becomes comfortable in the job, he or she will depend on the advisor for advice. It is the faculty advisor's responsibility to work closely with and to develop the abilities of the SAM President. The SAM President generally should have a strong personality and one who has been a member for several terms. Past presidents of SAM have had their own ideas and each has added to a chapter's knowledge base. Initially, the advisor meets regularly with the President. The SAM chapter is a professional organization and an organization for professionals. Since the student President represents the SAM organization, the SAM advisor recommends that general meetings are conducted professionally and that the student President dress appropriately.

The advisor should encourage the SAM President to allow his or her officers to present reports orally. This gives each the experience of speaking in front of a group. This kind of experience is important to the young professional and comes in handy when some of these student officers present their solution(s) in the International Case Competition. Advisors should advise only the President. To do otherwise violates the chain-of-command. As stated previously, the advisors should advise and counsel, not intervene, meddle, or overrule.

A SAM member should leave a meeting feeling that it was worthwhile to be there and that the meeting was conducted in a professional manner. Minutes should be taken, prior minutes read, and an agenda distributed. Advisors should encourage the President to create an agenda, look at it, and suggest additional items if necessary.

To further add to the relationship between advisor and the student President, watch for things in his or her presentation that can use improvement. For example, the advisor should take note if the President is abrupt or abrasive during a meeting, uses slang, poor grammar, or has poor body language, is not forceful or speaks too softly, or perhaps comes across too indecisively. It is important as advisors to help in preparing a professional manager for the workplace.

## THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVATION IN A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

No SAM member receives a paycheck; therefore, serving in SAM does not enrich his or her financial position. They serve for non-monetary reasons. Perhaps they want to enhance their resumes, meet new friends, or attend and compete in the International Conference. As a faculty advisor, the opportunities for setting a motivational climate need to be enhanced. Although the advisor is not involved in the informal activity that takes place within a SAM chapter, many strong and lifelong friendships could develop from SAM membership.

Several years ago, one SAM President came up with a great idea. This student reasoned that a chapter could award points for each volunteer activity engaged in by a SAM member. These activities needed to be identified as to their importance and points attached to each. The point system is really a non-financial compensation system. One chapter begins their point system on February 1. On January 31 of the following year, they add up each SAM member's points. Depending on how well they have raised funds, the top point-earners comprise the case competition team. The chapter pays for each member's transportation, room, and conference fee at the International Conference. The point system rewards those students who have contributed the most to the chapter's success during the previous year. The point system is impartial, meaning there are no charges of unfairness. It is an objective way to determine who attends the International Conference. However, it may need to consider the skills and abilities of team members.

It is up to the individual chapter to decide what is included in the point system. For example, if a SAM member attends a general meeting or a speaker session, is worth 3 points. If a student attends a committee meeting--2 points; if a student sells ten dollars worth of raffle tickets--2 points. Many chapters have had a tremendous amount of success with the point system.

There is much that a Faculty Advisor can do to motivate and/or reinforce SAM members. Each year a chapter can nominate a deserving student(s) to *Who's Who in American Colleges*. An advisor can write various letters to college administrators announcing individual student accomplishments. A college Vice-President responds directly to the student in a letter that is a nice addition to a credentials file. The chapter President should be encouraged to provide certificates of appreciation or plaques, which can be given out at an Awards Luncheon at the end of the year to the top 20 SAM students. The SAM student chapter, at year's end, elects an Outstanding Executive Board Member and an Outstanding General Member. The student President may be given an engraved gavel. These awards are presented at a social affair.

## THE PROBLEM OF HIGH STUDENT TURNOVER

In general, a student chapter may have a turnover rate of 50% per year. If a faculty advisor does not take this turnover rate into consideration, unnecessary time will be spent each year continuously training for new officers. One way to handle this problem is to create the "Assistant-to" positions as stated previously. In this manner, officers, rather than advisors, are then training their replacements. Second, it is important to make sure that each officer's position has a current job description. The President should be advised to insist that his or her Executive

Board member read and know the job description. When annual elections are held, it is important to make job descriptions available to all candidates for office. If many of the officers are graduating, the President can promote the "Assistant-to" SAM members. If both the President and Executive Vice-President are both graduating, the Faculty Advisor might appoint a deserving member of the SAM Executive Board to the Presidency. The new SAM President should be encouraged to fill the rest of his or her board vacancies or have the membership vote for those officer positions from a slate of officers nominated by the Board.

Often the data for membership in SAM student chapters shows a sporadic membership. This means that one year a chapter may have 60 members; the following year they have 27; and then the following year they are back up to 62 members. Most likely this is caused by poor performance of the recruitment function plus a high turnover rate due to graduation. With a consistent effort of recruiting and knowledge of turnover, each SAM chapter most likely has a leveling-off point at which consistent membership could be maintained.

Chapter membership should be built to a point where the membership "evens out" from year to year. Stable membership enables the advisor to plan and maintain programs that otherwise would not have been maintained if membership fluctuates. If just beginning as an advisor, assess chapter membership and build it gradually from year to year. Find the membership level that can meet chapter goals and try to maintain this number of members each year.

#### AN ADVISOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE CASE COMPETITION

Most SAM students look forward to the annual Case Competition held during the International Conference. Previous members of one chapter told their advisor that it has had a remarkable impact on their lives and enabled them to form lasting friendships. The goal of the Faculty Advisor is to allow students the opportunity to have a good experience. Each year that his or her school has competed, each team has set winning the Case Competition as its individual goal.

The advisor is doing his or her SAM chapter a disservice if the students are not made aware of the International Competition. The competition is a natural goal of the planning process. Although attendance at the conference is important, it pales in comparison to participation in the Case Competition. How does the Case Competition work? With the objective at the beginning of the year that the chapter will participate in the International Case Competition, there are several things that an advisor should do. First, encourage students to be active in class and participate in group case problems and, if possible, in their courses. Second, allow for students to give reports during SAM meetings so that they become comfortable speaking in front of a group. Using the point system, have the team chosen by early February so that several meetings can be held in order to discuss the previous year's case competition as to what it takes to successfully compete. Third, use the videotapes of the previous year to better prepare the team for this year. Finally, distribute copies of last year's case for students to read. The case is normally mailed out in January. After it arrives and is distributed, an advisor is not permitted to provide any assistance to the SAM team members.

It is important to check with the travel agencies or the Internet in order to obtain the best travel rates for travel to the convention. As a reward for a good year, the SAM Advisor may encourage the President to have his or her team leave one day early for the conference. Getting in the night before the convention allows one extra day to rest and practice for the case. Other advisors bring their teams in on the first day of the convention. Students are tired from travel, plus many of them stay up late. As advisors, one must remember that this trip is not all business. This trip is the culmination of a year's hard work. Advisors may take slides of the entire trip and use them to promote the next year's conference.

Some schools choose to drive to the conference. If the location is close, there does not seem to be a problem. However, if it is far, why drive for fifteen hours to get there? Further, one can envision potential legal problems with students renting cars, assuming liability for their colleagues' safety, and having a car to drive at the conference site. Although a matter of personal preference, students should be encouraged to make their own way to the airport, get on a plane, have a van pick them up, and return them to the airport after the last day of the conference. In this manner, the airlines and the van companies assume the liability.

As a professional organization, it is important not to condone underage drinking. This particular problem can be controlled if the SAM faculty advisor has established a good relationship with the students.

With regard to the dispensing of SAM funds for airfare, hotel, conference fees, and van service, not all of this money is due at once. For example, one can obtain a group rate on an airline if travelling in a group of ten, and one need only put a small deposit down in advance, usually in December. Total airfare is normally due one month before the conference. The conference fee must be paid early in order to take advantage of lower rates. The fee for the conference center/hotel is not due until the departure from the event, and van service requires payment on arrival. This means that all of the fundraising does not have to be finished by a certain date. If necessary, one can hold a fundraiser in March to pay off the hotel and van bills.

Much of the material in this section has been tried successfully. Advisors are strongly encouraged to look upon their terms as SAM Faculty Advisors as positive ones. If there are any further questions about how to advise a SAM student chapter, please contact SAM International Headquarters.

If there are further questions about SAM or if additional information is needed, you may contact us at [sam@sam.national.org](mailto:sam@sam.national.org).