STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

By Student Affairs Committee

College of Business and Technology

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska

The following is a collection of resources and best practices for student organizations at the College of Business and Technology (CBT) at the University of Nebraska – Kearney (UNK). Based on a review of the literature, existing successful student organizations, and other resources we include a collection of tools and information to help advisors, student leaders, and departments in facilitating successful student organizations. More specifically, this document consists of:

1. A collection of best practices and success indicators designed to help give direction for establishing a successful student organization.
2. A worksheet used for assigning responsibilities between the advisor and students in the organization.
   > According to both anecdotal and empirical evidence, often student organizations struggle to allocate the work among the participants. Establishing boundaries and responsibilities is important to sustainable and successful student organizations.
3. A list of engagement activities which can serve as a resource for increasing student involvement.
4. A list of organizations in the community which can be a source of collaboration and support for helping student organizations.
5. An inventory of important factors associated with building social capital.
   > Social capital is an important outcome of successful student organizations in order to provide students with the network of relationships to help them in school and after graduation. The factors provided in this section and their associated questions are designed to help create social capital in student organizations.

Finally, we are aware that our collection is certainly not exhaustive; readers are encouraged to explore various sources provided at the end of this document for in-depth knowledge. That said, these selected tools are more likely to be useful to new advisors, student leaders, and participants of student organizations at CBT. Future research should be conducted to validate and enhance this document, making it particularly practical and effective to managing student organizations at CBT.

Success Indicators

The following indicators are primarily collected from Dunkel and Schuh (1998), except the last group of indicators on community which are based on our experience and discussion. Student organizations and their faculty advisors can use these indicators to measure the effectiveness of their organizations. This is not an exhaustive list, readers should consider using the indicators that apply to their organizations and/or adding other indicators based on need. The purpose of this section is to provide readers with a tool to assess their organization's health and hopefully generate meaningful conversations with members to improve operations and/or to recognize achievement.

Goals and Objectives
☐ Members understand the purpose of the organization.
☐ The constitution and by-laws are current.
☐ Members have read the organization's constitution and by-laws.
☐ Members understand how to amend the constitution and by-laws.

Meetings
☐ Meetings are held regularly.
☐ Meetings are run using Robert's Rules of Order or a similar approach.
☐ Members attend the meetings regularly.
☐ Officers attend the meetings regularly.
☐ Organization business is discussed and members are engaged in the conversation.

Finance
☐ Dues (if any) are paid on time.
☐ Financial reports are accurate and produced with regularity.
☐ Long-term debt is kept to a minimum.
☐ Self-financing events are successful.
☐ Multiple sources of financing exist.

Learning
☐ Members can identify what they have learned by participating in the organization.
☐ Members learn to work cooperatively.
☐ Members' leadership skills have improved over time.
☐ Members can identify skills that are transferable to their careers after college.

Membership
☐ Membership is stable or growing.
☐ Few members drop out.
☐ Recruitment of new members is well organized.
☐ Recruitment of new members is shared by the membership and is not only the responsibility of the membership chair.
☐ Members know what is going on in the organization.

Leadership
☐ Students have learned leadership techniques.
☐ A variety of people provide leadership for the group.
☐ Officers complete their terms.
☐ Elections are contested.
☐ Officers have read the organization's constitution and by-laws.
☐ Communication mechanisms, such as a newsletter or website, have been established and are used regularly.

Special Events
☐ Special events are planned with the needs of the members in mind.
☐ Special events are self-financed.
☐ Special events are well attended.
☐ Members have an opportunity to suggest and plan special events.

Community
☐ Members have created a strong group identity (from their activities) that is well recognized in their community.
☐ Members have built strong connections with industry leaders and their local communities.
☐ Members have expressed their interest in serving their community and improving the lives of others.

Setting Clear Boundaries

AIM: This worksheet can be a means of communicating expectations of the organization-advisor relationship. Both the advisor and officers of your organization should review each item.

INSTRUCTIONS: Organization members check off what you expect from the advisor in the "Org" column. Organization advisor(s) should check off those items he/she feels are appropriate for him/her to fulfill in the "Adv" column. From this, both parties can come to an agreement of roles and expectations.

The advisor agrees to…	Org	Adv	Agree
Attend all general meetings of the organization			
Attend all officer meetings			
Call meetings of the officers when deemed necessary			
Explain University policies where appropriate			
Explain University policy to the membership once a year			
Help the president prepare the agenda before each meeting			
Serve as parliamentarian to the group			
Speak up during discussion when you feel the group is about to make a poor decision			
Be quiet during general meetings unless called upon			
Provide resources and ideas to the group			
Take an active part in formulating goals for the group			
Act as a member of the group, except in voting and holding office			
Receive a copy of all correspondence			
Request the treasurer's books at the end of each semester			
Keep the official files in her/his office			
Let the group work out its problems, including making mistakes			
Request a written evaluation at the end of each semester			
Cancel any activities that you believe have been inadequately planned			
Approve all candidates for office in terms of scholastic standing; periodically check their GPAs			
Take an active part in officer transition and training			
Represent the group in any conflict with members of the University staff			
Mediate conflicts as they arise			
Veto a decision when it violates a by-law or constitution			
Keep the group aware of its stated goals, purposes, and objectives			

Advisor Responsibilities

- Be there
- Help plan
- Know University policies
- Manage risk
- Use facilities available

- Know about the money

  Funding opportunities can be found from the Office of Student Life.

- Keep other entities/students on campus informed

  E.g., updating information on OrgSync.

- Mentor others

  You may not be the advisor forever; mentor an adjunct advisor.

- Give praise

- Goal-setting meetings (where faculty advisor acts as a facilitator)
  - Individual goal setting (e.g., attend at least one event per semester).
  - Organizational goal setting (e.g., recruitment, events held, activities involved).
    - Ask for group input.
    - Assign tasks.

- The power of peers (i.e., fellow students)
  - Current students and success stories featured in posters, emails, and social media.
    - Bios of leading members on the organization's website.
  - Increased visibility via sending announcements and creating badges/point systems or signs at event locations (e.g., location-based apps on the organization's website).
  - Social activities to make members feel engaged:
    - Beginning of year party, retreats, sport events, etc.
    - Free food/snacks
  - "Member-get-a-member" contests.
  - "Buddy" program, student recruiting friends.
  - Group identity such as clothes with organizational emblems.
  - Idea exchange with similar groups.

- Membership drive events
  - Signage, brochures, flyers, giveaways, games, etc. It has to be very easy to join.
  - Potential events/locations: Blue and Gold days, organization fairs, student union, BSAD 100 classes, entry courses for specific majors.
  - Membership drives through the email and online to reach busy audience.
    - Email to relevant majors; social media tools.
  - Public praise everyone's efforts (or point systems for involvement) in helping the events.

- Frequent member recognition (e.g., helping other members, giving back to the organization)
  - Public praise
    - It can be especially beneficial if some authoritative figures such as the Dean introduce the organization and its leaders in student orientation and/or college materials.
  - Point systems for involvement and award ceremony at the end of the year.
  - Newsletters, upcoming events promotion.
  - Course credits for leadership experience at the organizations involved (e.g., experiential learning courses).

- Exclusive activities for members only
  - Heightened success denoting it is a serious organization.
  - Enrollment allowed only at certain times to promote exclusivity.
  - Invitation only events and/or membership nominations.
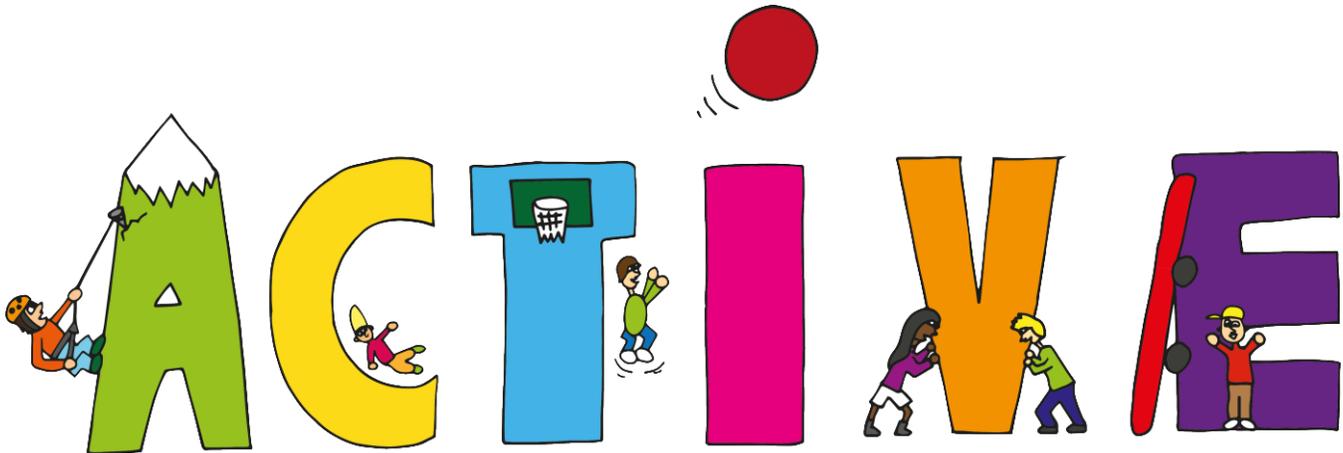
- Active learning activities

  - Guest speakers
    - Business speakers, hiring managers, staffing agencies, local entrepreneurs, alumni, etc. A list of professional organizations to contact in Kearney is provided on the next page.
    - Local Small Business Administration or the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development can be contacted and asked to come to campus.

  - Projects (pro-bono work) with UNK departments, local businesses, and non-profits
    - Entrepreneurial activities such as new product development, how to start or run a small business, and how to identify target markets. Business incubators also present valuable benefits.
    - Focused tasks, local projects, or small functions (volunteering) can serve to develop teamwork and organizational skills, and practice interpersonal skills.
    - Professional chapter events where students are in charge and thus have to apply their teamwork skills.

  - Networking
    - Collaborative activities with Career Services and other local or regional entities.
      - ✓ Workshops on how to have a professional Linked-in page or resume, how to interview for jobs, and business etiquette.
      - ✓ Career events; professional day.
      - ✓ Company showcase involving local businesses.
    - A series of events with specific industry professionals - such as advertising executives, sales managers - can serve as venues to help students to find internships.
    - Sending student organization's newsletters to the advisory board to increase exposure to industry professionals.

  - Professional development
    - Case competitions held by the American Marketing Association, the American Advertising Federation, APICS, ASC, NAHB, etc.
    - Tours of local businesses.

Listing of professional organizations and communities in Kearney, NE

Organization	Contact Person	Contact
American Public Works Association-Nebraska Chapter	Denny Wilson	402-537-6908
Association of General Contractors Nebraska Building Chapter	Jean Petsch	402-438-0400
Buffalo County Board of Realtors	Tara Rost	308-234-9655
Central Nebraska Human Resouce Management Association (local Chapter)		centralnehrma@gmail.com
Community Action Partnership of Mid NE	Martha Stribling	308-865-5675
Eagles Club	Denise Madison	308-234-2216
Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship	Jim Dubas	308-234-3906
Great Plains Government Finance Officers Association (through LNM)	Ann Aruschanova	president@gpgfoa.org
Habitat for Humanity	Ken Mumm	308-234-3101
International Institute of Municipal Clerks	Ellen Freeman	402-554-2636
Kearney Area Arts Council	Steve Cooke	714-814-9005
Kearney Area Barbershoppers & 1733 Chorus	Fran Wilson	308-234-5376
Kearney Area Children's Museum		308-698-2228
Kearney Artists Guild	Elissa Kargas	308-627-7401
Kearney Christian Women's Connection	Joleen Hicken	308-237-2597
Kearney Community Theatre	Rick Marlatt	308-234-1529
Kearney Concert Association	Sharon Almquist	308-440-8834
Kearney Dawn Rotary	Sri Seshadri	308-865-8190
Kearney Jubilee Center		308-234-3880
Kearney Toastmasters Club	Melinda Haag	308-379-8840
Kiwanis Dobytown	Jeff Kritzer	308-233-3883
Kiwanis Golden K	Myron Fougeron	308-234-1008
Kiwanis Noon	Rita Uldrich	308-237-7872
League of Nebraska Municipalities (LNM)		402-476-2829
Make a Wish Foundation—NE	Hannah Stone	308-234-6612
Merryman Performing Arts Center	Denise Christensen	308-698-8052
National Audubon Society	Bill Taddicken	308-468-5282
Nebraska Bankers Association		402-474-2946
Nebraska Library Association	Julee Hector	nlapres@gmail.com
Nebraska Municipal Clerks Association		402-554-2625
Nebraska Recreation & Park Association		http://www.nerpa.us/contact-us/
Nebraska State Home Builders Association		402-435-6772
Power Talkers	Diana Luscher	308-627-6738
R.A.F.T.	Erin Merryman	308-865-1355 ext 133
Sertoma Club	Scott Anderson	308-236-5466
Society for Human Resources Management-Nebraska		shrmnedirector@gmail.com
Technology Association of Nebraska (TAN)		info@nebraskatech.org
United Way	Eileen Dakan	308-237-6840
YMCA	Denny Placzek	308-237-9622

Building Social Capital

Social capital is defined as the relationships among individuals and the actual or potential resources embedded in those relationships. Individuals typically accumulate social capital via their social networks. Further, it has been shown that participation in student organizations is a form of social capital investment. Wang, Vaux, and Xu (2014) uncovered nine common factors that contribute to the building of social capital. Based on their findings, a list of questions has been developed to help generate discussions (and ideas) among student leaders and their faculty advisors regarding their organizations and approaches.

Social need (actual problem versus abstract cause)	• Does the student organization have a purpose beyond themselves?
Visionary individual(s)	• Is there a leader with a vision for the organization?
Ball carriers (either professionals or volunteers)	• Are there ball carriers (student leaders & industry professionals) who can help carry the vision further?
Funding	• Is there money available to make things happen that does not add to the burden of the leaders?
Catchy slogans or rallying cries	• Is the vision for the group communicated in a way that members are attracted to it and know the goal?
Incubation	• Is there a long-range plan? Do the visionaries and/or ball carriers have the time to do the behind the scenes work to execute the plan?
Shared stories/histories	• Are there ways in which the organization is creating its own unique narrative to reinforce social connection between members and social capital for the group?
Innovative operation of vision	• Does the leadership team buy into the vision of the organization and operationalize it in innovative ways?
Serendipity	• Is there freedom, time, and energy to capitalize on serendipitous occurrences?

The definition of each factor is provided below as described by Wang, Vaux, and Xu (2014, p. 34-35):
1. Social need: A set of communal circumstances that converge to create a specifiable need for intervention.
2. Visionary individual(s): Person who identifies the social need is in a position to affect change and exerts influence to bring about the change.
3. Ball carriers: On-the-ground workers instrumental in enacting the change.
4. Funding: External sources of financial support and the ways and means to raise it.
5. Catchy slogans or rallying cries: Persuasive monikers that capture the spirit of the goal in an attractive and memorable manner.
6. Incubation: A period of time when nothing much seems to be happening, but the visionaries and/or ball carriers are at work behind the scenes.
7. Shared stories/histories: Shared communal narratives that contribute to community identity, either before the movement for change (in this case stories are a way to inspire change) or during the change (in this case stories give focus towards the goal).
8. Innovative operation of vision: Innovative methods to operationalize the vision, imaginative solutions to bring parties together and inspire teamwork.
9. Serendipity: Unplanned and unpredictable occurrences with positive impact toward the goal.

Useful Links

You might find these links handy.

Listing of all CBT student organizations, their mission, and their faculty advisors

- http://www.unk.edu/academics/bt/student_resources.php

Listing of funding resources available for UNK student organizations and procedures to request these funds

- http://www.unk.edu/offices/student_life/rso_resources.php

What's OrgSync?

- It's an intranet portal accessible by UNK students in which organizations share event information, students can exchange messages, and members of organizations can document and report their involvement activities. It's the best way to stay connected to club and organization activities and members.
- https://orgsync.com/login/university-of-nebraska-kearney

UNK Office of Student Life (for questions about policies)

- http://www.unk.edu/offices/student_life/staff_and_building_hours.php

This document is created based on the following sources:

Recognized Student Organization Handbook, University of Nebraska at Kearney. Provided by

Nebraskan Student Union and Student Engagement.

Student Organization Survey – Fall 2014, College of Business and Technology, UNK.

Advisor Manual, University of Central Missouri. Retrieved from

https://www.ucmo.edu/osa/studentorgs/documents/student_organization_advisor_manual.pdf

Advisor Manual from ACPA, Western Illinois University. Retrieved from

http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/student_activities/student_organizations/pdf/acpaadvis

ormanual.pdf

Dunkel, N. W., & Schuh, J. H. (1998). *Advising student groups and organizations.* San Francisco,

CA: Jossey-Bass.

Munoz, L., Miller, R. J., & Poole, S. M. (2016). Who are you going after? A practical typology to

generate engagement in professional student organizations. *Marketing Education Review*,

26(2), 105-118.

Wang, D., Vaux, D. E., & Xu, M. (2014). Better bowling: 'doing with' for design studio

instruction and public scholarship. *Journal of Interior Design*, *39*(1), 33-45.