

EMPOWERING THE CAMPUS STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISERS IN THE PHILIPPINES:A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Campus Organization Advisers play a vital role in the success of any student organizations. They are considered as motivational factors as they lead their organizations into the right track of student leadership. They can even break or make the whole performance of the student organization. In the Philippines, there is no existing relevant guidelines, many Campus Organization Advisers from different HEIs are confused on how they will do their role as Campus Student Organization Advisers. This study will help Campus Organization Advisers to be more effective and efficient by producing institutionalized principles and guidelines that are acceptable to the majority to the HEIs. In addition, the study will primarily focus on helping the Campus Organization Advisers understand their roles and responsibilities by coming up with suitable guidelines about Campus Advising. It targets majority of the Campus Advisers from the National Capital Region, from private and public universities and colleges. Still, some of the Campus Organization Advisers from different provinces will be the major respondents in order to have a comparative perspective on the set--up of Campus Advising in NCR and from provinces. Furthermore, this study will present different challenges and concerns facing all Campus Advisers in performing their responsibilities. Campus Advisers are confused on how they will perform their responsibilities as Advisers. It is also good to note that in the Philippines, private and public HEIs have different set--up in regards with Campus Organization Advising. While there are challenges, this study will also present the best practices on Campus Advising from different private and public HEIs in the National Capital Region and nearby provinces. To have a sustainable guidelines, it also best to benchmark from different national organizations focusing on developing the skills of Campus Organization Advisers. It plays an important role in having a different perspective about the major focus of the study. This action research will gather data based from the interview to some of the Student Leaders, Campus Organization Advisers, Student Affairs Practitioners and even the administrators from private and public universities and colleges in NCR and nearby provinces to know how Campus Organization Advisers failed or become productive and successful.

Keywords: Campus Organization Advisers, Student Leaders, Student Affairs Practitioners, Student Organizations

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Campus Student Organization Advisers play a vital role in the success of any student organizations. They are considered as motivational factors as they lead their organization into the right track of student leadership. They can even break or make the whole performance of the student organization.

In the Philippines, the practice of Student Affairs is guided by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order Number 63 series of 2013 which focused on the Enhanced Policies and Guidelines on the Student Services. This serves as guiding principles of all the private and public universities/colleges in promoting different student development programs. This covers the following: Student Welfare Services, Student Development Services, and Other Student Programs and Services. All of these services are in placed and being used by all Higher Educational Institutions in serving its students.

To elaborate, one of its major services, the Student Development Services has different sub--services focusing on Student Activities, Student Publication and Yearbook, Leadership Training, Student Discipline, Student Organization and Activities, and Student Council and Government. The guidelines are cleared and well explained in order for HEIs to be of better service in the category of Student Development. These are the areas where the Campus Student Organization Advisers come in as moderator or even much more. Nevertheless, the guidelines on Campus Organization Advising has not been established. Maybe because the Commission empowers all Higher Educational Institutions to monitor its Campus Organization Advisers as contributors to the holistic development of the students.

Indeed, different HEIs in the Philippines have different styles and techniques on how they empower the Advisers. Furthermore, the study will focus on determining factors or methodology in empowering the Campus Student Organization Advisers in the Philippines.

Definitions

Campus Student Organization Adviser (CSOA) is a faculty, associate or staff member who provides support and guidance to the officers and members of a Recognized Student Organizations in the higher educational institution. The adviser does not only serve as a representative of the group in an official capacity, but also as a student advocate. An adviser is one who gives ideas, shares insight, provides a different perspective, encourages and challenges organization members.

Recognized Student Organization is group of currently--enrolled students in different Higher Educational Institutions who form together for a common purpose and goal. Their organization is being recognized by the HEIs.

2.0 BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Due to the lack of some pertinent guidelines, many Campus Student Organization Advisers from different HEIs are even disorganized on how they will do their role as

Campus Advisers. There are no institutionalized rules and regulations which serve as guides to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of all Campus Organization Advisers. Some are fortunate if their university implements certain guidelines, but majority of the Campus Student Organization Advisers haven't encountered a manual containing their responsibilities. Some only rely on their experiences, knowledge as individual professional and by attending convention being conducted by different national organizations which focus on Campus Organization Advising. If this is the case, majority of the recognized student organizations are not properly guided primarily because their Campus Organization Advisers are not also well-equipped and trained.

The study aims to help the Campus Student Organization Advisers to be more effective and efficient by producing an institutionalized principles and guidelines that are acceptable to the majority to the HEIs, as well as in the international perspective. Their role must not be taken for granted as one of the factors in producing dynamic student organization in different HEIs in the country. This study focuses in providing appropriate and effective trainings to fortify them by different skills and aptitudes for the holistic development of the recognized student organizations. In addition, this study wishes to come up with a lot of concept on how the Campus Organization Advisers will be oriented and equipped about their roles to avoid any future concerns with their organizations and with their schools. Lastly, this paper intends not only to present guidelines but to encourage the Campus Student Organization Advisers to be more committed and responsible in campus advising.

To present a more holistic approach about this case study, it will present different challenges and concerns facing all Campus Advisers in performing their responsibilities. It is also worthy to note that in the Philippines, private and public HEIs have different set-up in regards with Campus Organization Advising which is also a major discussion in this paper. While there are challenges, this study will also present the best practices on Campus Advising from different private and public HEIs in the National Capital Region, as well as other parts of the country.

Since the paper aims to empower the Campus Organization Advisers, it is also important to include the role of different national organizations focusing on developing the skills of Campus Organization Advisers. It is necessary to deliberate how these organizations' activities can help mold and train the Campus Organization Advisers in the Philippines.

3.0 KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Campus Student Organization Advising

Advising is an educative process--centred on assisting individual students in planning, acquiring, and assessing their own educations as learners while navigating the institution's educational opportunities. Individuals are deemed responsible for acquiring the self--knowledge and direction needed to benefit maximally from the curriculum. The traditionalist advising system is knowledge and teacher centred, not learning and student centred (Melander, 2005). This is where the importance of co--curricular and extra--curricular involvement comes in.

It is a vital part of the over--all collegiate student experience. It provides students the opportunity to apply what they are learning inside the classroom to their lives outside the class. Co--curricular and extra--curricular involvement enhances student learning and cognitive, psychological, moral and ethical development (Kuh, 2009). Students develop greater self--knowledge of their talents and strengths as well as improving their leadership competence and the capacity to mobilize themselves and others to serve and work collaboratively (Astin & Astin, 1996). This involvement through student activities prepares students for personal and professional success beyond graduation. We uphold the choice of our students to be involved in the campus and community, and student organizations provide an important avenue to engage in the co and extra--curricular experiences.

Institutionalized principles and guidelines

a. Role of Campus Student Organization Advisers

Campus Student Organization Advisers consider as mentor, moderator, teacher, consultant, mediator, teambuilder, holistic formator, evaluator, liaison, guide, security, financial advisor, or in a more personal level, a friend, mother or father and many more.

If all these roles are evident to the Advisor, it will be easier for the students and organization to achieve abundant success.

b. Competencies and Skills of Campus Student Organization Advisers

No doubt that the Advisers possess the professional skills primarily because they are professionals from different academic fields. Still, they must possess skills appropriate in the area of Campus Student Organization Advising.

Challenges on Campus Student Organization Advising

a. Organizational Structure

Even majority of HEIs in the Philippines follow what the CHED Memorandum contains, there are still concerns in regards with designation of people involved in providing student need and academic services.

This concern has been carried to when most HEIs forgot the importance of the role of the Campus Student Organization Adviser. HEIs were not able to ensure that even the people assigned in campus organization advising will be as competent as it is. Maybe because many HEIs in the Philippines, private and public, have different organizational structures which also affect the job descriptions of people. There are institutions where the advisers came from the internal organizational structure of the Office of Student Affairs. While majority of advisers came from academic departments.

This structure has pros and cons on the part of the Student Affairs and in the performance of the Adviser. Still, both of the services they provide became essential part of students' holistic development.

b. Level of Commitment of Campus Student Organization Advisers

1. Professional

All of the Campus Student Organization Advisers serve as professors in the HEIs. This is the core of their job description inside the campus. In that case, Campus Advising is not merely their priority.

2. Personal

Performance of Campus Student Organization Advisers suffer because of a lot of reasons, personal family, focus on profession and interest to pursue further studies, etc.

c. Culture of the HEIs

HEIs in the Philippines have different focus and interests. These things create the culture inside the institutions. There are HEIs that never give importance to the role of the Campus Student Organization Advisers. HEIs need to prioritize their academic goals that lead this aspect being neglected. This situation discouraged some active Campus Student Organization Advisers not to be involved anymore in Campus Advising.

d. Tenure of Campus Student Organization Advisers

Campus Student Organization Advisers has no contract in any of the Recognized Student Organizations. Even they are being selected by the officers, their tenure will only last for a year. Extension of their advising depends on their performance and even from the personal choice of the college dean.

e. Involvement in Financial Irregularity

Even there are active Campus Student Organization Advisers, they do their role beyond what is expected. Some Advisers are involved in financial irregularities, particularly in collecting membership fees.

Best Practices in Campus Student Organization Advising

a. Advising style and commitment

In spite of different personal reasons, some of the Campus Student Organization Advisers became committed to their role in helping the students to succeed in life. They consider this a vocation aside from their regular profession.

b. Regular Orientation

The orientation before the start of every school year will help the Campus Student Organization Advisers understand and imbibe their role as motivating factors. Some HEIs conduct synchronized schedule of training of student leaders and Campus Student Organization Advisers.

c. Guidelines on Campus Advising

If HEIs will have cleared and precise there is no reason for the Campus Student Organization Advisers not to do their best when handling the organization. The

guidelines can able to set the parameters and even elaborate expectations between the Adviser, student organization and the institution itself.

d. Monitoring and Measure

The evaluation tool for the performance of the Campus Student Organization Advisers will be a great help in determining their performance. It can also help the organization by ensuring to have a responsible Adviser. HEIs must have different measures in working with the Campus Student Organization Advisers.

e. Former Student Leaders as next Campus Student Organization Advisers

Some Student Leaders being absorbed to work in HEIs also venture to be Campus Student Organization Advisers. The Advising style becomes easy since there is no question in their knowledge and experience in handling people.

Training and Support

a. Institutional support

1. Recognition

HEIs must recognize the effort and importance of the role of Campus Student Organization Advisers. They must realize that these professionals also contribute to the holistic development of the students. In other form, they are being sent to different national convention in line with the Campus Advising.

2. Academic Loads

To ensure the commitment of the Campus Student Organization Advisers, some HEIs do practice of de--loading of academic subjects. This system allows the Advisers to have a regular period for consultation and time to personally monitor and supervise activities.

3. Monetary support

A special recognition being given by HEIs is through monetary. Every time the Campus Student Organization Advisers attended certain event or activity, they receive honorarium. This is a very effective motivational system for them.

4. Tenure of Campus Student Organization Adviser

Campus Student Organization Advisers in the most of the HEIs in the Philippines only have one year of tenure. The period is too short for an adviser to give impact to the student organization.

b. Involvement in National and International Organizations

There are different national or even international organizations that can supplement the learning and training of the Campus Student Organization Advisers. One of the good examples is the Philippine Association of Campus Student Advisers (PACSA). The organization provides different trainings and professional enhancement programs for the Campus Student Organization Advisers from the 17 regions of the Philippines.

4.0 RESULTS

Motivating and Demotivating Factors on Campus Student Organization Advising in the Philippines

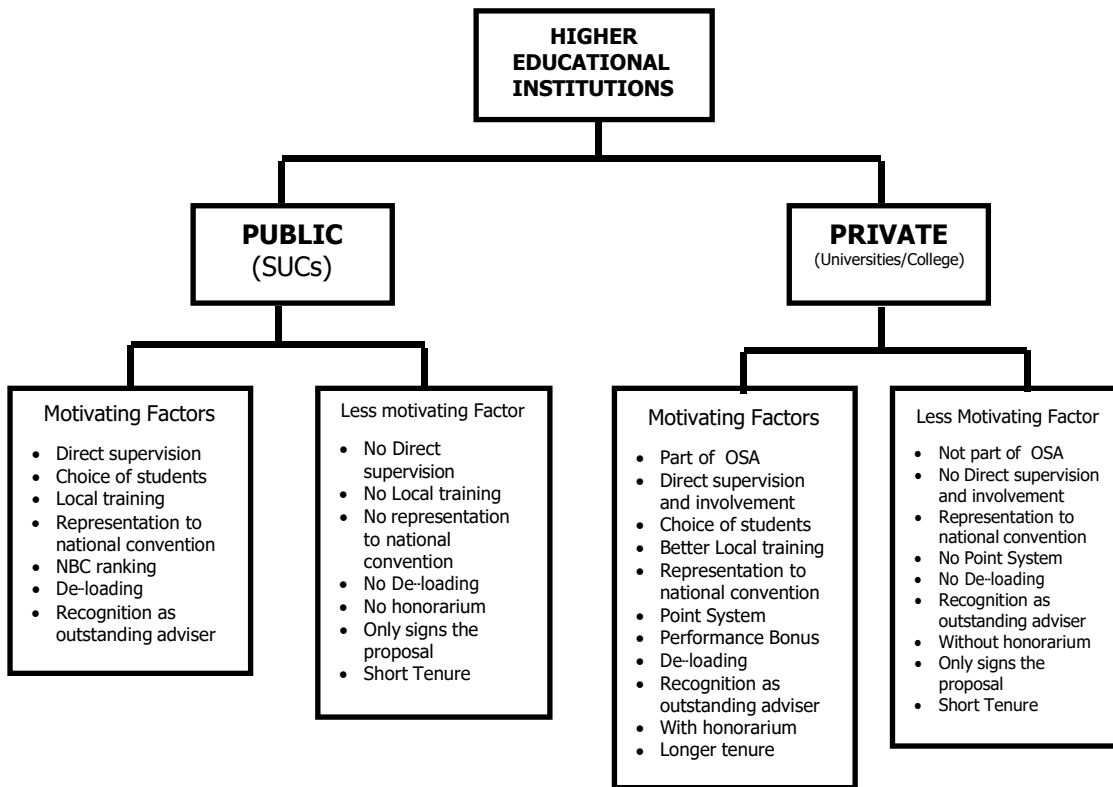


Figure 1: Motivating and Demotivating Factors on Campus Student Organization Advising in the Philippines

Campus Student Organization Advisers as partners of Student Affairs

Office of Student Affairs must realize the important roles of the Advisor. They must prepare better training in the development of the competencies. Advisers must be working hand--in hand with OSA as they are also a big motivating factor for the success and development of the student organizations.

Assembly of Campus Student Organization Advisers

As part of the improvement for the Advisers, it is advisable if all OSA will ensure their personal development, particularly being part of a national/international organization on Campus Advising. The exposure will be beneficial to the student organization and the institution as well.

General takeaways / way forward

a. Institutionalized Guidelines

Guidelines for Campus Student Organization Advising must be a work of all the stake holders. To professionalize it, a government agency must take--over in leading the HEIs. In this manner, it will be standardized and acceptable to the educational institutions. Lastly, Campus Student Organization Advisers will feel that they are part of the Office of Student Affairs.

b. Areas of Improvement on Campus Student Organization Advising

This study is a springboard of a future research. It is also recommendable to have separate study on some areas related like the following: correlation of number of student organization to the effectiveness of the advisers, national organizations having a local chapter per institution, how does the programs of Office of Student Affairs to Advisers affect the development of the student organizations.

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2. Margareth Aquino, Ed.D., Dean, Office of Student Affairs, Technological University of the Philippines – Manila
3. Apollo Portez, Ed. D., Director, Alumni Office, Technological University of the Philippines – Manila / Adviser, College Y--Club, YMCA of Manila

4. Alicia Mae de Mesa, President, College Y--Club, YMCA of Manila, Technological University of the Philippines – Manila
5. Dr. Jose Ariel A. Ibarrientos, Dean, Office of Student Development Services, Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Nabua, Camarines Sur / Vice--President for Luzon, Philippine Association of Campus Student Advisers, Inc. (PACSA),
6. Engr. King Harold A. Recto, Former Resident Assistant, Kalayaan Hall Residences / Student Leader, University of the Philippines – Diliman
7. Prof. Jose M. Abat, Director, Office of Student Services, Polytechnic University of the Philippines -- Diliman

Private Higher Educational Institutions (Universities/Colleges)

1. Dante G. Sauquillo, Director for Student Activities / Chair, Physics Department / Former Adviser, Mountaineering Club, MAPUA University
2. Engr. Erison C. Roque, Chair, Department of Chemical Engineering / Former President, Association of Campus Student Advisers (ACSA), Adamson University, Manila / Board Member, Philippine Association of Campus Student Advisers, Inc. (PACSA)
3. Engr. Jocelyn Antonio, Faculty and Former Outstanding Adviser, Math and Science Organization / Far Eastern University Institute of Technology
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