Engaging Student Organization Advisors in Risk Management Education

Khrystal L. Smith, Doctoral Candidate
Dr. Richard Mullendore, Professor
College Student Affairs Administration
Department of Counseling & Human Development Services
Learning Outcomes

By participating in this session, attendees will be able to:

• Increase awareness of risk management (RM) education within the context of student organizations
• Identify methods for educating student organization advisors about RM
• Increase knowledge of existing models of RM education for student organizations
Overview of Presentation

- Understanding Advisor Roles
- Defining Risk Management in Student Organizations
- Historical Perspectives
- Overview of Advisor Study
- Group Discussion
- Examples of Educational Models & Resources
- Q&A
Understanding Advisor Roles

Advisor Roles
- Mentor
- Supervisor/Administrator
- Teacher/Educator
- Leader
- Collaborator

Often serve as “first line of defense” when problems occur

“Reasonable Person”
- Applies standards to student events, reviews activities with officers and other members who are planning programs and making sure that risks have been identified and minimized.
Defining Risk Management

“[T]he process of advising organizations of the potential and perceived risks involved in their activities as well as, supervising organization activities and taking corrective actions and proactive steps to minimize accidental injury and/or loss.”

Texas A&M University Department of Student Activities

More than just the avoidance of injuries, loss, and litigation, also about student development & education

Risk Management for Student Organizations: Putting it in a Student Development Perspective

Essentially, advisor education is a form of risk management
Historical Overview

In Loco Parentis
• Colleges & universities operate “in the place of parents”
• Dixon v. Alabama State BOE (1961) rejected notion

Responsibility of Care
• “Obligation to exercise a level of care towards an individual, as is reasonable in all the circumstances”
• Duty to Care (Tort Liability/Negligence)

Facilitator University
• Promotes the concept of a facilitator university that seeks to share responsibility rather than allocating it unilaterally or not at all. As related to Student Activities, the facilitator model encourages student leaders as well as faculty and staff advisors to collaborate on the creation of student organization environments that help members and leaders make intelligent, fair and reasonable choices within the boundaries established by state, federal or local laws.
Legal Issues Involving Advisors

  - Advisor not actively engaged in preventing an event which resulted in a hazing related assault, in addition to failure to follow written policies of national organization.

  - Advisors failed to provide appropriate supervision during meetings & rehearsals, during which a student was injured.

- **Rider University (2007)**
  - Dean of Students & Greek Life Director were charged following an alcohol-related death connected to a fraternity hazing event. Charges were eventually dropped against the administrators.
Purpose Statement

- In an effort to contribute to existing knowledge of risk management education and student organizations, the purpose of this study was to understand if and how advisors of Greek-letter sororities are educating student members about risk management.

Research Questions:

- RQ1: How do sorority advisors define risk management?
- RQ2: How are sorority advisors educated about risk management?
- RQ3: How do sorority advisors educate their students about risk management?
About the Study

- Basic interpretive qualitative approach
  - Study occurred Spring & Summer 2007

- Participants
  - 4 Chapter advisors to National Panhellenic Conference-affiliated sororities at a large university in the Southeast
  - 1.5 - 8 years of experience as advisor

- Interviews
  - Interview protocol
  - Audio-recorded & transcribed
Findings

- Alcohol the major concern of participants
- Advisor as the “reasonable person”
- Attempt to incorporate RM education as part of advisory role(s)
  - Lack of institutional resources for advisor education
  - Dependence on previous membership experiences
  - Reliance on student to act as major RM educator
Examples of R M E ducation M odel s & E ducational R e sources

- Texas A&M University
- Arizona State University
- University of Texas
- FIPG
- University of Georgia
Arizona State University
Memorial Union

http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/mu/clubs/risk/
University of Texas-Austin
Student Activities & Leadership Development (SALD)

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sald/riskmgmt.php
Fraternal Information & Programming Group (FIPG)

FIPG’s Mission:
“To promote sound risk management policies and practices and to be the leading resource of risk management education, programming and information to the broad based constituency involved in all aspects of Greek life”

http://www.fipg.org
Center for Student Organizations Advisor Brown
Bag Information Series

- Monthly 1-hour information sessions
- Open to advisors of registered student organizations
- Topics include:
  - *Financial Management & Resources for Student Organizations*
  - *Understanding Campus Policies & Resources*
  - *What Does it Mean to be a “Good” Advisor?*
  - *“Am I Liable?” and Other Risk Management Concerns*
“Am I Liable?” & Other Risk Management Concerns

Overview of Presentation

• Historical Overview of Legal Issues
• Current/Recent Events
• Risk Management & Event Planning
• Additional Resources
• Question & Answer Session
Group Discussion

What resources do you have for educating advisors about risk management?

• How were they developed?
• Challenges /benefits advisor RM education programs?
• Suggestions
Any Questions?
Thank you for attending our session!

Contact Information:
Khrystal L. Smith  klsmith1@uga.edu
Richard Mullendore, Ph.D.  richardm@uga.edu

College Student Affairs Administration
Department of Counseling & Human Development Services
College of Education
University of Georgia