

# **SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR:**

## **Student Council Advisors**

How do you do it? How do you balance being an advisor, ad classroom teacher, a member of the teaching staff, as well as a person with a private and personal life? It isn't easy and it doesn't just happen. Effective time management must be sought and practiced.

### **SET GOALS**

We all stress to our students the importance of setting goals if they are going to put their time to its best use. Advisors need to do this too! We need to look at what is ahead and sort out the person and professional priorities. We need to look at both the short and the long-term goals. Then we need to make sound decisions about we choose to spend our time. Once these decisions have been made, we then need to stick to them. Goal setting is important and necessary, but it is only the beginning of becoming an effective time manager.

### **GET ORGANIZED**

To manage your time well, you need to develop a sound system of organization. Advisors shouldn't miss meetings, lose papers, forget phone calls, misplace reports, not answer emails, or be disorganized. Advisors have too many things to deal with to let a lack of organization get in their way. Use "tools" to develop organizational skills. Start carrying a daily calendar and use it as an outline of your day. Put all your meetings and all your deadlines on this calendar. Know what is coming up in the days and weeks ahead so you can address the needs of each task or topic that you must face. Start using a daily "Things to Do" list. You'll be surprised how much more willing you are

to do your tasks when you write them down.

### **USE TIME WISELY**

Time is a valuable resource that should be put to good use. A good Advisor knows when they might have some free time, so plan for it. Gather the resources and materials needed to accomplish any given task. Don't frustrate yourself by having to get up and leave what our doing to get the stuff you need to complete your task. Avoid wasting little bits of time, too. Fill out that questionnaire, for example, between classes, complete that form from the principal before classes, edit the program proposal during the test your giving to your 2<sup>nd</sup> Period class, see the Junior Class Advisor at the start of lunch and the Senior Class Advisor at the end of lunch. Fill in little bits of free time with little tasks.

For the big jobs, try to set aside blocks of time to address them. For example, take 30 minutes to plan next month's assembly; use another 30 minutes to plan for the upcoming elections; set aside 30 minutes to grade the tests from 2<sup>nd</sup> Period; use 20 minutes to talk to the Homecoming Chairperson about their responsibilities. Important tasks need a solid piece of your time. so make it available. That way, you avoid doing these things twice. Procrastination is another stumbling block to being organized. If you procrastinate, you end up with the impossible job of having to do three things at once because they all have to be on someone's desk in the morning. The old adage "Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today" should be the motto of every effective Student Council Advisor.

### **BREAK DOWN YOUR TASKS**

#### **(Chunking)**

Keep in mind that you don't have to do all the work. Let your students contribute to the completion of a job, it will benefit them and help you at the same time. Set reasonable deadlines when dealing with others and give yourself enough time to pull all the parts together. Also, remember to give credit to those who helped you. If you do, they'll be more likely to assist you in the future.

### **RELY ON EXPERIENCE**

Avoid trying to reinvent the wheel each time you begin a new project. Help yourself by taking advantage of what you've learned from past jobs. To do this you will need to keep accurate and complete records. Many of the tasks that an Advisor does do not change much from one year to the next. What changes are the students who direct and manage the events. "What was done last year" is a valuable resource to get started and it saves time – time that could be spent with family or friends.

### **HAVE FUN**

Successful Student Council Advisor have fun with their job. They like what they do and they do it well. They receive personal and professional satisfaction from doing their job. In short, they like being an Advisor. If they aren't having fun and aren't happy as the Advisor, perhaps it would be a good idea to turn the position over to someone else. There are only 24 hours in a day and an Advisor has a lot to fit into that time frame, and it can all be done effectively if you first take the TIME to manage your TIME!