

ADVISING CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Importance: Advisor involvement in SkillsUSA activities adds experience and influence to chapter operations. Advisors play a key role in helping members develop into responsible, self-directed and productive citizens. Advisor responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Advising and supporting chapter officers in organizing and running the chapter
- Acting as a role model for students and members
- Seeking counsel from community members (parents and community leaders are great resources)
- Securing needed materials and resources to support member development
- Working with local businesses to offer field trips and networking opportunities
- Preparing students for SkillsUSA Championships
- Collaborating with other advisors to strengthen curriculum and activities

VALUE TO PROGRAM

Advisor involvement promotes interest in SkillsUSA and encourages students to actively participate. The advisor is a great reference for students and valuable listener. Use the four steps from the publication *Champions Serving Others* to guide the learning process. These include:

- Getting started
- Planning and preparation
- Implementation
- Evaluation and celebration

Using these four steps, you have the opportunity to develop communication, teamwork and servant leadership with students. These steps are also valuable in helping you facilitate planning of any chapter activity.

WHY IT WORKS

Just as you need a mentor to become a better teacher and advisor, students need a mentor to have a quality SkillsUSA chapter and beneficial activities. Keep in mind that the role of the advisor is to guide, not dictate, chapter activities. The best advisors recognize student strengths and act as a coach to set them up for success.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Use the SkillsUSA Organizational Checklist
Along with student leadership, take time to evaluate your total SkillsUSA chapter each year. The following checklist will help your members begin the review process:
 - Officers set specific goals annually (and choose new ones as goals are achieved).
 - Activities planned to achieve goals are defined and scheduled at the beginning of the year.
 - A budget is developed annually and reviewed on a regular basis.
 - Projects and activities are planned well in advance.
 - SkillsUSA has interesting, orderly and well-attended meetings. A meeting agenda is prepared and shared in advance following the *Robert's Rules of Order* agenda outline.
 - The chapter has a well-established committee system in which all members are involved in one of the seven standing committees.
 - The SkillsUSA chapter has shared projects with other organizations in the school.
 - There is a well-organized filing system to keep record of previous accomplishments and ideas.
 - SkillsUSA distributes regular press releases and newsletters to share upcoming events and activities as well as the chapter successes.
 - Chapter leadership (in official attire) meets annually with the school board to thank its members for their support of the chapter and to share highlights from the year and plans for the future.

2. Encourage and Acknowledge Meeting Attendance

Following are a few tips for making this happen:

- Create a Facebook page for the chapter, send an email message or use a group texting application (GroupMe) to notify members
- Send reminder messages a few days before a meeting (Usually, messages need to be sent in the evening. This not only helps remind members of the meeting but also gives you a chance to check in with officers on how things are going or brief them on an issue.)
- Ensure the chapter's purpose and plan are kept visible to the membership so the members keep in mind that each meeting is valuable in achieving a specific goal
- Chart progress and success so membership does not get discouraged:
 - Hang an accomplishment or participation chart on the wall
 - Have officers provide updates following meetings and activities:
 - Students receive points for participation in different chapter activities.
 - Points may include the following but are not limited to:
 - 5 points — Attending chapter meeting
 - 10 points — Serving on a program of work committee
 - 15 points — Participating in a SkillsUSA Championships event at the state level
- Take time to celebrate achievements
- Ensure meetings are useful and productive so members and advisors don't feel their time is wasted:
 - Training members to use meeting and facilitation methods increases productivity
 - Use the SkillsUSA meeting agenda format from the book *Leveraging Your Leadership with Parliamentary Procedure*

3. Create a Stepladder of Opportunities

Use a stepladder format to track progress and visually show members the various stages needed to achieve goals:

- It provides members with a benchmark of where they are currently and leadership opportunities that await if they are willing to work hard
- It shows that multiple positions or activities provide increasingly more responsibility and opportunities for skills development and decision-making

A stepladder can be used to usher members into increasingly higher-level roles, or it can help transition a chapter trying to implement member-led leadership for the first time. Here is an example:

- Participated in activities at the local level
 - Demonstrated a willingness to work and be involved
- Served as a committee member for a chapter activity
 - Demonstrated a willingness to lead and worked to complete the activity within the established guidelines
- Served as a committee leader for a chapter activity
 - Demonstrated effective communication skills, planning and completed activity
- Served on multiple committees for the chapter
 - Demonstrated the ability to multitask and work effectively on a team, and showed desire to be a leader
- Willingness to become a chapter officer
 - Understands the value of time management, has the skills to communicate effectively with chapter members and advisors, and has the time to dedicate to the SkillsUSA chapter