

## TOP 10 POINTS to consider for FACULTY ADVISERS

Christine E. Pawelski, EdD - FCA National Director  
 Center for Child & Adult Development, School of Education  
 Brooklyn College, City University of NY  
[christine.pawelski@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:christine.pawelski@brooklyn.cuny.edu)

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.” — *Steven Spielberg*

**Faculty Advisers** to FCA clubs serve many purposes and can also become important mentors to FCA student leadership and to all club members as well. Most colleges/universities require students to identify a faculty member who will be willing to at least sign-off on the required formal club application which acknowledges that the goals and activities being proposed are appropriate and have potential to advance positive learning and engagement for students. For student clubs organized under the FCA “flag”, *Faculty Advisers* are even more important as they can assist in helping students to engage in and implement high quality **Professional Development** and **Community Service** activities that will advance advocacy in critical social justice areas both during their college years and in their future professions. Admittedly there can be reluctance for faculty to get involved in these types of activities on a campus since the role can also require added time which is not easily available given teaching, research, committee work, etc. In addition, this type of faculty work may not always be valued by university administration or tenure committees, etc. However, an important point to consider for individuals deciding about adding this activity to an already full work load is that the goals of a *Future Child Advocates* club/organization – i.e. exploring issues around child abuse, bullying in families and broader community – are increasingly becoming important areas for universities/colleges to demonstrate inclusion in some way in order to secure needed national, state accreditation. Seriously taking on this particular *Adviser* role can, therefore, not only assist the university in securing their credentials, but also offers a faculty member a useful “add-on” to include when seeking tenure or enhancing a curriculum vitae, too! The following are some additional ideas that may help and guide you in ways to positively fulfill your role and achieve the FCA student club success, too! GOOD LUCK!

### 1. Expertise requirements

There is sometimes a reluctance for a faculty member to get involved serving as an *Adviser* for this type of Club, claiming they lack the content expertise needed to support the students well in this instance. Expertise needed can be viewed in a number of ways given the type of activities involved students are encouraged to pursue. Faculty members can bring “to the table” important expertise in many areas that can serve students well, e.g. legal/policy development across disciplines, experience working in neighborhoods, communities across diverse populations, or strong curriculum designing and training development, etc. It is not totally necessary for a faculty member to be an “expert” in the areas of child abuse and/or bullying necessarily as there are many resources available to enhance this knowledge (see #2). But there has to be at least a willingness to acquire and explore information in these targeted club areas that can be shared with students in some way (e.g. articles, helping to identify speakers, programs, etc.).



### 2. Resources available to you

The past 5 years have seen an explosion in the availability of open source and quality materials available to all especially through websites and non-profit organizations focused on the target areas of child abuse and bullying. The FCA website provides a listing of some of those organizations (<http://futurechildadvocates.org/resources.html>) which are well worth exploring. Another idea is to assign a student to download those materials and perhaps create a “resource drawer” in the faculty office, categorized by topic areas where you and students can gather/add-to when new materials appear that need to be highlighted. This resource drawer

could be updated – passed along to the next FCA Adviser as a way to help consistently grow over time. Also, once an FCA club is approved by the university/college and Registers with the national FCA office, more professional resources, webinars, etc. will be made available – often to the Adviser who can choose to disseminate as desired.



### 3. Model infusion of Club activities into Courses

Another exciting possibility to consider - especially for an FCA club Adviser - is to model the infusion of appropriate activities and active FCA club participation as a way to also complete various types of course requirements. Some examples that have proven to be very successful have been courses that require Community Service hours, Reflection Papers on chosen topics, Field Trips to community organizations, or attendance at a Documentary or Speaker Forum featuring discussions with experts in research and practice. Any of the above can be written up/submitted as fulfilling a syllabus requirement...along with supporting FCA club activities in a dynamic way. An FCA Faculty Adviser is in a perfect situation to consider ways to make club membership be MORE than an extra type of campus activity with no academic value. Given the mission and goals of the Future Child Advocates club it can offer faculty a way to bridge academic classroom discourse to the social realities and need to support a human community striving for equity and justice. FCA Faculty Advisers are in a great position to model and encourage other members of the college community to adopt this practice as well!



**1. Reflection Paper** You will need to identify at least 1 student (young person) and 2 professionals to interview throughout the semester only to learn more about them and to give you additional personal information as you ready to enhance your current course. An outline of required questions to explore will be provided and a short written report will be required summarizing your findings or reflections.

**2. Reflection Report: Field Experience** Many career professionals and areas of work with diverse and varied work will be required throughout the semester. Fieldwork will be completed in a variety of ways (e.g., both in person and virtual). The Reports will only require research knowledge in particular areas. However, the other 2 Reports require the additional use of a different kind of research program of interest to them (i.e., approximately 8-10 hours total). In all cases, a 2-3 page report will be required that includes background research and a discussion, etc. Various types of possibilities will be provided for Field Experiences by the Institute and our Course Facilitators as well. Many of these are virtual or are available for research/learning in more volunteer/job possibilities as well. **The Field Experiences will be assessed by the Institute.**

**3. Career Notebook** A Career Notebook will be provided that outlines career practices and expectations from the profession that can be applied to the major course and experiential assignments. Details of the notebook can be found in the syllabus. It is hoped that it will be personally relevant/developed throughout the semester. i.e. providing a



### 4. Discuss with FCA Club leadership expectations for your role

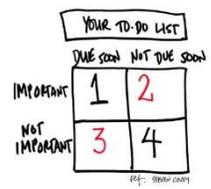
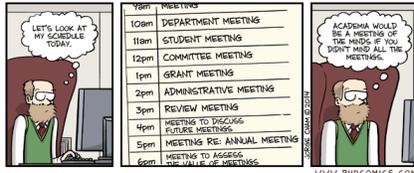
It's important from the very beginning to establish and discuss with FCA student leadership their expectations of your role as the designated Adviser for the club. Don't assume it is clear to them since often it just meant to get an "official" signature in order to complete the form and be approved. Oftentimes this is where a step is missed resulting in difficulties down the road when challenges emerge. Important to hear their perspectives on all of this, and share your thoughts about how you might be able to be helpful to them as well. There is no one way to do this either since advisement is more about developing a relationship and in this case perhaps this is where the "mentorship" possibilities begin, too.



### 5. Accessibility

This consideration is sometimes hard to positively achieve for both faculty members and students. Teaching and work schedules, full or part-time status, multiple individuals needing to coordinate with especially IF decisions or work needs to be completed by a certain deadline...all of these CHALLENGE even the most organized and committed of Advisers! BUT it is a consideration that needs to be figured out not only to build relationships with students, but also to provide the support and mentoring that is often needed. Although it is possible to "stay in touch" digitally (e.g. email, text, etc.) which allows access – important to try and figure out some consistent times when ALL can "touch base" in person in order to really be able to truly support students in a meaningful way for this type of less formalized student engagement. IF personal accessibility is not going to be possible given family, professional, timing considerations – maybe you might want to reconsider accepting this type of club Adviser role at this time...help in other ways.

NO CALLS?  
I UNDERSTAND.  
NO TEXT?  
I UNDERSTAND.  
BUT WHEN YOU SEE  
ME WITH SOMEONE  
ELSE, PLEASE  
UNDERSTAND.



## 6. Point Person

It's a strong recommendation to have ONE of the FCA club Leadership students be your major POINT PERSON with the responsibility to perhaps email you regularly with updates on club activities or clue you into possible "concerns" that might need future planned discussions with various individuals. The most likely person to serve in this capacity could be the FCA student President since she/he is also working on developing leadership skills as well. Being able to "balance" and effectively communicate with all levels of professionals is an important skill to refine. As the Adviser for this group, the "point person" role could be the one individual that your skilled mentorship abilities will be most helpful to and appreciated. Having ONE person designated as your contact can also help to guarantee clearer communication when things get very busy or complicated issues arise as well.



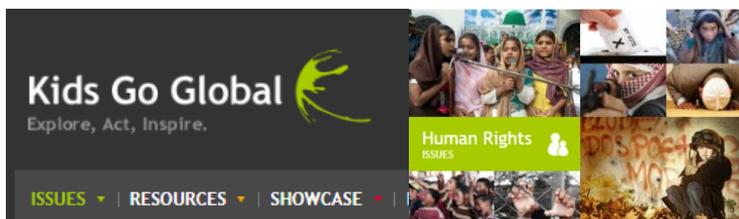
## 7. Attendance at Club events

As we know, it's not necessary for Advisers to attend all club events since some are created for more social/networking purposes as students get more involved especially in community work adding "partners" to their support. And more often than not, student Club events can oftentimes conflict with teaching a class (day or evening) - making it impossible to truly be in "two places at one time"! And of course, evening events on weekends or week days pose real problems given personal family obligations and also a question of the need for a Faculty Adviser to "show up" - *What real purpose does it serve? How to handle and when?* Consider, however, attending **one or two** of the organized more social events of an FCA student club. Bring your significant other along or friends – Buy the fundraiser raffle ticket or drink that has been designed by students to secure funding for their community action work. Students often can use these activities as a positive vehicle to invite their community partners or even other faculty members or friends to join in the work in a more "fun atmosphere" that can generate lots of positive energy beyond the event. Don't miss out on joining here as well. *It sets a powerful message to ALL about your real commitment to them and their work in these areas!*



## 8. Help to highlight Broader Issue Topics

Sometimes these types of student clubs become too narrow in the topics/areas that they are learning about or supporting. After all, these are young people, just getting their "feet wet" in areas that might be very, very new to them, scary or even controversial. An Adviser can help broaden and expand the thinking of this next generation, and even help to touch upon topics or issues that present for them real dilemmas that they will personally face in their personal or professional futures. The topics are truly expansive in the areas of abuse and bullying...and sometimes it takes that "older person" to intervene and help direct the thinking of students in new ways – helping them to uncover knowledge and enhance their perspectives. Expanded educational experiences can occur in unexpected and amazing ways for students and you, too ... especially if we broaden topics to include a global focus as well.



## 9. Provide information/ideas to enhance Club funding

Colleges/universities usually provide a limited amount of monies (e.g. \$300-500) per semester for approved student clubs to utilize for activities (e.g. speakers, films, snacks, printing, etc.) that provide support for their goals and objectives. However, it is usually never enough to provide sufficient resources for activities that can support **Professional Development** (e.g. Hosting a 1-day formal college wide conference on a topic, etc.) or **Community Service** work (e.g. purchasing of materials for activities at child advocacy centers, or assisting schools/programs to purchase and implement anti-bullying curriculum, etc.). Faculty oftentimes get alerts to small grants available within the university for innovative projects sponsored within departments or know of digital/online websites that support this type of community work. It is extremely helpful for an *FCA* Adviser to help brainstorm or introduce students to these types of funding possibilities that can yield needed resources. More importantly this can help educate these future young professionals to these possibilities, with coaching to develop the skills needed to successfully access them as well. *Enhancing creativity and problem solving for all are key given the realities of current funding challenges.*

### CROWDFUNDING



Student Mini-Grants  
Apply during one of our four funding cycles:  
September 16, 2016  
October 28, 2016  
January 13, 2017  
February 17, 2017  
umichigan



**DRINK SPECIAL – Be Bully Free**  
A portion of each BBF drink sold between 8-1am tonight will be donated to the Manhattan Child Advocacy Center and FCA-TC Book/Activity Project

## 10. Back-Up

Even though commitments are made by all to follow-through when accepting these types of professional role responsibilities, e.g. Faculty Adviser... "stuff happens" to force unexpected changes as a result of personal or professional circumstances. In addition, it is a good idea for faculty serving in this capacity to begin thinking about who else might be interested in serving in this kind of mentorship/support capacity for this group of students in the future. Other faculty members might be more willing to get involved in a more permanent way in the future if this informal introduction or involvement takes place ahead of time. Examples to get this going might be... Invite a potential future *FCA* faculty *Advisor* to attend one of the *FCA* club meetings or functions... Ask them to facilitate a discussion of interest for a student meeting... Ask for help in supplying ideas for speakers or articles they may have come across in their work related to targeted topics. Then when there is a need for you to move away from an advisory role, there is less anxiety for both students and faculty to accept this in a positive light, making transition easier for all. PLUS you might even get another faculty member to join you now in supporting students with these issues in new ways – as the saying sometimes goes - "Two is better than ONE"!

