

Potential Areas of Authority for Student Organizations

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Although it may differ markedly from school to school, and even from time to time within a given school, activity advisors and members of student organizations need to have an understanding of how authority and responsibility are divided. A general understanding of this concept will help avoid potential problems in such areas as project planning, communication, and student empowerment.

It is helpful to recognize three broad categories of authority applicable to any school setting. In the first, students have very little, if any authority. In the second, students have virtually complete responsibility and authority. Finally there is the area of shared authority between the school administration and a given student group. Logically this should be the largest, since the welfare of the student body is the primary concern of both groups.

The following is simply a suggested list from the perspective of the student organization.

Little or No Authority

- Grades and honor roll
- Homework regulations
- School maintenance
- Student discipline
- School personnel decisions
- Length of vacations
- Academic credits
- Cost of lunches
- Teaching procedures

Virtually Complete Authority

- Staff appreciation and other projects
- Evaluation of student projects
- Leadership training
- Calendar planning
- Spirit activities
- Elections
- Charity drives
- Constitutional creation/evaluation

Shared Authority

- Social events
- Homecoming
- Chartering of new student groups
- School morale and pride
- Code of conduct
- Athletics
- Assemblies
- Tradition development/alteration
- School visitations
- Student orientation
- Policy proposals/changes
- Addressing student concerns