

## Student Organization Formation and Recognition

**Original Implementation:** Unpublished

**Last Revision:** October 23, 2017

Stephen F. Austin State University recognizes the right of enrolled students to form voluntary organizations for purposes that are not forbidden by state or federal law.

Student organizations will be recognized with one of the following designations:

Temporary—designation given to proposed student organizations during their formation process. Temporary designations last no more than 90 days. Temporary organizations are not eligible for funding from the Student Organization Reserve Fund (SORF).

Probationary—newly formed student organizations are designated as probationary for a 12-month period. During this time, these groups may not use the name or registered marks of the university as a part of their name. Probationary organizations are not eligible for SORF Funding.

Recognized—organizations that have been in existence for at least 12 months and are in good standing with the Office of Student Engagement. Recognized organizations are eligible for SORF Funding.

Sponsored—organizations sponsored by a university department and designated as such by the Office of Student Engagement. Sponsored organizations are not eligible for SORF Funding.

In order to form a recognized student organization, a group must:

1. Have four (4) students (in good standing as defined by SFA General Bulletin) to act as incorporators who will be legally responsible for the formation of the organization. One of the four must be designated as the initial Registered Agent. The Registered Agent is the legal contact and spokesperson for the group. After an organization forms, the currently registered organizational president will be considered the organization's Registered Agent.
2. Select an advisor from the faculty/administrative staff who is a benefits-eligible full-time university employee.
3. Complete required risk management training as administered by the Office of Student Engagement Programs with a minimum of four (4) officers participating.
4. Complete and submit all of the documents required in the Student Organization Formation Packet. This packet is available in the Office of Student Engagement Programs.

A group seeking recognition must not:

1. Be a commercial enterprise.
2. Be an unsolicited and/or unrecognized auxiliary of a larger organization.
3. Allow minors to become organizational members unless they are full-time enrolled students at Stephen F. Austin State University

Applications for recognition can be made at any time during the year. The Office of Student Engagement Programs may grant a group temporary recognition while they are finalizing their formation paperwork and securing an on-campus advisor. The length of temporary recognition shall be no more than 90 days.

The director of student engagement will review the application for recognition when it is complete and determine whether recognition is granted.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING RECOGNITION**

The authority of an organization to function as a student organization may cease upon:

- a. the removal or resignation of the advisor, unless a qualified replacement is registered within 90 days.
- b. violation by the organization of any rules or regulations of the university or state or federal law.
- c. failure by the organization, its officers or advisor(s) to adhere to the requirements set forth by the university.
- d. the organization remaining in an inactive status for three or more long semesters.
- e. failure to provide acceptable documentation of affiliation with any parent organization when requested.

Students selected, elected, or appointed as a student organization officer (an officer is an individual in a leadership position as defined in the organization's constitution) shall be in good standing with the university and:

For undergraduates, be enrolled for six (6) or more credit hours during their term of office.

For graduate students, be enrolled for four (4) or more credit hours during their term of office.

All meetings and activities of each student organization shall be subject to, and held under, all applicable university regulations and policies. Student organizations must abide by the policies and procedures set forth by the SFA Board of Regents including, but not limited to, the Student Code of Conduct.

Being recognized as a student organization is an awarded privilege, not a right, and requires responsibility on the part of the membership of the organization for meeting university

requirements for student organizations.

All student organizations must register with the Office of Student Engagement Programs as often as is required. At the time of registration, all information requested on the registration documents must be supplied. A constitution that provides information on the structure, purpose and operation of the organization must be provided and kept on file in the Office of Student Engagement Programs, reaffirmed by the organization on an annual basis and updated whenever the document is revised.

A minimum of four (4) officers must complete the annual risk management training administered by the Office of Student Engagement Programs.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Aside from the supervision exercised by university departments over the Student Activities Association, Student Government Association, Residence Hall Association, and certain other social and cultural activities conducted on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University, the university recognizes registered student organizations as independent entities and assumes no responsibility or liability for their programs or activities. Some organizations, if closely connected with the activities of academic departments of the institution may, in some cases, receive special help and supervision from those departments.

To protect the student-led nature of student organizations, university employees may not serve in any officer role within the organization other than advisor without the written approval of the dean of student affairs. No employee of the university has the authority to open a bank account in the name of, or for the benefit of, any student organization nor should any employee be included as an allowable signatory on any off-campus bank account of any student organization. Student employees are exempted from these prohibitions.

The name of the university (including abbreviations) may not be used within the name or description of any off-campus banking account established and/or maintained by any student organization.

Responsibility for any views expressed in a meeting or activity of a student organization is solely that of the individuals concerned and the university is not to be held to approve or disapprove such views, whatever their nature. The university is to be concerned exclusively with the discharge of its educational obligation and to facilitate free discussion of all points of view to the extent constitutionally guaranteed.

**Cross Reference:** Stephen F. Austin State University Policy Manual; Student Handbook; U.S. Const. amend. I, XIV; Student Organization Risk Management Training (10.10)

**Responsible for Implementation:** Vice President for University Affairs

**Contact for Revision:** Director of Student Engagement Programs

**Forms:** Student Organization Formation Packet

**Board Committee Assignment:** Academic and Student Affairs