

Student Organization Handbook

Office of Student Activities



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY *at* GALVESTON

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THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

All student organizations must go through an annual recognition process if they choose to be officially recognized by the university and be eligible for all of the benefits of recognition.

Benefits of Recognition

There are a number of benefits that come from being a recognized student organization at Texas A&M University at Galveston. These benefits are not afforded to non-recognized organizations or individual students. Some of the privileges of recognized student organizations include:

- Association with Texas A&M University at Galveston, including the ability to incorporate the name of the university into the name of the organization and the ability to use university logos and trademarks for organizational needs, products, and communication with the Galveston community (please see the Office of Student Activities for more information).
- A free web site through The Wheelhouse.
- Use of university facilities and priority use of campus space.
- Eligibility to apply for special funding for student organizations and conference funding allocated by the Student Government Association.
- Resources and support from staff members in the Office of Student Activities.

Steps to Becoming a Newly Recognized Organization

While Texas A&M University at Galveston has many student organizations offering opportunities to students with many different interests, often a group of students will wish to start a new organization. The Office of Student Activities has implemented the following process in order to appropriately assess the request for recognition and to allow the organization the opportunity to participate in the recognition process. The following steps will need to be taken:

1. Come by the Office of Student Activities and discuss the feasibility of your desired student organization with a professional staff member.
2. Find out how much interest there is among the student body. It might be helpful to schedule a meeting to find out how many other people share your interests. You should meet ahead of time with the Office of Student Activities to schedule a location and have flyers and emails approved. Keep a list of all students showing interest and their contact information for your records.
3. Once you know that you have other students to join the organization, start working on a constitution. For an example constitution that includes all TAMUG Student Activities requirements, please see <http://www.tamug.edu/stuact/studentorgs/Docs/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Constitution.pdf>. Once you have completed a draft, bring it by the Office of Student Activities so a staff member can review it with you.
4. Every student organization must have a faculty or staff advisor. Before selecting an advisor, consult with the Office of Student Activities to determine if your organization will be a Sponsored Organization. Sponsored Organizations will be assigned a full-time professional staff member whose job description designates them as the primary advisor to the sponsored organization. Sponsored organizations are those considered critical to the mission and culture of the university. These organizations are inherently linked to the university because of their role in representing TAMU or in presenting events that are considered an integral part of the institution. Sponsored organizations routinely present events for the campus and broader community, and typically have a close relationship with a university department or office. The activities and events of these organizations are considered to involve a higher level of complexity because of their scope and perceived association with the university.

If you will be selecting your own advisor, think about what qualities you would like in an advisor. Does this person need to have any special skills? When you solicit this person's time, make sure that you make it clear to them what your expectations are. You can even print out the list at <http://www.tamug.edu/stuact/studentorgs/Docs/AdvisorExpectations.pdf> and take it to them. This can help them make an informed decision about whether they can volunteer the amount of time that your organization needs.

5. Once you find your advisor, register a new organization on The Wheelhouse at <https://tamug.collegiatelink.net>. This requires you to give the purpose of your organization, who can join, and what activities you will engage in.
6. After your application is complete, bring a copy of your constitution signed by an officer and your advisor to the Office of Student Activities.
7. If your organization is approved, you will need to hold officer elections and turn in a list of those elected to the Office of Student Activities. These officers will be required to attend Officer Training sessions to learn about the procedures for managing a student organization.

Recognition Requirements for New and Previously Recognized Organizations

Once an organization is given its initial approval, there are several requirements that must be completed in order to maintain recognition.

1. The eligibility of all officers will be verified prior to each semester. According to University Student Rule 41.2, officers must be currently enrolled students at least half time at Texas A&M University at Galveston and must have a semester and cumulative GPR of 2.0 for the semester prior to election, the semester elected, and all semesters while in office. Officers must be in good standing with the university.
2. Each semester, an Officer Form must be fully completed on Wheelhouse, with contact information for all officers and the approval of the advisor. The advisor approval signifies his/her willingness to serve as the organization's advisor for that semester.
3. According to Texas House Bill 2639, annual training is required of all students serving in leadership roles in student organizations recognized by the university. Training will be conducted in both the fall and spring semester. Officers must attend the training that is given earliest in their term as an officer. Any officer unable to attend the required training will be asked to resign from their position.

THE ROLE OF THE ADVISOR

The role of the advisor is to work collaboratively with students sharing responsibility for the organization and its events. Organizations should be open to suggestions and criticisms that the advisor may provide, as his/her knowledge and experience will help in exploring solutions and implementing organizational procedures. Expectations on both sides should be discussed, and regular meetings should be scheduled to discuss the organization's activities and events. Here are some additional points about the role and practices of student organization advisors:

- Advisors are trained and knowledgeable about the student rules related to student organizations, and are great resources about policies and procedures.
- Advisors should have access to the guiding documents and policies for the student organization. Make sure the advisor has an updated copy of your constitution and operations manual.
- Advisors are trained to report and follow up on any discipline issues for the organization and/or its members.
- Advisors are here to support and guide the organization, empowering the students to make fair, intelligent, and reasonable decisions based on the information and guiding boundaries at their disposal.

The key point is to work collaboratively with the advisor to encourage organization success and rewarding experiences for all.

Annual training is offered for student organization advisors.

MANAGING ORGANIZATION FINANCES

All recognized student organizations are required to use an Agency Funds account set up with the university to collect and disperse funds, and are prohibited from using any outside account for student organization finances. Once an organization collects money for the first time, the Office of Student Activities will have an account created specifically for that organization.

The financial records of student organizations are public records and therefore must be kept in a neat and orderly fashion. The records are subject to inspection and audit by Texas A&M University auditors, Texas A&M System auditors, State of Texas auditors, the organization's members and advisors, and the TAMUG Division of Student Affairs.

Student Organization Funding

Student Organizations should generally create their own sources for funding, whether through membership dues or fundraising activities. There are some university funds available to recognized student organizations each semester through an application and interview process with a committee of students who make allocation recommendations to the Office of Student Activities.

All funds collected by recognized student organizations should be documented with a receipt and deposited with the Office of Student Activities within 1 business day of collection. When making a deposit, student organizations should complete the Club Source of Funds form and turn it in with all money and receipts.

Student Fee Allocations

Each year, a committee of students is given the charge of allocating a specified amount of student fee money to student organizations through an application and interview process. Through this process, amounts allocated are determined based on the amount requested, the organization's budget planning, and how the funds will be used to impact student life at TAMUG. Funding Requests should be completed on

Wheelhouse in the first few weeks of each new semester. Money allocated by the committee are not to be used to purchase prizes, gifts, or anything to be used for fundraising purposes. All purchases using allocated funds are tax-exempt.

Soliciting Outside Sources

Prior to soliciting donations, a student organization must have approval from the Office of Student Activities. In order to gain that approval, the letter of solicitation and list of businesses being solicited must be presented. Letters of solicitation should include the following information: your request for support and how you will use the donation, gracious reference of any previous gifts they have given your organization, description of your project/organization, what the donor will receive in return for their donation (for example, recognition on an event t-shirt), and contact information for the donor to contact you at a later time.

Donations to Student Organizations

Due to the fact that a majority of TAMUG recognized student organizations are not tax exempt organizations, funds collected as donations are deposited based on the wishes of the donor. If the donor should choose to use the donation when filing their annual taxes, the donation must be given to the university and placed in the account of the student organization, minus 5% which is put in a university development fund. If the donor has no desire to use the donation for tax purposes, the full amount may be deposited into the student organization's account.

Tax Exemption

According to House Bill 596 from the 74th Regular Session, recognized student organizations of state universities are exempt from paying sales tax on items purchased for resale. They are also exempt from collecting sales tax on items sold if their gross sales are less than \$5,000 in a calendar year and they sell only 1 day per month (but please note that a sales tax permit is required when gross sales exceed \$5,000 annually). Student organizations must pay sales tax on items purchased that are not intended for resale unless application has been made and approved by the Internal Revenue Service deeming the organization a not-for-profit organization under Code 501[c]3.

When using university allocated funding, all purchases are tax exempt.

Forms of Payment

There are several possible ways for student organizations to spend organization funds. All purchases must be approved by an officer and the student organization advisor through the completion of the Purchase Request on Wheelhouse. **Under no circumstances is it acceptable to spend cash collected in fundraising/dues collecting efforts, without first depositing it into the student organization account.**

Payment Card

Student Organization officers who have attended finance training have the ability to check out a credit card from the Office of Student Activities. The credit card must be returned by the end of the work day and must be accompanied by all receipts from all purchases made. At no time may the credit card be used for personal items. Depending on what account is being used for purchases, tax may or may not be charged on the credit card.

Check

If a vendor needs payment by check, it must be noted in the Purchase Request. An invoice showing what is owed must accompany the request. Payment by check requires that the vendor be set up in the university's payment system, which will require a W-2 form if the vendor is new and not already in the system. This type of payment will also take a minimum of 3 days, so make sure to plan accordingly.

Purchase Order

Some vendors may accept a purchase order number in lieu of payment. A PO will reserve the established amount for that vendor, and will be paid by the university once the vendor presents a bill for goods or services. In order for a PO to be created, the vendor must be set up in the university's payment system, which will require a W-2 form if the vendor is new and not already in the system.

Record Keeping

Each student organization has access to their financial activity records through Wheelhouse. While Student Activities staff members are able to pull up financial information for student organization accounts, it is the responsibility of the organization to track their funds and request account activity reports when needed.

EVENT PLANNING

Pre-Event Planning

Event Form

The Event Form must be completed any time a student organization is planning an activity other than a general, on-campus business meeting. Fundraisers, campus-wide events, off-campus events and guest speakers at meetings are all examples of activities that would require the Event Form.

Student Organizations will be scored based on the approval date previous to their event. If an event is fully approved 7 or more days prior to the date of the event, the organization will receive full points. For every day after this, points will be deducted. A percentage of points given relative to possible total points will be applied to the student fee allocation committee's recommendations for funding. **Organizations should expect a well thought-out event to require 3 business days for approval.**

The Pre-Event Form serves several purposes:

First, it informs the Office of Student Activities of what events student organizations are preparing for, so that we may assist in making sure their events are successful. This also allows us to make sure that student organizations are not duplicating campus-wide events or overbooking certain dates.

Second, it serves as a checklist to the organization officers to make sure they have not forgotten any critical details to planning their event, including assessing the risks of their event to both the event guests and their organization.

Finally, it serves as a guide for future officers who will be planning the same event, giving them the ability to spend time making upgrades and improvements, rather than reinventing the event each year.

Assessing Risks

One step in completing the Event Form is assessing the risks associated with your event. The goal of the risk assessment is to ensure that student organizations plan and host events where everyone involved has a safe and fun experience. Risk management is the process of advising organizations of the potential and perceived risks involved in their activities, as well as supervising organization activities and taking corrective actions and proactive steps to minimize accidental injury and/or loss.

The steps to proper risk assessment are the following:

1. List all activities and aspects of your event.
2. Identify the risks associated with each activity or aspect. Consider each of the following:
 - a. **Physical** risks (injury, death, travel, food-related illnesses, etc.)
 - b. **Reputation** risks (the reputation of your officers and members, the reputation of the whole organization, the reputation of the university)
 - c. **Emotional** risks (the emotions of your members, reactions of participants or attendees, sensitive subject matter, potential controversy, etc.)
 - d. **Financial** risks (cost reduction, proper budgeting, etc.)
 - e. **Facilities** risks (the safety of the facilities for your participants or attendees, the maintenance and clean-up of the facilities, etc.)
3. Assess each risk for probability of occurrence and seriousness of consequences.
4. Make decisions about how to manage each risk identified in Step 2.
5. Share your plans and risk management actions with the others involved in planning the event, and implement your event according to those decisions.
6. Assess the success of your event after its completion. Document your evaluation information for next year's officers by completing the Post-Event Form.

Creating a Budget

The final portion of the Event Form is the budget. Take a moment to consider what costs will be associated with this event. If you will need to purchase items for your event, you will need to list those items, along with their approximate cost.

Reserving/Set-up of Facilities

Prior to beginning the publicity for your event, be sure to make sure the desired facilities are available and reserve them for your event. Below is a list of contacts for reserving facilities:

Classroom spaces: Belinda Gaddis, Administrative Assistant for Student Affairs, gaddisb@tamug.edu, 409-740-4561

PE Facility spaces: Joe Hoff, Associate Director of Recreational Sports, hoffj@tamug.edu, 409-740-4472

Athletic Playing Fields: Joe Hoff, Associate Director of Recreational Sports, hoffj@tamug.edu, 409-740-4472.

Tables in Student Center Lobby: Shelly Fordyce, Director of Student Activities, fordyces@tamug.edu, 409-740-4427

If you need help with event set-up such as tables and chairs or floor coverings placed in the gym, please make sure this request is in your Event form. It is recommended that you see someone in the Office of Student Activities to ensure that a work request has been made to Facilities Services. Last minute requests to Facilities Services may incur a fee.

Publicity

The Office of Student Activities provides many resources when it comes to assisting with publicity for student organizations. The most important thing to remember is to make sure to include all pertinent information in your publicity efforts. Remember the 5 W's: who, what, when, where, and why. The more creative the publicity can be, the more successful it will be in advertising your event.

Aggnews: Send an email to any full-time staff member in the Office of Student Activities. The email should include the exact text that you want sent out to campus, along with a notation for who you would like it sent to. Aggnews emails are usually sent at one time during the day, so to be sure your email goes out in time for your event, please be sure to send it prior to the day of the event. Emails to faculty and staff must be sent by 2:00 pm the day prior to the day you wish it to be sent.

Flyers: Flyers must be approved and stamped by the Office of Student Activities prior to being posted on campus. In order to keep our campus looking nice, please refrain from posting flyers on any painted walls, glass windows, or bathroom stalls.

Banners: Each student organization is allotted 6 posters from the Student Activities poster printer each semester. If a poster design has a full-color background, the organization will be charged for 3 posters. Extra posters beyond the 6 allotted to each organization will cost \$10/linear foot. Posters should be designed as Power Point slides and fully formatted, including slide orientation. In order to have an organization poster printed, please email the file to any professional staff member in the Office of Student Activities or upload it into your Wheelhouse Event Form. Please give at least 1 workday for printing to be completed.

A-Frame Boards: There are a limited number of A-frame boards available in the Office of Student Activities to place around campus with event information. These boards do not provide a weatherproof cover for your advertisements, and therefore, it is the responsibility of the organization who checks out the boards to bring them inside each evening, prior to the office closing at 5:00 pm.

Seibel Center televisions: The televisions in the Seibel Center have a running list of student organization meetings and events. In order to have your event added, you need to email a member of the Student Activities staff prior to Monday of the week you want the event posted.

Events involving Alcohol

In general, student organization events are not allowed to include alcoholic beverages. In a small number of instances, when the benefits outweigh the risks, alcohol may be allowed for fundraising events that are geared toward non-student, adult populations. Approval for this must be granted by the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs by completion of the Responsible Use of Alcohol page within the Wheelhouse Event Form.

STUDENT TRAVEL

Definition of Student Travel

Texas A&M University Student Rules define Student Travel as travel that is undertaken by one or more students presently enrolled at the University to reach an activity or event organized or sponsored by the University that is located more than 25 miles from the University and that is:

Funded by the University and students use a vehicle owned or leased by the University ; or

Required by a student organization recognized at the University; or

Undertaken under the scope, direction, or election of a college, department, class, university office, learning community, study abroad program, recognized student organization or their representatives.

Student Travel Safety Guidelines

During travel situations specified above, students must abide by the following safety guidelines.

In accordance with state law, drivers must use seat belts or other available safety restraints and require all passengers to do likewise.

Drivers, occupants, and their luggage should not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's recommended capacity.

Drivers must be at least 18 years old and possess a valid driver's license that is appropriate for the classification of vehicle being driven.

Operator fatigue should be considered when selecting drivers. On lengthy trips, alternate drivers should be used to avoid fatigue.

Notification of Student Travel

Student organizations are required to fully complete the Travel portion of the Event Form on Wheelhouse by indicating that travel will take place as part of the event. This form allows the University to verify that adequate drivers are being used and that risks of the trip are being managed appropriately. The Office of Student Activities will maintain this form and will provide a copy to the University Police Department to be used in case of an emergency during travel.

All students participating in the student organization travel must read, sign and return the Assumption of Risks and Waiver form. Officers can find this form online at: <http://www.tamug.edu/stuact/studentorgs/Docs/Assumption%20of%20Risk%20form.pdf>. Officers should fill all blanks within the text of the form before distributing to members for their signature. Assumption of Risks and Waiver forms should be uploaded to the Wheelhouse Event Form or turned in to the Office of Student Activities where a copy will be made. One set of waivers should be taken on the trip while the other will be maintained in a file in Student Activities for three years.

Rental Vehicles

Texas A&M University does not have a fleet of vehicles available for student organizations to use, but student organizations are able to rent vehicles through outside rental companies. The cost for rental and all associated fees must be paid by the student organization.

For rental of 15 passenger vans, drivers must receive large capacity van operation instruction provided by University Police. Please come see a professional staff member in the Office of Student Activities for more information.

TRADEMARK LICENSING

Texas A&M University Student Rules require student organizations to have advance approval before using A&M trademarks and logos. Licensed vendors (screen printers for apparel, for example) will handle the licensing work directly with the licensing office. If you are using a non-A&M licensed vendor or need other licensing assistance, please contact the Office of Student Activities. All products that are officially licensed must include a label or sticker featuring the Collegiate Licensed Product (CLP) logo.

Word trademarks of the university include:

- Aggie
- Aggies
- Texas Aggies
- Texas A&M
- Texas A&M University
- TAMU
- Twelfth Man
- 12th Man
- 12th Mania
- Gig 'Em
- Texas Aggie Bonfire
- Wrecking Crew
- Old Sarge
- Fightin' Texas Aggie Band

Design trademarks of the university include:

- Block ATM
- A&M (stylized)
- University Seal
- University Ring Crest
- Ring Design
- Corps Insignia
- Gun and Sword
- Bugle with Banner
- Star
- T Star (with design)
- Bonfire (with flames)
- Reveille
- Ol' Sarge Head
- Gig 'Em

The Office of Trademark Licensing will also only approve art graphics which utilize the following Pantone Monitoring System (PMS) colors to depict the university trademarks: maroon (PMS 505), gray (PMS 422), and gold (PMS 873) and green (PMS 341) for the

university seal. Finally, the registered trademarks of Texas A&M University cannot be utilized in internet domain names purchased by a student organization.

For more information about Trademark Licensing associated with Texas A&M University, please visit <http://trademarks.tamu.edu> as well as <http://brandguide.tamu.edu/>

VIOLATION OF POLICIES

The Student Organization Hearing Board views student organization discipline as an educational process. When an organization disregards a regulation or policy of the state or the university, the focus of the process turns to education: uncovering the reason for the violation, demonstrating why the behavior is inconsistent with the expectations of the university, and aiding the student organization in coming to the realization that certain rules and regulations are necessary for the existence of the university community.

The Student Organization Hearing Board may only be called to hear a case when information exists indicating that an organization has allegedly violated Texas A&M University Student Rules. The hearing board may be called if any members commit a violation or fail to prevent the violation when they knew or should have known about it beforehand.

When the Associate Director of Student Activities receives information that an organization has allegedly violated a University rule, he/she may appoint a representative from the Department to investigate the alleged violation. The Associate Director of Student Activities, in concert with the Hearing Board Chair, shall discuss the case and determine whether disciplinary charges should be initiated. In some cases, it may be necessary to summon the president and/or members of the executive committee for a conference with the Hearing Board Chair and the Associate Director of Student Activities.

The organization's president and advisor must be notified by letter of the date, time, and place for the hearing. This letter will describe the alleged violation and advise the organization of its assurances:

1. To be informed in writing of all charges at least seven calendar days before any hearing may proceed.
2. To choose not to say anything during the hearing.
3. To personally question any witnesses against the organization. (It should be noted that relevant witnesses can only be requested to participate in the process; they cannot be *required* to do so. In certain circumstances where confidentiality is paramount, an incident report will be substituted and the accused organization may question facts in the report.)
4. To present information, provide witnesses and argue on its own behalf. (Statements from character witnesses must be in written format rather than personal presentations.)
5. To review all information brought against the accused prior to the hearing.

6. To have an advisor present during the hearing who is bound to advise the organizational representative only and not actively participate in any way in the proceeding. a. (The advisor may not actively participate in the hearing unless he/she is serving as a witness. The advisor cannot serve as organization's representative, but can only serve in an advisory capacity.)
7. To be notified via written statement of the findings of the hearing within a reasonable amount of time after the hearing.
8. To have an opportunity to submit a letter of appeal regarding the decision to the Associate Director of Student Activities within seven calendar days of receiving notification of the findings.

In all proceedings, the accused organization shall be presumed innocent until proven that a violation of Texas A&M University at Galveston Student Rules occurred. The burden of proof shall rest with the university, which is the entity bringing forth the charges, and said burden of proof shall be by a preponderance of the evidence.