



OP 91.200: STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS/OTHER UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS

PURPOSE

To provide fair and reasonable guidelines and procedures for students organizations and other organizations including faculty/staff organizations and faculty/student organizations.

Voluntary associations of students in student organizations are an integral part of the educational experience at Mississippi State University. The university has a positive responsibility to encourage such associations as a means by which students can develop civic and social awareness and responsibility. In doing so, it neither endorses nor disclaims any particular idea, system of thought, or point of view.

Similarly, other University organizations enhance campus life and contribute to the accomplishment of the mission of the University.

POLICY

Only those organizations registered with the university may conduct activity on the university campus.

I. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

A. Registration and Classification of Student Organizations

To obtain registration as a student organization, a student group must present their petition to organize to the Center for Student Activities, Division of Student Affairs. Applications and information are available in this office (662.325.2930) and online at www.cowbellconnect.msstate.edu. The steps to organize can be found in the Center for Student Activities Student Organizational manual.

Registration of a student organization (for other than a temporary period) will be on an annual basis by the New Student Organization Standing Committee and will be effective until the beginning of the next academic year. Annual renewal of the registration shall be dependent on the organization's demonstration of compliance with its purposes, aims, and activities as stated in its constitution, and compliance with all applicable rules and regulations of the university. Registration forms are located at www.cowbellconnect.msstate.edu. A representative of all student organizations is annually required to attend student organization training sessions held by the Center for Student Activities.

Upon registration of a student organization, the New Student Organization Standing Committee shall determine the classification (sponsored or registered) of a student

organization based on the following areas: mission, advising, funding, risk, responsibility of the organization and reputational association with the university.

1. Sponsored – organizations with a mission and culture that is critical to the university. Sponsored organizations will be advised by a determined full-time staff member of the university that is a part of their university position responsibilities. All financial accounts that collect university monies will be held in on-campus accounts. Sponsored organizations are allowed to carry the name Mississippi State University or MSU.
2. Registered – organizations with a mission and culture that is consistent with those of the university. Registered organizations will be advised voluntarily by an MSU faculty or staff member or registered affiliate member. Registered organizations may hold off-campus financial accounts for monies not provided by the University. Registered student organizations may additionally have an appointed advisor from their governing body or national/local affiliated organization. Registered organizations are not allowed to use **“Mississippi State University” or “MSU” Name of Organization** but can use **Name of Organization “at Mississippi State University” or “at MSU”** as the organization's name.

B. Membership in Student Organizations

1. All Student Organizations are required to acknowledge that:
 - a. The university prohibits the exclusion of students from membership or leadership in a student organization, or any other form of unlawful discrimination, on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status to the extent protected by applicable law.
 - b. MSU promotes equal opportunity for all students as valued members of the University community.
2. Certain groups, such as social fraternities and sororities, governing organizations in single-sex residence halls, and other organizations specifically exempted from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, are permitted to exclude men or women; and
 - a. Registered student organizations may limit their membership and leadership to students who, upon individual inquiry, affirm that they support the organization’s religious, political, or other legally protected views, consistent with the First Amendment.
 - b. This policy will be administered in a manner consistent with applicable law and the First Amendment rights of student organizations.
3. Each student organization or group is responsible for taking appropriate steps to

comply with Membership rules above. Any organization that desires to affiliate with the University, use the University name or facilities, or receive support and assistance from the University staff or faculty shall register and acknowledge the MSU Non-Discrimination Policy.

4. An individual having a complaint, grievance, or question concerning selection, conditions of membership, or treatment by an organization or groups shall take the matter to the Dean of Students' Office.

C. Freedom and Responsibility of Registered Student Organizations

Freedom of action granted a registered student organization also implies a responsibility of the organization for developing the direction, scope, and character of the organization in promoting the total educational program of the university. The only limitations placed upon this freedom are those imposed by the stated purposes of the organization, by university and board policy, and by law.

The university, through the registration process set forth, seeks freedom of existence for student organizations and ensures that designated privileges and support are readily available equally to all organizations that uphold the registration requirements. The university does not, however, automatically endorse the mission, goals, or purpose of any organization. Mississippi State University, while encouraging active participation in non-classroom activities, seeks to ensure that first and foremost students successfully meet their educational goals and requirements.

Student organizations operate independently of Mississippi State University, with some receiving guidance and support from university departments. The university encourages student organizations to engage in civic discussion and promote awareness of issues relevant to their organizational purpose, but does not review or endorse their statements, activities, or viewpoints.

D. Financial Policies for Student Organizations

1. Custodians of organization or public funds must maintain those funds in on-campus or off-campus accounts, as appropriate:
 - a. On-Campus Accounts – Both sponsored and registered student organizations may have on-campus accounts. University funds or funds coming from the Student Activity Fee must be kept in an on-campus account in the name of the student organization.
 - b. Off-Campus Accounts – A registered student organization may use an off-campus account, usually a checking account, provided the name “Mississippi State University” may not be used. All funds placed in any off-campus account must come from student-initiated projects, self-assessed fees or dues, or other income not from university sources. The funds cannot be student activity fees, nor can they be revenue from coin-operated equipment located on campus.

- c. See tax implication information located in the MSU Student Organization Manual provided by the Center for Student Activities.

E. Registration of Student Organization Events

1. Events refers to meetings, socials, or the like sponsored or hosted by an organization.
2. All on-campus and off-campus events must be registered using an Event Form in Cowbell Connect. Event Forms should be completed seven (7) days prior to the event.
3. The university will not approve registration of events for any organization that is delinquent in its financial obligations to any department or agency of the university.
4. Student organizations must follow all event regulations which are updated regularly and are available at www.cowbellconnect.msstate.edu or <https://www.studentactivities.msstate.edu/>

All University funded activities of any student organization must be open to all students regardless of race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status to the extent protected by applicable law regardless of whether the funding comes directly from the University or from funds the student organization receives from the University.

- F. Other Policies: Student organizations must comply with all applicable policies, regulations, and procedures established by Mississippi State University. In addition to the policies included below in Section III.A.6, specific policies that student organizations should be familiar with and must follow include:

1. 91.100 Code of Student Conduct;
2. 91.208 Hazing Policy; and
3. the Center for Student Activities student organization manual.

- G. Discipline of Student Organizations – Any student organization may be placed on probation, suspension, or restriction, or have its registration withdrawn by the Dean of Students after having been accorded due process in accordance with OP 91.100.

II. OTHER UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Other university organizations include:

1. Student/Faculty Organizations - groups organized for both students and faculty;

2. Faculty and/or Staff Organizations - groups organized primarily for faculty and/or staff.
- B. Benefits and Privileges of Registration – Other university organizations who register receive the following benefits:
1. The opportunity to incorporate, as prescribed by university guidelines, the university name into the organization’s name;
 2. Eligibility to reserve and use university facilities;
 3. Listing in publications or found online at www.cowbellconnect.msstate.edu, and
 4. The privilege to participate in university events such as orientation, homecoming, organizational fairs, etc.
- C. Registration of Organization – to obtain registration as an organization, a group must present their petition to organize to the Center for Student Activities, Division of Student Affairs. Applications and information are available in this office (662.325.2930) and online at www.cowbellconnect.msstate.edu. The steps to organize can be found in the Center for Student Activities Student Organizational manual.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ORGANIZATIONS

- A. The university shall not be responsible for injury or damage to persons or property resulting from the activities of the organizations or for any debts or liabilities incurred by such organizations.
- B. Organizations shall be held responsible for the conduct and actions of each member of the organization while acting in the capacity of a member or while attending or participating in any activity of the organization.
- C. An organization must represent the interests of its members and control of the organization must rest with the local campus group. The organization must not have a knowing affiliation with an organization whose aims and goals are illegal.
- D. Registered organizations may build, buy, rent, or lease a house or other facility on campus only with the written approval of the university. Arrangements can be made through the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- E. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action and may lead to suspension or termination of the organization’s recognition by the university and/or loss of University privileges.
- F. Space Scheduling – all organizations should contact Event Services (662.325.3228) or the appropriate facility manager to reserve the facilities needed.
- G. Other Policies: All organizations must comply with all applicable policies, regulations,

and procedures established by Mississippi State University. Specific policies that all organizations should be familiar with and must follow include:

1. Include alcohol policy;
2. 91.300 Blood Procurement;
3. 91.304 Free Speech and Assembly Policy;
4. 91.306 Campus Roadways;
5. 91.310 Outdoor Amplified Music; and
6. 91.354 Facilities Use Policy & Procedure.

REVIEW

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this operating policy every four years or as needed.

REVIEWED BY:

/s/ Regina Hyatt
Vice President, Student Affairs

2/17/2026
Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness

2/23/2026
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas
General Counsel

2/17/2026
Date

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mark E. Keenum
President

3/23/2026
Date