



OP 91.200: Student and Other University Organizations

Purpose

To provide fair and reasonable guidelines and procedures for student and other organizations at Mississippi State University.

Voluntary associations of students in student organizations are an integral part of the educational process 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 ideology, system of thought, or point of view. Other university organizations also enhance campus life and contribute to the accomplishment of the mission of the university.

Policy

The university will maintain a procedure for registration and provide rules and regulations for university organizations.

Rules and Guidelines for Registered Organizations

1. University Organization Definition

University organizations are those whose active membership is composed entirely of students, and/or faculty, and/or staff. They are subcategorized into the following types:

- a. Student Organizations - groups organized for students;
- b. Student/Faculty Organizations - groups organized for both students and faculty;
- c. Faculty and/or Staff Organizations - groups organized primarily for faculty and/or staff.

2. Benefits and Privileges

The benefits and privileges of a registered organization follow:

- a. The opportunity to incorporate, as prescribed by university guidelines, the university name into the organization's name;
- b. Eligibility to reserve and use university facilities;
- c. Listing in publications or found online at www.one.msstate.edu, and

- d. The privilege to participate in university events such as orientation, homecoming, organizational fairs, etc.

3. Registration and Classification of Student Organizations

Registration of an organization (for other than a temporary period) will be on an annual basis by the Student Organization Standing Committee and will be effective until the beginning of the next fall 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.one.msstate.edu. A representative of all student organizations is annually required to attend student organization risk management sessions held by the Dean of Students Office and the Center for Student Activities.

Upon registration of a student organization the 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.

- a. 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. 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.
- b. Registered – organizations with a mission and culture that is consistent with those of the university. Registered organizations will be advised by a MSU faculty or staff member and may hold off-campus financial accounts for monies not provided by the University. Registered student organizations may additionally have an appointed advisor from its 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 MSU}** as the organization's name.

4. General

- a. Only those organizations registered with the university may conduct activity on the university campus.
- b. 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.
- c. Organizations shall not engage in or condone any form of hazing. Hazing occurs when a person or organization who, in the course of another person's initiation into or affiliation

with any organization, intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or to a third person.

- d. 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.
- e. Organizations must comply with all applicable policies, regulations, and procedures established by Mississippi State University (Policies related to organizations include but are not limited to 91.100 Code of Student Conduct, 91.101 Definition of a Student, 91.200 Student and Other University Organizations, 91.208 Hazing Policy, 91.210 Food Handling On-Campus by Registered Student Organizations, 91.300 Blood Procurement, 91.304 Free Speech and Assembly Policy, 91.306 Campus Roadways, 91.354 Facilities Use Policy & Procedure.) and the Center for Student Activities student organization manual.
- f. 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.
- g. 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 the Student Code of Conduct found online at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/html> (see OP 91.100). Other registered organizations (with the exception of faculty organizations) may have their registration withdrawn at any time by the Dean of Students after having been accorded appropriate due process. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs are responsible for oversight of faculty organizations, and may withdraw their registration after affording appropriate due process.
- h. 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.
- i. All University funded activities of any student organization must be open to all students regardless of race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by state or federal law or University policy. This includes events funded through university departments or students.
- j. 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.

This policy has been superseded.

5. Membership

- a. Student Organizations – All Student Organizations are required to acknowledge that it is the policy of Mississippi State University
 - (1) To prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by state or federal law or University policy.
 - (2) To promote equal opportunity for all students as valued members of the University community and to support affirmative steps to accomplish that objective.
- b. Registered Student Organizations - No Registered Student Organization may exclude a student from membership or leadership on the basis of his or her race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by state or federal law or University policy. However:
 - (1) 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
 - (2) Registered student organizations may limit their membership and leadership to students who, upon individual inquiry, affirm that they support the organizations religious, political, or other legally protected views, consistent with the First Amendment.
 - (3) This policy will be administered in a manner consistent with U.S. law and the First Amendment rights of student organizations.
- c. University sponsored student groups – University policies prohibiting discrimination also apply to University-sponsored student groups such as the Student Association, choral groups, bands, and cheerleading squads.

6. Implementation

- a. Each student organization or group is responsible for taking appropriate steps to comply with Membership rules above. Any organizations that desire 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 sign an acknowledgement of the MSU Non-Discrimination Policy.

- b. 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.

7. 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 the 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 purposes 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.

8. Financial Policies for Student Organizations

- a. Policy - Custodians of organization or public funds must maintain those funds in on-campus or off-campus accounts, as appropriate.

- b. Procedure

- (1) On-Campus Accounts - Student organizations whose existence is a direct outgrowth of a department whose funds are derived from student fees or other university funds, must keep those funds in an on-campus account in the name of the student organization.

- (2) Off-Campus Accounts – A student organization may use an off-campus account, usually a checking account, provided the following conditions are met:

- a. 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 university-collected or university-assessed fees, nor can they be revenue from coin-operated equipment located on campus.

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

This policy has been superseded.

9. Registration of Student Organization Functions

- a. Definition - The term "function" herein refers to meetings, parties, or the like sponsored by an organization.
- b. Registration of Events - All on-campus functions sponsored by or hosted by a student organization must be registered using a Student Event Form. The university will not approve registration of activities for any organization that is delinquent in its financial obligations to any department or agency of the university.
- c. Closed Events - The following guidelines are for closed events:
 - (1) It is strongly recommended that all student organizations hosting a social function limit attendance to members and invited guests to minimize safety and legal risks.
 - (2) If an on-campus party is held outside of a student organization's house or other facility, a fence is required to enable the organization to limit attendance to members, dates, and invited guests. Specifications for the fence are provided by the university. The organization's officers are responsible for checking guest attendance and established party entrance(s). A sign stating "By Invitation Only" must be prominently displayed at each entrance.
- d. Security – At all functions on campus which are open to the general public, either free or through paid admission, the sponsoring student organization must submit a security plan that includes the controls in place for monitoring attendance and the behavior of the attendees. (Security plans must be approved by the University Police.) The amount of security guards needed depends upon the size and nature of the event and will be determined in consultation with the University Police.
- e. Alcohol – Unlawful sale, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages, including beer and wine, by students on campus is prohibited. While the university has no control over off-campus social functions, the following guidelines concerning the use of alcohol at student organizations off-campus functions are suggested:
 - (1) Organizations and individual student members will abide by all federal, state, and local laws and Mississippi State University policies.
 - (2) No organizational funds may be used to purchase alcohol.
 - (3) When alcohol is present:
 - Non-alcoholic beverages should also be served;
 - Food (preferably low salt, high protein) should be served;
 - No alcohol should be consumed during the last hour of the event; and
 - An effective system should be in place to transport drinkers home (e.g., buses or non-drinking designated drivers).

(4) Appropriate and reasonable behavior is expected of all students and their guests who attend an event associated with registered organization of Mississippi State University. The health and safety of students and their guests will be taken into consideration when planning and implementing an activity.

f. Hours for Social Events - On-campus events may be conducted on Sunday through Thursday until 11 p.m., and on Friday and Saturday until 1 a.m. the following morning. In exceptional circumstances, special permission may be granted on a case by case basis by the Dean of Students' Office. (See OP 91.310: Outdoor Amplified Sound)

10. Outdoor Amplified Music

See OP 91.310: Outdoor Amplified Music.

11. Disciplinary Proceedings concerning student Organizations

See OP 91.100: Code of Student Conduct

12. Hazing

See OP 91.208: Hazing Policy

Procedures

1. Registration of Organizations

a. Student, Faculty, Staff, and University Organizations

In order 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 (325-2930) and online at www.one.mssstate.edu. The steps to organize can be found in the Center for Student Activities Student Organizational manual.

b. All Organizations

- (1) Submit a statement of assurance of compliance signed by an officer of the organization that it will adhere to all rules and regulations, policies and procedures of Mississippi State University and with all laws and ordinances, whether federal, state, or local.
- (2) The petition is submitted to the Student and other Organizations Committee which renders a favorable or unfavorable decision. This decision is subject to review by the Vice President for Student Affairs, or in the case of faculty organizations, by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

- (3) The petitioning group is notified as soon as the final university decision regarding registration is made. Upon receipt of the letter of registration, the group may then assume all privileges and activities of a registered organization until registration expires or is withdrawn. All on-campus activities of the petitioning group, both before and after registration, must be registered by completing the Student Event Form.

2. Space Scheduling

- a. University organizations must contact Event Services (325-3228) to reserve the facilities needed. After contacting Event Services, the student organizations will provide the following information on the Student Event Form: person in charge, time of activity, food service (if applicable), and custodial service (if applicable), details for "set-ups" for meetings, including microphones, lights, chairs, stages, etc.
- b. Event Services will determine if requested facilities are available for use.
- c. The activity will be placed on the Student event calendar.
- d. Student Event Forms will be routed by students to the proper person including: the representative of the scheduling organization, the organization advisor, the Colvard Student Union representative, and the Dean of Students' Office representative. If applicable, the Director of the Longest Student Health Center, the University Police, Facilities Management, and the event building and/or location supervisor may also need approval. .
- e. If outdoor space is desired for a function, the organization is encouraged to register the activity with Event Services in order to better coordinate activities.
- f. University-wide scheduled events have precedence as to time and facility.

3. Facility Use

See OP 91.254, 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 Y. Hyatt
Vice President for Student Affairs

08/24/2015
Date

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General Counsel

08/25/2015
Date

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08/24/2015
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APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mark Keenum
President

08/25/2015
Date

This policy has been superseded.