Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Howdy Student Organization Leaders and Advisors!

We hope that this update finds you and your organization members well and successfully adjusting to our new landscape for remote education, work, and life. See below for important updates and information to support your organization’s operations, please share this information with members of your organization. Also, don’t forget to regularly check out our Student Organization Resources and Updates (COVID-19) website for helpful information.

KEY UPDATES

- Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued an executive order effective 12:01 a.m. on April 2, 2020 continuing through April 30, 2020. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, every person in Texas shall, except where necessary to provide or obtain essential services, minimize social gatherings and minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household.
- Due to the cancellation of many student organization events, activities, and fundraisers during the Spring 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the Student Organization Funding Assistance Board (SOFAB) has dedicated a portion of the annual allocation of funds to specifically assist organizations recover their losses. For more information and to submit a request, search for the SOFAB COVID-19 Supplemental Funding 2020 application on the MaroonLink Forms website.
- The John J. Koldus Building remains closed to the public. However, Student Activities will continue offering virtual services moving forward. Please check the Student Organization Resources (COVID-19) website for more information on available services.
- If your organization has any messaging that it would like to share on Student Activities social media platforms, please TAG or DM Student Activities on its social media platforms at: @tamustuact

STUDENT ORGANIZATION FINANCE CENTER (SOFC) UPDATES

- The SOFC continues to operate virtually to manage your organization’s financial needs. Please email sofc@stuact.tamu.edu with any questions and the appropriate team member will contact you.
- SOFC eForms are available, with links posted on the Student Organization Resources (COVID-19) webpage. Signers must be authorized on the current SOFC Signature Card and use their @tamu.edu email address to access forms. All payments will be paid via ACH, Direct Deposit. No checks are being printed at this time.
- The SOFC is also offering Virtual Office Hours and Zoom meetings with all SOFC team members. Visit tx.ag/SOFCVirtualOfficeHours to select a time and schedule a Virtual Office Hours appointment.

ORGANIZATION MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES

- Texas A&M has released updated guidance regarding any camps and programs for minors sponsored by university colleges, departments, or student organizations.
  - Any face to face/in person programs are cancelled through June 30-
  - Student Organizations are encouraged to work with their advisors to make decisions regarding the cancellation of any programs scheduled after June 30 based on their unique needs, personnel requirements and financial commitments. Please keep in mind that additional University guidelines may be released that will need to be adhered to, so stay informed
  - Student Organizations are also encouraged to explore online alternatives. If programs move to an online platform, please contact University Youth Programs for adjusted risk and compliance information including adjusted requirements to the yearly compliance checklist.
University Center & Special Events (UCEN) has now opened special event registration for all yearly conferences, large seminars, banquets, socials, etc. that are open to individuals outside your organization membership scheduled to occur between June 1st of the current year and May 31st of the following year. See the video at https://ucenter.tamu.edu/reserve/ for instructions on using the Special Event template when making a web request.

If you are planning an event or meeting on or off-campus, please remember to follow TAMU Guidelines related to meeting size, social distancing, remote access for participants, and travel restrictions.

If you are planning to move a program to an online platform, please ensure that you are also following best practices for online events. If you would like to speak with someone about moving your event online, please email SODA at soda@stuact.tamu.edu.

We, in Student Activities, have been receiving many questions relating to student organization events and activities such as Muster, The 12th Can, Student Senate meetings, Fish Camp, T-Camp, fraternity and sorority recruitment, etc. Please ensure that your website and social media outlets are up-to-date, and that you are effectively communicating with your constituents.

NOTABLE UNIVERSITY UPDATES

- All summer courses offered through Texas A&M University in the first, second, and 10-week summer terms (including the May “minimester”) will be delivered online.
- Scientists and other experts throughout The Texas A&M University System will speak with Chancellor John Sharp about their roles in the fight against COVID-19 on a new television series beginning 7 p.m. Thursday. The special series will air every Thursday at 7 p.m. on KAMU-TV. It also will be available on the System’s YouTube channel.
- Texas A&M has published a new website called Texas A&M Responds: COVID 19 that is tracking the ways that Aggies are making a positive difference in the fight against the spread of the virus. Check out this new site for some heartwarming stories as well as good information and instructions on ways to better protect yourself and help others.

TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- As more of us are utilizing Zoom and other tele-conferencing platforms to meet and connect, security issues have arisen. Texas A&M has issued recommended guidelines for setting up a secure Zoom meeting. More information can be found on the Keep Teaching website.
- Zoom’s Desktop Client has a new update! This update allows you to lock any meeting you are hosting! To learn how to update to Version 4.6.10 & find out where the new feature is located visit KeepTeaching.tamu.edu.

The Department of Student Activities is here to support you and your organization! Our staff are still assisting student organizations as needed and will continue to provide regular updates. Please do not hesitate to contact us at soda@stuact.tamu.edu for direct student organization assistance or info@stuact.tamu.edu for general Student Activities questions.

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