



Student Activities

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

July 23, 2020

Earlier this summer, Chancellor Sharp released [TAMU System guidance](#) for campus re-openings and activities. This guidance affirms that co-curricular activities are essential to the holistic education of students, while also stating that some co-curricular activities may be equally effective when delivered remotely rather than in-person or face-to-face. In this context, the guidance also makes clear that student organization activities that occur face-to-face will be expected to observe both limitations on the size of gatherings and precautions recommended by local health authorities at the time to limit the spread of, and exposure to, COVID-19 (e.g. physical distancing, face coverings).^{*} With these overarching expectations as a foundational baseline for all student organization activities, the Department of Student Activities is providing the following recommendations regarding student organization events and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations are based on current [university](#), [local](#), [state](#), and [federal](#) guidance, with appropriate updates to be made as various guidance evolves.

ORGANIZATION MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Continue to conduct virtual-only meetings and events whenever possible. It is strongly recommended that, if not already initiated, organizations plan for virtual and/or hybrid options for fall and spring programs to allow for maximum flexibility and compliance with state and university guidelines.
- If holding in-person meetings, provide a virtual attendance option for those who can't attend in person, and consider adjustments to membership attendance requirements to support member health and safety.
- Avoid conducting events in crowded public spaces and/or as a part of larger mass gatherings.
- ***For in-person activities, ensure compliance with limitations on the size of your gathering by observing both the capacity limitations of your event venue and any local or state restrictions on gathering size at the time.** For specific information for on-campus reservations in the MSC or Rudder, visit the [University Center website](#).
- ***For in-person attendees, require all individuals to utilize personal protective face coverings in order to comply with the [Texas A&M Face Covering Policy](#),** which requires all individuals to wear face coverings both on campus and at off-campus student organization activities.
- ***For in-person attendees, implement measures to encourage and ensure compliance with physical distancing and personal health practice guidelines from the university and local health authorities.** For example:
 - Instruct potential attendees to monitor health conditions before attending. Those showing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should not attend, and attendees that exhibit symptoms at the event should be sent home.
 - Spread out seating options at appropriate distances (6' apart) and remove or block off other seats.
 - Direct attendees to avoid contact with each other, including typical greetings (handshakes, hugs, etc.), and avoid contact with high-touch items or surfaces.
 - Provide hand-sanitizer or wipes for use by attendees during the event. Provide facemasks if possible.
- If food will be provided, avoid self-service buffets or snack bowls. Instead, provide single-serving packages or have staff with facemasks and gloves serve food. Coordinate food service plans to maintain physical distancing between participants, and set up food service areas away from the normal flow of attendee traffic.
- Prior to and at the beginning of any event, remind attendees of expectations for behavior at the event, as well as the risks involved in attending an in-person activity. Consider the use of a required Acknowledgement Statement or [risk waivers](#) for in-person attendees that addresses COVID-19 risks and safety measures.
- Avoid the distribution of any printed materials or physical items, utilizing digital distribution whenever possible.
- Maintain clear records of in-person attendees and contact information in order to facilitate contact tracing in the event that an attendee is diagnosed with COVID-19 after attending the event. Establish a plan and protocol for communication and notification to attendees in such an instance.
- If you are planning an event that will involve non-TAMU visitors, be aware that the university has established [phased restrictions](#) of visitors on campus. Check the [TAMU COVID-19 website](#) for up-to-date information.
- If your event will involve minors, be aware that all camps and programs for minors must continue to contact and coordinate with the [University Youth Programs office](#) for compliance. Strategies for hosting youth programs beginning in August 2020 are available on the UYP website, but all organizations are encouraged to prepare for virtual alternatives, as future restrictions may be possible.

- Concessions activities will be allowed on campus in a limited capacity beginning on August 19. No in-person transactions will be allowed (all purchases must be made online through university approved channels – e.g. Marketplace), and the organization must provide documentation of a COVID-19 risk management plan.
- For all events, establish plans and protocols for cancelling or adjusting to a virtual option on short notice due to the constantly evolving public health circumstances, and be prepared to notify attendees of any changes.

ORGANIZATION TRAVEL

- Until further notice, domestic and foreign student travel, which is defined by [University Rule 13.04.99.M1 – Student Travel](#) and includes activities of recognized student organizations, is suspended unless the travel is deemed mission critical to Texas A&M University. Student organizations should consult with the Department of Student Activities to determine if desired travel is mission-critical to the institution, with approval required from the Vice President of Student Affairs (if domestic) and/or Office of the Provost (if international) prior to travel.
- Educate and encourage members to maintain appropriate physical distancing and personal health practices while engaging in collective travel or group transportation within 25 miles from campus.

ORGANIZATION FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

- The Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC) continues to operate to support organization financial needs.
- SOFC eForms are available at studentactivities.tamu.edu/resources/forms/. SOFC eForm signers must be authorized on the organization's current SOFC Signature Card and use their tamu.edu email address to login to sign. All payments will be paid via ACH (Direct Deposit).
- SOFC Signature Cards may be signed, scanned, and emailed between all signing parties, but must be signed in ink, as digital signatures are not accepted on Signature Cards. Email completed cards to sofc@stuact.tamu.edu.
- At this time contactless deposit drop offs are being accepted at the SOFC office suite (Koldus 235) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:00-11:00 A.M., with non-cash deposits accepted by mail at 235 John J Koldus Student Services Building, 1236 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1236. Student organization mail pickup appointments may also be scheduled during these times by emailing sofc@stuact.tamu.edu.
- For organizations with funds that cannot be submitted to the SOFC by one of the methods provided above, have a designated officer or member secure these organization funds, maintain a record of their origin and purpose, and ensure the organization leadership and advisor is aware of the possession of these funds.
- Marketplace remains fully operational for purchases as well as donations and refunds. For assistance, or to set up a Marketplace storefront for your organization, contact sofcga@stuact.tamu.edu.
- SOFC Trainings are available online. Officer and Advisor Essentials modules and Marketplace trainings are available in the [StuActOnline Training Center](#) or visit the [SOFC YouTube Channel](#) for topic-specific videos.
- To schedule a Virtual Office Hours appointment with an SOFC team member, visit tx.ag/SOFCVirtualOfficeHours to select a time. For other questions or concerns, please email sofc@stuact.tamu.edu for support.
- In light of the financial circumstances and hardships many individuals are experiencing at this time, it is recommended that student organizations cancel or postpone fundraising efforts to benefit the organization if they involve direct support requests to the community or alumni.
- Fundraising efforts in support of charities or local/national/global relief efforts, however, may be appropriate. Contact Allie McConnell (amcconnell@stuact.tamu.edu) in the Department of Student Activities for support and/or recommendations regarding student organization fundraising.
- Evaluate student organization financial needs in light of reduced programming and services, and where possible consider reducing membership dues and/or event participation fees. Also consider providing expanded refund policies to encourage appropriate attendance decisions by registrants in support of attendee health and safety.

As an organization, it is critical to understand that caring for and protecting the health and safety of members and participants engaging in organizational activities is a primary responsibility. ***Student organizations will be expected to comply with the [TAMU System guidance](#) requiring the observance of event size limitations and health precautions recommended by local health authorities at the time of an organization event.** Failure to comply may result in restrictions or sanctions for the organization. Utilize the recommendations above to help guide organization planning and compliance, and continue to watch for future guidance from the university and local, state, and federal authorities to stay informed. For additional support, continue to contact Student Activities staff at soda@stuact.tamu.edu for direct student organization assistance or info@stuact.tamu.edu for general Student Activities questions.