Texas A&M University
Student Organization Manual

Student Activities

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Revised July 2026

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Section I: Overview of Student Organizations at Texas A&M

Organization Manual Overview

We are here to help you!

The Department of Student Activities (StuAct) works to provide students, faculty, and staff with the information and resources necessary to support the efforts and success of all recognized student organization leaders.

This Organization Manual was created to supplement information found on our website and University rules, so that it can help you with the day-to-day management of your recognized student organization. It includes policies, procedures, and lots of information to help you be successful. Please note that policies, rules, procedures, and even the law can change from year to year, so be sure to stay up to date.

If you need additional assistance, please contact Student Organization Leadership and Development (SOLAD) at (979) 458-4371 or email solad@tamu.edu.

Facilitator University

For more than twenty years, the Department of Student Activities has subscribed to an advising model called the Facilitator University Model, which focuses on balancing the needs and learning of students, advisors, and university administrators.

A Facilitator University seeks shared responsibility between the institution and students by creating a dynamic learning environment. The goal for advisors is to find a balance between directly guiding the organization and allowing students to guide the organization themselves. Facilitation of student organizations also implies an appropriate and reasonable degree of risk. The Facilitator University encourages students to take risks and try new things, provided that they do so within guiding boundaries (i.e. state, federal, and local laws as well as university policies and rules). Other guiding boundaries could include the missions, values, purpose, etc. associated with the institution or the student organization. In many ways, a Facilitator University works to get to “yes” with students, but has the ability to say “no” if the request or

decision is unreasonable. The Facilitator University seeks to help students prepare and transition to life after college (Lake, 2013).

The Hallmarks of a Facilitator Mindset

- **A "duty" to care.** The idea is that while students must be given the latitude to make decisions, university officials have a 'duty' to educate and help facilitate a safe campus environment.
- **A priority on education**. Ultimately, at institutions of higher education, our aim is to facilitate student learning. The facilitator's goal is to educate around intelligent, fair, and reasonable decision making.
- **The centering of institutional and organizational mission**. As university officials, the institution's mission, values, and policies guide our practice as professionals. Similarly, as facilitators, we help students center the mission and vision of their organization in their decision making.
- **Advocating for safety**. Be proactive about safety and risk management. Supporting effective decision-making with our students is ensuring their awareness of state, federal, and local laws, along with university policies and rules. In addition, initiating conversations that focus on safe practices, event planning measures, and inclusive leadership fall within the bounds of what helps to foster a safe educational environment.
- **Empowering students.** Similarly, students have the responsibility to understand their role as members of the university and local community, and how their decisions impact those communities. The institution provides educational opportunities, inviting students into being collaborative partners and effective decision makers that benefit their communities.

What does it mean to be a Recognized Student Organization?

When a group of students gather around a cause or host an activity, they form a student organization: they have the ability to assemble, express themselves, recruit members, and more. Over time, this group may seek different affiliations, such as with a national organization or within the university.

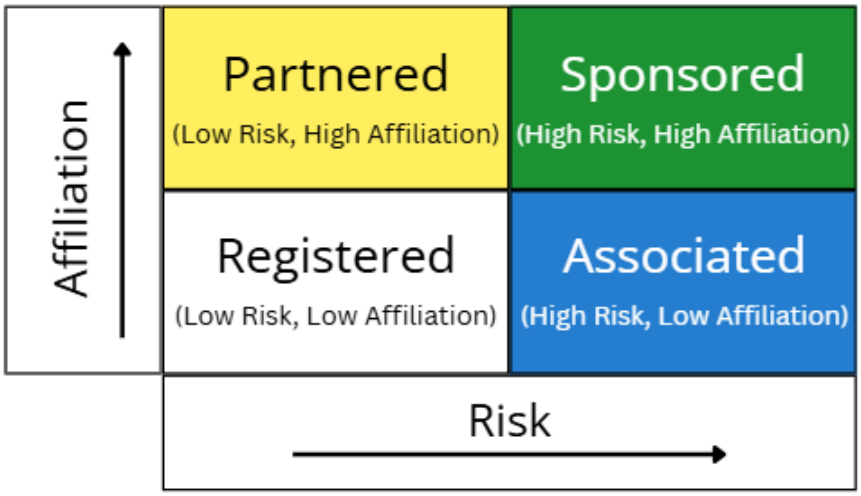
In order to become recognized by Texas A&M University, student organizations initially submit information about themselves, complete an educational process, and agree to comply with university rules, as well as federal, state, and local law. Once recognized, student organizations are expected to renew their status with the university each year. University recognition comes with privileges and resources, as well as expectations and responsibilities, as outlined in Student Rule 41 & 42 and this Organization Manual.

Recognition Classifications

In order to support the unique characteristics and relationships that exist within the broad student organization community at Texas A&M, the Department of Student Activities has developed a quadrant model of student organization classification. The quadrant model is based on an evaluation of each student organization's unique characteristics on two scales of organization risk and university affiliation.

- **Risk** - While all activities involve risk, in the context of student organization classification quadrants, the risk evaluation scale refers to potential physical, reputational, emotional, financial, and/or facility harm due to activities of an organization that may negatively impact the organization's members, other students, campus community members, and/or stakeholders.
- **Affiliation** - While all organizations inherently have internal and external affiliations, in the context of student organization classification quadrants, the affiliation scale refers to organization connections and engagement with the University through resources, expertise, staffing, responsibilities, agreements, or other types of assistance provided to the organization to help it achieve its goals.

Evaluation in these two areas is based upon an assessment of the organization's planned, existing, and/or historical activities, operations, connections, and engagement with the University. When combined, an organization's evaluated level of risk and affiliation will result in the organization's placement in one of four classification quadrants as represented by the following chart.



- **Registered Organizations** - These organizations are classified as low risk and low affiliation. The activities and operations of Registered organizations are generally smaller in scope and exhibit lower levels of risk and complexity, and the relationship of these organizations to the university is typically limited to their formal university recognition status and intermittent collaboration with campus offices without an officially established partnership or sponsorship. The privileges and expectations of Registered organizations are highlighted below and form the foundation of support for all recognized student organizations.

- **Associated Organizations** - These organizations are considered to be high risk and low affiliation. The activities and operations of Associated organizations are often larger in scope and exhibit higher levels of risk and complexity, while the relationship of these organizations to the university is primarily limited to their formal university recognition status and intermittent collaboration with campus offices without an officially established partnership or sponsorship. In addition to the privileges and expectations of all recognized student organizations outlined below, Associated organizations also benefit from enhanced training and requirements as well as additional support and resources to facilitate safer and more responsible organization planning and operations in high risk activities.

- **Partnered Organizations** - These organizations are classified as low risk and high affiliation. The activities and operations of Partnered organizations are often smaller in scope and exhibit lower levels of risk and complexity, while the relationship of the organization to the university is typically defined by an officially established partnership or sponsorship with a university department, academic area, or program. In addition to the privileges and expectations of all recognized student organizations outlined below, Partnered organizations also benefit from enhanced training and requirements as well as additional support and resources to facilitate thoughtful and more responsible stewardship of the organization's relationships and affiliation with the University and other organizational partners.

- **Sponsored Organizations** - These organizations are considered to be high risk and high affiliation. The activities and operations of Sponsored organizations are often larger in scope and exhibit higher levels of risk and complexity, while the relationship of these organizations to the university is typically defined by an officially established partnership or sponsorship with a university department, academic area, or program. In addition to the privileges and expectations of all recognized student organizations outlined below, Sponsored organizations also

benefit from enhanced training and requirements as well as additional support and resources to facilitate safer and more responsible organization planning and operations in high risk activities in addition to thoughtful and more responsible stewardship of the organization's relationships and affiliation with the University and other organizational partners.

Section II: Requirements of Student Organizations

Recognition Requirements

Each year, recognized student organizations are expected to fulfill specific requirements in order to maintain their 'recognized' status. These include (but are not limited to):

- Identification of all organization officers and advisors, including at least the Chief Student Leader, Treasurer, and a Primary Advisor, which constitute the three key university required Organization Leadership positions. Additionally, these three positions must be in good standing with the university and must be eligible to serve in these positions in accordance with Student Rule 41.
- Updated contact information for all officers and advisors of the organization
- Completion of annually required training by the university required Organization Leadership positions. Training requirements are defined by the designated quadrant classification of the organization.
    - **Registered** organization leaders must complete two core Essentials trainings and the Youth Protection training.
    - **Associated** organization leaders must complete two core Essentials trainings, one enhanced risk management training, and the Youth Protection training.
    - **Partnered** organization leaders must complete two core Essentials trainings, one enhanced marketing and communications training, and the Youth Protection training.
    - **Sponsored** organization leaders must complete two core Essentials trainings, one enhanced risk management training, one enhanced marketing and communications training, the Youth Protection training, and one elective training.
- Updated organizational public profile in Get Involved
- An approved organization constitution that meets all requirements in the Constitution Checklist. *A copy of the approved constitution will be made available on the Public Page of the organization's Get Involved page.*
- Updated signature card for the organization's Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC) account
- An approved risk and affiliation assessment
- Any additional miscellaneous items as determined by the office of Student

Organization Leadership and Development (SOLAD)

Privileges of Recognition

- Association with Texas A&M University, including the ability to use university name, logos and trademarks as outlined in the University Brand Guide (note: printed products may incur a licensing fee)
- Free or discounted university facility rental and priority use of campus space
- Free banking services at the Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC)
- Access to a Get Involved page, which features roster management, event planning and marketing, form creation, and more
- Organizational consultation, training, and resources through the Department of Student Activities
- Eligibility for:
    - Participation in Club Crawl (formerly known as MSC Open House)
    - Special funding opportunities
    - Annual student organization awards

Expectations of Recognized Student Organizations

- Renew university recognition annually through the Department of Student Activities process
- Adhere to local, state, and federal laws, the Texas A&M University Student Rules, and all published departmental policies
    - Organization-specific rules and policies include, but are not limited to, Student Rules 41 & 42, Appendices VI, VIII, & XI, and University Rule 13.04.99.M1
- The organization should exercise reasonable care to protect its members and guests from foreseeable harm during operational meetings, events and/or affiliated activities.
- Remain in good standing with the university, and fulfill any enhanced expectations or conditions that may be assigned to the organization upon recognition
- Conduct all financial transactions through the organization's SOFC account, unless approved for an on-campus banking exemption by Student Activities
- Seek advance approval to use university marks on commercial products or service promotions, purchase the products from a licensee, and have design approved by the Office of Brand Development
- Provide the organization's university advisor(s) an opportunity to review all:

    - Organization contractual agreements
    - Student Organization Events
- Obtain university advisor's approval for all:
    - Organization events
    - Financial Transactions
- Obtain advanced reservation for on-campus expressive activity that is:
    - Near intersections, and/or
    - In close proximity to academic or research buildings anytime classes, study activities, and/or research or scholarly activity are taking place

Recognition Status

Within Get Involved, your organization will always be in one of seven statuses of recognition. These define your organization's official relationship to the university.

- **Recognized** – The organization meets all requirements and can operate without restrictions.
- **Renewing Recognition** – The organization recently switched between recognition cycles and is renewing its recognition requirements. During this time, the organization can continue to operate without restrictions in this phase for two months.
- **Pending Recognition** – The organization has completed the New Student Organization process and is finishing its recognition process for the first time. The organization can operate completely, but must meet the recognition requirements within two months.
- **New Student Organization** - The organization is in the process of completing their New Student Organization process and must complete their pre-recognition checklist within one month of the organization's Get Involved page creation.
- **Recognized with Restrictions** – The organization is still considered recognized by the university, but has failed to meet all necessary organizational standards. In this phase, the organization's ability to utilize campus resources is temporarily restricted. Once all elements of the organization's Get Involved recognition checklist are completed, the organization's status will return to *Recognized*. If the organization remains restricted for more than two months, its status will change to *Not Recognized*.
- **Not Recognized** – The organization is no longer recognized by the university. In order to renew, it must restart the recognition process by contacting Student Organization Leadership and Development at solad@tamu.edu.
- **Suspended** - The organization is currently in bad standing with the university due to conduct violation, university rule violation, etc. and is not allowed to operate until suspended status is lifted.

Creating a New Student Organization

At Texas A&M, we have over 1,300 active organizations. However, there is a process to create a new organization if you aren't able to find an existing organization that fits your needs and interests.

All new organizations must complete the New Student Organization process before being officially recognized to operate on campus. The New Student Organization process includes:

- Completing a New Student Organization mini-course on Thinkific and submitting a completed New Student Organization application
- Once approved, completing the main New Student Organization course through Thinkific as determined by the course instructor
- Once the NSO's Get Involved page is created, completing the pre-recognition checklist within one month
    - Pre-Recognition Checklist includes:
        - Identification of all organization officers and advisors, including at least the Chief Student Leader, Treasurer, and a Primary Advisor, which constitute the three key university required Organization Leadership positions. Additionally, these three positions must be in good standing with the university and must be eligible to serve in these positions in accordance with Student Rule 41.
        - Updated contact information for all officers and advisors of the organization.
        - Updated organizational public profile in Get Involved.
        - An approved risk and affiliation assessment
        - Any additional miscellaneous items as determined by the office of Student Organization Leadership and Development (SOLAD)

Note: *Prospective new student organizations at off-site locations may have a modified process for their respective campus or site. Reach out to the Student Affairs office at the specific site for more information.*

Before you get started, please remember the following:

- There are **five** New Student Organization sessions offered each academic year. Two within the fall semester, two within the spring semester, and one within the summer semester.
- Each session has a capacity of twenty enrolled student organizations, which amounts to a total of 100 new student organization course spots per year.
- The link for the fall semester sessions will be live on the Student Activities webpage around the beginning of May, and the link for the spring and summer semester sessions will be live on the Student Activities webpage around the beginning of November.
- We receive many New Student Organization applications each semester. Because we want to thoroughly equip each organization's leadership with the knowledge and skills they'll need to be successful, the University-recognition process takes around 7-8 weeks.
- All organizations must meet the following basic criteria to advance in the New Student Organization process:
    - All recognized student organizations must have at least two student leaders (a Chief Student Leader and a Treasurer) and an eligible university advisor.
    - New student organizations must have a unique mission and vision that is distinct from those of other recognized student organizations. Use the Get Involved Student Organization Search page to browse through existing recognized student organizations. If you see a similar organization, don't hesitate to reach out to them to see if you can join their efforts!

If you have additional questions or want to learn more about recognized student organizations at Texas A&M, contact the Student Organization Leadership & Development (SOLAD) area at (979) 458-4371 or solad@tamu.edu

Re-Recognition Process

Student organizations must be recognized by the Department of Student Activities to remain active at Texas A&M University. If your organization falls into "Not Recognized" status, the organization's Chief Student Leader must complete the following steps depending on when the organization became "Not Recognized":

- **Less than two months:** If your organization fell into the "Not Recognized" status for less than two months, the Chief Student Leader will need to contact to the Student Organization Leadership & Development (SOLAD) office to meet with a staff member to ask and receive for an extension two week extension to be placed in the "Recognized with Restrictions" status to complete your Recognition Checklist.
- **Two months to three years:** If your organization fell into "Not Recognized" status for two months to three years, the Chief Student Leader will need to contact the Student Organization Leadership & Development (SOLAD) office to receive the Re-Recognition course link.
    - The Re-Recognition course is a self-paced course that covers important organizational information and resources.
    - Once the final assignment is complete, you will schedule a meeting with a SOLAD staff member to be placed in the "Recognized with Restrictions" status to complete your Recognition Checklist.
    - After the meeting, you will have three (3) weeks to complete your Recognition Checklist to be moved to "Recognized".
    - If the organization does not complete the Recognition Checklist, it will be moved into "Not Recognized" status.
- **More than three years:** If your organization fell into the "Not Recognized" status for more than three years, the Chief Student Leader will need to contact the Student Organization Leadership & Development (SOLAD) office and complete the New Student Organization process to become a student organization.

Constitutions

Each organization is required to have an up-to-date organizational constitution on file with the Department of Student Activities as part of their annual recognition cycle. These documents outline organizations' guidelines for self-governance within the parameters of student rules and federal, state, and local law.

All student organization constitutions must contain:

- Organization name and/or abbreviation
- Organization mission, vision, and values
- Organization activities and operations
- Membership eligibility, standards, and requirements
- Officer eligibility requirements
- Officer positions and duties
- Officer selection processes
- Officer disciplinary procedures
- Member disciplinary procedures
- Advisor Expectations
- Financial procedures
- Constitutional amendment procedures
- Statement of Annual Review

These requirements, along with other recommendations for organization constitutions, can be found on the Constitution Checklist and must comply with minimum expectations set forth in Student Rule 41. All constitutions will be reviewed by Student Organization Leadership & Development.

A copy of the approved constitution will be made available on the Public Page of the organization's Get Involved page.

***Note**: Organizations under a Batch Group Constitution in Get Involved are expected to have an up-to-date organizational constitution on file with their Batch Manager.*

Organization Name Change Process

Student Organizations who want to change the official name of their organization will need to complete the Organization Name Change Request Form on Get Involved. The Student Organization Leadership and Development team will review the request and assist the organization in changing their name on Get Involved and with the Student

Organization Finance Center (SOFC).

Organization Finances

All recognized student organizations are required to deposit and withdraw all funds of the organization in the Student Organization Finance Center and/or with a University fiscal account unless an on-campus banking exemption has been submitted and approved by Student Activities, per TAMU Student Rule 41.1.3.

On-Campus Banking Exemptions

In recognition of the unique banking needs of some of our student organizations, the Department of Student Activities provides an On-Campus Banking Exemption Application for student organizations that meet specific criteria. If an organization wishes to pursue an exemption to Student Rule 41.1.3 regarding the on-campus banking requirement, an officer will need to submit an On-Campus Banking Exemption Application for consideration. The application may be found on the On-Campus Banking Exemption Get Involved page. (*Note: be sure to sign in before accessing the form.)

Before submitting an application, be sure to review the requirements for exemption eligibility to ensure your organization meets all listed criteria. These criteria may be found on the first page of the application. Also please note that if granted, the banking exemption is only in place for the remainder of the organization's recognition cycle, and the organization would need to reapply for exemption during its next annual recognition renewal process to maintain its exemption status.

Student Organization Officers

Who is a student organization officer?

Any student who serves in a leadership role as defined by the organization's constitution for a recognized student organization is considered an officer under TAMU Student Rule 41.2. This includes, but is not limited to, roles like: President, Treasurer, Vice President, Secretary, Chair, Co-Chair, Committee Leader, Peer Mentor, Exec, Staff, etc.

Officer Eligibility

In order to serve as an officer in a recognized student organization, students must be eligible under TAMU Student Rule 41.2. In summary, officers must be:

- Have above a minimum cumulative and semester GPA of
    - 2.00 GPA for Undergraduate students,
    - 2.50 GPA for first Professional students,
    - and 3.00 GPA for Graduate students
- Enrolled at least half-time at Texas A&M University
- "In good standing" with the University with regard to academic and conduct status

If an officer becomes ineligible during their term, they will be notified via email from Get Involved. Until this matter is resolved, the organization may be placed under "Restricted" status. The organization's Advisor and Chief Student Leader will be notified of any change to the group's status, and they will be sent the titles of the officer position(s) within the organization that do not meet the eligibility requirement.

Organizations may choose to enact more stringent requirements than the university, under the condition that the more stringent requirements are reasonable in nature and consistent with the mission and purpose of the organization.

GPA Appeals

If the officer ineligibility was caused by a grade deficiency, the student may choose to appeal via the GPA Exemption Application. These applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applications received will be reviewed by a committee and decisions will be communicated within 3-4 weeks.

Review Criteria

Waiving the minimum semester GPA requirement for a student organization officer is based on the premise that an extenuating circumstance of significant

magnitude negatively impacted the student's academic performance. If it is concluded that an extenuating circumstances did exist, then two other mitigating factors will be considered in making a final determination on the request for waiver: 1) the student's grade history, and 2) the plan submitted by the student for improving their academic performance.

Please note that a difficult class, a heavy course load, switching majors, or student organization involvement does not constitute an extenuating circumstance in and of itself for the determination of a GPA Exemption.

When the student's request for exemption is processed, both the student and the student organization advisor will be notified electronically as to the result of the request.

Research Credits, Study Abroad, Internships, Special Programs, & Withdrawals
Students enrolled in special programs, such as those listed above, as well as those who have withdrawn from the university, may receive notification that they are ineligible. Often, this is the result of an issue with grade synchronization. If such an issue arises, students are asked to send their name, organization name, and a description of the issue to solad@tamu.edu, subject line "GPA – Special Program Exception." These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine student eligibility for a temporary exemption.

First-Semester Students
Students who are in their first semester of coursework at Texas A&M may receive notification that they are ineligible due to an issue with grade synchronization. If such an issue arises, students are asked to send their name, organization name, and a description of the issue to solad@tamu.edu, subject line "GPA – First-Semester Student Exception." Our staff will verify the student's first-semester status and issue temporary GPA exemptions for the duration of the student's first semester at the university.

Student Organization Advisors

Who is a student organization advisor?

An advisor is a Texas A&M employee who provides support and guidance to officers and members of a student organization. The advisor not only serves as a representative of the group in an official capacity, but also serves as a student advocate.

An advisor agrees to be an educational resource and consultant for an organization and its members. The advisor should have a genuine interest in the organization and their activities, as well as the time and ability to provide appropriate support and guidance for the group.

Advisor Eligibility

For all recognized student organizations, all rostered advisors must be Texas A&M University employees (faculty or staff). In certain cases local Texas A&M University System employees may also qualify, and under the authority of the Commandant of the Corps of Cadets, military personnel assigned to Texas A&M University through the ROTC program may serve as advisors to recognized organizations within the Corps of Cadets.

The Primary Advisor of each organization must be employed at a level consistent with the organization's classification:

- **Registered**: Primary Advisor must be a full-time or part-time (at least 50%) university employee (faculty or staff).
- **Associated**: Primary Advisor must be a full-time university employee (faculty or staff). It is recommended to select an advisor with knowledge, skills, or abilities within the area of organization activity.
- **Partnered**: Primary Advisor must be a full-time university employee (faculty or staff). It is recommended to select an advisor connected with or supported by the university area of organization affiliation.
- **Sponsored**: Primary Advisor must be a full-time university employee (faculty or staff). It is recommended to secure an advisor with knowledge, skills, or abilities within the area of organization activity and who is connected with, supported or assigned by a sponsoring department.

Note: *Student Organization Leaders can change their advisors on Get Involved by navigating to the organization's page, clicking on "Organization" on the left-hand side of the screen, clicking on "Leadership", then clicking on "Replace", then selecting the person the organization wishes to select as the new advisor, and finally clicking "Appoint".*

Advisor Exemption Application

Student Leaders may apply for an advisor exemption from the employment requirement by completing the Advisor Employment Exemption Application on Get Involved. These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Department of Student Activities to determine advisor eligibility. In order to receive an exemption, an advisor must have some form of an employment relationship to Texas A&M University.

When completing the application, student leaders will be expected to explain in detail why the organization would like the advisor to remain in their position, what level of engagement the advisor has with the organization, how often the advisor meets with the student leaders, and any other helpful information.

Advisor Agreement

The following Advisor Agreement contains the core expectations the university has of its recognized student organization advisors. Advisors will find this agreement included within their annual training requirements and are asked to affirm their alignment with these expectations from year to year:

> "The Department of Student Activities appreciates your commitment to serve as an advisor to a recognized student organization(s) at Texas A&M University. The advisor plays an integral role in helping student leaders create an environment within their organizations that is productive, safe, responsible, enjoyable, and educational. To this end, we believe it is important to provide clear guidance and support regarding the expected role you will play as you interface with the organization.
>
> Qualifications:
> I am a Texas A&M University employee as defined by the Texas A&M Human Resources Department, an employee of a Bryan/College Station-based agency in the TAMU System (such as the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, Texas Engineering Extension Service, or Texas Transportation Institute), or an approved military personnel assigned to Texas A&M University and approved by the Commandant of the Corps of Cadets.
>
> Knowledge of the Organizations:
> I am familiar with the activities of the organization and have (or am willing to obtain) an appropriate level of experience, resources, or knowledge related to those activities and mission of the organization.

Training:

I will participate in required advisor development activities. These activities will be aimed at enhancing my advising skills, introducing me to the resources available for student organizations, and helping me meet the expectations outlined above and below.

Employment:

I am employed at a level consistent with the classification of the organization I advise.

If I have not met the requisite level of employment listed above, I have obtained an exemption from the Department of Student Activities.

Advising Expectations*:*

As an advisor, you will perform your greatest service by facilitating opportunities for students to exercise initiative and judgment within a proper measure of autonomy when coordinating events or activities. Advisors share responsibility in the overall wellness of their student organization through quality partnerships with their student leaders.

Roles:

I will, along with my student leaders, establish a clear understanding of the roles that each of us will fulfill for the organization based upon the tenets of the organization's constitution and Texas A&M student rules and policies.

For Fraternity/Sorority advisors: I will also be familiar with and work with the fraternity/sorority alumnae chapter advisor(s).

Involvement:

I will regularly attend executive meetings and consistently engage with the organization through general meetings and organizational events, as well as make myself available outside of those meetings/events for advice and consultation related to the operations of the organization.

Events:

I will review all documentation regarding student organizational events in accordance with Student Rule 42, including but not limited to contracts, event forms, sales & solicitations forms, travel forms, etc. I understand that I serve as a required reviewer for all organizational events, per Student Rule 42.

Risk Management:

I acknowledge my legal "duty to care," which means to exercise reasonable care to protect organization members and guests from foreseeable harm. I will do this by providing guidance and support in the organization's efforts to identify, assess, and manage the risks that accompany the organization's operations and events.

Financial Expectations:

Recognized student organizations at Texas A&M University are required to coordinate financial transactions with the Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC) and/or appropriate university fiscal department. Valuable information regarding fiscal management procedures and guidelines can be found online at sofc.tamu.edu.

SOFC Statements:

I will regularly receive statement notices from the SOFC. These statements will be posted on Get Involved.

Awareness of Financial Status:

Student Rule 41.1.3 states "Deposit and withdraw all funds of the organization in the Student Organization Finance Center and/or with a University fiscal account unless an on-campus banking exemption has been submitted and approved by Student Activities."

Therefore, I will be aware of the organization's financial status via a review of the SOFC statements and provide review and signature for all deposits and withdrawals relating to the organization.

Student Rules & University Policies:

As an advisor, you should be aware of the University Student Rules and other institutional guidelines that establish expectations for student behavior and activities.

Awareness of Student Rules:

I will ensure that the organization and its officers know where rules and guidelines are published, what the rules are, why they exist, and the consequences for choosing to operate outside their parameters.

Reporting Rule and Policy Violations:

I will report all rule violations or potential violations of the organization, or organization officers or members, to the appropriate university officials.

Awareness of Supporting Documents*:*

I am knowledgeable (or will become knowledgeable) of the organization's constitution and all other governing documents including by-laws, safety and operations manuals, risk management policies, and new member requirements (if applicable). Additionally, I am knowledgeable (or will become knowledgeable) of the Student Organization Manual provided by Student Activities.

Advisor-Officer Relationship:

The organization-advisor relationship is not a one-way street, in that the student organization and its leaders also have responsibilities. These responsibilities include an appropriate level of communication, providing opportunities for advisor interaction, and a commitment to the success of the organization as a whole.

Understanding of Expectations:

I have read and understand the expectations of a student organization advisor and am willing to serve as the student organization advisor in this capacity. I have had or will have a discussion regarding these expectations with the student organization leadership team.

Withdrawal as Advisor:

If I feel I am unable to function in the capacity of advisor, I will provide advanced written notification to the Department of Student Activities and the organization's officers. If my employment status changes, I will notify the Department of Student Activities immediately."

Organization Travel

For all in-state and out-of-state travel, the following procedures apply:

1. **Submit a Travel Information Form online**, per the University Department and Organization Travel Guidelines, no less than 48 hours prior to your event departure for any travel 25 miles or more from your respective Texas A&M campus or site. This form will request information about the logistics of your travel plans and the names, UINs, and emergency contact information of all traveling participants. In the case of an emergency during your trip, staff members from the University Police Department (UPD) and Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) will serve as your on-campus liaisons for crisis management. Should a critical incident occur, call UPD at (979) 845-2345.

2. **Each traveling member must sign a risk waiver form through the Student Travel Information Form website** that specifies the risks associated with the organization's trip.

3. **Student drivers must have a valid driver's license and possess auto insurance coverage mandated by the State of Texas.** In addition, the vehicles must have a current registration if a privately-owned vehicle. It is the responsibility of the student organization to verify that every driver possesses each of these elements. In the event of an accident, it is the driver's insurance that may be used to pay for damages to the vehicle(s) involved in an accident and/or any injuries to a passenger or occupant of another vehicle. Drivers of personal vehicles, by choosing to drive, assume responsibility for the safety of those in their vehicle, not the organization or university.

4. **International Travel:** Per the A&M University Student Travel Rule, all Texas A&M students traveling outside the United States on university or organization business are required to register with Education Abroad regardless of whether the experience is for credit or no credit. International experiences may include academic competition, athletic competition, capstone project, conference, internship, research, study, teach abroad, volunteer, workshop/training, and other approved university travel.

   For student organization group travel, proposals are due to Education Abroad for approval approximately 6-8 months **PRIOR** to travel and any payments made for

the program. Please read through the proposal website for information on proposal deadlines, steps to planning a program, location vetting, etc. For questions or assistance with planning, reach out to abroad@tamu.edu. For individuals traveling abroad not on an organization's program, registration is also required with Education Abroad. Please schedule an appointment with an Education Abroad Advisor to discuss your chosen individual program so you can be provided with the appropriate registration link.

Also, please note: undergraduate students are not permitted to travel to extreme countries or high-risk regions on the TAMUS International Travel Advisory List. More related guidance is available in the Standard Administrative Procedure for foreign travel.

5. **It is recommended to submit a Get Involved Event Form for your event and staff members from Student Activities will respond with relevant procedures and advice.** For international group travel, once it is cleared to proceed with planning (see above #4), Education Abroad will provide the next steps for participants and requirements for program leaders to complete prior to departure. For assistance with planning, contact abroad@tamu.edu and reference the checklist for pre-departure considerations.

   These requirements are the minimum measures your organization should take to be in compliance with A&M policy on student travel and to address the risks associated with travel. We also strongly suggest developing behavior expectations for participants, communication plans, and emergency response procedures.

These requirements are the minimum measures your organization should take to address the risks associated with travel. We also strongly suggest developing behavior expectations for participants and emergency response procedures.

Organization Road Trips

Road Trips are the most common form of student organization travel, and it is important that your drivers are completely prepared for the trip. The consideration of who will be your drivers, their qualifications, appropriate training processes, and the personal liability and responsibility taken on by your drivers are of utmost importance.

You may also want to purchase insurance for your organization's event. You should verify that drivers have auto insurance and may require that participants provide information about their health insurance, the organization purchase

Special Event Insurance through the Department of Student Activities, and/or purchase an insurance policy through your commercial carrier.

Rental Vehicles

One way to mitigate risks during organizational travel is to utilize rental vehicles. If your organization plans to use rental vehicles, reach out to your preferred vendor to inquire about rental rates, insurance, gas, mileage, age limits, and other policies or requirements associated with your rental. Student Organizations are encouraged to use companies that have state contracts with Texas A&M, such as Avis or Enterprise, to give student organizations reduced state rental rates. To obtain this rate, make a reservation through Enterprise or Avis using the State Code {T-X-S-O-T}.

We recommend that drivers of large capacity vehicles (commonly referred to as 10-15 passenger vans) complete training prior to operating the vehicle, even if they are rented from a commercial company. Please refer to Van Safety Rules provided by Transportation Services.

Emergency Situations During Travel

If you are involved in an accident:

- Call 911 immediately or notify local police
- Assess the situation and provide appropriate aid
- Contact your advisor
- Fill out a police report for insurance purposes
- Obtain the names and contact information of all witnesses
- Avoid making statements about who is at fault for the accident or offering to pay for damages
- If the vehicle involved is inoperable, call a local vehicle maintenance center or nearest dealer for the make of your vehicle for towing service
- If you are driving a commercial vehicle, consult with the procedures outlined in your rental information

Should you have any media inquiries, it is best to state simply that the situation is under investigation and more information will be revealed when available, and that your organization sympathizes with all affected by the accident. Be sure to cooperate fully with the authorities investigating any transportation-related accidents

If someone is injured on your trip:

- Call 911 immediately to obtain medical attention for the participant
- Render aid as appropriate
- Consult the waiver or medical release form to determine if the participant has special needs and/or health insurance information
- Contact the University Police Department at (979) 845-2345 to notify the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)
- Contact your advisor

If a breakdown occurs, you can call the Department of Public Safety non-emergency roadside assistance at (800) 525-5555.

Organizational Contracts

Contracts are a binding agreement between two parties in which each gives something in return for something else. Your organization may enter into contracts for speakers or performers, apparel sales, vehicle or facilities rentals, or catering services, just to name a few examples.

A contract should be used when:

- Any time there is a need for a clear understanding of responsibility
- When you are paying for a person's services
- When you are providing travel, lodging, meals, etc. for a performer/speaker
- Or any time any duties are being performed in exchange for payment

Contract Review

The Department of Student Activities provides courtesy contract reviews for recognized student organizations, in keeping with TAMU Student Rule 42. Recommendations provided are consistent with guidance from Texas A&M University's Office of Contract Administration. This information is not provided in the course of an attorney-client relationship and is not intended to substitute obtaining legal advice from a licensed attorney. If you would like to obtain legal advice on campus, we recommend visiting Student Legal Services in Student Life.

The Student Activities contract review process takes approximately 4-6 weeks, as it involves multiple versions passed between the student organization and department. Organizations should read their contracts carefully and discuss it with the other members of the organization, their advisor, and (if necessary) the Department of Student Activities and/or legal counsel before signing the contract. To begin the contract review process, student organizations can submit their agreements by filling out the Contract Review Form.

In all cases, the organization is expected to provide their university advisor an opportunity to review the contract prior to execution, and organizations are responsible for compliance with the expectations and financial obligations of their agreements.

Important note:

While recognized student organizations can use the university name and symbols, they cannot formally represent the university to third parties. No student organization may enter into a contract on behalf of Texas A&M University. Student organizations, and not Texas A&M University, are accountable for the financial obligations associated with the execution of the contracts. Therefore, Student Activities strongly recommends that organizations include a clause clarifying that they are entering the contract solely on their own behalf:

> "(Organization Name) is a recognized student organization of the university and does not represent the University. The organization cannot contractually obligate the university. As a (member/officer) of (Organization Name), I enter into this contract/agreement on behalf of the organization in my role as (Position Title)."

This will prevent miscommunications about the role of the university, should a party fail in its obligations or should the contract be otherwise violated

Section III: Recommendations for Student Organizations

Best Practices for Recognized Student Organizations

- Demonstrate respect for the university community and other student organizations
- Keep the Department of Student Activities informed of changes to governing documents and organizational leadership and advisor(s) in a timely fashion
- Operate in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the university and the governing documents of the organization
- Consult with the appropriate university departments, offices, or representatives when planning large, unusual, and/or potentially complex events, especially those hosted on campus
- Ensure continuity in leadership from year to year by training newly selected leaders and maintaining good records and transition materials
- Establish and communicate appropriate advisor expectations, and maintain advisor engagement through regular communication and meetings
- Create organizational bylaws and/or an operations manual
    - **Bylaws** are secondary principles and policies that govern the internal affairs of your organization
    - **Operations manuals** serve as a resource in planning organizational events or activities and can also outline how to make specific decisions that might impact the organization. They can include guidelines, procedures, and expectations set by your organization, making it a very effective tool for training and transitioning new leaders. See example document here. Generally, they include:
        - Standard operating policies and procedures
        - Event protocols
        - Behavioral expectations
        - Risk management procedures
        - Organizational history

Section IV: Event Planning

What is an Organization Event?

As an organization, it is vital that you are able to identify which events and activities you participate in are organization events, as those events must then be in compliance with all student rules, appendices, and policies outlined in this manual. We understand that organizations are made up of individual students who often have connections with one another independent of their organizations, and who seek to have experiences with each other within the context of their independent lives. At times, the line between what is an organization event and what is an independent event can blur. It is crucial that your organization officers understand how to assess your activities, plan appropriately, and train members to also take responsibility in event management.

If you are unsure whether or not an activity qualifies as an "organization event", ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of the event? Does it relate to my student organization/s?
- Who will attend the event and why?
- What resources and/or facilities are being used for the event?
- How is the event being publicized or communicated?
- Would a reasonable outside observer or the media associate this event with my organization?

Student Rule 42 outlines the university's baseline policies around Organization Activities, while other rules, which are listed in this manual as well, govern specific types of activities. It is important to know and comply with these expectations while planning for any activity that could be perceived as an organization event.

Steps for Proper Event Planning

The Department of Student Activities recommends that you engage in proactive event planning for every event that your organization hosts, focusing on risk management. The goal of proactive risk management is to take preventative steps to minimize the potential and perceived risks involved in all of your activities. The Event Planning Module on Get Involved provides students the tools and resources they need to be able to learn how to utilize the event management function within the Get Involved organization management platform.

Here is a quick guide we have put together to assist in your event planning process. Use this as a starting point and build on it to fit your organization's needs:

1. List all activities and aspects of your event in detail.
2. Identify the potential risks associated with each activity and aspect. We use the PREFF model to outline risks:
    a. Physical risks - These risks involve potential harms to the physical body, like food, alcohol, and dangerous environmental conditions to name a few.
    b. Reputational risks - These risks involve the actions or decisions of your organization that incurs a negative public image for your group or individuals.
    c. Emotional risks - These risks include the actions or discussions of your organization that may bring about negative emotional or psychological effects in your members or guests.
    d. Financial risks - These risks involve the planning and usage of money by your organization.
    e. Facilities risks - These risks involve the spaces you occupy, and how you choose to operate in them, for your organization meetings and events.
3. Assess each risk for probability of occurrence and seriousness of consequence of each of your identified risks. We recommend using the Event Planning Matrix found on the Forms page of the Student Activities website.
4. Make decisions about how to mitigate each risk identified in Step 2. You can choose to respond to identified risks by taking any or all of the following steps:
    a. Accept the risk by choosing to incur the consequences of the risky element if they were to be realized.
    b. Modify the risk by adapting your event to decrease the likelihood or

severity of risks you are uncomfortable accepting.

   c. Transfer the risk by partnering with another entity who may be willing to share the consequences of risk with you (i.e. Risk Waivers signed by participants, procuring Special Event Insurance coverage - both available on the Forms page of the Student Activities website).
   d. Eliminate the risk by removing the risk element altogether from your activity.
5. Consult with relevant on- and off-campus experts and resources in the planning of the event.
6. Complete any necessary permits using the Special Events Requirements Guide.
7. Share your plans and risk management actions with the officers, members, and advisors involved in planning the event, and implement your event according to those decisions.
8. Develop thorough contingency and crisis response plans in case of emergencies and train others on how to implement those plans.
9. Evaluate the success of your event after its completion. Document your evaluation information for the next year's officers.

Refer to our common events guidelines on the Student Activities website to access more information and resources concerning specific types of events.

Get Involved Event Form

The Department of Student Activities offers the service of event planning reviews, in which your organization can submit an event form through Get Involved and a member of the Student Organization Leadership and Development (SOLAD) team can respond with relevant information and suggestions.

If you would like to request a review from the SOLAD team, please submit this form at least ten (10) business days in advance of your event. For a quick and easy tutorial on how to find and submit this event form, please refer to the Get Involved Event Form Module on Get Involved, which lasts approximately ten (10) minutes.

In some cases, your organization may be required to submit the Event Form on Get Involved based on the characteristics of the event, including:

- Events where your organization is seeking Special Event Insurance
- Events involving reservation at various spaces across campus, which would be specified by the building proctor overseeing that space reservation
- Events hosted by an organization whose advising or sponsoring area requires Event Form submission for review

While the Get Involved Event Form is not required by Texas A&M University for most of your events, Student Rule 42 does require that all events are reviewed by your advisor. You may use whichever form of communication works best for your officers and advisors to enable the review of each of your events by your advisor, but we do believe this Get Involved Event Form is the best to ensure and catalog your event planning and review process.

For any questions regarding the form or how to utilize the Get Involved platform in general, email solad@tamu.edu. For any questions or any technical issues related to the Get Involved site, please submit a bug report.

Risk Management Officers in Student Organizations

One recommended approach for addressing risk management oversight for your organization is to create an officer position focused on this area. A Risk Management Officer is a member of your executive team who works to identify risk management issues for your organization, develop appropriate mitigation strategies and responses, and provides training or education for your membership. Some of the job functions might include:

- Raising awareness of risk-related issues
- Coordinating training and education on risk management for your members
- Developing policies and procedures to address risk issues
- Producing and/or maintaining an operations manual
- Connecting fellow leaders with risk management resources

Your organization's Risk Management Officer may be a new position that your organization creates or their responsibilities could be incorporated into an existing officer position. Either way, this officer should be an active part of your regular meetings and stay in communication with all members.

Special Event Insurance

Your organization may wish to purchase general liability/accident medical insurance when coverage is required by a vendor/third party or when there are elevated levels of risk. When contemplating whether to purchase insurance coverage, you should consider the events your organization sponsors, the number of individuals attending, and any past incidents.

Your event may also warrant purchasing special event insurance for the organization or participants. Examples of programs that may need special event insurance include large financial expenditures, contracting with outside guests, or if participants are non-TAMU students.

Student organizations may obtain insurance from an off-campus vendor on their own, but the university provides a Special Event Insurance policy that organizations may obtain on a per person/per day basis for specific events. Student Organization Leadership & Development has established updated timelines for student organizations seeking to secure special event insurance. To request insurance, a student organization must submit a Get Involved Event Form. If the event needs Special Event Insurance, a link to the Special Events Insurance Request Form will be posted in the event's form comment box. When a Certificate of Insurance (COI) is needed, we recommend completing and submitting all required documentation at least 4 weeks in advance, but will not accept any submissions less than 3 weeks (15 business days) prior to the event. If a COI is not needed, we recommend completing and submitting all required documentation at least 2 weeks in advance, but will not accept any submissions less than 1 week (5 business days) prior to the event.

To request Special Event Insurance through the university policy:

- Submit a Get Involved Event Form
- Submit a eSpecial Event Insurance Request Form *(a link will be provided following submission of the Event Form)*

**If the event is sports related, please email solad@tamu.edu for a different special event insurance form*

Crisis Planning

Creating an effective crisis response plan is crucial in effectively managing an emergency situation:

- Develop a crisis response plan prior to an event or activity
- Educate organization members about that plan and chain of command to effectively manage emergency situations
- Be prepared to follow the plan.

Your crisis response plan should include:

- Detailed plans of action for various situations
- Attention to medical needs
- Contact information for important parties
- Crisis fact sheets or incident report forms
- Designated organizational officers and crisis management team who can take charge of a crisis situation

All officers or volunteers should have copies of the crisis response plan for their reference. Remember to review your crisis response plan with your officers and advisor on a regular basis and update your plan as needed.

Assessing an Emergency Situation

In your immediate response, begin by gathering and verifying as many facts as you can. Some key facts to gather include:

- The chain of events for the crisis
- Specific dates, times, and locations for the situation
- Why and how the incident occurred
- Who was involved with the crisis and each person's perspective
- Any property or other facilities-related damages sustained
- The nature and scope of any physical or emotional injuries sustained
- Any applicable university and/or organizational policies or procedures involved or affected
- Who will serve as the organization's spokesperson

In your longer-term response to the situation:

- Ensure that all proper documentation has been filed
- Learn as much as you can from the emergency
- Apply those lessons to improving the safety and success of your organization in the future
- Consider what other events or activities from your organization could merit more review or effective planning, based on the lessons learned from this crisis situation

Medical Emergencies

Call 911 as a first step. You can also provide any medical care that is reasonable or within your abilities, but remember that you may be legally responsible for any medical assistance beyond that which is reasonable that you provide to an injured person.

If your participant signed a risk waiver, which is outlined in the next section, consult with the medical release forms to ascertain whether or not the person has special medical needs and/or provided you with their medical insurance information to use in case of an emergency.

Once immediate medical needs have been attended to, then follow your established chain of notification. Notify the University Police Department (UPD) at (979) 845-2345 if you have not yet done so and UPD will contact the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) as appropriate. Contact your advisor and any others in charge of the event or organization, such as your Chief Student Leader and Risk Management Officer. If necessary, contact any other appropriate authorities such as your national organization liaison, travel liaison, etc.

Risk Waiver Forms

The Department of Student Activities has a standard waiver that can be adapted for your organization's use by describing your activity in the Indemnity Clause section. You can find that Risk Waiver Form template on the Forms page of the Student Activities website.

Some key points to consider in waiver and release forms for your organization and/or activities are:

- Make sure the title of the document is clear, so everyone understands what they are signing
- Include spaces for the organization's name, participant's name, and the name of the specific event
- Describe the activity and risks involved as specifically and clearly as possible
- Include text to "hold harmless and indemnify the sponsoring organization" to ensure the participant read and understood risks involved and will not hold the organization liable in case of injury, provided the organization is not negligent in its execution of the event.
- Include text asking the participant to give consent for medical treatment in case of injury
- Be sure to collect pertinent medical care information (e.g. emergency contact information, medical insurance information, allergies, etc.)
- Designate a clear space for the participant to sign and date the form indicating acknowledgement
- If the participant is a minor (under the age of 18), they must have a parent/guardian sign the form
- Retain waiver forms for the specified amount of time following the event (recommended minimum of three years)

In addition to signing the form, you should go over the possible dangers which participants may encounter while engaging in the activity. Try to be comprehensive so participants will be aware of what is involved in the activity and then are able to assume the responsibility of engaging in the activity in an informed way.

Your organization leadership will need to ensure these waivers are easily accessible for the duration of your event. The university also recommends that you retain copies of these waivers for three years following the completion of the event.

In the state of Texas, waiver forms themselves do not ensure that an event organization is protected from liability. Even if a participant signed a waiver form, you still owe that

person a duty to effectively train them for the activity, maintain equipment, and supervise the activity properly to avoid potential injuries. Do not let a waiver form be your only mitigation strategy to exercise all reasonable care in preventing risk for your participants.

Additional Resources Regarding Organization Activities

Authorized and Sponsored Events Calendar

Submit an Event for Approval ‖ View the Calendar

Sales & Solicitations

On-campus Sales & Solicitations Form

Events Involving Alcohol

Student Rule - Appendix VIII

Food at Events

Food Approval Flow Chart‖ Food Distribution Form ‖ Food Distribution Form - Catering

Freedom of Expression and Expressive Activities

Student Rule - Appendix XI ‖ System Regulation - Expressive Activity on Campus ‖ University Rule - Expressive Activity on Campus

Funding Opportunities

Student Organization Funding Assistance Board (SOFAB) ‖ Good Bull Fund ‖ Other Funding and Banking Resources

Hazing

Student Rule 24.4.5 ‖ Hazing State Law (Student Rule Appendix VI)

Racial and Ethnic Harassment

Student Rule 31

Sexual Harassment & Assault

Sexual Harassment and Related Retaliation (Student Rule 47) ‖ Title IX at Texas A&M University

Section V: Student Organization Accountability

Student Organization Accountability Process:

Resolution of Complaints, Incidents, and Rule and Policy Violations involving Recognized Student Organizations

Complaints or Incidents

All complaints and incidents reported about a TAMU recognized student organization will follow the Student Organization Accountability Process and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Student Activities and Student Community Standards (SCS) and defined student conduct process for individual students. The Student Organization Accountability process and MOU for student organizations is intended to specify the jurisdictional body with primary responsibility for the handling of organizational disciplinary cases involving recognized student organizations at Texas A&M University (this includes national fraternity and sorority chapters affiliated with the Greek governing councils).

Any member of the University or larger community may report alleged misconduct involving a student club or organization. Most complaints involving student organizations are received by the Department of Student Activities directly or are forwarded from the University Police Department or other offices on campus. The reporting process is initiated through the submission of a written account of the incident to the Department of Student Activities or the respective advising staff or student leaders. To facilitate reporting, Student Activities provides an online Tell Somebody Report form. Additionally, reports can be made to the Tell Somebody website.

Initiating A Report

Reports should be submitted as soon as possible after an incident or event occurs. In cases in which a University staff member is notified of an incident from an outside person or entity the staff member may document the call and prepare the incident report. In cases in which the reporting person fears retribution, the name may be withheld by the reporting staff member at the discretion of the Director of Student Activities and Student Community Standards (SCS). Anonymous reports may be submitted but will warrant additional investigation to substantiate the validity of the complaint.

Upon receipt of a complaint or incident report, the Department of Student Community Standards has a responsibility to address these. This includes notifying the Student Community Standards (SCS) in cases in which an individual has possibly violated a student rule. Normally, complex or serious cases such as sexual harassment, sexual assault/rape, sexual abuse, hazing, illegal drugs, or the involvement of a recognized fraternity or sorority, and cases in which the possibilities of both individual and organizational violations exist, will require investigation prior to charges being issued. Such investigations will be conducted expeditiously.

In such cases, the Student Community Standards (SCS) will determine the process and timing of the investigation. Hazing investigations will be reported to the University Police by the Student Community Standards (SCS) for their action as appropriate. A determination regarding the need for a joint investigation (with members of a parent organization or inter/national headquarters staff assisting) is made at this time with the Department of Student Community Standards coordinating their participation.

Reports which indicate possible Title IX violations such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, retaliation, or stalking must be reported to the Department Civil Rights and Title IX (CRTIX) for review and consideration. CRTIX will determine appropriate next steps for these cases, which could include the initiation of a university investigation conducted by CRTIX. In such cases CRTIX will follow its own protocols, working with SCS or Department of Student Activities staff to address non-Title IX related concerns or violations. No further action will be taken by the Department of Student Activities or SCS unless and until CRTIX releases the case or concludes their process.

Investigations

The Student Community Standards (SCS) will assign an investigator (from a pool of trained investigators) to look into the situation and collect facts associated with the reported incident.

Prior to the commencement of the investigation, the chief student leader and organization advisor will be notified via email of the investigation and associated process. Time permitting, a meeting may be held with the chief student leader and organization advisor(s) to discuss the investigation process.

An Investigator will begin the investigation and meet with selected members and/or associated others to collect information about the incident or behavior in question. Statements from all relevant witnesses are collected at this time. Organization leaders

are encouraged to collect and/or prepare statements related to the matter for addition to the report.

A summary report is prepared and the investigation report is submitted to the Student Community Standards (SCS) for review. The report will then be shared with the Director of Student Activities and their designee. The Director of Student Community Standards or their designee will determine if the report contains information that warrants organizational conduct action.

Interim Suspension of Recognition

Based upon a student organization's alleged behavior, the Vice President for Student Affairs or the Director of Student Community Standards (or their designee(s)) may impose an interim disciplinary action prior to the initiation of formal charges under the Student Organization Accountability Process.

When the student organization's actions/behaviors affect the safety, health, or general welfare of a student organization and/or the University community, an interim disciplinary action may be issued. Some of the restrictions that may be placed on the student organization during the interim disciplinary action period include, but are not limited to:

- Barring or limiting some or all of the organization's activities and/or privileges, including, but not limited to:
    - Social activities
    - Intramural competitions
    - Organizational competitions
    - Eligibility to receive any University award or honorary recognition
    - Privilege to occupy a position of leadership or responsibility in any University student organization, governing body, publication, or activity
    - Ability to represent the University in an official capacity or position
    - Entrance into University Residence Halls or other areas of campus
    - Contact with specified person(s)

While on interim disciplinary action, the student organization's University recognition is suspended pending the outcome of an investigation or conduct. While an organization is suspended, it may not use University resources or participate as an organization in any University activities or events.

An interim disciplinary action requires that the student organization be notified in writing

delivered via email to the contact addresses for the chief student leader and faculty advisor on file with Student Activities.

The student organization may request a meeting to discuss the restrictions imposed by the interim disciplinary action. The student organization's request must be in writing to the Director of Student Community Standards.

If a meeting is requested on the interim disciplinary action, a meeting will be scheduled within three (3) class days of the receipt of a written request. The Director of Student Community Standards (or designee) will conduct the meeting. The student organization will be notified of the outcome of the meeting in writing. The written notification of the outcome is final as to the interim disciplinary action, pending the final results of the Student Organization Accountability Process.

Formal charges under the TAMU Student Rules may be filed at the completion of a University investigation, even if law enforcement investigations or criminal proceedings are ongoing.

Assessment of Charges

Upon the receipt of a written incident report or complaint, the Director of Student Community Standards (or designee) may determine that there is sufficient reason to charge the student organization with a violation of the TAMU Student Rules and Student Organization Manual protocol and if a hearing is warranted. If it is determined that there is not enough evidence to warrant organizational conduct action the organization president will be notified in writing of that determination and the report will be archived for one year. If it is determined that there is sufficient evidence to warrant an organizational accountability conduct conference , the Student Conduct Administrator from the Department of Student Community Standards will assess charges applicable to the incident and initiate the process.

Hearing Notification

All charges shall be sent via email to the chief student leader of the student organization in written form. This letter of notice will provide details of the alleged violations and set a time for the conduct conference. Conduct Conferences will be arranged as expeditiously as possible but, if a Student Organization Accountability Board hearing is needed, depending on the academic calendar, may be extended until the Student Organization Accountability Board reconvenes following scheduled breaks.

The written notice given to any alleged student organization will include the

following:

- Sufficient detail to prepare a defense (including source of information, alleged violation, and specific Student Organization Conduct Code allegations).
- An invitation to attend an information session, during which the student organization's representative may view all materials related to the case, receive instruction regarding the student conduct process and the student organization's rights, and confirm the forum in which the case will be heard.

Notice of a conduct conference will occur at least five (5) class days prior to the conduct conference date outlined within the notice.

The Department of Student Community Standards working in conjunction with University offices and/or organization advisors may place restrictions on the student organization if the representative fails to address the Student Organization Conduct Code charges in a timely manner.

The Chief Student Leader email address on file with the Department of Student Activities Get Involved recognition database will be used for all notices sent to the organization regarding the conduct process.

Hearing Bodies and Jurisdictional Authority

Student Organization Accountability Board

Student organization conduct cases which may result in the suspension of University recognition will be provided the opportunity to resolve the case through an informal resolution process. If an agreement cannot be agreed upon, the student organizational conduct case may be conducted by the Student Organization Accountability Board (SOAB).

The Student Organization Accountability Board will be convened by the Student Organization Accountability Board Chair (or their designee). This Board will be made up of one TAMU faculty or staff member and two trained student board members. Student representatives from the general student body will make up the pool from which student board members will be selected.

Administrative Resolution (Low Level Options Process) of Organizational Charges

In cases where the organization is not subject to the revocation of University recognition AND if the charges are not disputed, low level options process may be offered..

Following notification of the charges, the chief student leader and faculty/staff advisor of the Student Organization will meet with the Student Conduct Administrator or their designee to discuss the charges and accountability options. A written summary of these agreements are provided to all parties. These agreements are binding and once entered are not subject to appeal. Failure to abide by the agreements could result in the situation being returned for resolution through the Student Organization Accountability process.

If the charges are disputed by the organization, or an agreement cannot be reached regarding sanctioning, the case will move forward to the Student Organization Accountability Board for a formal hearing.

SOAB Hearing Guidelines

All hearings will be fair and impartial and will use a reasonable person standard when assessing whether the information presented constitutes a preponderance of the evidence. An alleged student organization may submit a challenge to the impartiality of any member of a hearing body to the Director of Student Community Standards.

Decisions on challenges shall be final and not subject to appeal.

An alleged student organization will have the opportunity to present evidence on its behalf, including presenting witnesses and/or signed, written statements from witnesses, and other documentary evidence. Witness testimony is not required and the inability of the alleged student organization to question a witness who has provided a witness statement is not a violation of the due process rights of the alleged student organization, as the alleged student organization has the opportunity to review the written statement and may offer evidence to rebut the witness statement and other evidence presented at the hearing. Witness statements are entitled to be given the same weight by the hearing body as live witness testimony. Witness statements need not be sworn or in affidavit form.

The alleged student organization and any witnesses may be accompanied during the hearing by an advisor. A faculty advisor, national representative or student may serve as an advisor to the alleged student organization. A student representative of the student organization is required to address the hearing body in-person, although the representative may consult with the advisor and other members of the student organization during the hearing. This consultation must take place in a manner that does not disrupt the proceedings. The advisor shall not speak on behalf of the student organization unless expressly authorized to do so by the chair of the Board. The alleged student organization and any witnesses shall provide the advisor's name in writing to the chair of the Student Organization Accountability Board two (2) class days prior to the hearing. The advisor may not serve as a witness.

Protection from self-incrimination does not extend to student organizations.

The burden of proof in an SOAB hearing always rests with the University. The standard of proof will be the preponderance of the evidence, meaning that the evidence, as a whole, shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.

The formal rules of evidence do not apply to Student Organization Accountability Board proceedings.

Appropriate witnesses will be called by the University to all formal hearings. Those witnesses who appear may also be questioned by the alleged student organization. If called witnesses do not appear, their written or taped statements may be considered by the hearing body. Appropriate witnesses may also be called by the alleged student organization to all hearings, provided they are reasonably available and do not disrupt or delay the hearing. In the event a witness is not reasonably available or the witness's

presence may disrupt the hearing, a written statement from the witness may be substituted. Witness statements need not be sworn or in affidavit form.

If the alleged student organization fails to appear at the scheduled hearing after proper notice or fails to cooperate with the Student Organization Accountability Board process, the hearing may be held in the alleged student organization's absence.

Prior records of Student Organization Accountability Board action and complainant/witness impact statements are considered by the hearing body only in the sanctioning phase of deliberations.

The hearing body's determination of "responsible" or "not responsible" will be based solely on the information presented at the hearing. However, when additional information that affects this determination is gathered outside the hearing, it may be used provided it is shared with the alleged student organization and the student organization has an opportunity to respond to the information. In cases involving multiple students or organizations alleged, information provided at one hearing may be used as evidence in the related case(s).

To request the cancellation of a previously scheduled formal hearing, the alleged student organization must submit a written statement to the chair of the Student Organization Accountability Board two (2) class days prior to the hearing date. At the discretion of the chair of the Student Organization Accountability Board (or designee), the hearing may be rescheduled or conducted in the alleged student organization's absence.

All decisions made by the SOAB will be communicated in writing to the alleged student organization and will include the findings of fact, determination of responsibility, sanctions (if applicable).

SOAB Procedural Outline

- Hearing called to order by Chair
- Introductions of Board members and hearing participants
- The Chair will review the investigation report(s) and charges, and as appropriate:
    - Facilitates questions of witnesses (if any) this can include text, video, photos, and other things specific to the case.
    - Questions from board members
- Student Organization presents their case including:
    - Presentation of witnesses (if any)
    - Questions from panel members and board chair

- Student Organization final statement regarding responsibility
- University summary statement - Chair reviews charges of alleged Student Rule violations
- Hearing is paused for Student Organization Accountability Board Deliberation
    - The board will specifically review the charges for organization responsibility using a preponderance of evidence standard
- Chair delivers Board's Decision regarding Student Rule violation
    - If the organization is found NOT RESPONSIBLE for violating a Student Rule then the hearing is dismissed.
    - If the organization is found to be RESPONSIBLE for violating a Student Rule then proceed to sanctioning.
- The Chair will review the charges and outlines sanctioning guidelines to be considered:
    - Nature of the behavior
    - Circumstances of the case
    - Past organizational conduct history
    - Sanctioning precedent and options
    - Educational/developmental impact on organization and its membership
- Student Organization presentation of case including:
    - Self-imposed sanctions, national organization requirements or protocols developed
    - Questions from Board members
- Student Organization final statement regarding sanctions
- Hearing is paused for Student Organization Accountability Board Deliberation
    - The board will review the charges sanction guidelines to determine sanction outcomes for the student organization
- Chair delivers Board's decision(s) regarding sanctions for student organization
- Representatives from the Student Organization and the Board sign the Hearing Summary Sheet and the hearing is dismissed

Student Organization Sanction Guidelines

In light of the facts and circumstances of each case, the following sanctions or combination of sanctions (with or without appropriate modifications) may be imposed upon any student organization found to have violated Student Rules or the Student Organization Manual protocols. Certain sanctions may result in a financial cost to the student organization. If a student organization does not complete a sanction by the required deadline, the Department of Student Activities and Student Community Standards (SCS), working in conjunction with University officers and/or organization advisors may place restrictions on the organization.

Primary Sanctions (in order of severity):

- **Organizational Suspension:** This action consists of a student organization's recognition being suspended for a specified or indefinite period of time, and automatic loss of all rights and privileges associated with University recognition (e.g. use of the University facilities, use of University name and associated logos). For Greek-letter organizations, this sanction also prohibits the group's participation in Greek Council activities and recommendations will be made to the National/International Organization to temporarily suspend or revoke the charter.
    - A Student Organization whose recognition is suspended through the Student Organization Accountability Process is NOT guaranteed re-recognition at the end of such period of time, but is guaranteed a review of the case and a decision regarding eligibility and the process for re-recognition.

- **Organizational Deferred Suspension:** An official notice that the student organization's conduct was in violation of Texas A&M University Student Rules and/or the Penal Code of the State of Texas, but not sufficiently serious to warrant immediate suspension of the organizations' University recognition. If the student organization is found in violation of any University Student Rule during the time of Deferred Suspension, the Suspension takes effect immediately without further review. Additional student organization conduct sanctions appropriate to the new violation also may be taken. It is also possible that more stringent disciplinary action, including restriction from participation in specific events, such as intramural events or University traditions, may result if future violations occur during the deferred suspension period. The length of the deferred suspension sanction is set by the Board and is normally set to end at the conclusion of the current or some future semester.

    - A student organization on deferred suspension is deemed to be "Recognized with Restrictions" with the University for student organization recognition purposes and will have limited privileges. Parent organizations, national/international headquarters of organizations placed on deferred suspension will be notified of this action. Greek-letter organizations may be subject to additional action, restrictions or sanctions to be determined within their respective councils.

- **Organizational Conduct Probation:** An official notice that the student organization's conduct is in violation of Texas A&M University Student Rules and/or the Penal Code of the State of Texas, but not sufficiently serious to warrant suspension of the organizations' University recognition. It is also possible that more stringent disciplinary action, including restriction from participation in University events, Greek Life activities, intramural events or University traditions, may result if violations occur during the probationary period. The length of the probation is set by the Board and is normally set to end at the conclusion of the current or some future semester. **This sanction is generally accompanied by a secondary sanction of an educational and/or restrictive nature.*
    - Unless restricted by the Board, this status does not restrict an organization's ability to host events. A student organization on organizational conduct probation is deemed to be "Recognized with Restrictions" for student recognition purposes and may have limited privileges. A violation of the terms of organizational conduct probation may result in the organization's University recognition status being suspended temporarily or permanently.
    - Parent organizations, national/international headquarters of organizations placed on deferred suspension will be notified of this action. Greek-letter organizations may be subject to additional action, restrictions or sanctions to be determined through their Greek Council jurisdictional procedures.

- **Organizational Social Probation:** Restriction of an organization's ability to host or participate in any social activity outside of meetings, educational programs, community service projects, and intramural activities. The length of the probation is set by the Board and is normally set to end at the conclusion of the current or some future semester. It is also possible that more stringent disciplinary action, including restriction from participation in University events, Greek Life activities, intramural events or University traditions, may result if violations occur during

the probationary period. **This sanction may be accompanied by a secondary sanction.*

    - Greek-letter organizations may be subject to additional action, restrictions or sanctions to be determined through their Greek Council jurisdictional procedures.

- **Letter of Reprimand:** A letter that makes a matter of record any incident that reflects unfavorably on the student organization or the University. It specifies that more severe disciplinary action may result should the organization be involved in future violations. **This sanction is generally accompanied by a secondary sanction.*
    - Greek-letter organizations may be subject to additional action, restrictions or sanctions to be determined through their Greek Council jurisdictional procedures.

- **Warning:** A written admonition of a student organization for actions unbecoming a recognized student organization to the university community.
    - Greek-letter organizations may be subject to additional action, restrictions or sanctions to be determined through their Greek Council jurisdictional procedures.

Secondary Sanctions (may be imposed in addition to a primary sanction as appropriate):

- **University Restrictions:** The withdrawal of specified privileges for a definite period of time, but without the additional stipulations contained in the imposition of conduct probation. The mechanics of the restriction should be clearly specified, as well as how long it is in effect (i.e. tailgating restriction, social restriction, date party restriction, alcohol or intramural restriction).

- **Community/University Service:** An organization may be offered an opportunity to complete a specified number of hours of community/university service in lieu of other sanction(s). The deadline for completion is set by the Board and is normally set to end at the conclusion of the current or some future semester. The Chair of the Student Organization Accountability Board or their designee must approve the type of Community/University Service prior to participation by the organization. Organizations may not count community service time done by individuals assigned community service hours as part of TAMU student conduct or court ordered directives. Completion of service projects will be supervised by the organization advisor of the organization with a

final confirmation of completion provided by the Chair of the SOAB.

- **Educational Requirements:** A provision to complete a specific educational requirement directly related to the violation committed. The provision will be clearly defined. Such educational requirements may include, but are not limited to, completion of an alcohol education workshop, a diversity awareness workshop, presentations or guest speakers, essays, reports, etc. The deadline for completion is set by the Board and is normally set to end at the conclusion of the current or some future semester. Completion of educational requirements will be supervised by the faculty advisor with a final confirmation of completion provided by the Chair of the SOAB.

- **Restitution:** A payment for financial injury to an innocent party in cases involving theft, destruction of property or deception. The assessed costs to be paid may be in addition to receipt of any of the above sanctions. Compliance with the restitution sanction will be supervised by the organization advisor with a final confirmation of completion provided by the Chair of the SOAB.

- **Letter of Apology:** A letter written to those impacted by the behavior of the organization. The letter indicates that the organization accepts responsibility for the incident and has remorse for their actions.

- **Other Penalties:** The Student Organization Accountability Board may impose other restrictions, requirements, or sanctions in addition to, or in conjunction with those listed, when deemed appropriate.

Appeals Of Student Organization Accountability

Appeals of Student Organization Accountability Board sanctions are heard by the Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee. The written outcome of the appeal will be copied to the Director of Student Activities and Student Community Standards (SCS) (as applicable).

To initiate an appeal, the student organization must complete the Appeal Request Form and submit it to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, within five working days of the date the decision was announced. The organization must base the appeal on one or more specific aspects of the previous hearing; Unjust sanction(s) or a violation of procedural fairness.

The Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee may deny the admission of any evidence that does not accompany the student organization's request for appeal.

Rules of Evidence in an Appeal

- Burden of proof rests with the student organization
- Decisions will be based on a preponderance of the evidence
- The written appeal must be limited to facts of the incident and the basis of the appeal.

  **Note: The purpose of the appeal is NOT to rehear the case, but to review the decision that was made regarding the case.*

Appeal Process

The student organization representative will submit a written appeal to the Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee who will serve as the appeal officer and render a decision.

The Vice President for Student Affairs or designee will conduct an administrative review of the appeal and render a decision in writing to the student organization. Should there be a need for additional information or clarification the appeal designee may contact and/or meet with the student organization representative.

Appeal Decisions

All decisions of the Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee are final, there is no other appeal provided.

The Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee may:

- Uphold the original sanction(s)
- Modify the sanction(s)
- Remand the case for new hearing
    - If the appeal is based upon a violation of procedural fundamental fairness and the appeal officer determines that a deviation of fundamental fairness occurred and the deviation was sufficient enough to make the process fundamentally unfair to the student organization, they may remand the case back to the Student Organization Accountability Board for a new hearing.

  **Note: A finding that a procedural violation occurred in the initial hearing will not result in the dismissal of the case.*

Decisions will be delivered within three working days of the appeal hearing

Records

Student organization conduct files will be maintained in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University Records Retention Schedule.

Section VI: Student Organization Manual Revision Procedures

The Student Organization Manual will be reviewed twice annually, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester, by a committee composed of:

- One representative from Student Organization Leadership and Development
- One representative from the Student Organization Finance Center
- One representative from Student Community Standards
- One undergraduate student representative*
- One graduate or professional student representative*

Revisions may be proposed by any member of the Texas A&M University community and can be submitted via Get Involved Form. Proposals submitted by the last day of the previous semester will be considered the following semester.

Any proposed changes must be agreed upon by at least a three-fifths majority of the Student Organization Manual review committee. The updated Student Organization Manual will take effect beginning the following academic semester (excluding summer).

Non-substantive changes, such as updates to office names, websites, links, etc., may be made by Student Organization Leadership and Development without initiating the full revision procedures. Substantive changes must proceed through the formal revision process.

**Undergraduate and graduate/professional student representatives will be identified and selected via a nomination process hosted by Student Organization Leadership and Development during the fall semester of each year. Evaluative criteria will include recognized student organization involvement experience and availability.*