Forming a New Student Organization at GW

The George Washington University has over 450 registered student organizations. Student organizations are a vibrant part of the campus community. Assembled under a wide variety of causes and interests, student organizations exist to provide a diverse array of student activities that benefit and enrich the student experience.

We are glad that you have expressed interest in forming a new student organization here at GW and are eager to aid you in this process! However before you get started we encourage you to do some research and follow the steps outlined below.

1) **BEFORE FORMING A NEW ORGANIZATION:**
   - Check the current Directory of Student Orgs
   - Determine if there is an existing organization at GW similar to the one you would like to form (ex: you want to form a second Republican group).
   - If so, how will your organization be different than the one that already exists? To form a new org, your org must be different than those that already exist at GW.
   - This is identified through the following questions:
     i. Does your org fill a gap or serve GW students, and or the community in a way that does not yet already exist at GW?
     ii. Is the mission of the org you want to form significantly different than other orgs that exist?

2) **SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH A CSE ADVISOR TO DISCUSS YOUR IDEA**
   - Before you get too far along in the process flush out your ideas with one of our CSE advisors. Our advisors can work with you to develop your plan of action for the organization.
     - [Click here to schedule a meeting with an advisor.](#)
   - We also have two New Organization Meetings scheduled for the fall semester. The dates and times are listed below.
     - **Monday** September 9, 2013 4:30-6:00PM Marvin Center 407
     - **Thursday** September 12, 2013 7:00-8:30PM Marvin Center 407

   **You do not have to attend a New Organization Meeting if you schedule an individual meeting with an advisor.**

3) **ASSESS THE RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED TO OPERATE AT GW.**
   - Does the University have the resources you need to exist (i.e. If you are an org that wants to teach students how to cook, does the university have a kitchen large enough to support this endeavor?)?
   - Will you need to procure your own resources?
   - What is your plan to do this?

4) **CREATE A FOUR YEAR PLAN FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION.**
   - How will you build it from year to year?
   - What impact will your organization have at GW in the long term?
   - How will you design a sustainable organization so that your efforts will result in an org that exists after you have graduated?
There are a limited number of resources for organizations, and the University encourages students to collaborate with existing established organizations. The University reserves the right to deny an organization from becoming registered if current organizations already exist similar to the type of organization that is being developed.

2013-2014 Student Organization Registration Steps

To operate and receive the full benefits of a registered student organization, all groups operating as student organizations at GW are required to register annually with the Center for Student Engagement. The registration process for the fall semester will be open from 9/25/2013 at 12:00pm through 10/16/2013 at 11:59pm. The following steps must be completed in order to become fully registered:

1) **MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT**
   All new and returning student organizations must have **10** active and currently enrolled students as members and/or officers of any student organization in order to move forward with registration.

2) **ATTEND AN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT MEETING**
   This meeting will offer all kinds of helpful information to navigate how to stay on top of student org policies and finances at GW. All organizations are required to send their Treasurer or another Executive Board member to the meeting. Meetings have been set at varying dates and times for your convenience! The Treasurer must also pass an online Financial Quiz (more info below) which is based off of information presented in the Organizational Management Meeting. A list of all fall Organizational Management Meetings which will begin at the end of August is listed below. You can register for any of the sessions below by clicking here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8/28/2013</td>
<td>Marvin Center 309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>9/3/2013</td>
<td>Marvin Center 309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9/30/2013</td>
<td>Marvin Center 413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10/4/2013</td>
<td>Marvin Center 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/9/2013</td>
<td>Marvin Center 308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) **COMPLETE ONLINE REGISTRATION**
   Use your GW email username and password to log into the bottom right side of the screen at studentengage.gwu.edu and click on the "Awaiting Registration" link next to the name of the organization that needs to be re-registered. If you are registering a new org, click on "Register New Organization" to begin. Fill in all requested information and submit. Online registration includes the following steps in addition to entering basic information about your org:
   a. **Constitution**
      i. During the online registration process you'll be asked to upload a copy of your organization's constitution. If you need help, please reference the Guidelines for Writing a Constitution below.
b. Budget
   i. All SA Funding requests are processed through the online budget form that orgs fill out as part of the annual registration process. Use the electronic budget form in the registration process to request annual funding from the Student Association (SA). More information will be available at the Student Association Website.

c. Online Quizzes
   i. There are two quizzes that need to be completed in the registration process. All student organizations are required to have an officer successfully complete a general Registration Quiz. The Treasurer must also pass the Finance Quiz based on information presented in the Organizational Management Meeting. This Finance Quiz will only be available to the org member who has been identified by the org as the Treasurer/Financial Contact for the org.
   ii. Both quizzes contain randomly chosen questions. In order to pass both quizzes you must receive a score of at least 85%. If you do not pass the quiz, you must allow 24 hours before taking it again.

d. Responsibility Statement
   i. Two officers of your organization must read and electronically sign the Responsibility Statement. Click here to see the content of this form (Responsibility Policy).

4) AWAIT FINAL SAT ADVISOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Upon completion of these steps, your SAT (Staff Advisor Team) Advisor will review the documents you have submitted. Constitutions will be reviewed to ensure that the following statements are included:

- A non-discrimination clause
- A statement that the organization will abide by University policies
- A statement that explains that only registered GW students are considered members of the organization; all others (friends, family, faculty, staff) are considered guests. Guests are welcome to attend events and vote, but they cannot hold officer positions or handle money on behalf of the organization.

If the above listed statements are not included, your SAT advisor will email you noting what statements are missing, asking you to revise your constitution and email it back to your SAT advisor with the appropriate changes.

Please allow at least five business days from the day your organization completed their steps to hear about approval. You will know that your organization has been approved when you receive an email from your advisor stating your registration is complete.

Please note that review of an organization’s information may require consultation with other University departments such as Risk Management and General Counsel in order to ensure the safety of GW students. Please allow more than 5 days of review time in these cases. Upon such
a review, your SAT advisor may contact you with additional steps that may be required before your organization can be fully operational. These steps may include:

- Signing an operational agreement with specific safety precautions or requirements that your organization must abide by.
- All members signing safety and liability waivers.
- Other measures deemed required and appropriate by General Counsel or Risk Management.

**In extreme cases when students' safety is of the utmost concern, the University reserves the right not to approve an organization.**

### Student Organization Membership Policy

All members of a student organization must be currently registered and enrolled students of the University. For an organization to form and be considered active, there must be at least 10 currently enrolled GW students who are members. Friends who are not GW students, as well as alumni, and family of current members are considered guests of the organization. They can participate in organization events, but are guests of the organization, not members. Only currently enrolled GW students are allowed to hold officer positions within a student organization or process financial transactions on behalf of the organization.

#### Clarifications of Membership

Membership can be defined in the following ways:

**OPEN:** The organization is open to all students currently enrolled in a degree granting program and in good academic and judicial standing with the University, with no other selection criteria for membership other than interest in the group.

**SELECTIVE:** The organization is NOT open to all GW students, but has established membership criteria that relates to the mission of the organization and abides by all University Policies (including non-discrimination) and the Center for Student Engagement Policies. Criteria for membership in a selective organization must be outlined in the online student organization registration form through the studentorgs.gwu.edu website.

#### Definitions of Officer Status

An officer is a member of an organization that accepts full responsibility for the organization, its actions, conduct, and activities. Full responsibility includes, but is not limited to, ensuring payment for services and supplies needed to compliment the organization's activities and events, as well as ensuring that your organization abides by all University policies.

To serve as an officer, one must be currently enrolled in a degree granting program at GW and be in good academic and judicial standing.

Please contact your SAT advisor at 202-994-6555 or engage@gwu.edu if your officers change at any time.
Student Organization Responsibility Policy

As part of the annual registration process, two officers from each organization are required to electronically sign the following Responsibility Policy to which all organizations are responsible for conducting themselves. That policy reads as follows:

All events and activities sponsored, co-sponsored, or hosted by the organization on off the GW campus will comply in full with the regulations governing student organizations: The Alcoholic Beverage Consumption Policy, Agreement to Use University Facilities, Distribution & Poster Policy, the Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Code of Student Conduct, all other policies of the Center for Student Engagement, as well as any other agreements made with authorized University officials regarding such events and activities.

If a student organization fails to pay a vendor/bill on time (on a specified date in the George Washington University Addendum) then present (non-contracted) and future events supported by this organization will be suspended until the outstanding bill is paid. However, in the event that a student organization is able to illustrate proper procedure history of said bill, then this clause will not apply.

If a student organization fails to follow Scheduling procedure, Contract procedure, etc. more than two times, and then all events for this organization will be cancelled for the remainder of the semester. In addition, all events planned for the following semester will only be allowed on a trial basis. If a student organization has rendered itself subject to any one of these planks, the organization in question must meet with both the Center for Student Engagement and Marvin Center Scheduling in order to reinstate a "standard" registration status. More specifically, if a student organization has violated this policy then they must meet with the aforementioned bodies to determine whether or not the organization is ready to return to its initial registration status.

All information used in the registration process, including but not limited to officers' names, phone numbers, email addresses, and addresses will be considered public information. By submitting this agreement and submitting it to the Center for Student Engagement, an organization agrees that this information may be released for any reason.

Important Things to Know about Student Organization Registration at GW

While a student organization is in the process of registering their organization they will be able to complete the following steps:

- Update their list of organization officers themselves
- Update their list of schedulers themselves
- Upload a new constitution
- Upload a new budget that will reflect their anticipated expenses for the upcoming academic year
- Update their org address, phone, website and email address themselves
When student organizations have completed the registration process and need this information updated, they must contact their SAT Advisor to do so. Updating student org information while registering/re-registering or contacting one's SAT Advisor to do so after the registration has been completed for the organization is the only way to ensure that the studentorgs.gwu.edu website will accurately reflect your organization's information.

### Guidelines for Writing a Constitution

**Three Elements All Constitutions MUST Contain:**

1. Student organizations are required to include an inclusive non-discrimination clause in their constitution in order to be considered a registered student organization.
   - **Sample non-discrimination clause:**
     - (Insert student organization name) will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.

2. A statement that the organization will abide by University policies.

3. A statement that explains that only registered GW students are considered members of the organization.
   - **Sample membership clause:**
     - Membership in (insert student organization name) is reserved to currently enrolled GW students. All others (friends, family, faculty, staff) are considered guests. Guests are welcome to attend events and vote, but they cannot hold officer positions or handle money on behalf of the organization.

**If a constitution is submitted without the above listed elements, the SAT Advisor for that organization will not be able to register the organization until their constitution is amended to include this information.**

**Writing Each Section of a Constitution**

The main body of the constitution should contain statements concerning enduring aspects of the organization. Items that are subject to frequent revision should be included in the by-laws. University policies that apply to organizations are included in the outline below.

**Preamble:** State the name of the organization and the purpose of its establishment.

**Article I: Name**

- Section 1 - What is the exact title to be used in addressing the organization?

**Article II: Purpose**

- Section 1 - What is the Purpose? Is it fostering a broad educational goal? Is there a social, cultural, or political aim? Why was the group founded?
- Section 2 - This section should be a statement of the group's willingness to abide by and support established University policies.
### Article III: Membership

- **Section 1** - Who is eligible for membership (membership must be limited to registered GW students)? Are there any restrictions? How does one become a member? How are members identified?
- **Section 2** - Voluntary withdrawal of membership may be provided for. Can a member remain in the organization without paying dues?
- **Section 3** - Non-discrimination clause must be provided, and must include the following: ability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin and citizenship.

### Article IV: Officers/ Executive Committee

- **Section 1** - How many officers are there? What are their titles and duties? Will the officers constitute an executive committee? Description of any standing committees should be included, probably in the by-laws. Process for removal of officers.

### Article V: Operations

- **Section 1** - How are officers elected? What type of ballot? When are they elected and for what period? Who is eligible for office? What are the procedures for an election tie? How may officers be removed? You may wish to clarify the role of your advisor.

### Article VI: Finances/ Allocations of Funds

- **Section 1** - How will the organization finance its activities? Will the organization submit an annual Student Association budget request? How will financial records be kept? What is the process for approving expenditures?

### Article VII: Amendments

- **Section 1** - How are amendments to be proposed and by whom? Do you want to provide for delay before voting on amendments? How are amendments to be voted upon?

**Note: You must include an effective date and contact person's name on your organization's constitution.**