

II. Student Organization Policies

Approved by University Council July 8, 1994

General Statement of Purpose

The university recognizes (1) the importance of organized student activities as an integral part of the total educational program of the university; (2) that university learning experiences are enriched by student organizational activity; and (3) that organizations provide a framework for students within which they may develop their own special talents and interests. Inherent in the relationship between the university and organized student groups is the understanding that the purposes and activities of such groups should be consistent with the objectives and mission of the university.

Policies

- A. The student organization policies are official UH-Clear Lake policies, covering student organizations and their relationship to the university community.
- B. The Student Life Office is responsible for the implementation and administration of the student organization policies.
- C. Proposals for changes in the student organization policies shall be considered by the Student Life Council.
 - 1. The Student Government Association will act in an advisory capacity to the Student Life Council on proposed changes in the student organization policies. Unless otherwise stated, any change shall take effect immediately upon approval of the Student Life Council.
 - 2. Any member of the university community may propose changes in the student organization policies to the Student Life Council.
- D. Upon request by a person or organization directly affected, the Student Life Council will consider the waiver of any provision of the organization's policies for a specific time period.
- E. Provisions of the student organization policies shall comply with Student Life Policies and all other university regulations.

Procedures for Recognition of New Organizations

- A. Permanent Organizations
 - 1. Any group of students having a purpose, which is within existing federal, state, and local laws and university policies, may be recognized. **Recognition of a campus organization does not constitute endorsement of its program or purpose by the university.** Recognition is simply a charter to exist on the university campus and may be withdrawn by the Dean of Students if the organization becomes inactive, or is found guilty of violating any federal, state, and local laws or university regulation or policy.
 - 2. The group will file a Petition for Recognition including a constitution and statement of purpose with the Student Life staff.
 - a. In cases where a potential faculty adviser is unknown to the group, the Student Life staff will assist in identifying a university staff member who may wish to serve as an adviser. Organizations are not required to have a faculty adviser, but are strongly urged to do so.
 - b. If the group has not elected its officers or done other work connected with its formation at the time of initial contact of the Student Life staff, the Student Life staff shall make arrangements for the use of the university facilities until the organizational process is completed and the required information can be filed.
 - c. At the time of the filing, the organization president or contact person for the organization will sign a statement indicating that he/she is familiar with and will abide by the Responsibilities of Recognized

Student Organizations (cited later in this document). He/she will also sign the standard hazing and discrimination disclaimer required of all student organizations.

- d. Along with its petition for recognition, the organization must submit the names of at least five student members on its recognition petition. A minimum of five student members is required for university recognition.
 - e. At least two members of the petitioning group shall attend the Organizations Orientation Workshop. This workshop, presented by Student Life Office staff, is a one-hour review of the Student Organizations Policies and the procedure necessary to complete the paper work for recognition and for events as mentioned throughout these policies.
3. When the Student Life staff has approved the group's petition and it has been determined that the group's purpose is lawful and within university regulations, and that the group has filed the required forms and disclaimers, the Dean of Students will sign the petition. A copy of the petition will be returned to the organization as formal notification of recognition and the original placed in the organization's file in the Student Life Office.
 4. Should the Student Life staff determine that the organization does not meet the requirements for recognition, a written copy of the decision and the reasons will be furnished to the organization involved.
 - a. Decisions regarding the status of recognition may be appealed to the Student Life Council. Decisions of the Student Life Council will be final.
 - b. Upon request, the Student Life staff may make arrangements for the group to use university facilities on a meeting-to-meeting basis until the appeals process is completed.

B. Recognition for a Limited Purpose

In some cases, a group may wish to organize for some short-term goal (one which can be accomplished in less than one academic year) such as the passage of a particular piece of legislation or to conduct a particular event. Upon request, the Director of Student Life will consider waiving the requirements for filing a constitution and formal statement of purpose. Recognition will automatically expire on the date indicated on recognition forms.

Maintenance of Recognized Status

- A. At the beginning of each academic year, student organizations wishing to renew their recognized status for that year will submit to the Student Life staff a petition for continued recognition, listing the names of the officers or contact persons, a list of current members, and the names of faculty advisers (if applicable). In addition, a copy of changes and/or additions to the organization's constitution or statement of purpose shall be provided. In addition, at least two officers shall attend the Organizations Orientation Workshop held at the beginning of each semester. All new officers are encouraged to attend the Workshop.
- B. Should the Student Life staff determine that the organization does not meet the requirements for continued recognition, a written copy of the decision and reasons will be furnished to the organization involved. This decision may be appealed to the Student Life Council.
- C. A recognized student organization that fails to meet the responsibilities under which it received recognized status may be referred to the Dean of Students for the purpose of reviewing its status. Such referrals must be made in writing by the Student Life staff. The Dean of Students may revoke the recognition of a student organization or place the organization on probation. The decision of the Dean of Students in such matters may be appealed to the Student Life Council. Decisions of the Council on such matters will be final.

Rights of Recognized Student Organizations

- A. Student organizations are recognized on the assumption that their activities and programs contribute to the educational, professional, civic and social development of the students involved.
- B. Rights of a recognized student organization.
 1. Use of the name "University of Houston-Clear Lake" in all information, publicity and references.
 2. Use of the services of the Student Life Office, including assistance in planning, implementing and evaluating activities and programs and assistance in making the organization more effective and efficient.
 3. Publicity assistance through the Office of Institutional Advancement.

4. Privilege to invite off-campus speakers and artists to appear for regularly scheduled meetings and assemblies (subject to scheduling in accordance with proper procedures).
5. Distribution of literature relating to the organization's purpose and activities in those areas authorized by UH-Clear Lake distribution policies.
6. Sponsorship of profit-making activities and solicitation of funds for organizational activities in accordance with university regulations.
7. Representation in the Student Government Association.
8. Petition to the Student Government Association for funding for program development purposes.

Responsibilities of Recognized Student Organizations

- A. To manage itself and carry out its activities within its own constitution, all local, state and federal laws, and all university regulations and policies.
- B. To conduct its activities and fiscal operations in accordance with standards of good management practice.
- C. To be aware of the special role the organization holds as an integral part of the academic community of UH-Clear Lake and to act accordingly in the best interest of its members and the university, as well as the surrounding community.
- D. To be aware of and to be in compliance with all organization information distributed through Student Life mailboxes and email.
- E. To deposit the organization's funds into an account at a public banking facility that has been designated by the Student Life Office. Such funds will be deposited in such a manner as to require two signatures to withdraw funds from the accounts (i.e., two organization student members). Funds, other than university monies, must be deposited in a public banking facility within seven days of their receipt. The location, account numbers, and a copy of the bank signature card must be provided to the Student Life Office to be placed in the organization's file.
NOTE: Organizations funded by university monies (including Student Government Association funding allocations or funding from any program or office within the university) may disburse such monies only in accordance with state and university regulations. Such monies may be disbursed via regular university purchasing procedures. These requirements in no way preclude the right of the organization to solicit funds or disburse monies that are not derived from the university, according to the organization's bylaws. **The university assumes no liability for the financial transactions of a given student organization and strongly recommends that each organization establish whatever controls it deems necessary via the organization's constitution and/or bylaws.**
- F. To work cooperatively with the Student Life staff in conducting organization operations and activities. The Student Life staff and Dean of Students will serve in an advisory capacity to all recognized student organizations.
- G. To update any of the information supplied to the Student Life Office within two calendar weeks of the change. This includes changes in the constitution, officers, membership requirements, needs of the organization and/or authorized signatures for bank accounts. In addition, new officers who are authorized signatures on the organization bank account shall complete 'part b' of a second copy of the UH-Clear Lake *Bank Account Authorization Form*, which will be kept on file in the Student Life Office until those individuals leave office and must be removed from the bank account authorization list.
- H. To provide to the Student Life Office at the end of each fall and spring semester a complete written accounting of all income and expenditures of the organization for the previous semester. Such an accounting is required as a prerequisite for recognition for the subsequent academic year.

Members and Officers of Recognized Organizations

- A. Recognized student groups have freedom of choice in the selection of members, provided that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation (see Student Rights within the University Community), mental or physical disability or gender.
- B. A student organization is free to establish its own procedures for election and qualifications for holding office, provided that:
 - 1. All officers must be currently enrolled students at UH-Clear Lake.
 - 2. All officers must be regular members of the organization.
 - 3. There must be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation (see Student Rights within the University Community), mental or physical disability, or gender.

Organization Records

- A. The Student Life Office shall maintain official records on each organization, which is recognized.
- B. The information contained in these records shall fall into two categories:
 - 1. Required information shall include the annual recognition petition, a current copy of the organization's governing documents (i.e. constitution, statement of purpose, etc.) and records of any pertinent action of the Student Government Association, student services personnel, or the Student Life Council.
 - 2. Optional information shall include any material that the group may wish to keep on permanent record.
- C. It shall be the responsibility of the organization to notify the Student Life staff of any changes in the required information.
- D. Information within the organization files is considered public information.

Organization Events

- A. Definition of University-Sponsored Events
 - 1. Any event on campus sponsored by a university-recognized student organization.
 - 2. Any student event off campus funded by university monies or sponsored by a university-recognized student organization.
- B. University approval may be provided only for events sponsored by recognized university organizations and must be scheduled in accordance with Paragraph E of this section. It is the policy of the university to permit the expression of a full range of ideas as long as there is no violation of federal, state and local laws or university regulations.
- C. Organization officers and members are responsible for observing all federal, state and local laws and university regulations. **The university assumes no liability for individual actions that occur during an event sponsored by a recognized student organization.**
- D. Requests by student organizations for use of university facilities must be filed through the Student Life Office.
- E. Events other than regularly scheduled organization meetings must be approved by Student Life through the submission of a "Request for Approval of Special Event" form.
- F. The schedule of upcoming events will periodically be made public to the university community.

Organizations with Special Status

Due to the nature of their particular organizational role and scope, the following groups have been given special status as indicated:

A. Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) is a representative body, composed of an internally elected representative from each of the recognized student organizations on campus.

1. The SGA exists for the following purposes:
 - a. To allocate university funding provided to student organizations.
 - b. To provide input to the university administration on student and organizational issues.
 - c. To appoint students to university committees.
2. The Student Life staff and the Dean of Students will serve in an advisory capacity to the Student Government Association, which is ultimately accountable to the Student Life Council.

B. Student Honor Societies

Student honor societies are organized on campus to recognize outstanding achievements of students in a particular field or endeavor, or to commend overall scholastic achievements. Academic and scholastic honor societies are the responsibility of the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition, honor societies are eligible to be recognized as campus student organizations and in doing so are entitled to all rights and subject to the responsibilities of student organizations.

C. Student Publications

The university is committed to the organization of student publications on campus with an overall benefit to the university community. The *SIGNAL* newspaper and the *Bayosphere* literary magazine are recognized on-campus student publications. The university recognizes the contributions that can be made to the university only by a student-managed and student-operated newspaper. Accordingly, UHCL fully endorses the concepts of freedom of press and freedom of speech as established by the Constitution of the United States as well as federal and state laws. Within these boundaries, the university is committed to the support of a student newspaper that serves the various needs of the academic community at large and secondarily, the needs of the surrounding community. The following rights and responsibilities as well as the above-mentioned constitutional guarantees become the framework by which the recognition of the UHCL student newspaper is initiated and maintained.

1. The UH-Clear Lake student newspaper must be a vehicle of communication for all segments of the university community (i.e., student, faculty and staff); it must, therefore, be an organ of the University at large. Accordingly, editorial policy should permit soliciting input for the paper from all interested parties within the university. Newspaper operational policy need not require the newspaper to publish all such input, but there shall be no arbitrary exclusion of input from any given individual or groups within the university.
2. In meeting the above criteria, the newspaper must be responsive to the needs of the university at large and the surrounding community. It also follows that it must be responsible to the university-at-large as in any other recognized student organization. Accordingly, the student newspaper is accountable to the Student Life Council on matters pertaining to its rights and responsibilities.
3. Editorially the paper must adhere to acceptable journalistic ethics and standards of good taste as they relate to the responsible reporting of views or events.
4. Within these parameters, the paper has the freedom to:
 - a. Organize in whatever way is deemed internally efficient.
 - b. Publish without threat of censorship (although this in no way negates collective and individual responsibility for what is published).
 - c. Establish whatever editorial policy is deemed appropriate and/or necessary.