Registered Student Organization Handbook

2021-2022

Office of Student Involvement and Leadership
Student Services/Classroom Building (SSCB)
Room 1.204
(281) 283-2560
studentorgs@uhcl.edu
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Chapter One: Student Organizations

Section 1.1: Rights and Responsibilities of UH-Clear Lake Student Organizations

Student organizations are considered “Registered” on the assumption that their activities and programs contribute to the educational, professional, civic, and social development of the students involved.

Successful “Registration” of a campus organization does not constitute endorsement of its programs or purpose by the University. Registration is simply a charter to exist on the University campus and may be withdrawn by the Associate Director of Student Involvement and Leadership if the organization becomes inactive or is found guilty of violating any federal, state, and local laws or University regulation(s) or policy.

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. The rights and responsibilities of student organizations are outlined in the Student Involvement and Leadership Policies.

Benefits of Being a Registered Student Organization

1. Receive an @uhcl.edu email address.
2. Reserve spaces on campus.
3. Invite off-campus speakers and artists to appear for regularly scheduled meetings and assemblies (subject to scheduling in accordance with the proper procedures).
4. Advertise organization and activities.
5. Host profit-making activities and solicitation of funds for organizational activities.
6. Be a representative and request funding from Student Government.

Responsibilities of Student Organizations

Student organizations also have certain responsibilities:

1. To manage itself and carry out its activities within its own constitution, all local, state, and federal laws, and all University regulations and policies.
2. To conduct its activities and fiscal operations in accordance with standards of good business management practice.
3. To be aware of the special role the organization to act accordingly in the best interest of its members and the University, as well as the surrounding community.
4. To both work cooperatively with and be in compliance with all information distributed by the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership.
5. To maintain an accurate GetInvolved page including an up-to-date roster and posting all organization events.

Please review the entire Handbook to ensure that you are familiar with all expectations and responsibilities.
Section 1.2: University Recognition

All student organizations must complete the following process annually to be considered fully registered with the University.

1. Organizations should maintain at least 5 UHCL student members including at least 2 UHCL student officers.
2. Organizations should maintain an updated and accurate constitution outlining the organization’s mission, activities, and membership experience.
3. The top two officers of an organization for the following academic year must complete required registration process and workshops each Spring. Offerings may change annually, so officers should stay in touch with Student Involvement and Leadership to know what is required.
4. The organization must complete the Registration form on GetInvolved and all of the requirements within it. Requirements may include uploading an updated version of the organization constitution with required clauses, updating the organization roster and officer team, uploading an advisor agreement.

Membership Requirements:

1. Non-UHCL students are welcome to join UHCL Registered Student Organizations, but non-students may not outnumber student members in any organization.
2. Registered 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, mental or physical disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity and gender expression. A student organization may limit Officers to those members who subscribe to the tenets of that organization.
3. To best adhere to the UHCL non-discrimination policy, we recommend RSOs hold elections overseen by a neutral third party in order to choose Officers as opposed to appointment.

New Organization Requirements:

1. A minimum of five UHCL student members. Students at other colleges and universities and members of the community can be organization members, but these members cannot outnumber the UHCL student members. All officers must be currently enrolled UHCL students.
2. All organizations should have a constitution.
3. The organization president or contact person will sign a statement indicating that they are familiar with and will abide by the Terms and Conditions of Registered Student Organizations electronically signed in Get Involved.
4. Organizations are strongly encouraged to secure a faculty or staff advisor.
5. If the group has not elected officers or done other work connected with its formation at the time of initial contact with the Student Involvement and Leadership staff, the Student Involvement and Leadership staff shall make arrangements for the use of University facilities until the organizational process is completed and the required information can be submitted, if requested.
Reminder: Each organization must re-register every year in the Spring.

Successful Registration of a campus organization does not constitute endorsement of its program or purpose by the University. A Registered Student Organization is simply a charter to exist on the University campus and may be withdrawn by the Director of Student Involvement if the organization becomes inactive or is found guilty of violating any federal, state, and local laws or University regulation or policy.

A student organization will be informed no later than ten (10) business days following its submission of a complete application whether their application has been approved and their student organization recognized by the University.

When the Student Involvement and Leadership staff has approved the group’s registration form and it has been determined that the group’s purpose is lawful and within University regulations, and that the group has completed the required forms and disclaimers, the form will be approved by Student Involvement and Leadership staff.

Should either the Associate Director of Student Involvement and/or the Coordinator, Organizations and Activities determine that the proposed organization does not meet the requirements for registration; the officers will be notified of the reasons in writing no later than ten (10) business days following that organization’s submission of a complete application.

Officers may appeal that decision to the Director of Student Involvement and Leadership. The Director of Student Involvement and Leadership shall make a decision, upholding or overturning the denial of registered status, within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal from the student organization.
**Section 1.3: Hazing Statute**

Hazing is any intentional or reckless act by one person alone or acting with others that endangers the mental or physical health of a student. Hazing may occur on or off campus and usually takes place in connection with obtaining membership in or holding office in a student organization. “Student” includes all persons presently enrolled, accepted for admission, and those intending to enroll after a period of vacation.

A person commits the offense of hazing if the person engages in hazing, solicits, encourages, aids or attempts to aid another in hazing, knowingly permits hazing to occur, or has firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred or may occur and fails to report the act to the proper authority.

An organization which knowingly engages in or encourages hazing also may be charged with the offense of hazing.

This offense is punishable by a fine and/or confinement in jail. It is not a defense to a charge of hazing that the person at whom the act was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

If you have knowledge that a person or organization is planning or has committed an act of hazing, you must report the information to the Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students.
Chapter Two: Organization Event Policies

Section 2.1: Food and Alcohol at Events

Organizations request approval of events by submitting your event on Get Involved. Approval will be complete once you have received an “approved” notification from the Office of student Involvement and Leadership staff.

Special Considerations:

1. **Food Permits**: If you are having any kind of food at your event, a food permit must be secured from the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) a minimum of 14 days in advance. Please read EHS’s Temporary Food Permit Policies and Procedures to understand the steps required to secure a food permit for your event.

   a. Registered student organizations have the right to provide their own food/beverages for their campus events if there is no charge for the food.

   b. Due to contract obligations and tax regulations, organizations are not permitted to purchase food for re-sale to the public. The source of food being served at any on-campus event must be indicated in the space provided on the facility request form.

   c. The UHCL Environmental Health and Safety may have regulations relating to food service, especially if the food items being served must be kept at certain temperatures. You may, depending on the type of food items being served, be referred to that office for a briefing and the completion of a Food Permit.

   d. If you are having food at a private event for only your organization members, a food permit does not have to be completed.

2. **Chartwells Catering**: By contract, the University has granted Chartwells® the right to sell and manually dispense food, confections and beverages (including alcoholic beverages) on campus. If using University funds (several organizations work with campus offices on events, with the office paying for the food), the organization must purchase the food and beverages from Chartwells®.

   a. If using organization funds, the organization is not obligated to purchase food and beverages from Chartwells® (except for alcohol at on-campus events), but we strongly encourage you to discuss your catering needs and your budget with their staff.

   b. At the time of booking, the following information is required: number of guests, date of the event, service time of the event, ending time of the event, location of the event, name of the group’s representative, address and phone number or the group’s representative, and menu requests. This information will be entered into the online system.
c. Meeting, event planning, space and equipment (audio/visual, tables, chairs, podiums, etc.) must be booked prior to making your catering arrangements. This is done through completion of the facility request form.

3. **Alcohol:** If your organization is wishing to serve alcohol at an event, please contact the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership at least 4 weeks prior to your event. Alcohol policies include, but are not limited to:

   a. All alcohol served at a student organization event must be purchased through and served by Chartwells, the UHCL on-campus food catering provider.

   b. Organization officers must complete an *Alcohol Event Registration Form* for this event.

   c. Organizations that are planning any event at which alcohol will be served, whether on campus or off campus, must request an Alcohol Workshop. The student(s) who attend(s) the Alcohol Workshop must also be in attendance at the event at which alcohol will be served.

   d. A UHCL faculty or staff member must be in attendance at the event the entire time alcohol is being served.

   e. The alcohol cannot be sold at either on campus or off campus events. State law prohibits anyone who does not have a license to distribute alcohol to sell alcohol.

   f. The forms for an event at which alcohol will be served must also be routed to the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, the Provost, and the University Police Chief for their signatures.

   g. Student organizations can only serve mixed drinks (hard liquor) at an event at a commercial establishment, such as a restaurant or club, which has a liquor license. Chartwells® holds a license to serve liquor at on-campus events.

   h. Student organizations may not sponsor a BYOB (Bring Your Own Bottle) event, either on campus or off campus, under any circumstances.

   i. Food and non-alcoholic beverages must be available throughout the event.

   j. The organization must provide a TABC certified server who is not drinking alcohol. There may not be a common source of alcohol present.

   k. The organization must provide safe transportation home for any guests who appear to be unfit to drive and must display a sign to that effect at the event.

   l. The organization must take steps to ensure that alcohol is not served to or consumed by anyone under the age of 21.

   m. An additional charge may be added to invoice to obtain alcohol serving license. Contact Catering Services for information.
Organization officers are encouraged to consult well in advance of the proposed event with the Coordinator – Organizations and Activities, Associate Director – Student Involvement and Leadership, or the Director – Student Involvement and Leadership when planning any event at which alcohol will be available or served.

4. **Coca Cola Products**: The University has granted the Coca Cola Company exclusive rights to sell and serve soft drinks on the UH-Clear Lake campus.
   
   a. Campus offices, program areas, and student organizations are not permitted to serve non-Coca Cola products at University functions.
Section 2.2: Event Inclusivity

It is University policy that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any academic or student services program or activity. Students may request academic adjustments and auxiliary aids through the Office of Accessibility Services.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all UHCL student organizations must offer the University’s assistance in making accommodations for persons with disabilities who are invited to attend any event sponsored by the organization. Any necessary accommodation will be evaluated and arranged by the University’s ADA coordinator, and at least one week’s notice is generally required to make such accommodation.

Keep in mind that if you hang a flyer around campus, any person who reads might reasonably presume that they are being invited to the event.

Organizations are required to include the following statement in all invitations, flyers, and materials for events to which members of the public might be invited.

Any individual requiring an accommodation in order to participate in this event will need to contact {insert your organization name} at {insert your organization email} prior to the event.

Failure to comply with this federal law may result in revocation of an organization’s registration status.
Section 2.3: Student Government Funding

Student Government provides reimbursement for Student Organization events and travel.

Please reach out to Student Government with any questions regarding the organization funding process at SGA@UHCL.edu.
Section 2.4: Travel Approval

If your student organization members are travelling, you must submit the following:

- A Travel Authorization Form must be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership at least two weeks in advance of the travel event.

- A Release and Indemnification Agreement for each student traveling on this event must be submitted to the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership prior to departure. Please visit the UHCL travel site for more information: https://www.uhcl.edu/dean-of-students/faculty-staff/travel-policy
Section 2.5: Use of University Facilities

Exemption from Liability

The University of Houston-Clear Lake cannot be held liable for any form of injury to any individual or for the loss of or injury to the property of any individual or of any organization or group using the facilities of the University.

Protection of State Property

Any organization or group or any individual member(s) thereof using University facilities will be held liable for any destruction of or damage to any property of the University.