

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS GOVERNING POLICIES

from The University of Tennessee at Martin Student Handbook, P. 41-45

Student Organizations

“Although the primary purpose of the university is academic, voluntary associations of students are an important part of the educational process. The university has responsibility to encourage such associations as a means by which students can develop full civic and social awareness. In doing so it neither endorses nor disclaims any particular idea, system of thought, or point of view. The ultimate testing place for all of these is not in any one office or council, but in the minds of responsible citizenry.

When groups of students wish to have a continuous association causing them to congregate for activities on the campus, requiring from time to time the use of university facilities, and holding themselves out of the general public as a group centered on campus, it is proper that they be registered by the university. All registered associations shall be accorded the same privileges and bound by the same obligations. Registration by the university does not constitute endorsement of the purposes or activities of an association by the faculty, administration, or student body.

University Liability

Fraternal organizations, sports clubs, and other student organizations, even though permitted to operate on or near university property and even though required to conform to certain prescribed university procedures, are not in any way or manner operated under the general supervision of the university or its Trustees, officers, administrators, or employees. Neither the university nor any of its Trustees, administrators, officers, or employees is in any way or manner liable for acts or failures to act on the part of such organizations. It is especially noted that the university is not responsible for bodily harm or death to participants in voluntary organizations or activities including athletics, hiking, karate, judo or other such organizations in which risk is incurred.

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Registration & Statuses

With the exception of social Greek letter organizations whose relationship with the institution requires a more detailed and exacting peer and administrative review, any group of students may seek to register their organization as an official student organization of UT Martin.

• Fully Registered Organizations:

Those organizations which have successfully completed the registration process and have been fully approved by the University Council. These organizations shall be registered in the Office of Student Life. In order to maintain registered status, organizations must submit current leadership information to the Office of Student Life every fall semester by the end of the fourth week of class.

• Inactive Organizations:

Those organizations which have discontinued activity or have dropped below ten (10) members. Inactive status can be granted for two (2) consecutive academic years, and then any additional inactivity will warrant the organization being removed from the UTM student organization roster maintained in the Office of Student Life.

• Temporarily Registered Status:

Temporarily Registered Status may be granted to those groups of students who have faculty guidance and whose mission is affected by current events. This status may be granted until the next subsequent University Council meeting where the group is expected to petition for full status.

Registration Process

Any student group may apply for registration by ***submitting a petition*** with the following included:

- the appropriate signatures affixed
- a typewritten copy of the proposed constitution and bylaws
- student organization information sheet, indicating student leadership
- name and contact information for a sponsoring UTM faculty/staff advisor
- Also include any additional information that is determined necessary by the University Council or the Office of Student Life to facilitate the registration process.

Registration forms can be obtained in the Office of Student Life.

Please see the next page for more information on proper registration...

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Student Org. Petitions

Petitioning information may be turned in throughout the semester. The forms will be organized, checked and distributed to the University Council at two times during the semester, once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end. Organizations will be considered temporarily registered in the interim between the filing of the petitioning information and the actual approval of the University Council. No organization that is awaiting University Council approval may conduct public outreach projects. Public outreach is defined as any such project or activity that is designed to involve the public at large.

Constitutions

Student organization constitutions must at a minimum contain the following clauses:

- The name of the organization
- The mission statement of the organization
- Membership eligibility requirements
- Officers listed by title and function
- Statement of their term of offices and the time and method of selection
- Frequency of meetings
- Statement of any dues, including amount and frequency of collection
- Statement the organization will not discriminate against any person for reasons which are illegal
- Provisions for disposition of funds should the organization be dissolved

Recommendations are forwarded to the University Council for action and then to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs for disposition.

Denial of Registration

Negative recommendations or denial by the University Council of a student organization may be based on one or more of the following grounds.

- If the statement of purpose or the proposed activities are illegal under local, state, or federal laws or does not conform with written university regulations
- If the organization would, in the opinion of any appropriate university official, constitute clear and present danger to the continued or proper functioning of the university
- If the proposed organization duplicates the functions of an existing registered student organization.
- If any aspect of the registration forms have been found to be fraudulent
Please Note: If the proposed organization has been recognized as an organization previously but their campus status was revoked for disciplinary reasons, and such time has not passed so that all those involved in the infraction have graduated or left the university

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Terms of Registration

An updated list of registered student organizations will be prepared at the beginning each academic year by the Office of Student Life. This list is available on the web under the heading "Student Life." Organizations, in order to maintain their "registered" status, must complete the student organization information sheet provided by the Office of Student Life.

Organizations that are fully registered or are temporarily registered shall have the ability to meet in campus facilities, and have access to other such resources for organizational development as may be provided by the Division of Student Affairs or the Office of Student Life.

- **A student organization may be removed from the list of registered organizations by the Office of Student Life if:**

- The organization has not shown a reasonable amount of activity in promoting the ends and purposes specified in its constitution, as evidenced by membership meetings and other activities.
- The organization violates university regulations including those governing student organizations, or local, state and federal laws.
- The organization has failed to update its yearly registration information on file in the Office of Student Life.

- **Affiliations**

Registered student organizations may be affiliated with an organization off the campus where such affiliation is:

- Clearly indicated by the title of the organization or through its constitution
- Consistent with the purposes set forth in the constitution
- Not such as to change significantly the nature of the organization as an association of students with primary interest on campus.

- **Disciplinary Actions and Penalties**

Student organizations should respect the rights of all members of the university community. The following categories of conduct subject organizations to disciplinary action by university officials ranging from disciplinary warnings to withdrawal of charters. This list includes, but is not limited to: hazing, disorderly conduct, interference with activities of the university or other organizations of individuals, poor academic performance or social misconduct, and improper discrimination.

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• **Membership: Eligibility and Records**

Voting membership in a registered student organization(s) is limited to full-time students of the university, except where membership of faculty or other university staff is consistent with the structure and purpose stated in the constitution.

Accurate membership records must be maintained and available to the faculty advisor.

Officers should, for the most part, be full-time students; if non-students, they must be members of the faculty or the university staff. No student organization may enroll as an official member, or elect or retain as an officer or committee chairman, any student on academic or disciplinary probation.

• **Officers**

The names of the organization leadership should be updated at the beginning of each academic year (at a minimum) or within one week following the election process. The officers are responsible for the events sponsored by their organization. Further, they are responsible for making appropriate reservations and arrangements for facilities and for adhering to the policies for those facilities as determined by the persons responsible for the facility. The use or possession of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs on campus is prohibited. Officers of student organizations are encouraged to invite members of the faculty and staff and their spouses as their guests to both on-campus and off-campus events.

• **Faculty/Staff advisors: Eligibility and Role**

All student organizations must have at least one qualified faculty advisor. Any full-time member of the university faculty or full-time professional administrator may serve as faculty/staff advisor to a student organization provided he or she has completed one year of service at UT Martin. Those persons not having one year of service must be approved by the University Council.

Persons off campus with special interests or talents are permitted to serve as additional advisors to various student organizations with the approval of the University Council. A faculty/staff member who agrees to the request of a student organization to serve as its faculty advisor accepts responsibility for encouraging the organization in its purposes and activities within the limits of university policy.

Faculty/staff advisors are responsible for being familiar with the following:

- This policy and other university regulations pertaining to student organizations and speakers.
- The constitution and purposes of the student organization they are advising.
- The activities and projects of their organizations.

The advisor should always be fully informed of any policy or program decisions reached at meetings at which the advisor is not present.

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- **Change or Amendment Affecting the Nature or Purpose of an Organization**

Any change or amendment affecting the nature or purpose of the organization as originally approved must also be approved by the University Council, and a current copy of the constitution must be on file in the Office of Student Life.

- **Meetings**

Registered student organizations are encouraged to hold their meetings on campus, and university facilities will be made available to them for this purpose whenever possible.

All meetings should be conducted in an orderly fashion, and members of registered student organizations are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion when attending meetings other than their own. When an organization opens a meeting to the public, it has the obligation to see that any portion of the meeting given over to audience discussion is open to all present, so far as time permits.

Student organizations should recognize the importance of the education program of the university and should plan their activities in such a manner as to complement this program. So far as possible, conflicts with major events in the educational program and with scheduled activities of other registered student organizations should be avoided. Activities should not be scheduled during final examination week or on study days.

