

# GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY GUIDE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF NEW STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## I. THE PRESIDENTS CHARGE

Georgia Southern University's President has been charged by the Board of Regents with the responsibility and authority to recognize and oversee the operation of all campus organizations. He has delegated this responsibility to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, which administers organizational regulations through the Director of Student Activities.

Please note: (OSA) is an acronym for Office of Student Activities

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION

A group of ten (10) or more students wishing to organize into an organization may do so if the following criteria are met:

- A. The group does not duplicate an existing organization.
- B. The application for chartering a new student organization is completed and submitted to the Director of Student Activities, along with a formal constitution outlining the purpose and framework of the organization.
- C. The Officers must possess a minimal 2.0 cumulative GPA.  
**(OSA staff reserves the right to check officer's academic standing.)**
- D. Review of the application for chartering a new student organization by the Director of Student Activities.

**Note:** Any group of students is welcome and encouraged to consult with the Director of Student Activities concerning plans for a new organization, and to call on her/him for advice while drafting the constitution, or while making plans for activities, which shall call for purposes of the group to meet.

## III. STEPS TOWARD GAINING RECOGNITION AS A STUDENT ORGANIZATION ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

Meetings held prior to the official chartering of a student group will be termed organizational meetings for the purpose of forming the proposed organization. Business during these meetings should be limited to constitution drafting, and forming the structure of the organization. The students forming the proposed organization may schedule three (3) of these meetings. These must be scheduled by the Russell Union Facilities Use Coordinator. The Director of Student Activities can meet with the group for aid and counseling in the forming of the new organization. No new organization may organize under the sponsorship of an existing organization. Additional organizational meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Director.

- A. Submit to the Director of Student Activities one (1) copy of the application for chartering a new student organization, the constitution and by-laws of the organization, the charter members' signature forms, and meeting request form, in the event the group seeks to affiliate with a state, regional and/or national organization, one (1) copy of that constitution must also be appended.
- B. The Director of Student Activities will review all materials and has the discretion to involve any students or SGA Executive members on the outcome.

### 1. **Major Revisions Referral**

Constitutions which are referred back to the organization are typically those that have major flaws or indiscrepancies in them (e.g., single sex organizations, organizations whose name implies limited membership, etc.) When an organization has a constitution referred back to it, that group has thirty (30) days to re-submit a revised version. If this is not done, the group will be denied charter and will subsequently have to resubmit for recognition. Groups who refuse to revise their constitutions as per the recommendations of the committee or groups who fail to resubmit within the time line prescribed may be denied charter.

### 2. **Provisional Recognition**

Provisional recognition will be granted to groups whose constitution and by-laws require only minor modifications (e.g., typos, date corrections, etc.) Groups who are granted provisional recognition will have twenty-one (21) days to revise and return the constitution to the Director of Student Activities. Failure to do so will result in the provisional approval being repealed and the group will be denied charter and will subsequently have to re-submit for recognition.

### 3. **Privileges & Limitations of Provisionally-Recognized Student Organizations:**

During the 21 day provisional period student groups are permitted to conduct organizational business. However, they may **not**:

- Request money from SGA
  - Co-sponsor programs with other student organizations
  - Sponsor open programs or special events
  - Sponsor Fundraisers
- C. Once approved, the new organization may proceed in accordance with its stated purpose and exercises the 'Rights and Privileges' of recognized student groups at Georgia Southern University.
- D. Recognition shall be denied if the evidence presented shows the proposed organization will present substantial likelihood of conflict with the educational process of the University in any of the following:
1. The regular and orderly operation of the University
  2. The requirements of appropriate discipline within the University community.
  3. The academic pursuits of teaching, learning, and other campus activities.
  4. The laws or public policies of the State of Georgia and the United States.
  5. The statutes and regulations of the University and the Policies of the Board of Regents.
  6. The constitution and the by-laws of the Student Government Association.
  7. Limited membership is implied in the organization's name.

Appeal of the recommendation for recognition can be made by following the procedures in Part VIII of this document.

## **IV. CATEGORIES OF RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (RSOs)**

Upon approval, an organization will be listed in one of the following categories:

### **Academic & Professional**

An organization whose stated objective is to provide an opportunity for individuals to discuss and share information related to specific academic discipline, topic or interest. Membership may be composed of a specific academic discipline, topic or interest. Membership may be composed of a specific academic major.

**Advocacy & Service**

An organization whose membership is interested in advancing social issues that concern not only the University, but institutions outside the University as well.

**Greek (Social)**

A social, fraternal organization composed of all male or female members (single sex organizations). These groups must be affiliated with a national fraternal organization.

**Honorary**

An organization whose membership is based on academic achievement and whose purpose is to recognize such; however, this category of recognition has no impact on the university's graduation honor process.

**Multicultural**

An organization whose purpose is to provide social and cultural awareness relative to special ethnicity or heritage.

**Religious**

An organization whose purpose is religious instruction and fellowship.

**Production and Performance**

A group whose purpose does not fall into one of the other categories and whose purpose is entertaining in nature. Also, any group whose functions are a majority production and performance in nature (except meetings) would be classified as a production and performance group, or who sponsors more than three production and performance functions in one academic term.

**Recreational**

An organization whose purpose is to encourage participation and engage its members in competitive intramural sports. This also includes clubs, which are recreationally based organizations.

**Political**

An organization whose purpose is to provide an opportunity for individuals to discuss and share information regarding a specific topic within the realm of politics.

## **V. RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF A RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATION (RSO)**

Upon official recognition by the University, an organization becomes eligible to participate in University approved student activities and is given the following rights and privileges:

- A. Reserve University facilities, equipment, vans, etc.
- B. Hold fundraisers
- C. Sponsor campus-wide activities
- D. Invite speakers to campus
- E. Sponsor on-campus social activities
- F. Apply for activity fee monies with SGA
- G. Distribute handbills or leaflets on campus
- H. Publicize sponsored activities on campus
- I. Recruit students as members
- J. Use the University's name and logo (must get approval via Business Affairs for logo)
- K. Develop website visibility
- L. Use services provided by the OSA.

## **VI. OBLIGATIONS OF A RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATION (RSO)**

Each RSO pledges itself to the following obligations:

- A. Follow the stated purpose of the organization. An officially chartered student organization will not use its official status for any purpose other than its own organization. Sponsoring activities for an unchartered group, reserving facilities, and carrying on business for an unchartered group is strictly prohibited.
- B. Use of activity fee monies must conform to the purposes and practices approved by Georgia Southern University. Organizations are expected to meet their financial obligations on time and use the funds prudently and appropriately.
- C. Sponsor only such projects that will benefit both the group and/or the University.
- D. Practices of RSOs shall not be contrary to stated policies of the University. All students and student organizations are responsible for their conduct and are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the standards and regulations of the University. Specific regulations are referenced in the Student Code of Conduct document.
- E. Any changes in an organization's constitution after initial approval must be submitted to and approved by the Director of Student Activities. An updated constitution must be on file in the OSA at all times.
- F. Each RSO must have at least one faculty/staff advisor who is interested in the purpose of the organization and gives counsel and advice to the organization. Advisors must be a fulltime faculty or administrative staff members at Georgia Southern University and should be selected or appointed for a one year term. The organization should review the advisor's position on an annual basis. Non-Greek groups can have graduate student advisors.

- G. Each organization is responsible for maintaining adequate communication with the OSA.

RSOs are required to complete an annual renewal form each year. The OSA will send appropriate forms to the president and advisor named at the time. These forms can be found on the OSA website.

An organization will be classified as “inactive” upon failure to submit an annual renewal form. Inactive organizations cannot exercise any of the privileges granted to recognized groups. Active status shall be reinstated only upon completion of the annual renewal form within one year.

Failure to complete an annual renewal form within one year of inactivity will result in the loss of the organization’s recognition. The organization will be deleted from the files and must follow all application procedures to be reinstated.

- H. The OSA sponsors certain meetings and activities that are deemed very important to clubs and organizations. These special meetings may have mandatory attendance. Failure to attend a required meeting may result in the loss of the organization’s recognition status.

## VII. POLICIES

### GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING SOCIAL EVENTS with Alcohol.

Please contact the Office of Greek Life and/or Legal Affairs for these specific guidelines.

- A. **Membership:** To participate actively in organizational activities, a student must be a regularly enrolled student and must be registered for at least four (4) semester hours or be classified as an associate member. Student members shall compose the majority of membership of the organization. All other membership requirements are left to the discretion of the organization subject to approval by the University. Criteria beyond those set by the organization may be imposed by the University if it deems the impact of the organization on the total campus warrants such additional criteria. Members of the faculty or other non-students cannot vote or hold office. Advisors are ex-officio members and do not vote.
- B. **Officers’ Academic Responsibility:** To hold office in an organization, a student must have earned, at the time of nomination, a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average on GSU course work and must maintain this average during his/her tenure in office. If an officer’s GPA falls below this minimum, two semesters in a row, they must forfeit their office. No student may run for office in a student organization while on academic or disciplinary probation. A student placed on academic or disciplinary probation after he/she is elected to office must relinquish that office.
- C. **Facility Usage:** Meeting rooms and other venues on campus are reserved by the Russell Union Facilities Use Coordinator. All fees associated with using campus facilities must be paid by the organization.

- D. **Event Approval:** University facilities may be used by student organizations for approved events. For event approval, Activity Request Forms must be submitted to the Russell Union Facilities Use Coordinator.
- E. **Funding:** Most programs sponsored by an organization will be financed through the organization's funds. If additional funds are needed, the Student Government Association (SGA) has set aside a portion of its allocated activity fee monies to encourage organizations to sponsor activities that can benefit all students. For your convenience, information about funding requirements and procedures through SGA has been appended to this packet. Additionally, services are provided via the OSA.

## **VIII. RECALL**

The approval of a student organization at Georgia Southern University is granted on the basis that the organization conforms to the 'Obligations' as stated in Part VI of this document. Failure on the part of the organization to conform to the conditions of approval was mentioned above will subject the organization to recall by the Director of Student Activities. Recall will result in an officer and faculty advisor of the organization appearing before the committee to answer any charges that have been brought against the organization. The Director of Student Activities reserves the right to administer such disciplinary action as it might deem necessary against the organization or forward the action to The Office of Judicial Affairs. This action could be a probationary period for the organization or could completely revoke the charter.

## **IX. APPEALS**

The steps for appealing when recognition has been denied or recalled are as follows:

- A. Groups may appeal denial, or recall by submitting a written statement of reasons for appeal to the Director of Student Activities within thirty (30) days of denial.
- B. Appeals will be reviewed by the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management who will report his/her decision after considering the following questions:
  - 1. Will the organization interfere with the stated purposes and mission of the institutions?
  - 2. Is the stated purpose of the organization in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, and with statutes and policies of the University and the Board of Regents?
  - 3. Were appropriate procedures followed by those reviewing the initial application?
  - 4. Is there other pertinent information needed to make a proper decision?
- C. Groups dissatisfied with the decision may appeal to the President within thirty (30) days.
- D. The President, following the same criteria stated above, will notify the petitioning group of his/her decision within thirty (30) days. The decision of the President will be considered final.

## DEVELOPING A CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

For your convenient reference, a suggested format and sample constitution and by-laws have been prepared. The sample is only an example to follow. It is not to be used as a “fill-in” form. If you need further assistance, contact the OSA in Russell Union, Room 1056, 486-7270.

A **constitution** is the basic framework of an organization. It should state the general operating procedures and policies of a group, which are not subject to change frequently. The **by-laws** contain a more detailed method of doing business and specific rules. For example, the constitution would establish that dues are a requirement for membership and would outline the method of determining the amount; and the by-laws would state the specific due’s amount.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

ARTICLE I. NAME & PURPOSE

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE III. QUORUM

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES

ARTICLE V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

ARTICLE VI. IMPEACHMENT AND VACANCIES

ARTICLE VII. FACULTY/STAFF ADVISOR

ARTICLE VIII. DUES

ARTICLE IX. MEETING

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES

ARTICLE XI. RULES OF ORDER

ARTICLE XII. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

ARTICLE XIII. RATIFICATION

### SAMPLE CONSTITUTION CONSTITUTION FOR (name of organization) at Georgia Southern University

PREAMBLE

**Introductory Statement of Purpose**— *The following is the Student Government Association’s preamble: “We, the student of Georgia Southern University, in order to for a democratic, efficient, and responsible student government to represent, lead, and unify the student body, to decide act... do hereby establish and adopt this constitution and its by-laws for the Georgia Southern University Student Government Association.”*

### ARTICLE I. NAME & PURPOSE

**Section A.** The name of the organization should reflect the nature of the organization and cannot imply limited or discriminatory membership. The name of the organization shall be at Georgia Southern University .

**Section B.** The purpose(s) of the organization should be listed. Use descriptive verbs that apply to your organization’s purpose. The purpose of (*name of organization at Georgia Southern University*) shall be the following:

1. *To provide....*
2. *To assist....*
3. *To participate....*
4. *To promote....*

## ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

*(Types of membership, requirements for membership, and a non-discrimination statement should be listed.)*

**Section A.** General membership shall be open to all undergraduate and graduate students *(specify requirements: currently enrolled in at least four (6) semester hours) at Georgia Southern University.*

**Section B.** Associate membership shall be composed of faculty and staff of Georgia Southern University *(and/or community professionals in \_\_\_\_\_ industry)*. Students enrolled in less than four (4) hours should be assigned associate membership. State the limitations of associate members—not required to pay dues, cannot hold office, do not have voting privileges, etc.

**Section C.** Members are considered in good standing (list requirements – if they have paid their dues, attend at least (\_\_\_\_) meetings per semester, etc.). Only members in good standing can vote.

**Section D. Non-Discrimination Statement:** No otherwise qualified individual shall be excluded from membership on the basis of age, race, gender, disability, national origin, religion or sexual orientation. (This statement can be reflected in your constitution as printed here.)

## ARTICLE III. QUORUM

A quorum of membership for voting purposes shall be reached when (\_\_\_\_%) of the general members are present. (A quorum is usually a simple majority of members, but can be 2/3, 3/4, etc. Two-thirds quorum is suggested.)

## ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES

*(List the officers' positions, qualifications for holding office, and duties of their offices.)*

**Section A.** The officers of the organization shall be the following: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and (others designated as necessary).

**Section B.** Officers must possess a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA during their term of office, be a member in good standing, *(some organizations specify membership for at least one semester prior to holding office)*, etc.

**Section C.** The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary
5. Other officers

## ARTICLE V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

*(List the term of office, nomination, vote counting, installation, and special election processes.)*

**Section A.** The term of office shall be *(one year, one semester, etc.) beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Section B.** Nominations shall take place on *(day of election, the week of month preceding election, etc.)*.

**Section C.** Votes shall be counted by (*advisor suggested*) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Section D.** Installation of new officers shall take place (*week of month, semester*) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Section E.** Special elections shall be held if a vacancy occurs. The elections should occur within \_\_\_\_\_ (*days, weeks*) of the vacancy. Members shall be notified by (*how and how much notification...phone, mail, email, direct contact, etc.*)

## **ARTICLE VI. IMPEACHMENT AND VACANCIES**

*The process of impeachment of an officer, committee chairs, and filling vacancies should be stated.*

### **Section A.** Impeachment of Officers

1. Charges may be brought against an officer by any member of the organization. It will take a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee, excluding the accused officer, to impeach.
2. The impeached officer shall then be provided due opportunities for defense. (*suggested two weeks preparation*)
3. A 2/3 vote of the voting body is then required to effect the resignation of the officer.

### **Section B.** Filling Vacancies

1. All vacancies in elected positions shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term.
2. If one or more officers are unable to assume or continue with their duties, the remaining officers shall hold a special election to fill those vacancies under the guidelines for elections in this document. In the event that such an election cannot be held within a reasonable amount of time due to the University not being in session, the remaining officers shall appoint the replacement with the advice and counsel of the advisor.

## **ARTICLE VII. FACULTY/STAFF ADVISOR**

*State the procedure for selecting a faculty/staff advisor. Duties and responsibilities should be included.*

This group shall have an advisor who is interested in the purpose of and gives counsel to the organization. The advisor must be a full-time member at Georgia Southern University. The advisor is selected or appointed on an annual basis by the majority of the organization's general membership. The advisor serves as an ex-officio member and does not vote.

## **ARTICLE VII. DUES**

*Provisions for membership fees, dues, and assessments, if there are to be any, should be set in detail: How often dues are expected to be paid, collection and handling procedures, delinquent membership dues, how the amount of dues will be determined, etc. The provision for the organizations' account, should the organization become inactive or folds should be included (e.g., donate to \_\_\_\_\_charity, scholarship fund, etc.).*

Section A. Dues collection (*if any, when: academic year, semester, month, etc.*).

Section B. Dues shall be set at the beginning of each academic year by recommendation of the officers and a vote by the voting body.

Section C. Delinquent membership dues...

Section D. If the organization becomes inactive or folds, the remaining funds in the account will be donated to...

## **ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS**

*Provisions for setting regular meetings times, stipulations for calling special meetings, and the officer who has the authority to call special meetings should be included.*

Section A. Meetings shall be held regularly at a time to be specified by the organization at the beginning of each (*academic year, semester, week of the month, etc.*). There should be at least (*indicate minimum # of meetings per semester*) \_\_\_\_\_ meetings per semester.

Section B. Special meetings may be called by the (*President, combination of officers and advisor, etc.*) Notifications, how, when?

## **ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES**

*Names of standing committees, if any should be listed. Include the method of choosing the chairpersons and committee members, the duties of the committees, and provisions for creating ad hoc committees.*

## **ARTICLE XI. RULES OF ORDER**

*A provision for some accepted rules of order for parliamentary procedure, such as "Robert's Rules of Order" should be provided.*

Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide by the presiding officer in all situations not covered by the provisions of the constitutions.

## **SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I. DUES**

**ARTICLE II. MEETINGS**

**ARTICLE III. COMMITTEES**

**ARTICLE IV. AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE XII. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS**

*State requirements for adopting by-laws and amendments to your constitution. All amendments are subject to final approval by the Committee on Student Organizations.*

Section A. By-laws

1. By-laws may be created by (*officers, members with recommendation from the officers, etc.*)
2. By-laws must be in accordance with this constitution as amended.
3. By-laws must be sponsored by at least (two) persons, one being an officer, committee chair, etc.

C. By-laws shall be adopted by a (*2/3, 3/4, etc.*) vote of the voting body. (*2/3 suggested*)

**ARTICLE XIII. RATIFICATION**

*This section should state the requirements for ratification of the newly formed organization.*

This constitution shall be enforced upon ratification by a (*2/3, 3/4, etc.*) of the voting body, and upon approval of this constitution by the Committee on Student Organizations. (*2/3 suggested*)

**SAMPLE BY-LAWS**

**BY-LAWS FOR (name of organization)**

**ARTICLE I. DUES**

Section A. Dues will be (*specify amount*) per (*semester, year, month, etc.*)

Section B. Dues will be collected by (*specify meeting day, e.g., second meeting each semester, etc.*)

Section C. Dues will be delinquent if not collected by (*specific day, meeting, etc.*)

**ARTICLE II. MEETINGS**

Section A. General membership meetings will be held (*specify date, time, etc.*)

Section B. Officers will meet (*specify time, day, etc.*)

**ARTICLE III. COMMITTEES**

Section A. Ad Hoc Committee

Section B. The purposes of the ad hoc committees are the following:

**ARTICLE IV. AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS**

Section A. Amendments to the by-laws may be presented by any member in good standing.

Section B. Amendments to the by-laws shall be adopted by a (*2/3, 3/4, majority, etc.*) vote of the voting body. (*2/3 suggested*)

**GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
APPLICATION FOR CHARTERING A NEW STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

All blanks must be completed. The initials "N/A" may be used where questions do not apply to the organization. No application will be considered unless all blanks are completed.

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will the Organization affiliate with a National Organization? ( ) No ( ) Yes

If yes, give name and address of National Organization.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

OFFICERS: Eagle ID (last four digits) P.O. BOX PHONE E-MAIL ADDRESS

PRESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

VICE PRESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_

TREASURER \_\_\_\_\_

ADVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

NAME P.O. BOX OR PHONE E-MAIL ADDRESS

CURRENT ADDRESS

Student Organizer Signature Advisor Signature

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Make sure and include the last four digits of Eagle ID, P.O. Box, Phone, and email address for all positions and advisor or the form will be returned.)**

**CHARTER MEMBERS' SIGNATURE**

ORGANIZATION

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OFFICERS: NAME Eagle ID (last four digits) SIGNATURE EMAIL  
PRESIDENT

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VICE PRESIDENT

---

SECRETARY

---

TREASURER

---

ADVISOR

---

NAME SIGNATURE

You must have at least ten (10) members other than your officers listed:

NAME Eagle ID (last four digits) SIGNATURE

1.

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2.

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10.

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