

Registered Student Organization Procedures & Guidelines

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Registered Student Organizations

Student organizations are voluntary associations of University of Tennessee Southern students, which are legally separate entities from the University. Student organizations are student initiated and student run. Student organizations that are registered with University of Tennessee Southern may have access to certain University-controlled benefits and resources, such as facilities use and funding eligibility.

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.

Registration Procedures

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 the University facilities and holding themselves out to the general public as a group centered on the 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. If faculty or staff members are interested in creating an organization to fit a particular need on campus, they should speak with currently enrolled students to discuss their interest and allow the students, if they choose to proceed, to complete the registration process.

Registered Student Organizations (RSO) at UT Southern must be made up of and started by current and enrolled UT Southern students, and may not be started by alumni, affiliate members, community members or UT Southern faculty/staff. **Any groups seeking recognition as an RSO must complete the formal registration process facilitated by Student Affairs staff as outlined in this document.** Recognition from the University does not mean endorsement of the purposes or activities of any organization by faculty, staff or University leadership. It means only that the organization has met the minimum requirements set for all RSOs. These stipulations apply to all groups, including, but not limited to fraternities, sororities, student media organizations, club sports, affinity groups, and campus ministries.

Creating a New Registered Student Organization

The steps below will help you understand the process to start a new group. New organizations may register any time during the year except during the last two weeks of an academic term. If you have questions, please reach out to staff in the Division of Student Affairs. Organizations seeking recognition must complete all of the steps listed below.

Step 1: Recruit Student Members

All RSOs require five currently enrolled UT Southern students to start an organization. Student Affairs staff can help in gauging interest in and advertising potential new RSOs.

Step 2: Find an Advisor

All RSOs are required to have an advisor. Verified Campus Ministries¹ are allowed to have a religious official, or designee, of their affiliate place of worship serve as their advisor, though additional requirements apply. Verified Greek Organizations² must have a full-time UT Southern faculty or staff member serve as the primary advisor, but may have a secondary advisor through their governing body or the chapter's alumni group and additional requirements apply. For all other RSOs, the advisor must be a full-time UT Southern faculty or staff member.

¹ See *Campus Ministries*.

² See *Greek Organizations*.

Step 3: Create a Constitution and Bylaws

All RSOs require a Constitution to be submitted and renewed each year. Social fraternities and sororities may be required to submit the equivalent from national affiliates or other pertinent information.

The constitution must contain the following information:

- I. The name of the organization
- II. A statement of purpose for the organization
- III. Membership eligibility requirements
- IV. A listing of officers by title and any special functions of the officers/positions, and a statement of the terms of the officers and the time and methods for election
- V. A statement detailing any membership dues, including amount and frequency of payment and provision for the disposition of any funds (in the event of dissolution of the organization)
- VI. Provision for faculty/staff advisor(s)
- VII. A dissolution clause

See the document
***Registered Student
Organization
Constitution
Guidelines*** for
specifics on how to
build your
constitution!

Some organizations, usually those that are chapters of a national organization, will also have bylaws that dictate additional rules and procedures. Any bylaws must be submitted along with the Constitution.

Step 4: Submit a New Student Organization Application

New organizations may begin the registration process by submitting the New Student Organization Application (available online or in the Office of Student Activities). Organizations are required to submit a constitution along with their application. Local chapters of regional or national organizations, including campus ministries, will be required to submit their local constitution and, in addition, any statements of their parent organization to which their local constitution refers or which determine local policy above and beyond that which is stated in the local constitution.

Step 5: Recognition Review

After an initial review by Student Affairs staff, the application will be passed on to the Dean of Students. If there are changes, additions or inaccuracies that need to be corrected with the request, the student who submitted the application will be contacted and given feedback and instructions on the corrections needed.

The student who submitted the application will be contacted will be notified in writing if/when the RSO is approved by the University. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and other senior leadership members, as applicable, will be notified of the creation of any new RSO.

Once an organization is established and active, it must fulfill the following requirements to maintain its recognition as an RSO at the university.

Maintaining a Registered Student Organization

1. Renewal Paperwork

Each RSO should renew its status by submitting the required renewal paperwork, including any updates to membership rolls (minimum of five members), advisors, and constitutions, by May 1 for the upcoming academic year. RSOs that are unsure of the interest or sustainability may request an extension until September 30. Any RSO not renewed by September 30 will be deemed inactive, and all right and privileges associated with RSO status will be revoked.

What to Expect in Renewal Paperwork:

- updated information, including contact information for officers and advisors
- current constitution and bylaws, and
- a current roster of members at UT Southern.

2. Annual Presidents Meeting

Student Organization Presidents will be required to attend an Annual Presidents Meeting, offered each semester. The following will be discussed at the meeting:

- Campus Policies and Procedures, including reservation information
- Student Programming
- Hazing Prevention, Sexual Violence Prevention/Title IX, and Student Conduct

3. Programming Requirements

Student Organizations are encouraged to host events, both for its members and for the University community. At minimum, student organizations are required to participate in Activity/Involvement Fairs at the start of each semester. See *Events* for more information.

4. Campus Ministry and Greek Organization Advisors

When a campus ministry or Greek organization RSO has an Advisor that is not a current UT Southern employee, the advisor must attend an Annual Advisors Meeting, offered each semester.

If an RSO fails to complete all components of the re-registration process, the following will occur:

- The organization will be designated as “not in good standing,”
- All current reservations for the organization will be cancelled, and
- The organization will lose all other privileges and rights afforded to RSOs.

Registered Student Organizations Rules & Guidelines

Advisors

All student organizations must have at least one qualified faculty/staff advisor. The advisor shall be a full-time faculty or staff member, unless the organization is a Campus Ministry (see *Campus Ministries*) or Greek Organization (see *Greek Organizations*). 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 Southern. Those persons not having one year of service must be approved by the Dean of Students.

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. Advisors may counsel their organization in the exercise of responsibility, but they do not have the authority to control the policy of the organization. The officers of the organization are responsible for keeping their advisors aware of the policies and actions of their organization. Financial records must be available to the organization's advisors at all times.

Change of Advisor: Organizations should notify Student Affairs immediately upon the changing of an organization advisor.

Affiliations

RSO's may be affiliated with an external organization where such affiliation is:

1. Clearly indicated by the title of the external organization, and through its mission/constitution.
2. Consistent with the purposes set forth in the external organization's constitution.
3. Not such as to change significantly the nature of the organization as an association of students with primary interest on campus. (Affiliation with an external organization does not of itself affect the right of a student organization to operate on the campus. When seeking registration, the student organization must make clear those obligations imposed on the local chapter by extramural affiliation.)
4. When there is a conflict between the policies and procedures of the external organization and those of the University (e.g., policies pertaining to membership eligibility or voting privileges), the obligation of the student organization is to the University and its policies.

Alcoholic Beverages

University policy prohibits any student and/or student organization from serving or permitting the consumption, possession or display of any alcoholic beverage or containers at any time, or by anyone on University premises. Student organization officers are responsible for initiating risk management procedures and refusing admission to their social gatherings of persons under the influence of alcoholic beverages. Student organizations sponsoring any social affairs are responsible for the general decorum of the event. Any student and/or organization can be sanctioned for violations of the UT Southern Standards of Conduct, whether on or off campus, if the Office of Student Affairs is notified or contacted.

Appeals

Any decision refusing to register an organization or deeming an RSO inactive may be appealed to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in writing by the affected organization. When a decision is appealed, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs shall abide by the following procedures in hearing the appeal:

1. The University has the burden of proving the charges against the organization, including the presentation of a detailed statement of why the organization should be denied registration or registration should be withdrawn under the University's policy governing student organizations.
2. The organization may be represented by an advisor of its choice.
3. The organization may present a defense against the charges. A copy of the charges must have been provided to the organization in a reasonable time in advance of the hearing, along with all information available to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in rendering their denial.

Campus Ministries

RSO's may be designated as Campus Ministries where such affiliation, in addition to the qualifications noted above ("Affiliations"), is:

1. Registered with the University through an RSO
2. Organized and authorized under the auspices of a nationally recognized religious body
3. Granted tax-exempt status under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code
4. Associated with a religious organization who has an established campus ministry for long enough (at least two years) to establish the nature and true purpose of the organization
5. Associated with a Campus Ministry whose principal mission is ministry to and with the UT Southern community
6. Able to provide documentation of its own liability insurance
7. In coordination with and/or under the leadership of a leader, serving as Advisor, who successfully passes required background checks and attends required meetings
8. Comprised of members limited to students, staff, or faculty at the University of Tennessee Southern, with the sole exception of the Advisor who meets qualification #7 above

Campus Ministries may make use of campus facilities with the same rights and responsibilities that apply to any RSO, as long as such use remains consistent with the purposes of the University (as determined by the University) and does not attempt to infringe on the privacy or rights of others. Use of any University facility will be cleared with Student Affairs through the appropriate requests.

Greek Organizations

RSO's may be designated as Greek Organizations where such affiliation, in addition to the qualifications noted above ("Affiliations"), is:

1. Registered with the University through an RSO
2. Organized and authorized under the auspices of a nationally recognized organizing body, who has an established Greek Organization identity for long enough (at least two years) to establish the nature and true purpose of the organization
3. Granted tax-exempt status under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code
4. In coordination with and/or under the leadership of a leader who successfully passes required background checks and attends required meetings
5. Able to provide documentation of its own liability insurance
6. Qualified as a "social fraternity or sorority" as defined by the United States Department of Education
7. Comprised of members limited to students, staff, or faculty at the University of Tennessee Southern

Greek Organizations may make use of campus facilities with the same rights and responsibilities that apply to any RSO, as long as such use remains consistent with the purposes of the University (as determined by the University) and does not attempt to infringe on the privacy or rights of others. Use of any University facility will be cleared with Student Affairs through the appropriate requests.

Greek Organizations may restrict membership based on the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Denial of Registration

Denial by the University of a student organization may be based on one or more of the following grounds:

1. 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.
2. 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
3. If the proposed organization duplicates the functions of an existing registered student organization.
4. If any aspect of the registration forms has been found to be fraudulent.
5. 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 would have influence at the University.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions

RSO's must 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 organizations and/or individuals. 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, social misconduct, and/or improper discrimination. See the current Student Handbook and Code of Conduct for more information.

Events

RSO's are encouraged to host events for members and for the wider UT Southern community. So far as possible, conflicts with other events should be avoided. All RSO programming or events should be requested via the **RSO Event Form**. Forms should be submitted at least two weeks in advance, and may be submitted for single occurrence events or recurring meetings and events. Events should not be scheduled during final examination week without special permission. Events must comply with the provisions of the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, and RSO Guidelines and should be aligned with the RSO's specific purpose.

Fundraising & Collection Drives

Any RSO wanting to fundraise or host a drive for collections must first submit the **RSO Fundraiser Request Form** through Student Affairs. See *Solicitation* for more information.

Hazing

No student or organization of the university shall engage in hazing or committing an act that injures, frightens, degrades, or disgraces a person attending the University. Students and/or organizations involved in hazing shall be subject to disciplinary action as per the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Inactive Registered Student Organizations

If an RSO is not renewed within two consecutive years, the organization will become inactive. Any student wishing to restart the organization will need to go through the New Registered Student Organization process.

RSO's may also be deemed inactive if:

1. The RSO does not show a reasonable amount of activity in promoting the ends and purposes specified in its constitution, as evidenced by membership meetings and other activities.
2. The RSO violates University regulations, including those governing student organizations, or local, state, or federal laws.

Non-Discrimination

No RSO may deny membership on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. A registered student organization may not restrict membership based on the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. No student organizations, which have any restrictive clauses with regard to race, color, creed, or national origin will be granted recognition.

Officers

Officers must be full-time students, except for organizations where membership is composed of both faculty and student members, in which case a faculty member may serve as an officer. To be eligible to serve as an officer of a registered student organization, a student should be in good academic standing at the time of his/her election or appointment and during his/her term of office. In addition, a student may be judged ineligible for the office if found

responsible for violating a University Standard of Conduct. When an election is held in a registered student organization, the names of the new officers must be updated to Student Affairs within one week.

Transition of Organizations' Officers: RSO's must notify Student Affairs within two weeks of new officers being elected. New organization presidents will be required to complete a training course within two weeks of the notification of their election.

Political Activities on Campus

RSO's may invite candidates for public office to speak on or in University property or facilities. Scheduling of politically related activities shall be handled in accordance with applicable University regulations.

RSO's may announce a campus visit of a political candidate through the use of posters and signs. However, campaign posters and signs promoting candidacy for public office may not be attached to or placed on or in University property and buildings.

Sign Posting Procedures

The Dean of Students must approve any RSO signs, posters, or announcements before posting. Approval for posting does not represent University endorsement of the information posted or the actual function(s) advertised.

Posted materials must clearly promote the activity publicized and the sponsoring RSO as its primary message (rather than the advancement of the non-affiliated entity or product). If the name, logo, trademark, slogan, or similar identifier of a non-University affiliate appears on the posting, it must not appear as the dominant message.

Bulletin Boards are provided in various areas, some of which are for class or departmental use only. No tape of any kind can be used on painted walls. No signs may be posted on doors.

Violations of these procedures by RSO's are a violation of the Student Handbook and will be subject to the University student conduct process.

Solicitation on Campus

Any RSO wanting to solicit on campus must first submit Fundraiser Request Form through Student Affairs. RSO's are also encouraged to contact Student Affairs for the specifics of any guidelines regarding solicitation for private, political, or public philanthropy.

- Solicitation is defined as the seeking of funds or support from sources on campus and other forms of support including the procurement of supplies and the selling and distribution of items, materials, or products and services.
- Solicitation will not be authorized for personal benefit of individual students or individual members of student organizations.
- Solicitation and posted advertising of regular business enterprise sales by students and student organizations are not allowed. Students and student organizations may use designated bulletin boards and the UT Southern App to advertise occasional sales or rentals, such as personal autos and auto accessories, electronic devices, pets, homes, books, etc., that are not a part of a business.

- Door-to-door solicitation in residential halls, University apartments, and offices by individuals on or off campus is prohibited. Certain types of philanthropic solicitation in designated areas of University buildings might be permitted with approval of the Office of Student Life.
- In accordance with the state law, the University does not allow any raffling or other forms of gambling in its name or in any of its facilities.

Solicitation Off-Campus

RSO's interested in soliciting off campus, e.g. door-to-door sales, bake sales, car washes, etc., are required first submit the **RSO Fundraiser Request Form** through Student Affairs. After approved by the University, the RSO's must obtain a Solicitation Permit and approval from Pulaski City Hall. Additionally, if the RSO wishes to set up near a business establishment for a bake sale, car wash, etc., the organization should first have approval from that business entity.

Travel

RSO's are welcome to travel for events, conferences, and other opportunities. UT Southern assumes no travel or other liability in relation to RSO events, nor does the University endorse any event, conference, etc. attended by an RSO. All RSO travel should be requested via the **RSO Travel Form**. Forms should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Travel should not be scheduled during final examination week without special permission. Travel must comply with the provisions of the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, and RSO Guidelines and should be aligned with the RSO's specific purpose.

University Liability

Registered Student Organizations, although registered or otherwise permitted to operate on or near University property, and even though required to conform to certain prescribed University procedures in some cases, are voluntary associations of students and 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 and employees are 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.