

# Student Organization Policies and Procedures Manual (SOPPs)

This manual is intended to serve as a collection of all rules and regulations concerning student organizations at West Chester University put in place by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement (SLI) and the Student Government Association (SGA). This manual, in conjunction with the SGA bylaws, shall also govern the Bylaw Review Committee of SGA and its operation. No part of this manual shall conflict in any way with the SGA bylaws or any other University policy.

## Contents:

- I. Organization Approval Timeline
- II. Required Organization Assembly
- III. Organization Approval Process
- IV. Organization Bylaws
- V. Organization Rules and Regulations
- VI. Council of Organizations
- VII. Special Circumstances
- VIII. Composition of the Student Government Association Senate
- IX. Governing Body Approval for Undergraduate Organizations
- X. Amendment Policy

## Article I: Organization Approval Timeline

1. Students interested in forming an organization will have a maximum of one calendar year, from when the receipt of the Request to Organize form is confirmed via email by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, to the date of the organization's official SGA recognition, to complete this process.
  - a. Failure to complete this process in the allotted time will result in a full restart of the formation process.
2. Request to Organize forms will be accepted by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement on a rolling basis throughout the academic year. To allow for organizations to complete this process in a timely manner, there will be two checkpoints per semester where the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement will consolidate submitted forms for progression in the process.
  - a. The two checkpoints will be set and advertised by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement each semester.
  - b. All forms submitted after the second checkpoint in a given semester will be processed at the discretion of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement. At the latest, those forms that are submitted after the second checkpoint will be reviewed with other requests submitted by the first checkpoint of the following semester.

## Article II: Required Organization Assembly

Below is a detailed explanation of the assembly required to form an organization. Interested students should be compiling the following information throughout the formation process, ensuring that there is a minimum of five students (including the executive board) and an advisor to move forward in the recognition process.

1. A full executive board, consisting of a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary.
  - a. A student may not serve in more than one of the above officer positions at any given time but may hold in conjunction any additional executive board positions as detailed in the organization's bylaws (e.g., social media director, etc.).
  - b. Any additional executive board positions proposed by the organization are not required to be filled for SGA recognition.
  - c. All executive board members must be undergraduate students.
  - d. It is recommended, but not required, that at least one member of the executive board will not be graduating in the current academic year.
2. At least one student, undergraduate or graduate, not on the executive board that has expressed an interest in joining the organization as a member.
3. An organization advisor, who may be a full-time or part-time university staff member, faculty member, or administrator.
  - a. The purpose of this advisor is to remain in contact with the organization's executive board, attend organization events when necessary, remain in

communication with the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement with regards to the standing and performance of the organization, and provide overall support to the organization in decision making in accordance with University policies and procedures.

## Article III: Organization Approval Process

Below is an outline of the step-by-step process by which an organization can be recognized by the Student Government Association.

1. A student interested in forming an organization will do individual research into the current list of recognized organizations on campus. The most updated list of current organizations can be found on RamConnect.
  - a. Should the student find that their idea for an organization is similar in nature to one that is already recognized, they may edit the purpose of their organization accordingly to differentiate it from that previously existing group, or they may consider reaching out to that previously existing group to combine their efforts.
  - b. An organization that is found to be too similar to another existing organization will not proceed through the following steps of this process.
2. After ensuring the uniqueness of their organization, the student will send an email to [involvement@wcupa.edu](mailto:involvement@wcupa.edu) to express interest in proceeding through the process for newly forming organizations.
  - a. This email should contain the name of the student interested in forming the organization, the name of the proposed organization, and a draft of a purpose statement for the proposed organization.
  - b. The receipt of this email will allow for a staff member from the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement or a Leadership Consultant (LC) from L.E.A.D., Leadership Empowerment and Development, to set up and informational meeting to discuss the next steps of the formation process, including the procedure for filling out the Request to Organize Form.
3. The student interested in forming the organization must complete a Request to Organize (RTO) form, located on the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement's RamConnect page.
  - a. Prior to filling out this form, the student should secure an advisor interested in supporting their organization. A staff member from the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement will confirm via email with the listed advisor their commitment.
4. The interested students will receive an email from a member of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement staff informing them of the receipt of their Request to Organize form as well as the name of the Leadership Consultant that will be assigned to the student to assist them through the remainder of the following procedures in the process of SGA recognition for organizations.

- a. After receiving a confirmation email from the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, the organization will be permitted to hold a maximum of three informational meetings in Sykes Student Union (based on space availability).
    - i. Sykes Student Union staff will be alerted to the organization's forming status by staff from the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
    - ii. These three meetings are required to be strictly related to member recruitment and organization formation. Requests for space reservations related to events such as fundraising, special events or programming, etc., will not be honored.
5. The organization must create bylaws according to the template provided by their assigned Leadership Consultant. These bylaws should govern the assembly, operation, and sustainability of the organization. The interested student may contact their assigned Leadership Consultant for assistance with this process.
6. The organization must submit their compiled list of members, delineating executive board members and appointing a student point of contact (usually the organization's president) for the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement and SGA to communicate with.
  - a. Included in this list should be the emails of all involved students as well as their class standing (e.g., first-year, sophomore, etc.).
  - b. This list, in addition to the bylaws created by the organization, must be sent via email to the assigned Leadership Consultant. Following their review, the Leadership Consultant will send these documents to the SGA parliamentarian for approval to continue on to SGA's Bylaw Review Committee.
7. After a preliminary review, the SGA parliamentarian will reach out to the student point of contact for the forming organization via email to establish a time for them to attend a meeting of the Bylaw Review Committee.
  - a. Only one member of the potential executive board is required to be in attendance at this meeting, but as many members of the potential executive board as possible are encouraged to attend. It is suggested that the previously established student point of contact is one of the members that attends this meeting.
8. At the meeting, the Bylaw Review Committee will examine the proposed organization bylaws according to the following categories: the need for the organization's existence on campus and the uniqueness of the organization when compared to current recognized groups, the vision of the organization as it refers to its purpose and governance, and the sustainability of the organization in terms of the longevity of its membership.
  - a. The Bylaw Review Committee can reject bylaws for any problems in functionality, clarity, or if they are incomplete.
9. The SGA parliamentarian will work with the student point of contact to correct any problems that may arise during the review of their organization's bylaws. Any changes required must be made and submitted to the SGA parliamentarian before the group may proceed to the SGA senate.
  - a. If, according to the Bylaw Review Committee, the necessary changes are suitably minor, the organization will not be required to return to the committee and will instead be passed forward to the senate. Should the changes require any significant

discussion, the organization will be required to return to the Bylaw Review Committee.

10. Upon approval by the Bylaw Review Committee, the SGA parliamentarian will invite the organization to give a brief presentation to the SGA general senate.
  - a. The SGA parliamentarian will provide a presentation template to the forming organization following their approval by the Bylaw Review Committee.
11. The SGA senate will vote on the formation of the organization in accordance with the presented information as well as SGA and University policies.
  - a. A 2/3 vote in favor by the senate is required for the organization to be formally recognized.
  - b. Organizations are permitted to spectate the discussion on their organization and subsequent voting period.
  - c. A written letter containing the verdict and the most recent copy of the bylaws as approved by the Bylaw Review Committee, if recognized, will be sent to the student point of contact and the appropriate University staff via email.
  - d. The verdict will be forwarded to the Vice President of the Division of Student Affairs, or designee, and the Student Services, Inc. (SSI) Executive Director.
    - i. Any of the above may reject the organization's recognition if they deem it to be contrary to the university's mission, or if they find that it presents undue hardship and/or liability to the University or Student Services, Inc.
12. After the SGA verdict is made available to the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, a RamConnect page for the organization will be created.
13. After being recognized by the SGA senate, the organization's student point of contact will be encouraged to remain in contact with their assigned Leadership Consultant in order to discuss the responsibilities and expectations that follow recognition.
14. Outlined below is the procedure for groups that did not receive a vote in favor of recognition by the SGA senate.
  - a. If the group would like to appeal the decision, they must meet with the SGA parliamentarian to discuss the reason(s) for denial.
  - b. After at least 14 days from the SGA senate vote, the prospective organization may resubmit revised bylaws with the appropriate updates addressing the reason(s) for denial to the Bylaw Review Committee for appeal.
  - c. The Bylaw Review Committee will discuss any proposed bylaw changes and table the group's appeal for at least seven days.
  - d. After the seven day tabling period, the Bylaw Review Committee may vote to bring the group to the SGA senate for another vote of recognition.
    - i. Prospective organizations may go through this appeal process only once before the group must wait until the following academic semester to once again resubmit their bylaws.
    - ii. Organizations have a maximum allotted timeline of one year, from the time that their Request to Organize form is received by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, to be recognized by the SGA senate. Should an

organization be denied by the SGA senate, the appeal process will only be possible if they remain within the bounds of the one year timeline.

1. If the organization will exceed the one year period before the appeal process can be completed, they will be required to restart the entire organization formation process, from step one of the procedures detailed in this article.

## Article IV: Organization Bylaws

1. All organizations' bylaws must follow the format of the template provided to their student point of contact by their assigned Leadership Consultant.
  - a. Organizations may add components to their bylaws but may not remove anything that is already contained in the template.
2. Organizations are required to follow and operate within their own bylaws. If any West Chester University student, faculty, staff, or administrator feel that an organization is in violation of their bylaws, they can petition the Bylaw Review Committee via an email to the SGA parliamentarian to consider the situation.

## Article V: Organization Rules and Regulations

1. Organizations are required to follow all SGA policies, University policies, and their own bylaws.
  - a. Relevant policies include, but are not limited to, the SGA Student Organization Policies and Procedures Manual (this document), the SGA bylaws, the SGA Financial Policies and Procedures, the SSI Financial Policies and Procedures, all SLI policies, and the Sykes Student Union Program Planning Guide.
2. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement shall investigate any complaint brought to them by any West Chester University student, faculty, staff, or administrator, or any complaints that emerge from within the office against a recognized student organization for violation of any of the above.
  - a. These complaints can be brought to either the SGA parliamentarian or to the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement via email.
  - b. Complaints regarding violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the Office of Student Conduct.
  - c. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement reserves the right to place suspensions or restrictions on any organization should the need for an investigation arise.
3. If an organization is found to be in violation of any of the above policies, the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement will consider sanctions including a warning, suspension, or a recommendation of derecognition.
  - a. A warning is defined as written communication from the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, possibly in conjunction with a meeting, detailing the infraction and what steps are required to correct it.

- i. This communication will contain a deadline for when this correction must be completed. If an organization does not meet this deadline, further sanctions will be considered by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
  - b. Suspension is defined as a freeze on the organization's SSI account and/or a hold on the ability of the organization to reserve University spaces. The length of a suspension will be determined by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
  - c. Derecognition is defined as a loss of formal University recognition from SGA. The organization is prohibited from conducting any and all group activity including the use of the West Chester University name or logo, the reservation of space on campus, access to SSI funds, and any other privileges entailed to recognized organizations.
    - i. If the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement finds that an organization should be recommended for derecognition, the organization will be placed on suspension.
    - ii. The recommendation will be forwarded to the SGA parliamentarian and the Bylaw Review Committee. The Bylaw Review Committee will review the recommendation and vote either in favor of or against the derecognition.
    - iii. If the Bylaw Review Committee's decision is to derecognize an organization, the SGA parliamentarian will make such a motion to the SGA senate. A 2/3 vote shall be sufficient to pass the motion. If the motion fails, the organization is still considered to be on suspension. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement shall consider the time of the suspension.
    - iv. If a derecognized group feels that their derecognition is unfair then they may apply for an appeal to the Bylaw Review Committee. They must submit, in writing, a notification of appeal to the SGA parliamentarian after the derecognition has been announced. A deadline for the notification of appeals will be set by the SGA parliamentarian.
4. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement will inform Sykes Student Union staff, SSI, other appropriate facilities staff, and the SGA treasurer of any suspended or derecognized organizations to ensure the loss of privileges.
5. Officers of all recognized clubs must maintain a 2.25 cumulative grade point average.
6. After recognition, an organization must maintain a full executive board of undergraduate students (president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary) and an advisor to retain active status. A student may not serve in more than one of the above officer positions at any given time but may hold in conjunction any additional executive board positions as detailed in the organization's bylaws. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement must be informed of any changes in executive board members or advisors.
  - a. It is recommended that organizations retain additional membership outside of the executive board in order to ensure the sustainability of the organization.

- b. If an organization at any time does not have a full executive board and/or an advisor the organization will be placed on suspension by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement until those positions are filled.
7. Recognized organizations are required to hold elections for executive board officers that will be serving the following academic year by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current academic year.
  - a. This excludes clubs/organizations defined by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement as Greek Letter Organizations or Honor Societies.
8. All organizations must complete the organization re-registration process with the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement at the end of every spring semester.
  - a. Failure to do this by the deadline set by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement will result in the automatic suspension of an organization until the registration is complete.
  - b. If an organization fails to register by the last SGA senate meeting of the following fall semester, it will be officially derecognized. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement will inform SGA, Sykes Student Union staff, SSI, and other appropriate facilities staff in order to ensure the loss of organizational privileges.
9. The re-registration process entails submitting the full list of newly elected executive board members (president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary) and the organization's advisor as well as any additional information requested by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
10. Members of newly elected executive boards will be required to attend an officer training seminar provided by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement. Information regarding this seminar will be provided by the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement each year.

## Article VI: Council of Organizations

The first Tuesday of each month at 7:15pm, unless deemed otherwise by the SGA president, will be an event designated as Council of Organizations. Every student organization will be required to send an executive board representative to this meeting.

1. If an organization fails to attend this meeting with no written excuse to the SGA vice president within 48 hours of the meeting, this organization will receive sanctions that entail the freezing of all SSI accounts and demotion one level within the room reservation rating tier. These sanctions will be in place until the commencement of the next Council of Organizations.
  - a. The room reservation rating tier is as follows:
    - i. Good standing: All organizations will begin in good standing.
    - ii. 1<sup>st</sup> absence – warning: no action against the organization will be taken with regards to room reservations.
    - iii. 2<sup>nd</sup> absence – probation: the organization will not be permitted to submit new space reservation requests.

- iv. 3<sup>rd</sup> absence – bad standing: all of the organization’s previous space reservation requests will be cancelled.
- b. If a student organization feels as though they were unfairly sanctioned, they will have the ability to appeal their sanctioning to the SGA senate.
  - i. A student organization must express their intent to appeal via an email sent to the SGA vice president no later than one week after the date of the missed meeting.
  - ii. Upon presentation to the senate, the senators will vote on whether or not the decision of the sanctioning will be affirmed or reversed.
- c. Organizations with recurring academic commitments at the time of Council of Organizations must submit a written explanation to the SGA vice president to be excused from attendance.
  - i. This request will be granted upon approval from the SGA senate.

## Article VII: Special Circumstances

1. Sports Clubs
  - a. Any Sports Club must be recognized by the Sports Club Council before gaining SGA approval. The aspiring club should begin the process specified by the Sports Club Council after point 1 in Article III of this document. Sports Clubs will have a maximum of two years to complete the SGA recognition process due to the additional recognition requirements of the Sports Club Council.
2. Fraternities
  - a. Any Fraternity must be recognized by either the Inter-Fraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council before gaining SGA approval. The aspiring Fraternity should begin the process specified by the Inter-Fraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council after point 1 in Article III of this document. Fraternities will have a maximum of two years to complete the SGA recognition process due to the additional recognition requirements of the Inter-Fraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or National Pan-Hellenic Council.
3. Sororities

Any Sorority must be recognized by either the Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council before gaining SGA approval. The aspiring Sorority should begin the process specified by the Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council after point 1 in Article III of this document. Sororities will have a maximum of two years to complete the SGA recognition process due to the additional recognition requirements of the Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council.
4. The Graduate Student Association (GSA), Off Campus & Commuter Association (OCCA), and the Residence Hall Association (RHA) can be reviewed or investigated by the SGA Bylaw Review Committee but cannot be sanctioned by that committee.

- a. Any finding of fault within these organizations must be forwarded to the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement for their consideration.

## Article VIII: Composition of the Student Government Association Senate

As a representative body of the undergraduate student population at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, the Student Government Association will seek to ensure students are represented by maintaining a student senate comprised of senators representing student life, academic colleges, and university administrative departments as outlined in the SGA bylaws.

## Article IX: Governing Body Approval for Undergraduate Organizations

1. A governing body shall be defined as an organization that fulfills all of the following criteria:
  - a. Acts as a liaison between its constituent groups and West Chester University's SGA.
  - b. Petitions the SGA Finance Committee for funds and distributes them to its constituent groups.
  - c. Recognizes newly forming constituent groups prior to their presentation to the SGA Bylaw Review Committee.
2. Governing body organizations must govern over at least four constituent groups. Constituent groups must be in good standing with SGA and the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
3. Governing bodies must be created via an application process. Groups interested in creating a governing body should contact the SGA parliamentarian via email for access to this application.
  - a. The application must be completed in full and submitted to the SGA parliamentarian via email.
  - b. The group must submit documentation of their budget, bylaws, member roster, attendance records, and lists of potential constituent groups to the SGA parliamentarian from the last one to three years.
  - c. A recommendation letter is required from the group's current president, advisor, and the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
  - d. The group requesting to govern must present to its constituent student organizations.
    - i. A 2/3 vote of approval for the governing body is required from each organization.
    - ii. A signature is required from each organizations' president and advisor to document the approval.

- e. A presentation must be given to the SGA Finance Committee and passed by that committee with a 2/3 vote of approval.
  - f. Following approval from the Finance Committee, the group must present to the SGA Bylaw Review Committee and be passed by that committee with a 2/3 vote of approval.
  - g. The SGA parliamentarian will arrange for the group to present to the SGA senate, where a 2/3 vote of approval is required to establish the governing body.
    - i. A group that does not receive this vote of approval may repeat this process the following academic semester.
4. If a governing body is not performing the responsibilities as written in their bylaws, the SGA parliamentarian or the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement are able to recommend derecognition of the body.
- a. The SGA senate will vote on the derecognition, at which time the group may come to plead their case.
  - b. Should the governing body be derecognized, they may reapply using the above steps in order to regain recognition.

## Article X: Amendment Policy

Amendments to this policy must be passed by a majority vote of the SGA Bylaw Review Committee and the SGA senate. The vice president of Student Affairs (or designee) must also approve all changes to ensure no contradictions with University policy.

Written by Adam Swope, SGA Treasurer 2001-02  
Amended 12-03-2002 by Jay Mazzerle, SGA Parliamentarian 2002-03  
Amended February 2006 by Julie France, SGA Parliamentarian 2005-06  
Amended April 2008 by Laura K. McGregor, SGA Parliamentarian 2007-08  
Amended 9-2008, 10-2008, 2-2009, and 3-2009 by Colby M. Langweiler, SGA Parliamentarian 2008-2009  
Amended 04-10-12 by Alex Jose Paez, SGA Parliamentarian 2011-2012  
Amended 04-29-13 by Kyle VanHart, SGA Parliamentarian 2012-2013  
Amended Spring 2019 by Sean Milligan, SGA Parliamentarian 2018-2019  
Amended Spring 2022 by Brenna McGowan, SGA Parliamentarian 2021-2022 and Kimberly Farrer, Assistant  
Director of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement