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GRADUATE-ONLY STUDENT ORGANIZATION **APPLICATION GUIDE**

THIS PACKET INCLUDES ALL INFORMATION NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR A RECOGNIZED GRADUATE-ONLY STUDENT ORGANIZATION. TO APPLY, FILL OUT THE GRAD-ONLY ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION FORM ON THE GSO WEBSITE:

<http://gradorg.syr.edu/forms/registering-grad-only-orgs/>.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, EMAIL THE GSO INTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT AT
GSOINTERNALVP@SYR.EDU.

STEPS FOR STARTING A NEW GRADUATE-ONLY ORGANIZATION

Syracuse's Graduate Student Organization supports numerous student-run organizations. The organizations are often centered on a particular department but can also be created with a particular cultural or social interest in mind. The following steps outline the policies and procedures for starting a new graduate-only organization. Please use these steps as your guide and checklist to creating your organization. If you wish to create an organization whose membership includes both graduate and undergraduate students, please contact the Office of Student Activities for recognition.

Completed Packet Due Date: We approve organizations on a rolling basis. However, if you would like to apply for an annual budget with the GSO, you need to be a registered organization prior to submitting an annual budget (usually due in March for a budget that will cover the following academic year).

STEPS FOR REGISTRATION:

Write a Constitution

All Organizations must have a constitution listing the organization's name, goals, and organizational structure. This Packet contains a Constitution Writing Guide (CWG) designed to aid you in constructing a constitution that complies with University Policy, starting on page 5.

Elect Officers

Once you have determined what officers you will need and the method of electing them, hold elections and get your officers in place. This should be done before you register your organization so that you can list them on your Registration form. Currently registered Syracuse University students must comprise the majority (more than fifty percent) of all organization members.

Secure an Advisor and have him / her Complete the Advisor Contract

University policy requires that all student groups have an SU faculty or staff member to serve as advisor. Off Campus advisors and graduate students are not permitted. It is recommended that the advisor and organization share needs, responsibilities, and expectations with one another to ensure a productive, mutually beneficial relationship. Advisors must consent to advising your student organization and complete the Advisor Contract (page 4, and at the above website).

Complete the New Grad-Only Organization Registration Form

The "New Graduate-Only Student Organization Registration Form" is located online at <http://gradorg.syr.edu/forms/registering-grad-only-orgs/>. Fill it out completely. At the bottom of the form you may upload your Constitution and Advisor Contract. Please submit electronic versions of both if you can (scanned copies of the Advisor Contract are fine). Otherwise, submit your Constitution and Advisor Contract to the GSO mailbox in Bowne 207. Once the materials have been received, the GSO will either approve your organization's registration, or contact you for further information.

Benefits of Registration

Registration results in several privileges, including:

- 1) The ability to reserve campus facilities and advertise on campus
- 2) Eligibility for funding from the Graduate Student Organization through either an annual budget or special programming funds.

Registration is a charter to exist, and only registered organizations may be granted permission to hold meetings or sponsor events on University property and/or facilities. Registration in no way implies University endorsement, sponsorship, or approval of an organization's activities or events.



Recognized Graduate-Only Student Organization Advisor Contract

A useful instrument for sharing expectations and clearly identifying an Advisor's role is the Advisor's contract. Please take a moment to review and sign this advisor contract. Please note, that duplicates of this signed document have the potential to be copied to the dean, director, or department head of the advisor's home unit. This will inform your school or department area of the commitment you are making to SU and the student organization.

The members of (organization) request
(name) _____ to serve as Advisor of the organization for the
period beginning (date) and ending (date), not to exceed one year.

Duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the position are as follows:

Presidents/Chairperson's Name: (print) _____

(signature) _____ (date) _____

I have met with the president of the above-named organization and discussed the duties and responsibilities of Advisor as listed above. I understand that this responsibility falls within the scope of my employment at Syracuse University. In addition, I agree to serve as Advisor and will fulfill these duties and responsibilities to the best of my abilities.

Advisor's Name: (print) _____

(signature) _____ (date) _____

This contract is effective for the time frame listed above and must be renewed each year thereafter upon the agreement of both parties.

Constitution Writing Guide

This Constitution Writing Guide (CWG) assists your organization in writing / revising its constitution. Graduate-Only Student organizations may govern and structure themselves in any way deemed appropriate as long as it does not violate University policy. In other words, articles may vary from the CWG, but should follow the same basic pattern. As organization needs are diverse, this guide is intentionally general and may need to be adjusted for specific organizations.

Some policies and articles must be listed in your constitution to comply with University policy: they are indicated in italics and preceded by asterisks at the end of this writing guide. We recommend including all the following articles in your constitution.

Article I. Introduction

This article is meant to provide an introduction and overview of the organization. It sets the context for which the rest of the Constitution is interpreted and read. This section of the Constitution is vital, because it provides an understanding of what and who the organization is. The sections generally included in this article are name, mission statement, and objectives.

Section I: Name

This section states the name of the organization; along with any acronyms and nicknames the organization uses to identify itself (if the organization wants to refer to itself using an acronym or nickname throughout the Constitution for short, it needs to be stated here).

Example: “The name of this organization shall be (name of organization), hereinafter referred to as (shortened name of the organization, perhaps an acronym, as it will appear throughout the Constitution [optional]).”

Points of Consideration:

1) A recognized student organization may only use Syracuse University to describe the location of the organization. For example, an organization cannot use the name “Syracuse University Jumping Jack Club.” Rather, the group can use “Jumping Jack Club at Syracuse University.”

Section II: Mission Statement

The mission statement should encompass the organization’s overarching purpose. It will impact on decisions related to what are appropriate (and inappropriate) spheres of activity for the organizations to be engaged in. This statement should be broad enough to allow for flexibility within the organization, while fulfilling its mission, but specific enough to convey understanding of the uniqueness and purpose of the organization.

Example: “The purpose(s) of this organization shall be...”

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What is the overarching purpose/mission of the organization?
- 2) What is the intended impact of the organization on the SU/ESF community?
- 3) What services will be provided and for whom?

Section III: Objectives

Objectives should be written as action statements (“to...”), which act as specific things the organization strives to achieve in order to fulfill its mission. These statements are specific concepts, ideas, or issues that provide tangible examples of what the organization does.

Example: “To provide excellent resources and support for constitutional writing and revision.”

Article II. Organizational Structure

This article is a detailed description of the structure of the organization. The description provides an opportunity to define responsibilities of the executive board/officers. This allows for current and future members to understand the role of executive board positions and provides an ability to create a culture of accountability within in the organization.

Section I. Executive Board

This section details the executive board positions and their position duties/responsibilities. When drafting this section, it can be either in bullet style (numbered or lettered) sentences or paragraph form. The different responsibilities should be general, yet specific enough to allow for understanding of the positions.

A. List of Executive Board Positions and General Responsibilities

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Allow for flexibility for the person assuming the position to make it their own (i.e. do not state how a person should complete a responsibility, because each person has their own working that is most effective for them).

B. Qualifications for Becoming an Officer

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Who is eligible for office?
- 2) Only ESF/SU students can hold executive board positions.
- 3) GPA requirement – 2.0 for executive board and 2.2 for presidents
- 4) Specific skills and/or relevant experience desired or required to be eligible to hold an officer position.

C. Terms of Office

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Specify time frame (e.g. quarter, academic year, etc.)
- 2) When do officers assume their positions?
- 3) Officer transitions. When are elections held? When does the officer transition or officer training occur?
- 4) Suggestion: Elect officers in March, use the rest of the semester to train and transition new executive board members, have the new board officially take office May 1, so the old board can help train and advise while the new board is shadowing/training. This makes the organization stronger through overlap in duties and a designated training period.
- 5) Make sure terms of office are consistent with election/selection processes.

D. Procedure for Filling Vacated Offices

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Are special elections held?
- 2) Is ascending order used (moving up the rank order of officers to fill a position)? What is the order of succession (the rank order of officers to be used in ascending order)? Is the order of succession used for each position down the ladder, or can it stop along the way?
- 3) Are appointments made, or are interviews coordinated?

Section II: Committees

This section should be used to describe committees within the organization. The description should provide an overview of what the role/purpose of the committee is within the organization. Note: Committees will vary according to the purpose and activities of the organization. Not all organizations have committees and those listed below are merely to serve as a guideline.

A. Types of Committees

Points of Consideration:

- 1) State the names, purposes, and responsibilities of the various standing committees (i.e. executive board, publicity, fundraising, etc.)
- 2) How are members selected for each committee?
- 3) How is the head of the committee chosen?

B. Temporary/Special Committees

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How and when are such committees formed?
- 2) What are the purposes and responsibilities of special committees?
- 3) What is the duration of a temporary or special committee?

Section III: Advisor

The Advisor is a person who is selected by the organization to provide guidance and advice in the operations of the organization, and acts as a resource for the organization. The advice of the advisor to the organization should be welcomed and viewed as valuable, but the decision making and goal setting for the organization should remain in the hands of the student membership.

A. Selection of Advisors

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How is an advisor selected (i.e. election, appointment, or selection)?
- 2) How is a pool of advisor candidates developed?

B. Qualifications

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Are there any specific criteria for selecting an advisor?

C. Terms of Office

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How long of a term does/can the advisor serve?
- 2) Some organizations keep their advisors for long periods, whereas other organizations choose to change their advisor. Please consider when, if ever, the organization wants to review the advisor's status/role within the organization, and the process to find another.

D. Roles and Duties of an Advisor

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What are the responsibilities of the advisor?
- 2) What are the groups' expectations for the involvement of the advisor?

Article III. Membership

This article outlines the requirements and expectations for membership to be granted into the organization. It typically includes three levels of eligibility: general membership, committee membership, and executive board/officer membership. These sections detail the initial requirements to be eligible for participation.

Section I: Membership Eligibility

This section outlines who membership of the organization is open to (staff, faculty, students, community members, etc...) and the requirements/expectations for eligibility (GPA, major, etc...).

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Who is eligible for membership (e.g. ESF/SU students, faculty and staff members, community members, etc.)?
- 2) Are there any specific qualifications needed or criteria that need to be met for membership (e.g. minimal GPA requirements, dues, etc.)?
- 3) Ongoing requirements in addition to requirements to join the organization.
- 4) Organizations may, at their discretion, also include in its membership other members of the Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF community, including faculty, staff, and community members. These individuals will be known as *associate members*. Associate members may attend meetings, speak at meetings as members of the audience, and assist with program events under the supervision of an active member. Associate members may not hold office, vote, or otherwise conduct official organizational business, nor solicit funds on behalf of the organization.

Section II: Executive Board Eligibility

This section outlines who is able to hold an executive board position and the requirements/expectations to be eligible.

Section III: Committee Eligibility

This section outlines who committee involvement is open to and the requirements/expectations to be eligible to participate.

Section IV: Executive Board Resignation

This section discusses the timeline and process for an executive board member to resign their position

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What is the process for withdrawal from the organization?
- 2) Timeline for resignation (i.e. 2 weeks notice, until the position is filled, etc...).

Article IV. Executive Board Election/Selection Process

This article outlines and details the process and procedures for electing/selecting executive board positions. There are various methods to selecting officers or executive board positions, which can include: selection committee and interview, nomination and vote, or appointment. The elements contained within this section depend upon the method the organization decides to utilize. What should be stated in this section is who oversees the process; requirements to enter the selection process; how the process operates; how a new officer/executive board member is affirmed or selected; and when their term begins and ends (recommended May 1 through May 1).

We recommend that you hold your elections in March or April as all student organizations must update their roster with the GSO in April to maintain their status as a recognized student organization on campus. Also, this allows for new officers/executive board members to shadow departing members for at least a month before the incumbent leaves their position. This shadowing provides a vital period of learning and training for the coming year ensuring a smoother transition and greater passage of knowledge and information.

Section I: Time and period when selection occurs

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How often and what time of year is selection held?
- 2) Are there any special elections?
- 3) Training and transition

Section II: Nominations

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How are nominations made?
- 2) Are there self-nominations?
- 3) Is an application process required for nomination?
- 4) Does a nomination committee exist that monitors the nominating process?

Section III: Election Procedures

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What is the specific procedure followed for elections?
- 2) Is there a secret ballot taken, or is it hand or verbal vote?
- 3) What number or percentage of members or quorum is necessary for elections to be complete (e.g. 2/3, etc.)? How many members need to be present in order to hold elections and how many of those members must vote for someone in order for that person to be elected? What if the vote cannot take place if not enough members are present? Can people vote by email or by proxy?
- 4) Who is eligible to vote?

Section IV: Notification and Posting of Elections

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What is the process for notifying others or posting information regarding elections (e.g. letters, flyers, poster, announcements, etc.)?
- 2) How long is the notification and posting period?

Article V. Meetings

This article should detail any meeting the organization holds, which can vary from executive board meetings, committee meetings, general body meetings, and special meetings. The process of how and who can call a particular meeting, who runs the meeting, and the purpose of the meeting should be outlined. Each different type of meeting needs to have its own section so full understanding of the process and procedures can be conveyed.

Section I: Types of Meetings

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Are there different types of meetings (e.g. business, regular, special, executive, etc.)?
- 2) Who is required to attend each type of meeting? What happens if a meeting is missed?

Section II: Time and Occurrence of Meetings

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How often meetings are held (e.g. weekly, monthly, etc.)?
- 2) Is there a set date for meetings?

Section III: Special Meetings

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What are the circumstances under which special meetings may be called? Who can call the meetings?

Section IV: Quorum

Quorum usually consists of the next whole number above one half of the total active membership.

However, the number should be determined according to the organization's need. For example, quorum could be defined by an individual organization as "Two-thirds of the eligible voting membership."

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Note that the purpose of the quorum is to insure that enough members are present and expressing their opinions for the decisions made at this meeting to be considered valid and meaningful to the organization. You may wish to state this in this section of the constitution.
- 2) State the percentage or number of members needed for quorum.
- 3) What happens if quorum does not exist at a meeting? What if quorum is not reached for a few meetings?

Section V: Parliamentary Procedure

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What rules shall govern the conduct of business for the organization (e.g. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, General Consensus, etc.)?

Section VI: Voting

This article should outline voting procedures and processes. This should also include and describe who votes, method in which voting occurs, any exceptions to voting procedures, and any other pertinent information about voting

Section VII: Meeting Minutes and Records

Meeting minutes and other records are vital for an organization's success. Election results, impeachment of an officer, removal of a member, approval of a budget or expense and confirmation of an amendment approval are just a few of the important items that meeting minutes are used to validate/verify.

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Who is responsible for taking notes and/or meeting minutes?
- 2) How are these records stored and who is responsible for them?
- 3) How does the organization share the meeting minutes with the membership to solicit corrections to the minutes?

Article VI. Impeachment

This article provides the outline of the impeachment process, which empowers members the ability to recommend the removal of an executive board member or officer. This allows members to hold each other accountable for their responsibilities and actions. Within this article, grounds for removal, the procedure for impeachment, and the procedure for appeal of impeachment should be outlined.

Section I: Ground for Removal

This section outlines possible reasons to call for impeachment.

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What are the grounds for removal of an executive board member (i.e. under what circumstances would/could this occur, votes required, etc.)?
- 2) Who can initiate the removal of an executive board member?

Section II: Procedure for Impeachment

This section details and describes the impeachment procedure. It should include how impeachment is called for, how the hearing of the case is handled, who oversees the hearing process, and how impeachment is either confirmed or denied.

Points of Consideration:

- 1) What is the process for removal of a member of the organization? (Outline due process, including charges, response to charges [argument], appeal and removal/reinstatement process)

This should be framed in the following way:

1. Charge or complaint brought against an individual
2. Evidence to support complaint presented
3. Individual given opportunity to argue a defense and offer counter evidence
4. Vote is taken (vote count must be specified in the Constitution)
- 2) What type (secret ballot, voice vote, roll call vote, etc.) of vote is required for removal? Is voting determined by eligible voters present or by individuals present?

Section III: Procedure for Appeal of Impeachment

This section outlines the person's right for appeal. It should include how an appeal is called, how the appeal hearing is handled, who oversees the appeal hearing process, and how the appeal is either confirmed or denied.

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Is there a set time period to carry out an appeal?
- 2) What steps are involved with the appeal?
- 3) Who oversees the appeal process?

Article VII. Constitutional Amendments

This article overviews the process and procedure to amend the organization's Constitution. It should include an amendment and ratification section.

Section I: Amendment

This section should outline who can propose a constitutional amendment, how the amendment is affirmed or denied, and any other steps in the process needed to confirm the proposed amendment.

Points of Consideration:

- 1) Who can propose an amendment and what is the procedure (e.g. verbal, written, how much time must pass between an amendment being introduced and it being voted on, etc.)?
- 2) When can an amendment be proposed?
- 3) Is there any notice required in advance for amending the constitution?
- 4) How many members must be present for adoption of the amendment?

- 5) Who can vote on the amendment?
- 6) How many votes are required for affirmation?

Section II: Ratification

This section should outline how and when the Constitution becomes in effect for the organization and its members. A Constitution needs to be affirmed by the members for it to be used as the governing document of the organization.

Note: If an organization's Constitution is changed in any way, one new copy of the Constitution must be submitted to the GSO.

Points of Consideration:

- 1) How many votes are required for ratification?
- 2) When does a newly ratified constitution become in effect? (i.e. upon ratification, the following semester, the following academic year, etc...)

***Article VIII – Not-for-Profit Statement**

This is not-for-profit organization.

*** ARTICLE IX – Financial Obligation**

A majority of voting members of this organization may determine reasonable dues and fees assessed to each member at the beginning of each semester. A specific member or members, designated by this organization shall be responsible for payment in full of all debts accumulated by the organization not covered by funds on deposit.

*** ARTICLE X – Statement of Non-discrimination**

Syracuse University is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era to any extent discrimination is prohibited by law. This nondiscrimination policy covers admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs, services, and activities.

(As exempted by Federal law, social Greek organizations may omit "gender").

*** ARTICLE XI – Statement of Non-Hazing**

This organization will not conspire to engage in hazing, as defined by New York Penal Law 120.16 and New York Penal Law 120.17, or commit any act that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending the institution.

*** ARTICLE XII – Statement of Compliance with Campus Regulations**

This organization shall comply with the Syracuse University Code of Student Conduct.