



## **Student Organization Manual**

Updated September 3, 2020

# Introduction

## Welcome Letter

The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center and The Hub: Student Organization Resources Center offer a wide variety of resources and services to aid in the development of student organizations and student leaders. From leadership and training programs, to printing and poster-making supplies, to financial services and volunteer opportunities, The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center and The Hub: Student Organization Resources Center provide VCU students and registered student organizations with a wealth of services to ensure their success on campus and in the community.

The Student Organization Manual was created to assist student leaders in the day-to-day operation of running a registered student organization at Virginia Commonwealth University. The manual contains information on many topics that student organizations may find useful. If your organization is new or established, this manual will be very beneficial.

All registered student organizations have a page on the RamsConnect website. Organizations use RamsConnect to manage events, communication, membership, finance and more! Organizations are encouraged to make use of this resource. All VCU students have the ability to access the portal and use it to browse organizations, events, upcoming opportunities, and track service hours.

If you have any questions regarding this manual, student organizations, or involvement at VCU please do not hesitate to contact The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center. We are located in the University Student Commons, Room 015 and can be reached at 804-828-3648 or [studentorgs@vcu.edu](mailto:studentorgs@vcu.edu). You can also contact The Hub: Student Organization Resources Center. We are located in the Hunton Student Center, Room 209 and can be reached at 804-628-3100 or [studentorgs@vcu.edu](mailto:studentorgs@vcu.edu)

## **Staff Directory**

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## Student Organization Operations for the upcoming year

As you are already aware, many classes and student activities have transitioned to being virtual. Despite the many challenges we will face as a result of this, we are confident that you can continue to operate successfully as a student organization.

With that being said, we would like to share with you the [VCU COVID-19 Student Organization Operations Plan](#), which will provide guidance to ensure you continue to operate as a registered student organization, while educating you on protocol that will be enforced to ensure everyone is adhering to safety regulations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us: [studentorgs@vcu.edu](mailto:studentorgs@vcu.edu).

# Registration of Student Organizations

## How to Start a New Student Organization

Below are the steps to starting a new student organization at Virginia Commonwealth University. Please keep in mind the purpose of the proposed organization should be consistent with the mission of the University. Registration does not imply University approval or disapproval of the organization or its goals. *New student organizations may not duplicate or resemble an existing organization on campus.*

New student organizations can register at any time during the school year. During semester breaks, registration will not be completed until classes resume.

- Step 1: Submit the New Student Organization Registration
  - Complete and submit the “New Student Organization Registration”, which can be found by logging into [RamsConnect](#) and going to “Groups and Organizations”, then selecting “Register New Organizations”.
  - The registration must list President, Vice President, Treasurer and five (5) additional members.
    - President, Vice President, and Treasurer requirements: Undergraduate officers must be enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours with a 2.5 cumulative GPA). Graduate officers must be in good academic standing with their department.
  - When registering, you will be asked to include the following information:
    - Description
    - Profile picture
    - Copy of your Constitution/Bylaws
    - Contact information
      - Your mailbox address will be:  
(Student Organization Name)  
907 Floyd Avenue  
PO Box 842032  
Richmond, VA 23284
    - Roster with at least 8 with VCU email addresses (RamsConnect can only recognize VCU accounts so be sure not to list personal email addresses)
    - List three (3) officers - President, Vice President, Treasurer
- Step 2: GPA Authorization Check and Student Organization Orientation Confirmation
  - The President, Vice President, and Treasurer **must** complete the GPA Authorization and Orientation form, which they will receive by notification on RamsConnect once registration is submitted. A member of the Student Leadership team will confirm each officer’s cumulative GPA. If the GPA requirement is not met, then you will not be permitted to register your student organization until a replacement is named for the officer.
- Step 3: Meet with The Coordinator for Student Governance (or designee)
  - Once the form has been submitted, the President will receive an email from the Graduate Assistant of Student Governance to set up a meeting with the officers.

This meeting will help get to know more about the organization and share the requirements and expectations of student organizations.

When you have submitted the registration through RamsConnect and it is approved, your members will receive an email invitation asking them to confirm their membership. Each member must confirm the invitation to be listed on the page.

Once you have registered and have at least eight (8) confirmed members on your RamsConnect roster, your organization will be considered a registered student organization at Virginia Commonwealth University!

### **Annual Student Organization Registration**

Each year all organizations are required to renew their registration with The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center to stay as an official organization. Fall registration will open on July 31, 2020 and stay open through September 25, 2020. If the organization does not meet the deadline, they will have to wait until registration reopens in January to become a registered organization. Spring registration will open on January 4, 2021 and stay open through February 5, 2021.

Since the individual listed as President is the only person able to complete registration, please be sure that they are listed as such on RamsConnect.

### **Organization Categories**

When a new organization registers, they are assigned a category based on the purpose of the organization. Below are the categories:

- Class
- Competitive Club
- Cultural
- Fraternity/Sorority
- Governing
- Honorary
- Political
- Professional
- Programming
- Recreational
- Service
- Social Justice
- Special Interest
- Spiritual
- Sports Clubs
- Student Media

## Student Organization Requirements

Student organizations are required to complete the following in order to maintain an active registration status. Organizations that fail to complete the requirements will become inactive.

Operational Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All organizations must have a minimum of 8 members</li> <li>• Maintain a President, Vice President, and Treasurer (included in 8-member minimum)</li> <li>• Complete Student Organization Orientation online through RamsConnect during the fall semester.</li> <li>• Complete &amp; upload a copy of Constitution/Bylaws</li> <li>• Submit Annual Registration Form through RamsConnect</li> <li>• Submit the GPA Authorization Form through RamsConnect (required for the President, Vice President, and Treasurer)</li> <li>• Maintain accurate roster including all officer positions on RamsConnect</li> <li>• Maintain an active and accurate RamsConnect account</li> </ul>
Scholarship Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate President, Vice President, and Treasurer must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5</li> <li>• Undergraduate officers must be enrolled and registered for a minimum of 6 credit hours</li> <li>• Graduate President, Vice President, and Treasurer must be in good standing with their academic department</li> <li>• Graduate officers must be enrolled and registered for a minimum of 3 credit hours</li> </ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must follow all VCU, USC&amp;A, and Student Organization policies as stated in policy guidebooks</li> <li>• Complete Finance Training (required if using SGA funding)</li> <li>• Complete Event Management System Training (highly encouraged)</li> </ul>

## Benefits of Being a Student Organization

The following are resources available to you as a registered student organization:

- Up to 150 black and white copies per month
- Banner paper and art supplies
- Helium tank, button maker, and other PR materials
- Registration and webpage on RamsConnect
- Opportunity to apply for VCU SGA funding
- Room reservations on campus
- Monthly Newsletter
- Invitation to the Student Leadership Awards

## Advisors

Advisors play an important role in the success of student organizations here at VCU. They offer guidance, support, and knowledge to student leaders, while also helping to interpret University rules and policies. Their role can vary based on organizational activities and purpose. While your organization is not required to have an advisor, we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity.

Some of the benefits of having an advisor are:

- They can help manifest the enthusiasm necessary to help the organization reach its potential.

- They can assist in formulating goals and direction for the organization.
- They can assist in the development of procedures and methods for maintaining an effective organization.
- They can assist in matters of University procedures and help interpret policy.
- They can assist members in improving leadership skills.
- They can serve as a liaison with the University when necessary.
- They can guide the organization in planning activities and programs.
- They can encourage and support the organization through challenges.
- They can serve, as needed, as an arbitrator or impartial observer.
- They can participate in the meetings and events of the organization.

While there are many different roles an advisor can take on, the advisor and organization should agree on a set of expectations of one another from the onset and should write this list down as a contract between the organization and the advisor.

Some of the roles they can take on are:

- Mentor: having a basic understanding of student needs, a desire to challenge students, providing support, and the ability to listen to students.
- Team Builder: taking initiative to help individual students come together and set goals, build a team, and create a positive environment.
- Conflict Mediator: helping students work through conflict by mediating discussions and reminding them of the purpose of the organization.
- Educator: modeling positive behaviors, guiding the students through reflection, and being a resource.
- Motivator: encouraging students through challenges as an organization and recognizing success.
- Policy Interpreter: reminding students of University policies, procedures, and rules for student organizations



# Policies and Procedures

## General Information

Student organizations are required to abide by the policies and procedures created by The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center and Virginia Commonwealth University. Failure to abide will result in loss of registration status.

For additional information, please visit [Student Organization at VCU Conduct Procedures Manual](#) and [Policies and Procedures for Student Organizations](#).

## Conditions of Registration

The conditions of registration of an organization are as follows:

That the purpose of the proposed organization be consistent with the mission of the University for student organizations. Registration does not imply University approval or disapproval of the organization or its goals. A student organization may not use the University's name, nor an abbreviation of the University's name, in the name of the student organization in such a manner to suggest the organization is sponsored by the University. Student organizations may use "of VCU" or "at VCU" following the name of the student organization, so that the location of the organization is reflected in the name. **Student organizations may not put VCU at the beginning of the name at any time.**

That the organization's President must file an online registration form with The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center and The Hub: Student Organization Resources Center each year, which shall contain, but is not limited to the following information:

- a statement of such present or intended affiliation as it may have to any other local, state, national, or international organization(s);
- a certification that there are, without question, no limitations on selection of members and customary rights and privileges of membership in the organization as a result of the race, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, political affiliation, veterans' status, disability or national origin of the student, faculty or staff member desiring membership.
  - Notwithstanding these provisions, a religious or political student organization may determine that ordering the organization's internal affairs, selecting the organization's leaders and members, defining the organization's doctrines, and resolving the organizations disputes are in furtherance of the organization's religious or political and that only persons committed to that mission should conduct activities. If such a determination is reached, the organization may limit the selection of members or customary rights and privileges of membership in the organization.
  - Exemptions have been granted to social fraternities and sororities with regard to limitations based on sex.;
- a copy of its constitution and bylaws and the constitution and bylaws of any affiliated organization(s).

That the purposes and activities of the proposed organization are not in violation of local, state or federal statutes or of University regulations or objectives as published by the University.

New student organizations may not duplicate or resemble an existing organization on campus.

That the majority of the membership of the organization will be currently enrolled students at VCU. A minimum of eight (8) currently enrolled VCU students are required to form and maintain an organization.

Major officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer or positions with similar responsibilities) of student organizations must maintain certain academic requirements in order to hold an office. Undergraduate students must be enrolled and registered for a minimum of six (6) credit hours and graduate students must be enrolled and registered for a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Officers must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 for undergraduates and good academic standing for graduate students. Any officer who fails to meet any portion of these academic standards is no longer eligible to hold any office in the organization.

Non-students may hold membership in an organization as an associate member. However, they may not serve as an officer nor may they conduct official business on behalf of the organization.

That the organization make provisions for the businesslike management of its funds, either by establishing an organizational account with the University or by opening an account with an off-campus bank or credit union. Each organization will be limited to two accounts. The location and account number for all funds are to be provided to the USC&A to be placed in the organization's file. All organizations receiving funds from the Student Activity Fee must maintain these funds in a University account which can only be accessed by the appropriate organization officers. Organizations that generate revenue in addition to Student Activity Fee funding have the option of maintaining a non-University account or use their Student Activity Fee University account for their generated revenue funds. (The Student Activity Fee funds must remain in a University account.) Organizations that do not receive funds from the Student Activity Fee must maintain their funds in a non-University account with an off-campus bank or credit union. It is strongly recommended that all off-campus bank or credit union be established with two signatures for the withdrawal of funds from the account. When possible, one of these signatures should be that of the faculty/staff advisor of the organization.

That approval of a new organization request grants the organization provisional status for thirty days. At the end of this time, the organization may apply for funding through their designated SGA.

Registered student organizations are: eligible to apply for allocations from the Student Activity Fee subject to the Guidelines of their designated Student Government Association Appropriations Committee; to reserve space for meetings and activities within the applicable campus guidelines for space reservations; and to use services in The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center.

Men's and women's social fraternities and sororities must agree to follow all procedures outlined by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Student organizations that are considered sports clubs must agree to follow all procedures outlined by the Department of Recreational Sports

The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center will take final action on an application for registration or reclassification within 14 calendar days, exclusive of University holidays.

### **Denial of Registration**

The Coordinator for Student Governance (or designee) may deny registration to an organization if, in their judgment, the organization has failed to meet any of the Conditions of Registration.

### **Continuance of Registration**

In order for registration to remain in effect, an organization must do the following:

- Complete in full and submit an online annual Student Organization Registration Form and GPA Authorization Form each semester by the date provided from The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center and The Hub: Student Organization Resources Center.
- Organizations that submit required registration forms that are incomplete, list officers and members that do not meet the established Enrollment and GPA requirement or contain incorrect information will not be approved by The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center.
- Organizations that do not resubmit the forms with correct information by the established deadline date will not receive Active status.
- Failure to submit a Student Organization Re-Registration Form will result in the denial of all rights and privileges for student organizations for the remainder of the semester.
- Organizations that fail to submit a Student Organization Re-Registration Form for any semester will be required to re-apply as a new student organization
- Submit to The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center and/or The Hub: Student Organization Resources Center all changes in documents relating to the organization on file with the office. (For example, revisions in constitutions or bylaws, changes in the statement of purpose, changes in procedures for handling organizational funds, changes in membership requirement, etc.)
- Be in good financial standing with the University.
- Conduct its affairs in a lawful manner and in accordance with the constitution and bylaws it has on file (or in accordance with procedures as stated on its application) and in observance of the applicable University regulations and local, state and federal statutes.
- Be responsible for the observance of all applicable University regulations and other local, state and federal statutes by off-campus individuals or organizations whose appearance on campus is sponsored by a registered student organization.

### **Cancellation of Registration**

The registration of an organization may be canceled by The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center for noncompliance with the conditions for Continuance of Registration as stated above, or when there is evidence the organization is no longer active.

### **Hazing**

Hazing is prohibited by law in the Commonwealth of Virginia and by Virginia Commonwealth University. Hazing is activity which is physically or mentally abusive, potentially

dangerous, humiliating or demeaning, or which interferes with academic achievement and the human rights of the individual.

### **Discrimination**

Virginia Commonwealth University will maintain a strong commitment to outstanding achievement, educational excellence and high principle. Activities of the university are designed to promote the continuing policy of providing equal opportunity for employment and education and access to all programs and services without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, political affiliation, veterans' status, sexual orientation or disability. Notwithstanding these provisions, a religious or political student organization may determine that ordering the organization's internal affairs, selecting the organization's leader and members, defining the organization's doctrines, and resolving the organizations disputes are in furtherance of the organization's religious or political mission and that only persons committed to that mission should conduct such activities. If such a determination is reached, the organization may limit the selection of members or customary rights and privileges of membership in the organization. Such determination shall be certified in the registration form.

### **Logo and Name**

A student organization may not use the University's name or an abbreviation of the University's name, in the name of the student organization in such a manner to suggest the organization is sponsored by the University. Student organizations may use "of VCU" or "at VCU" following the name of the student organization, so that the location of the organization is reflected in the name. For example:

VCU ABC Club is NOT allowed  
ABC Club at VCU is CORRECT

### **Trademarks and Licensing**

As a student organization, you are able to apply for funding towards publicizing your student organization. We also understand that you would like to display your organization with pride and at times, you may want to include a VCU logo or trademark.

To ensure you are properly following guidelines, anything bearing VCU's key trademarks will need to be purchased from a licensed vendor.

Key VCU trademarks include:

- Virginia Commonwealth University®
- VCU®
- VCU Rams ™
- Rams ™
- Medical College of Virginia ™
- MCV ™
- VCU Health System ™
- Havoc ™

To confirm which vendors are licensed to produce any of VCU's key trademarks, here is the link to view all current licensed vendors:

<http://www.identity.vcu.edu/>

For additional questions or concerns, please email [identity@vcu.edu](mailto:identity@vcu.edu) or call 804-828-1463.

### **Alcohol Policy**

Organizations and its activities may NOT contain references to "alcoholic beverages," "cocktails," "keg" or other terms or illustrations descriptive of alcoholic beverages or their consumption. Additionally, student organizations are reminded that promotions that could be interpreted as demeaning based upon gender differences, racial and ethnic groups, or individuals subscribing to nontraditional and/or alternative lifestyles have been found to be offensive and objectionable.

### **Rules of Conduct for Organizations**

All registered student organizations are also subject to charges for violations of all prohibited conduct as listed in the VCU Student Code of Conduct. All registered student organizations are responsible for following all VCU policies.

### **Violation of Policies**

If an organization fails to abide by The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center or Virginia Commonwealth University policy, you will be contacted by The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center to discuss the violation. The appropriate actions will be taken to remedy the situation.

## Planning Your Event

The Event Services office is available to help your organization reserve space in the Student Commons, Larrick Student Center, and Hunton Student Center for meetings and events. They are also available to assist with vendor recommendations, audio/visual support, parking needs, as well as tips and advice on how to successfully plan and execute events. They can be reached at 804-828-9502 or at [uscaevent@vcu.edu](mailto:uscaevent@vcu.edu). They are located in Room 104 of the University Student Commons.

## Reserving a Room

To reserve a room, go to <https://campusems.vcu.edu/>. Your organization can also reserve information tables, and banner spaces.

\*Keep in mind that only the President and Vice President of your student organization will be able to reserve space. Ensure that your roster in RamsConnect is updated to reflect who the current President and Vice President are to avoid any confusion.

Reservation requests for publicity and information tables/standard\* meeting spaces must be made through EMS Webapp at least 3 business days prior to the requested date.

Reservations for non-standard\* meeting and event space must be made through EMS WebApp at least 10 days prior to the requested date. A “major event” request must be submitted through Virtual EMS at least 90 calendar days in advance. See below for what constitutes a major event.

\*Standard vs. non-standard meeting space:

- Standard space: already equipped with furniture (i.e. Shockoe, Metro, Forum Room)
- Non-standard meeting space: a clear room; furniture needs to be added (i.e. Commonwealth Ballroom, Richmond Salons, Virginia Rooms)

## Major Events

If your event includes any of the following, it is considered a major event and must follow the [Reservation and Use of Space Policy](#):

- Attendance (expected or historical) of more than 100 people
- Tickets (paid or free)
- Contracted Services (catering, speakers, DJ's, etc.)
- Police and/or Security Required
- Audio Visual Support (DJ, band, multiple mics, speakers, etc.)
- Alcohol is Served
- Event is a: Social, Festival, Carnival, Dance, Fashion Show, Pageant, Auction, Open Mic, Concert, or Culture Show

## **Event Services Resources**

Please reference the [USC&A Event Services Guidelines](#) for more information.

All events must follow the [Reservation and Use of Space Policy](#).

If you have any questions regarding space reservations or set-up, contact the Event Services office in Room 104 of the University Student Commons or send an email to [uscaevent@vcu.edu](mailto:uscaevent@vcu.edu).

## **Virtual Appointments with Coordinators**

- Kelly Kitchen - <http://calendly.com/kitchenkm>
- Savannah Smith - <https://calendly.com/smithsj2>
- Ryan Pander - <https://calendly.com/rbpander>
- Tyler Jarrett - <https://calendly.com/tylerjarrett>

## The How-To's & Rules on Reserving Space for Events & Meetings at VCU

- 1.) How to obtain a EMS WebApp (Event Management System) account to reserve space:
  - a.) Head to EMS WebApp at <https://campusems.vcu.edu>
  - b.) Click Log In
  - c.) It will prompt you to fill out information and create an account (remember to spell all words out, such as your organization's name, do not use acronyms). Make sure your name is on the roster on Ramsconnect for your org or your account will not be approved.
  - d.) If you receive multiple errors, please reach out to [uscaevent@vcu.edu](mailto:uscaevent@vcu.edu) and a member will help to activate your account
  - e.) Allow up to 3 business days for your account to be approved, an email confirmation will be sent out.
- 2.) How to browse for available space on EMS WebApp:
  - a.) Select "Locations" from the side menu
  - b.) Select the "Filter" option to select your date and buildings
- 3.) Rules for Outdoor spaces:
  - a.) Spaces that can be reserved are: the Compass, the Commons Plaza, Park Plaza, Harris Hall Lawn, Grace St. Green, Patterson Memorial Garden and the Larrick Compass. No other outdoor spaces are allowed to have events on them.
  - b.) Amplified sound and music is ONLY allowed Monday thru Friday between 12pm-1pm
  - c.) Baked goods and food cannot be sold unless they're pre-packaged and store bought or from a licensed caterer.
  - d.) Cash cannot be collected without the presence of a VCU Police Officer, this includes fundraising.
  - e.) Outdoor space requests open each year in May for the next academic year, requests must be made 14 days in advance.
- 4.) Rules for Academic spaces:
  - a.) Spaces that can be reserved by Student Orgs are: Hibbs Hall, Harris Hall, Temple Building, and Oliver Education Building. The Academic Learning Commons (MCALC) is NOT a space student orgs can reserve.
  - b.) Student orgs can ONLY reserve these spaces on the weekends; Friday's starting at 5pm till Sunday's midnight.
  - c.) No food is allowed in academic spaces.
  - d.) Academic spaces must be used for meetings and events that are appropriate to have in classroom spaces.
  - e.) If you are charging or having a registration for your event, you will have to pay for the use of the academic space.
  - f.) Academic spaces open for reservation requests each semester once add/drop is over. No earlier requests can be taken. Requests must be made 14 days in advance.
- 5.) Rules for Student Center (Student Commons/Larrick Center/Hunton Center) spaces:
  - a.) If you are charging or having a registration for your event, you will have to pay for the use of the space.
  - b.) Cash can only be collected in student centers for reservations at the Commons Theater Concession Stand.



- c.) Virginia Rooms hold standard meeting times: Sunday-Thursday from 6PM to close. During this time no additional resources can be added to the rooms, they must stay in the configuration they are in must be used as they are for the next organization using the space.
  - d.) Any resources added to your reservation will include charges, such as A/V equipment and support. In many cases A/V support is mandatory and must be paid for to hold your event.
  - e.) Student center spaces open the first Monday of April every year for the next academic year for reservation requests. Requests must be made 10 business days in advance.
- 6.) Guidelines and Policies:
- a.) All VCU staff, students and faculty, including departments and student orgs, must abide by the [Reservation and Use of Space Policy](#) for all events and meetings.
  - b.) All VCU staff, students and faculty, including departments and student orgs, must abide by the [USC&A Event Services Guidelines](#) for all events and meetings.
  - c.) Violations of any rules will result in a written warning to the organization and a “warning” status on EMS for the current semester. A second violation will result in a “bad” status on EMS and any current and future reservations, and Virtual EMS privileges being revoked and cancelled for that current and next semester. The organization will then be put on “warning” status for the second semester, and be under probation during that semester. If no further rules are broken for two consecutive semesters during “warning” and “bad” status, then the organization will be able to be put back on “good” status the third semester and hold events again.
  - d.) Any member of an organization that is found to be violating rules are representing that organization during their event, and therefore will be held accountable for any violations that occur in their organization.

# Publicity and Communication

## Publicity Resources

There are many ways you can promote your event. Below are a few recommendations of how to publicize:

- RamsConnect Events: Create an event page and upload a flyer to the virtual bulletin board on the homepage of the site.
- TelegRAM: Email announcement to Faculty, Staff and Students. Submit an email announcement to: [www.vcu.edu/telegRAM/](http://www.vcu.edu/telegRAM/).
- University Calendar: Place your program on the online University Calendar by submitting a request at: <http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/calendar/>
- Axis-TV: Create a PowerPoint slide and email in JPG form to [contactusca@vcu.edu](mailto:contactusca@vcu.edu)
- Banners: You must make a reservation through MERA to have it hung
  - This can be done on Virtual EMS at <https://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/CampusEMS/>
  - All banners must be 8' x 3'
  - Inside banners: may be paper or vinyl
  - Outside banners: MUST be vinyl with grommets in each corner
- Facebook: Create events and use announcements to post to newsgroups

## Digital Signage for Registered Student Organizations

All digital signage requests are now being handled through Technology Services' ticketing submission service. Information regarding this system is available at:

<https://ts.vcu.edu/askit/policies-and-publications/digital-signage/>

Slides submitted through Tech Services' ticketing system need to meet the following specifications:

- If created in Adobe, 13"x7.5" (1920x1080px). Final file either .jpg or .png.
- If created in PowerPoint, 11"x8.5". Final file .jpg or .png.
- Include event name, date, time, and location.
- Include contact/for more information/reservation information.
- Include name of Registered Student Organization.

Final slides should be submitted to:

<https://servicedesk.vcu.edu/ServiceDesk.WebAccess/wd/Logon/Logon.rails>

On the left menu, click on "Application/System." Next, "Axis TV." Then, scroll to the bottom and in "Digital Signage" click on "Submit a digital signage slide/content request."

The following information should be included in the ticket request:

- Name of Registered Student Organization:
- Name of Event:
- Date and Time of Event:
- \*Requested Start Date for Slide to Run:
- \*Requested End Date of Slide's Run (should coincide with the date of the event/end date of the initiative):
- Registered Student Organization Contact Information:

- **Specify Playlist: 162**

\*Note the **TWO WEEK LIMIT** for all postings of registered student organization slides.

***Please also note that if ANY of the above information is missing, slides may be rejected, without notice or warning. It is the responsibility of the submitter to make sure that all information is provided with the initial request.***

After filling in your information, **click "SAVE"** - this will allow you to add attachments (slides) on the next screen. (Note: If you click "Save and Close," there is no opportunity to attach slides.)

After receiving a confirmation email of the ticket/slide submission, forward that ticket confirmation to [SGAFunding@vcu.edu](mailto:SGAFunding@vcu.edu). Include all of the same information in the body of this email as was submitted in the ticket.

Questions? Email [contactusca@vcu.edu](mailto:contactusca@vcu.edu) or [sga@vcu.edu](mailto:sga@vcu.edu).

# RamsConnect Website

## Roster Management

It is important to update your roster on a regular basis. Please keep in mind that the President is the only person able to manage the organization's roster. To manage your roster:

1. Log into RamsConnect (<http://ramsconnect.vcu.edu>)
2. Go to your organization's page under My Groups
3. Click on the "Members" tab in the selection bar, or on the dashboard.
4. To add an individual member:
  - a. Select the blue "Add Member" button on the top right corner of your screen and input their name or email
5. To add an entire roster at once:
  - a. Select "Upload Members" in the drop-down list and download the MS Excel template.
  - b. Follow template/instructions, then upload by selecting the "Choose File" option and the "Preview Upload" button.
6. New members will have to be added as a Member. Once they are active, then you can change the position.

New members can join by locating your organization on the RamsConnect page. You must approve these new members before they are added to the organization's roster.

1. Log into RamsConnect (<http://ramsconnect.vcu.edu>)
2. Click on the "Notifications" bell in the top right corner.
3. Select the prospective member's name.
4. Select the box to the left of the member's name
5. Click on "validate" next to the prospective member's name.
6. Select "add member" at the bottom on the page.
7. Click "Yes" or "No" when asked "Are you sure?".

## Changing Leadership

Most organizations change leadership on a yearly basis and it is important to keep your RamsConnect page current. Due to how the system works, it is important to use the following steps to update your organization's leadership. If this is not done when you transition, the new President will NOT have access to making changes on the website. The past President of the organization must take the following steps to update the roster.

1. Log into RamsConnect (<http://ramsconnect.vcu.edu>)
2. Go to your organization's page under My Groups
3. Click on your "Dashboard" tab on the left hand side.
4. Select "Officer" in the drop down list.
5. Select the orange "Add Officer" button in the top right hand corner.

6. Type in the name or email of the person you would like to add as an officer.
7. Select the "Position" drop down to the right of their name.
8. Select the position(s) the member should now have.
9. Type the title of the officer next to "Custom Position".

Once you have added the new leadership, you can go through the following steps to remove officers from their old position. The President of the organization can remove individuals from the organization. You can remove them completely from the organization or just the one position they held, but maintain their membership.

1. Log into RamsConnect (<http://ramsconnect.vcu.edu>)
2. Go to your organization's page under My Groups
3. Click on the "Members" tab in the selection bar, or on the dashboard.
4. Select the member's name you'd like to change positions for.
5. Uncheck the appropriate positions.
6. To remove an individual member:
  - a. Select the box to the left of the members name you would like removed.
  - b. Select the three vertical dots to the right of their membership information below "Settings".
  - c. Click the last red tab that says "Delete" in the drop down menu.
7. To remove multiple members at once:
  - a. Select the box to the left of their name for as many members as needed
  - b. Select the three vertical dots to the right of "Generate Report" in the header above all members names.
  - c. Click the last red tab that says "Delete" in the drop down menu
8. Confirm deletion.

**\*\* Deleting a user will remove them completely from the organization. \*\***

# Finance

## Introduction

USC&A Finance is the one stop shop for all of your student organization's financial needs. The Finance staff members are available to provide students assistance in the areas of funding requests, purchase requests, reimbursements, budget reallocations, travel, and more.

## Bank Accounts

Student organizations may open an account with an off-campus bank or credit union. It is strongly recommended that all off-campus banks or credit unions be established with two signatures for the withdrawal of funds from the account.

Any funding received from the Student Government Association (SGA) must stay in the on-campus account managed through RamsConnect. This account can only be accessed by the President and Treasurer of each organization once they have completed the finance training process.

## Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association (VCUSGA) Funding

Student organizations with the classifications of Class, Competitive, Cultural, Honorary, Political, Professional/Academic, Recreational, Service, Social Justice, Special Interest and Spiritual are able to apply for funding directly through the SGA Appropriations Committee.

To become eligible for SGA funding, an organization must be active for 30-days and must be in good standing with Virginia Commonwealth University and The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center. Once the 30-day period has passed, a budget may be requested. Before any SGA funding can be spent, the President and Treasurer of the organization MUST complete finance training and pass the mandatory quiz.

## Member Dues

Student organizations are allowed to collect membership dues. The money collected through dues should be held in an off-campus bank account created for the student organization.

For additional information regarding finance, please review the [USC&A Finance Training Manual](#).

## Fundraising Ideas

Many student organizations host fundraisers throughout the year to help pay for travel or events or to raise money for charity. While the sky's the limit, below are some suggestions. You can also view our [Fireside Chats: Fundraising Do's & Don'ts](#), which goes over more information about fundraising.

- Events and Activities
  - Car Wash
  - Spaghetti Dinner
  - Ice Cream Social
  - Sales (candy, cards, flowers, etc.)
  - Talent Show
  - Tournament (sport, game, etc.)
  - Benefits (concerts, film showings, etc.)
  - A-thons (bicycle, swim, hula-hoop, etc.)
  - Give Back Night (restaurant donates percentage of money earned)
- Contests and Raffles
  - Guess the number or weight (jar of jelly beans, pennies, etc.)
  - Pageant/Competition
- Drives and Collections
  - Aluminum can/glass bottle collection
  - Cell phones
  - Inkjet printer cartridges
  - Clothes
  - Books
  - Toys

Please be sure to review the fundraising and money collection policies before planning your event.

# Travel

## Process

To ensure success of travel, student organizations that have received travel funding must to adhere to the following guidelines:

- All [USC&A Travel Authorization](#) paperwork is required at least 30 days prior to travel departure.
  - The minimum GPA requirement for travel with SGA funding is a 2.5.
- Airfare and rail should be arranged by the Finance Services Center.
  - Connect with the Finance Services Center early. Rates change daily with airfare and the closer you get to your travel date, the higher the prices become
- Registration can be arranged either by the Finance Services Center, or the student organization can pay out of pocket, and submit for reimbursement.
- Lodging, rental car, and gas will have to be purchased out of pocket by the student organization.
  - Each student organization will need to plan to have these expenses paid out of pocket.
  - Student organizations will need to submit reimbursement paperwork within five (5) business days after returning from the trip

You **must** fill out all [USC&A Travel Authorization](#) paperwork on RamsConnect at least 30 days prior to your travel departure. The complete packet include:

- USC&A Travel Authorization – cover sheet for travel authorization packet
- Travelers Statement of Responsibility and Authorization – signed by each member traveling
- Travel Waiver – signed by each member traveling
- Copy of Title IX Certificate from each member who is traveling



# Organizational Development and Leadership

## Constitution and Bylaws

An organization's constitution and bylaws are important documents that govern its purpose and future actions. Be sure to anticipate the future to ensure that your constitution does not limit the organization's options for growth and change.

The constitution of an organization contains the fundamental operating principles that govern its operation. The bylaws establish specific rules of guidance by which the group is to function. All registered student organizations should have their basic structure and methods of operation in writing. The constitution is the essence of the overall purpose of the organization and is not changed unless the purpose changes. Bylaws set forth in detail the procedures a group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. They provide further definitions to the articles of the constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change.

For additional resources on developing constitution and bylaws, please visit [Fireside Chats: Constitution Development: Determining Values and Setting Goals](#)

## Elections

Student organizations are encouraged to hold elections on an annual basis. There are no formal requirements as to how elections should run so each organization should follow the procedures in their Constitution. All organizations have access to the Elections feature on RamsConnect. For more information on how this works, please review the steps below.

Create an Election for your Organization:

1. Log in to RamsConnect (<http://ramsconnect.vcu.edu>) and go to your organization's page.
2. Click on Surveys & Forms on the left side of the page.
3. Click the purple "+ Create" button in the top right corner.
4. Select "Election".
5. Under "Select Question Type" click the "Vote" square for elections.
6. Fill out the appropriate candidate information, and attach any files you'd like.
  - a. Note: the candidate MUST be listed in CampusGroups to be selected.
7. Indicate if the election is for Members Only under "Access Rights".
8. Click "Save Changes"..

You have built your election. Members will select "Surveys & Forms" and click on the election they would like to vote on.

## View Ballot Results

1. Log in to your campus site.
2. Go to your organization.
3. Click on "Surveys & Forms" on the left side of the page.
4. Click on the name of the election.
5. Click on the "Stats" tab above all of the submitted votes.

6. A snapshot of the current results will display.
7. To download the results:
  - a. Check the square box above all names to select all.
  - b. Click the "Generate Report" button to download an Excel file of all the ballot entries.
  - c. When asked "are you sure" select "yes" or "no".

### **Officer Transition**

The officer transition process is a key step to a successful upcoming year. Taking time to have an officer transition meeting or retreat allows the outgoing officers to share information and knowledge with the incoming officers. Some of the important things to do during this time is to share job descriptions, organization constitution, policies, and other important documents. The new officers should also create a calendar with meetings and events for the upcoming year.

For additional resources regarding officer transition, please visit [Fireside Chats: Officer Transition](#)

### **Leadership and Student Organizational Developmental Opportunities**

Leadership and Student Organization development is key to a thriving student organization community. We provide development opportunities that include workshops, retreats, roundtables, consultation services, and additional physical and online services. Workshop topics will include organizational (recruitment, officer transition, planning and goal setting, etc.) and peer leadership (conflict resolution, collaboration, coaching, and mentoring, etc.). Consultation services will work directly with you to customize topics to fit your needs. The Leadership Resource Lounge in room 229 of The Commons offers a library of leadership books as well as team building activities and tools. Opportunities will be offered throughout the year and will be posted in Ramsconnect, newsletters, and through direct emails. Contact us at [studentorgs@vcu.edu](mailto:studentorgs@vcu.edu) for more information or to request a workshop. Find our workshops on our group page in Ramsconnect here:

### **Appendix: Adjudicating Misconduct by Members of Registered Student Organizations**

All registered student organizations are also subject to charges for violations of all prohibited conduct as listed in the VCU Student Code of Conduct. All registered student organizations are responsible for following all VCU policies.

When an individual student's or group of students' actions evolve from or are in any way related to their association with or the activities of a registered student organization, the student organization may be held responsible for the behavior of these members.

Students and student organizations have a right to expect enforcement of the rights and responsibilities outlined in this document. The University also has the right to expect students and student organizations to abide by them as members of the University community. Knowledge of these rules and regulations can prove most beneficial to students and student

organizations in utilizing and protecting their rights. It is important to add, however, that unfamiliarity with University policies and procedures does not excuse infractions.

The provisions of this document are applicable to all registered student organizations. Statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia, city or county codes, and federal laws apply on University premises, and violators of such laws will be subject to the provisions thereof, in addition to the sanctions of this document. In general, it is the policy of Virginia Commonwealth University not to become involved in adjudicating off-campus conduct of registered student organizations. However, the institution also has a commitment to protect its own welfare and that of its members. Thus, in those circumstances where the off campus behavior of a member or members of a registered student organization significantly impairs the University-related functioning of another member of the University community or gives rise to serious danger to the University community or when an event or travel is funded with Student Activity fees, the provisions of this document will apply to off-campus behavior. Such conduct may subject the violator to the provisions of law, in addition to the sanctions of this document.

Members of student organizations that commit offenses against local, state or federal laws are subject to prosecution by those authorities and may subject the organization to University disciplinary action when such conduct violates University standards.

### **Process**

When a complaint against an organization is received by a USC&A staff member, the president of the organization will be contacted. The organization will be given an opportunity to identify the individuals involved in the incident and to show that the organization took reasonable steps to prevent violations by their fellow members or that the organization had no knowledge of the misconduct. The failure or inability to demonstrate any such action will result in an investigation and disciplinary proceeding against the organization if justified.

Every student organization has the duty to take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent any infraction of University rules and other laws growing out of or related to the activities of the organization. This duty is applicable not only to members of the organization who are engaging in the activity, but is applicable to every member, including those not engaging in the activity. Thus, if a number of members are involved in misbehavior growing out of their association or membership in the group, even if no other members are around to prevent the action, the organization will still be held collectively liable for the misbehavior so long as it grows out of the life of the organization. All members should be aware that their misdeeds may result in the sanctioning of the entire organization as well as the individuals involved.

### **Procedure**

Any member of the University community or a department or unit of the University may make a complaint about a student organization. Complaints must be made in writing to the Director of the University Student Commons and Activities or designee. Complaints by non-University

community members against registered student organizations should also be made in writing to the Director of the University Student Commons and Activities and will be considered if policy violations are evident.

The Director of the University Student Commons and Activities or designee shall conduct a confidential investigation by interviewing the individual(s) bringing the complaint and the individual(s) accused in the complaint. When necessary, the Director or designee may also interview other individuals who have direct and specific information regarding the behavior alleged in the complaint.

The accused student organization president will have the opportunity to decide if the organization wants to have any action warranted by the investigation determined by the designated administrator in consultation with the Director of the University Student Commons and Activities and the Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

### **Penalties and Other Disciplinary Action**

Any organization which violates the provisions of this document is subject to one or more of the following penalties and/or disciplinary actions. If the offending organization falls under the judicial function of another student organization with established disciplinary procedures, the case may be referred to the appropriate organization. This decision will be made by the Director of the University Student Commons and Activities. Otherwise, the Director of the University Student Commons and Activities (or designee) will conduct an investigation, and proceed with an administrative review or a hearing to determine guilt or innocence and when necessary, sanctions, when notified that an organization has violated university regulations, local, state and federal statutes. Any sanctions imposed by the offending organization itself or its governing body will be taken into consideration during the hearing and sanctioning processes.

Organizations may receive one of the following sanctions: Censure, Probation, Suspension, or Cancellation.

The exact nature of the sanctions imposed on the organization shall be based on the severity of the violations. If the conduct is injurious to property (individual, group or University) for which monetary damages may be ascertained, financial restitution will be an option at any level of sanction. All sanctions may be appealed in writing within 14 calendar days of the notification of the sanction to the Director, University Student Commons and Activities.

### **Definitions**

*Censure:* A letter of warning shall be sent to the current president of the organization and a copy placed in the permanent file of the organization. If the organization is affiliated with a national organization, that national organization may be copied on correspondence.

*Probation:* The organization may lose certain privileges such as use of University space and may be required to perform certain public services and/or assigned some educational experience which, ideally, would bear some relationship to the offense committed. A probationary period will be a time of review and observation during which a student organization

is under an official warning that their misconduct was serious. Subsequent violation of University rules or policies could result in more severe sanctions.

***Suspension:*** Suspension means denial of rights and privileges of a registered organization for a period not to exceed two (2) calendar years. The organization shall lose the privilege of using university space for social and fundraising activities and be denied use of student activity fees for a period of time determined by the Director or designee. Services (such as an organization mailbox) assigned prior to suspension will not automatically be reassigned upon expiration of the suspension. Suspended organizations will be required to meet with a designated The Underground: Student Organization Resources Center staff member who will consider issues of compliance with the obligations of the suspension. Satisfactory compliance will result in the organizations being placed on probationary status for a minimum of one academic year following their renewed registration.

***Cancellation:*** The organization shall lose the privilege of being registered by or associated with the university. Any organization whose registration has been cancelled must cease all organizational activities upon receipt of the notice of cancellation. Any member of an organization whose registration has been cancelled shall relinquish any appointed or elected office held with that organization's governing body or any position that depends on membership in the organization being disciplined. Balances of all organizational funds granted by the Appropriations Committee of the SGA will automatically revert to the Appropriations Committee. Funds raised by the organization and managed by the Manager of Student Organization Accounts may be used to make financial restitution. Any balance of these funds remaining would be designated for use on any of several campus service projects managed by VCU student organizations.

### **Special Provisions for Collegiate Panhellenic Council, Interfraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Council, and National Pan-Hellenic Council**

Student chapters of these councils are overseen by the Fraternity and Sorority Life Office. All policies, procedures and guidelines are maintained by Fraternity and Sorority Life.

For additional information, please visit [Virginia Commonwealth University Special Provisions for Fraternities and Sororities](#)

### **Special Provisions for Sports Clubs**

Student sports clubs are overseen by Recreational Sports. All policies, procedures and guidelines are maintained by Recreational Sports.

### **Special Provisions for Student Media**

Recognized student media organizations are overseen by the VCU Student Media Center. All policies, procedures and guidelines are maintained by The Student Media Center.