

REGISTERING A STUDENT CLUB

Starting a new club

In order to start a new club at SUNY Orange, there are several simple but important steps to follow:

- 1) **Meet with Student Activities Staff**-This initial meeting is to discuss your idea for a club, review the requirements and paperwork, and talk about how the Student Activities Office can assist you. To schedule a meeting on the Middletown Campus, call 341-4230 or stop by the Student Activities Office in the Shepard Student Center. For the Newburgh Campus, call 341-9544 or stop by the office in the lower level of Tower Building.
- 2) **Recruit Members**-A club must have at least 10 active members in order to be recognized. Active members attend meetings regularly and participate in group events and planning. All members must be currently enrolled, credit students at SUNY Orange. The Student Activities Office can help you in your recruitment efforts by reserving rooms for meetings and reproducing fliers, posters and other advertisements. Word of mouth can also be a very effective recruitment tool. Talk to students in your classes and in the cafeteria and student lounges.
- 3) **Find an Advisor**-All clubs are required to have a Faculty or Staff Advisor, but finding the right one can sometimes be difficult. A good advisor is extremely important to a club's success. They must be an active and involved part of your club, and not just a name on paper. They can help you avoid potential problems and to best use available College resources to accomplish your club goals. The advisor does not run your club---student clubs are always student run. However, their experience and knowledge is extremely important and their suggestions and feedback should always be seriously considered. The best way to find a good advisor is to talk with faculty and staff members that you know well. While they may not be best suited to be your club advisor, they may be able to recommend a colleague that could help. Before deciding on an advisor, your club should meet with him/her and review the expectations outlined in the Club Advisor Agreement (**APPENDIX A**). The Club-Advisor relationship should be viewed as a partnership with expectations on both sides and in which frequent and open communication is the key to success.
- 4) **Write a Constitution and Complete the Club Recognition Paperwork**- Every club is required to have a constitution. This is a very important document because it lays out how your club is going to operate and the rules that you will follow. Important elements might include job descriptions for officers, how and when elections are held, and, for those "worst-case scenario" situations, how and under what circumstances members and/or officers may be removed. Writing the constitution should be taken very seriously and all members should be involved, especially in approving the final draft. A sample constitution as well as copies of the other required forms (Club Recognition Form, Membership List and Club Advisor Agreement) are available in the Student Activities Office (see **APPENDIX A**). The staff can also assist your club with writing your constitution. Once all of the forms are completed, they should be returned to the Student Activities Office.

- 5) **Meet with the Student Activities Committee and the Student Senate-** The final step in the recognition process is to obtain the approval of the Student Activities Committee and the Student Senate. When you return your completed forms to the Student Activities Office, the staff will schedule a time for you to meet with the Student Activities Committee. The committee's job is to review the applications of all new clubs, paying particular attention to purpose, goals and the constitution. Once the Student Activities Committee has approved the application, it is forwarded to the next scheduled Student Senate meeting for final approval. It is strongly recommended that the club send representatives to both of these meetings to answer questions that may arise.

What does Club Recognition mean?

Congratulations! You are now a recognized club. So...what does that mean? In the big picture, it means that your club is now officially part of the College and will be included in official listings and publications such as the College Catalog, the Student Handbook, and the College Website. In a more practical sense, it means the club can:

- reserve rooms and facilities on campus
- hold meetings and sponsor events on campus
- advertise and post notices on campus bulletin boards
- hold fundraising events
- apply for funding from the Student Senate
- have a mailbox in the Student Activities Office and receive mail at the College
- make use of Student Activities resources including faxing, photocopying and producing posters

Maintaining Recognition

In order to maintain recognition, all clubs must submit the following to the Student Activities Office every semester:

- Club Recognition Form
- Membership List (clubs must maintain a minimum of 10 active members)
- Signed Club Advisor Agreement

These forms are sent to every club at the beginning of each semester with the Student Senate budget forms and guidelines. They must be returned to the Student Activities Office by the advertised deadline or the club will lose its recognition and all related privileges. A club would then have to reapply for recognition.

Who Can Participate in Student Clubs?

All clubs are open to any currently-enrolled SUNY Orange credit student. Alumni or students not currently enrolled may not participate in a club. There is no minimum grade point average required to be a member of a club, but club officers are required to maintain a 2.0 or better semester and cumulative grade point average.

CLUB RECOGNITION FORM

CLUB NAME _____

CLUB PURPOSE _____

MEETING INFORMATION: DAY(S) _____ TIME _____

LOCATION _____

All meeting rooms MUST be reserved through the Student Activities Office at the beginning of each semester.

FACULTY ADVISORS 1) _____

2) _____

CLUB OFFICERS:

All officers are required to maintain a minimum 2.0 QPA and CQPA and be in good academic and disciplinary standing with the College.

PRESIDENT: _____ A# _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

VICE PRESIDENT: _____ A# _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

SECRETARY: _____ A# _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

TREASURER: _____ A# _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

CLUB MEMBERSHIP LIST

In order to receive and maintain recognition, a club must have a minimum of 10 active members. These members must be currently enrolled SUNY Orange credit students.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PHONE #</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>
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PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED

CLUB ADVISOR AGREEMENT

I, _____ agree to serve as the Advisor
to _____ for the
_____ academic year.

In this agreement, the Advisor agrees to:

1. **Serve as a resource and contact for all members of the club/ organization.**
2. **Regularly meet with the officers of the club/organization.**
3. **Attend at least three general membership meetings each semester.**
4. **Attend all events, programs or trips that require College supervision.**
5. **Inform the club/organization of important College news and developments.**
6. **Familiarize him/herself with College and Student Senate Policy as outlined in the Student Handbook.**
7. **Maintain communication with the Student Activities Office.**
8. **Attend club events and trips as required by College policy.**
9. **Offer advice, but allow the students to make final decisions and control their club.**

In this agreement, the club/organization and its officers agree to:

1. **Keep the Advisor informed of all plans, concerns and activities.**
2. **Provide the Advisor with copies of all correspondence.**
3. **Invite the Advisor to all events and activities.**
4. **Make all financial transaction documentation available to the Advisor and ensure the Advisor's signature is on all vouchers (check requests).**
5. **Plan officer meetings in consideration of the Advisor's schedule.**
6. **Consider the advice and counsel of the Advisor in making decisions.**

Advisor

Club/Organization President

Advisor

Club/Organization Vice-President

Date _____

Date _____

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section 1: Name

State the name of the club - you may abbreviate the name after this section if you identify that abbreviation here.

Section 2: Purpose/Mission

State the purpose/mission of your organization – the reasons why you exist. This can be in a list format, or in a paragraph.

Section 3: Affiliation:

If your organization is affiliated with any regional/national organizations, please state those affiliations here.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility for Membership

Recognized clubs must be open to any currently enrolled credit student of SUNY Orange.

Section 2: Voting Member Criteria

State how a student becomes a voting member [e.g., attends a certain % of meetings/ events, pays dues, etc] and if there are any criteria for any other membership categories. This is an important issue for your organization – you want to make sure that students listed on your voting member list are active, interested students in your group.

Section 3: Removal of Members

State the process to remove any member who is not in good standing with the club. Due process must be followed. Things to consider are: reasonable notice to the person being considered for removal, opportunity to defend their position, quorum needed to vote, timeline for the process, appeal process.

While you will hopefully not need this section, it is very important that you have a process in place. When you need it, this will clarify the procedure and take out some of the difficult personal issues...

Article III: Officers

Section 1: Officer Qualifications

Identify what qualifications a student must have to be eligible to be an officer. This may include QPA, length of time in organization, previous experience, etc. All officers must be currently enrolled SUNY Orange credit students with a QPA and CQPA of at least 2.0.

Section 2: Elected Officers

List the positions in descending order (e.g., President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary)

Section 3: Duties of Officers

List each officer position and their duties. You can include this information in Section 2 if you prefer. Typical duties include:

President: preside at meetings, call special meetings, primary contact with the institutions, appoint committee chairs, runs the election process.

Vice-President: assume President's duties in his/her absence, schedule meeting/practice rooms/facilities.

Treasurer: keeps all financial records, notifies organization of financial issues, prepares budget/allocation requests.

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

Secretary: takes and distributes minutes of all club meetings, recorder keeper (current and past members, files minutes, etc), club historian, notify members of meetings, handles the official correspondence of the club.

Section 4: Vacancy in Office

In the event a vacancy should occur (resignation or removal), provisions must be made to fill the vacancy. Officer succession/"chain of command" should be addressed (e.g., in the event that the President leaves office, the Vice President will assume those duties until a special election is held. Then refer readers to the special election section of Article IV.

Section 5: Removal of Officers

Grounds for removal of an officer must be clearly identified. Similar to the removal of members, due process must be followed. (see above) Make sure you note the role of your club advisor.

One example:

A petition to remove the officer in question must be submitted to another officer. This petition must contain the signatures of x% of voting members. When such petition is received, the officer shall call a meeting of the club to determine whether or not the officer should be removed.

Grounds for removal are to presented by the officer in charge at a regular or special club meeting.

The officer in question shall be provided an opportunity to present a defense either in person or in writing.

A quorum shall be present, and a (50% +1, 2/3, simply majority) vote of the voting members shall decide upon removal.

While you will hopefully not need this section, it is very important that you have a process in place. When you need it, this will clarify the procedure and take out some of the difficult personal issues....

Article IV: Elections

Section 1: Nomination Process

State how officer candidates will be nominated (by a current officer/member, self-nomination, etc.) and the timeline associated with the nomination process.

Section 2: Election

Election procedures, quorum present, method of voting (secret ballot, etc.), number of terms a person can serve, and when the elections will be held

Section 3: Special Elections

This section outlines what procedures will take place if an officer leaves/is removed from office. Clearly state the timeline for these procedures (e. g, within "x" weeks of vacancy occurring). You may use the same procedures from Section 2, with a revised timeline.

Article V: Advisor

Section 1: Selection

Indicate how your club will choose an advisor. Note: All clubs are required to have an advisor who is a SUNY Orange faculty or staff member.

Section 2: Duties

What do you want your advisor to do?

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1: Regular Meeting/Club Activities

Address how often business meetings will occur, any regular club activities, etc., process to notify members of meetings/activities.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Identify why you would call special meetings, and the process used to call these meetings/notify members, etc. Will these meetings be run any differently than regular meetings?

Section 3: Parliamentary Authority

Will you use Robert's Rules of Order? How will the meetings be run...

*Section 4: Quorum**

What % of your membership must be present for official club business to occur?

*A quorum is a certain percentage of voting members required to be present during a vote. It is VERY important to clearly indicate what your quorum will be. You want to make sure that when a vote takes place, that you have a representative sample of your voting membership present.

Article VII: Committees

Section 1: Committee Structure

Include what committees (if any) that your club will have. Include responsibilities of each committee and who is responsible for each committee. Examples include Membership, Programs, Elections, Fundraising, etc.

Section 2: Special/Ad-Hoc Committees

State that special/ad-hoc committees may be formed if needed...

Article VIII: Amendments

Section 1: Ratification

Identify the process to be used regarding proposed constitutional amendments: voting procedures, timeline, etc.

Section 2: Submittal to Student Activities Office

Any changes made to this constitution must be submitted to the Student Activities Office..

CONSTITUTION CHECKLIST-Items that should be included in any club constitution

- The Club's Official name and any abbreviation if needed (For example: Changing Outlooks Through Activities (COTA))
- The purpose or mission of the club
- Requirements for membership (Any club funded by the Student Senate must be open to all OCCC credit students. However, alumni, community members and students who are not currently registered in credit classes can NOT participate in a club). You may list other requirements such as attendance and participation in club events.
- Active versus inactive membership-how is a person's status determined
- Duties and responsibilities of club officers including GPA requirements (All club officers are required by the College to maintain a 2.0 semester and cumulative grade point average)
- Voting procedures for officer elections-When are officer elections held (fall, spring, etc)? Is there a nomination process before elections? Is the membership allowed to ask questions of the candidates before the vote is held? Is the vote secret ballot?
- How are officer positions filled if a vacancy occurs between elections?
- Process for removing members-occasionally, a member may become a detriment to the club due to disruptive behavior or other harmful actions. There should be a fair process defined in the Constitution for how to remove these members. Efforts should always be made to resolve any issues through discussions before seeking to remove a member. The club advisor can be helpful in this process.
- Process for removing an officer if they are not performing their job as outlined in the Constitution
- Process for changing the constitution-How are amendments made?
- When/how does the club meet- Do not be so specific as to include days, times or rooms or you will have to change your constitution every semester. You should indicate whether the club will meet weekly, bi-weekly, etc.
- How will the meetings be run? Most groups site Robert's Rules of Order as the authority for how meetings will be conducted. If you have questions about Parliamentary Procedure or Robert's, consult that section in the Club Resource Manual or contact Student Activities.

-Quorum-what is it and how it works-Quorum is the number of active members that must be present for a meeting to be considered official and for any voting to take place. It is usually set at 50% plus one of all active members. Clubs may set a higher standard, but it should never be lower than the standard outlined above. Whatever the standard for Quorum is to be, it should be reflected in the Constitution.

-Minutes/records of meetings (archiving minutes)-The Constitution should indicate who will take minutes of the meetings (usually the Secretary) and how they will be archived. Good meeting minutes are extremely important for passing on important information to future years of the club.

-Role of advisor-the basic responsibilities of the advisor are outlined in the Club Advisor Agreement that every club completes each semester. The Constitution should outline specifics for the club including how the advisor is selected and other specific responsibilities

-Committees (ad hoc/standing)-Some clubs, especially larger groups that sponsor many events, may use committees to work more efficiently. Committees can be either Standing(committees that exist semester to semester for an ongoing reason) or Ad Hoc(temporary committees appointed to serve a one-time function and then disbanded). If committees are to be used, the Constitution should outline how they are formed.

-Spelling and grammar count-this is the most important document your club has...please take the time to proofread it!

-Format for constitution-How should the final version of your constitution look? You can refer to the Club Resource Manual for a sample Constitution or come to the Student Activities Office for advice or to see other examples.