



**DRAKE UNIVERSITY**  
**REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATION HANDBOOK**

Updated: Spring 2022  
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Statement:

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) at Drake University enhance the student experience by allowing students to explore their interests and passions outside of the classroom setting with fellow students. Although there is a diverse array of registered student organizations that currently exist—including sports clubs, multicultural organizations, service organizations, and many, many more—Drake students are continually seeking to start new organizations with their unique mission. This handbook contains pertinent information for the creation and maintenance of Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) at Drake University.

### Terms:

**RSO** – Registered Student Organization

**TRSO** – Temporary Registered Student Organization

**OC** – Organizational Council

**Club** – A group seeking TRSO status

### Benefits of Being a Registered Student Organization:

- Use “Drake” in conjunction with the name of the group and use the official Drake logo
- Participate in Fall & Spring Activities Fairs
- Be listed on official Drake documents and websites as an RSO
- Access the University’s liability insurance
- Access to an on-campus Agency Account
- Ability to reserve space at the university
- Use of services offered in the Student Life Center
- Ability to check out P-Card, order through Amazon, or use Hyvee Card for RSO events and programs.

It is a privilege for student organizations to be an RSO at Drake University. It is expected that each RSO will align its goals, mission, and purpose with those of the University and be beneficial to the organization’s members and the Drake community. In some instances, the Office of the Dean of Students and/or Student Senate may deem it necessary to review an organization’s registered status, operations, and procedures. Under such conditions, the Office of the Dean of Students and/or the Student Senate reserves the right to review and take any action it deems appropriate (including removal) concerning any activities undertaken by any RSO and/or its members acting on behalf of the RSO regarding any potential violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

### Requirements to Start an RSO:

- **Names and ID numbers of a minimum of 10 current Drake students.** Names will be used to verify student interest and will be shared with the Office of Student Inclusion, Involvement and Leadership, the Organizational Council, and the Alumni Office.
- **The potential RSO must meet with the appropriate representative of the Student Life Center and the appropriate representative within the group’s declared RSO category.** The representative from the Student Life Center will notify the group of the appropriate faculty/staff member, to be determined by the type of organization that is hoping to gain RSO status. The purpose of these meetings is to receive advice and guidance from these representatives. The list of representatives within the group’s declared RSO category will be determined by the Vice President of Student Organizations and the appropriate representative of the Student Life Center.

- **Executive Council, complete with position descriptions.** Each potential RSO is required to have a president. Additional Executive Council positions could include Treasurer (required if the organization will utilize any funds), Fundraising Chair, Social Media Chair, etc. All Executive Council members must be full-time students in good standing with the institution (not on academic or disciplinary probation). A student in good standing is defined as having a cumulative institutional (Drake) grade point average of no less than 2.00 and no outstanding disciplinary sanctions.
- **A complete constitution and/or by-laws.** If the organization is affiliated with a local, regional, national, or international organization, students shall submit documents/contracts describing the relationship between the student group and the affiliated organization. If such documentation cannot be submitted, the students shall explain why in a written statement to be submitted to the Organizational Council. Here is a sample [constitution](#). The constitution must contain all Articles listed in the template constitutions. Potential RSOs are allowed to include additional articles to their constitution as needed.
- **A purpose/mission statement**, which should be included in the constitution/by-laws. **A commitment to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and University Non-Discrimination Statement**, which should be included in the constitution/by-laws.
- **A faculty or staff advisor.** The faculty or staff advisor must be a current employee, have a current Drake email account, and agree to advise your group.
- **Must have held at least two general meetings and two Executive Council meetings.** A summary (about 200 words) about each meeting must be submitted to the Organizational Council in advance of being considered for approval. These could be considered “meeting minutes.”
- Before the potential RSO can move forward in the process of becoming fully registered, the group must maintain **Temporary RSO status for at least one semester**, the semester immediately prior to submitting to the Organizational Council, before being considered by the Organizational Council. To qualify for “one semester” of Temporary RSO status, a group must gain temporary RSO status *before* the RSO application deadline for that semester. (To illustrate, a group that is seeking RSO status in the spring must become a temporary RSO before the application deadline of the previous fall semester, which would occur in September).

### **Exceptions:**

- **Exceptions to the 10-student rule** will be allowed on a very limited basis. The group must have a compelling interest tied to the purpose/mission of the RSO for having fewer than 10 members at any time. Exceptions will be granted by the Organizational Council.
  - As of Spring 2022, the 10-student rule does not apply to organizations on Unity Round Table. This amendment was voted on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, by VPSO Owens Organizational Council. The ruling was 7-0.
  - As of Spring 2022, the 10-student rule does not apply to the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organization. This amendment was voted on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, by VPSO Owens Organizational Council. The ruling was 7-0

### **Organizational Council:**

#### **Organizational Council (OC):**

The Organizational Council is the governing council that oversees the approval and denial of the Temporary Student Organizations requesting to appear on the Student Senate floor for full RSO status. This council will thoroughly examine each organization's request to enhance the student experience by allowing students to explore their interests and passions outside of the classroom setting.

This council consists of the following:

- Consists of the VPSO, 3 Student Senators, 3 students appointed by the Student Senate, the RSO Coordinator (non-voting), and 1 faculty/staff member (non-voting).
- The VPSO shall nominate one faculty/staff member to participate on the Organizational Council; each nomination is subject to approval by a majority of the Student Senate.
- The 3 students appointed by the Student Senate will be nominated by the Vice President of Student Organizations.
- The 3 Student Senators will be nominated by Student Senators and will be approved by the Student Senate. One of the Student Senators confirmed as a member of the Organizational Council must be one of the Equity and Inclusion Senators.
- Student Senators will be allowed to vote for three nominees, and the top three vote-getters will be appointed to the Organizational Council. In the event of a tie, a new vote will take place between the tied nominees, and the top vote-getters or the nominee receiving the majority of votes (depending on the circumstances of the tie) will be placed on the Organizational Council.

The Organizational Council also is over the Organizational Review or RSO Audit.

- The VPSO and OC shall conduct an annual audit of all student organizations in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Drake University Student Senate.
- The VPSO, OC, and the RSO Coordinator shall craft recommendations for all RSOs based on the information gathered from the audit.

**Process:**

Below is how the process will look for Temporary RSO seeking full RSO status:

1. The student group must set up a meeting with the RSO Coordinator to be considered for Temporary RSO status.
2. Submit the application to the Organizational Council by Friday of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. Application items to include consist of:
  - a. Constitution/by-laws
  - b. Meeting Minutes
  - c. Contracts/documents identifying relationship(s) with outside organizations
  - d. List of members (including names and student Banner ID).
3. After the potential RSO has fully submitted all required information, the group will be contacted by the Organizational Council to set up a meeting within two weeks of the submission deadline.
4. The Organizational Council will contact you to set up a time to meet. At this meeting, the potential RSO will briefly explain why the group is seeking RSO status and will answer questions from the Organizational Council. The Organizational Council will determine if the potential RSO meets all the requirements listed above and will conduct a review of the group's documents.
5. On the date the TRSOs present to the Organizational Council they will be asked to give a formal 7–10-minute presentation on:
  - a. The mission and goals of the organization
  - b. Potential events your organization may host
  - c. See how the potential RSO meets the 5 evaluative criteria listed below.
  - d. This will be followed by a question-and-answer time with the Organizational Council.

The Organizational Council will be evaluating the potential RSO on the following criteria:

- **Sustainability of the organization:** What is the probability the potential RSO will sustain past 2-3 semesters? Does the university have the facilities and resources to support your organization? Does the membership span across multiple-year classifications? Is there a strong recruitment strategy?
  - **Distinctiveness:** Would the existence of the potential RSO provide a community for particular members of our larger campus community?
  - **Necessity:** Could the potential RSO exist and thrive without RSO status? (i.e., within a department or division on campus)
  - **Mission and Values:** Does the potential RSO align with the stated [mission](#) of the university?
  - **Risk and Safety:** Does the potential RSO propose a safety risk to the institution or its population? RSOs need to examine and evaluate potential risks regardless of how likely they are to occur. It is also helpful to view risk from multiple perspectives (student, staff, community, etc.). If for any reason, the activities of the group are not covered by Drake insurance policies, the group will not be approved. These risks need to be considered by examining potential RSOs. Risk and Safety can be broken up into 3 parts:
    - **Physical** – Injury from physical activity, improper food handling, or travel.
    - **Reputational** – Negative publicity for the RSO, its members, advisor, and/or Drake University.
    - **Community** – Feelings of marginalization, discrimination, or trauma amongst the community due to the content or nature of the organization.
6. Following the Organizational Council review, the potential RSO will receive notification from the Organizational Council as to if the organization will go to the Student Senate for approval. The Organizational Council will vote on each organization by a majority ruling. The Organizational Council may reach out to the potential RSO after the presentation for clarification or more information.
  7. The Organizational Council will craft a report for the Student Senate with the anonymized opinions of its members on the potential RSO in question. The report will focus on the five different evaluative criteria.
  8. Student Senate will only consider organizations twice a year, during October and March. Student Senate has the power to approve or deny Registered Student Organization status.
  9. Student Senators are able to vote based on their discretion; however, they are strongly encouraged to use the five evaluative criteria to inform their decision-making.

## **Denial:**

If an organization is denied full RSO status by the Student Senate, it may re-apply for Temporary RSO status after one semester (i.e., if an organization is denied in the Fall semester, it may re-apply for Temporary status the next Fall). This does in fact mean that if denied by the Student Senate, the organization will lose Temporary status.

If a Temporary RSOs request is denied moving to the Student Senate floor by the Organizational Council, they will be allowed to maintain TRSO status and request to move to the Senate floor the following semester. If denied twice, the club will lose TRSO status and must reapply.

## **Timeline:**

### **August – October**

- The Organizational Council will accept applications for current Temporary Registered Student Organizations (TRSOs) that are seeking full RSO status until the fourth Friday of the fall semester.
- The Organizational Council will accept applications for clubs seeking Temporary Registered Student Organizations status until the first week of October.
- The last two weeks of September are for the review of application materials.
- The first and second weeks of October are for meeting with potential RSOs. At this time, the Organizational Council will be compiling materials and sending them to the Student Senate. TRSOs seeking full status will be brought in front of the Student Senate for confirmation at the last two meetings of October and the first meeting of November if needed.

### **November – February**

- November – February is devoted to the organizational review of current student organizations by the Organizational Council, this process is known as the RSO Audit.
- The goal of the RSO audit is to gather detailed information about each Registered Student Organization. This is where the membership status (10-student rule) of the organization will be verified through the submission of a roster.
- Through this, the VPSO and Organizational Council will have the opportunity to gather trends and assess the needs of RSOs. This process also confirms which student organizations are eligible for annual funding.
- The Organizational Council will begin accepting applications again for Temporary Registered Student Organization status after Thanksgiving break.

## **February – April**

- The Organizational Council will accept applications for current Temporary Registered Student Organizations (TRSOs) that are seeking full RSO status until the fourth Friday of the spring semester.
- The Organizational Council will accept applications for clubs seeking Temporary Registered Student Organizations status until the first week of March.
- The last two weeks of February are for the review of application materials.
- The first and second weeks of March are for meeting with potential RSOs. At this time, the Organizational Council will be compiling materials and sending them to the Student Senate. TRSOs seeking full status will be brought in front of the Student Senate for confirmation at the last two meetings of March and the first meeting of April if needed.

## **Status:**

### **Active Status**

In order to maintain Active RSO status, your organization must:

- Participate in a review once every year by the Organizational Review Committee.
- Maintain a minimum of 10 active students. These rosters must be submitted during the November – February period during the organizational review. Should an RSO have less than 10 active members, the group will have one semester to recruit students to reach 10 members.
- Follow all university policies and procedures, including the Student Code of Conduct and Non- Discrimination Statement, and adhere to all local, state, and federal laws both on and off-campus.
- A minimum of one member must attend the Presidents' Summit at the beginning of both the Fall and Spring Semester. It is recommended that the member be the president of the RSO or a member of the Executive Council.
- Submit a faculty/staff advisor agreement and RSO fiscal agreement form once per year.
- Ensuring all activities and programs sponsored by the RSO are consistent with the mission and goals of the organization and the University.
- Operating in a manner that is consistent with the mission and goals of the University and the organization's bylaws.



- Demonstrating respect for the University community and other student organizations.

### **Suspended Status**

If an RSO receives a recommendation for inactivation, the RSO will receive a formal notification of the recommendation from the Dean of Students office and will potentially be placed on suspended status. The Dean of Students Office may also suspend an RSO for potential violation of any portion of the Code of Student Conduct. The Dean of Students Office will communicate with the RSO to schedule a time to be heard in a timely manner. The Dean of Students Office will determine if the RSO will become inactive or active.

**The Dean of Students Office may place an RSO on suspended status.**

### **Inactive Status**

An organization can become “inactive” for failing to meet any of the criteria for maintaining “active status.” The process for an inactive RSO to regain “active status” shall be determined by the VPSO and RSO Coordinator. If an organization is “inactive” for a period of time no more than one semester and no less than two weeks as determined by the VPSO and the RSO Coordinator, the group cannot regain “active status” and must re-apply as if it were a new organization seeking RSO status.

### **Eligibility:**

All students are eligible for membership in any RSO, in accordance with the standards – academic or otherwise – established by each organization. RSOs are expected to comply with the university nondiscrimination statement in membership and officer selection.

Faculty or staff may attend student organization activities, but may not be members of RSOs, and thus may not vote, hold office, or participate in the decision-making of the student organization. Faculty and staff advisors for organizations are invited to attend meetings and advise members and officers in their decision-making and deliberation processes.

The officers of all RSOs must be in good standing at the time of their election or appointment and throughout their term of office.

The authority and responsibility for ensuring that officers are eligible to hold office shall reside with the officers and advisor of the organization. In instances of dispute, the decision-making authority and responsibility rests with the Dean of Students Office.

## **Core Values:**

It is expected that all RSOs adhere to these principles:

1. RSOs must be formed and administered by Drake University students. Student leadership and the opportunity for student organizations to be self-governing within the policies and expectations of the university are key aspects of the learning and leadership experience. Drake University recognizes and supports RSOs as part of its educational mission. Faculty and staff are welcomed and expected to serve as advisors but may not vote or lead the club or organization.
2. RSOs must comply fully with the university's non-discrimination policy: "The principles of equal access and equal opportunity require that all interactions within the University be free from invidious discrimination. Drake University, therefore, prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any characteristic protected by law in its educational programs and activities, admissions, or employment."
3. RSOs must welcome any Drake University student in good standing as members. The rationale is, again, that RSOs are part of the educational enterprise of the university so any student who is sincerely interested in learning about and participating in good faith in a student organization, must be welcomed. There are a few exceptions to all members participating in all activities. Student organizations such as a cappella groups, dance groups, etc. may hold auditions; honor societies may set GPA requirements; and some organizations may set selection criteria, such as social and business fraternities and sororities. In addition, some may develop and use criteria to select a smaller set of the members to represent them on certain occasions, but to the greatest extent feasible, the full membership should be included in all activities. For example, competitive groups, such as club sports, may develop and use criteria for selecting travel teams to participate in competitions at other schools if funds are insufficient or it is otherwise not feasible for the entire team to travel. All of these exceptions must be specified in the student organizations' by-laws.
4. The leadership selection of student organizations must be entirely student-led and administered following the democratic process specified in their by-laws. Drake University believes that, as part of the educational process, student organizations should engage in respectful dialogue over differences in opinions and views and allow its members to elect the individuals they deem best for leadership positions.

## **Accountability:**

Accountability for members and officers of student organizations must be based on clearly established behavioral criteria. Sanctions against, or dismissal of members/officers, must be based on clearly established, written criteria in student organization by-laws, or manuals

approved by the full membership (according to procedures specified in the by-laws). Reasons for holding a student accountable must be based on behaviors inconsistent with clearly defined criteria and not subjective questions of identity, belief, or fit. In addition, any conduct process must adhere to basic due process principles, including written notice to the student that states the incorrect behavior for which the student is being charged; the opportunity for the student to prepare for, and respond to the charges, and the opportunity for the student to face the person(s) charging the student. Organization members are also expected to uphold all university policies and may be held accountable based on the behavior of the appropriate department on campus.

### **Community Standards:**

To promote a relationship between RSOs and the University that is based on trust, collaboration, cooperation, and the resulting mutual benefits to the University and the campus community, the following Community Standards will apply to all RSOs.

Student organizations enhance participation in the cultural, academic, social, service, the philanthropic, and spiritual life of Drake University. The individual and group performance of members of our organizations should always uphold the values stated in the organization's constitutions and/or by-laws. By virtue of the University's recognition of each organization's stated mission, purpose, and values, the University expects that the goals of student organizations will be implemented in a manner that is compatible with the goals and mission of the Drake University community.

As stated in Drake University's Mission and Inspiration statement, an important objective of the Drake University experience, both in and outside of the classroom, is to create an exceptional learning environment that prepares students for meaningful personal lives, professional accomplishments, and responsible global citizenship, and for that experience to distinguished by collaborative learning among students, faculty, and staff and by the integration of the liberal arts and sciences with professional preparation.

Accordingly, each RSO's mission and goals must be congruent with the Mission of Drake University. RSOs are permitted certain privileges and, correspondingly, must undertake certain responsibilities within this community. There is mutual accountability between the organization and the University.

The Drake University Student Code of Conduct and all other policies supersede and preempt any and all inconsistent or contrary regulations, policies, and/or decisions made by RSOs and/or their inter/national organizations and affiliates.

Student organization leaders are expected to be knowledgeable of and adhere to any policies/practices as outlined by the University and any academic/administrative department or national organization with which the organization is affiliated.

**Approved by the 35<sup>th</sup> Session Student Senate on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 – Motion SS [220421]**