

American Public University System

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Student Organization Handbook

Policies and Procedures
For Acquiring and Maintaining University
Recognition

The Office of Student and Alumni Affairs

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| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| General Information..... | 4 |
| Mission..... | 5 |
| University Recognition for Student Organizations..... | 5 |
| Conditions for Recognition..... | 5 |
| University Relation to Student Organizations..... | 6 |
| Student Organizations Commitment to Excellence..... | 6 |
| Rights and Privileges of Student Organizations..... | 7 |
| Responsibilities of Student Organizations..... | 7 |
| Procedures for Obtaining Recognition at APUS..... | 9 |
| Procedures for Maintaining Recognition..... | 9 |
| Withdrawal of Recognition and Disciplinary Action..... | 10 |
| Procedures for Reactivating an Inactive Chapter..... | 10 |
| Membership..... | 11 |
| Officer Eligibility..... | 12 |
| Removal of Chapter Officers..... | 12 |
| Campus Leadership Registration..... | 13 |
| Chapter Advisors..... | 13 |
| Removal of Chapter Advisors..... | 14 |
| Web Conferencing and Virtual Meetings..... | 14 |
| Financial Affairs of Student Organizations..... | 15 |
| Collection of Fees by Student Organizations..... | 15 |
| Use of University Bank Accounts..... | 15 |
| Finances..... | 15 |
| Distribution of University Funds to Student Organizations..... | 15 |
| Use of University Funds by Student Organizations..... | 16 |
| Funds Raised by Student Organizations..... | 17 |
| Publications and Other Communication Data..... | 17 |
| University Branded Items for Student Organizations..... | 18 |
| Mascots..... | 18 |

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

| | |
|--|----|
| Use of APUS Web Resources | 18 |
| Social Media Policy | 19 |
| Social Media Clause | 19 |
| General Social Media Responsibilities of Organizations | 19 |
| Daily Social Media Responsibilities of Organizations | 19 |
| Social Media Escalations:..... | 19 |
| Process for Escalating Social Media Posts | 20 |
| Use of APUS and Other Facilities | 20 |
| Reserving APUS Facilities | 20 |
| Conditions for Use of APUS and Other Facilities | 20 |
| Charges for the Use of APUS Facilities | 21 |
| Responsibilities for Student Organizations Using APUS Facilities | 21 |
| Changes to the Handbook and Appeals | 21 |
| Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Policy | 21 |
| Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination | 22 |

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

Introduction

The policies and procedures stated in this handbook intend to clarify American Public University System's (APUS) relationship to student organizations and reflect the University's concerns and interest for promoting awareness, values, and responsible behavior.

Student organizations are defined as any student-operated honor society, professional organization, or common interest club that meets the criteria established by APUS.

This handbook was created in an effort to assist chapter advisors, chapter officers, and organization members, by providing accurate information regarding policies, procedures, services, and resources.

Organization founders, leaders, and members are expected to read and comply with all policies, procedures, and protocols, as outlined in the Student Organization Handbook. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from office or the student organization. In severe instances, a university sanction may be issued.

General Information

There are six student organization classifications: academic recognition and honor societies; career and professional; community and volunteer; cultural; faith-based and spiritual; and social. All student organizations, regardless of classification, must abide by the rules and regulations outlined in the Student Organization Handbook, [APUS Student Handbook](#), and Faculty and Employee Handbooks (as applicable). Rights and privileges do not differ for student organizations.

1. **Academic Recognition & Honor Societies** provide members with opportunities to recognize scholastic achievements and outstanding leadership in their specialized field of study as a basis for membership. Honor societies must be affiliated with a national or international organization and have high standards for membership, which may include eligibility criteria based on GPA, course completion, and/or program of study. Academic recognition societies either do not have a national or international organization with a related mission/purpose, are working toward an active charter, or have been denied an initial charter with their respective national or international organization.
2. **Career and Professional Organizations** provide members with a variety of opportunities to explore academic and professional (and pre-professional) interests. Professional organizations are affiliated with a national or international organization. Participation in this type of organization allows members to develop interpersonal, organizational and leadership skills in a supportive, yet challenging, environment.
3. **Community and Volunteer Organizations** provide members with a variety of opportunities to volunteer and engage with their communities. Organizations may be stand-alone or affiliated with a national or international organization. Participation in this type of organization allows members to develop interpersonal, organizational and leadership skills while contributing to a diverse, global society.
4. **Cultural Organizations** provide members with a variety of opportunities for the promotion and celebration of cultural awareness. Organizations may be stand-alone or affiliated with a national or international organization. Participation in this type of organization allows members with shared identities and allies to build connections within the community, and develop interpersonal, cultural competency, and communication skills while contributing to a diverse, global society.

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American Military University | American Public University

5. **Faith-based and Spiritual Organizations** provide membership with a variety of opportunities for religious and spiritual development. Organizations may be stand-alone or affiliated with a national or international organization. Participation in this type of organization allows members to build rapport within the community, feel strengthened in their faith, and develop interpersonal, communication and leadership skills while contributing to a diverse, global society.
6. **Social Organizations** provide members with a variety of opportunities to connect with members of the university community through shared interests. These clubs are a way to meet others who share common interests outside of academia. Organizations may be stand-alone or affiliated with a national or international organization. Participation in this type of organization allows members to develop skills in many areas including leadership, critical thinking, and project management while also contributing to a diverse, global society.

The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs is responsible for the oversight of all student organizations recognized by the University and, thus, is the main point of contact for chapters, chapter advisors, students, alumni, and faculty who declare intent to charter a student organization. Chapter Advisors assist the student organization by providing counsel on general matters relating to the conduct of organizational affairs and are encouraged to offer constructive criticism and guidance to chapter officers.

The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs is responsible for ensuring chapters comply with university policies. Student organizations are recognized by the delegated authority of the University President and the Student Affairs Board, which includes the Associate Vice President of Student and Alumni Affairs, the Vice President of Student and Alumni Programs, and other designated APUS constituents, as needed.

All student organization members will be held responsible for their own conduct. A written interpretation or clarification of policies can be obtained by submitting a written inquiry or request to studentaffairs@apus.edu. A response will be provided within 15 business days.

Mission

The mission of American Public University System is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

Student organizations provide co- and extra-curricular opportunities for students to network in areas of special interest, professional development, and academic achievement. Campus leaders are challenged to build leadership skills through developing organizational programming and service events.

University Recognition for Student Organizations

Conditions for Recognition

- a. The purpose and/or functions of a student organization seeking recognized status must not duplicate those of an existing student organization.
- b. No student organization shall deny membership on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or any other characteristics protected by applicable federal,

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

- state or local law. Attendance and participation in programs open to students, alumni, faculty or staff must comply with APUS non-discrimination policies.
- c. The constitution of the student organization must be consistent with the mission of APUS and align with university rules, regulations, and policies. Constitutions must be updated annually, and kept up-to-date and on file with the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
 - d. The constitution of the student organization must be consistent with the constitutional standards established by the group's respective governing body, if applicable; however, it should also reflect the mission and outline the operations of the chapter as it pertains to APUS.
 - e. All student organizations will be held responsible by APUS for abiding by applicable federal, state and local laws, as well as all APUS policies, procedures and expectations. APUS may become involved in the offline conduct of student organizations as APUS may deem appropriate in its sole discretion.
 - f. Only currently employed faculty, staff, active students¹, and, at times, alumni, are eligible for active membership status in student organizations. All other members may be admitted to associate membership, if available.
 - g. The purpose of a student organization must not conflict with the mission or educational objectives of APUS.
 - h. Student organizations recognized by the University may not engage in hazing activities. Hazing is defined as any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health, or safety, of a person; or that willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission, affiliation, or as a condition for continued membership in any student organization. Any student organization that engages in, encourages, or permits hazing will be subject to disciplinary action.
 - i. Student organizations recognized by the University must be actively involved in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#), meeting active standing requirements each year to remain recognized.

University Relation to Student Organizations

- a. Recognition of student organizations should not be construed as endorsement or approval of the mission or viewpoints of the student organizations, but only as an acknowledgment of the rights of the student organization to exist at APUS.

Student Organizations Commitment to Excellence

- a. To encourage student organizations to become actively involved at the University and to further enhance and add value to the organization members' experience, the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) serves as a guide to successful university engagement.
- b. Based on a student organization's performance and involvement in the categories of: Leadership, Professional Development, Academic Recognition, and Community Relations; the University may award the chapter Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze standing.

¹ An active student is defined in the [APUS Student Handbook](#) as a student that continues to make progress toward their academic goals in order to remain in "active" status at any APUS member-institution. They must successfully complete at least one course during each 12-month period to avoid being withdrawn from the institution for lack of course completion.

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

- c. The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs reviews an organization's performance and involvement bi-annually, on June 1st (preliminary report) and November 1st (final report). Chapters are awarded their chapter's standing by December 1st. Final reports will be distributed to the Chapter Advisor, who will share standing with chapter officers and membership.
- d. Activities completed in November and December will be included in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) for the following year.
- e. Chapters who medal, meaning they achieve Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze standing in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#), will have an opportunity to apply for the following annual chapter awards;
 - i. Chapter of the Year
 - ii. Chapter Advisor of the Year
 - iii. Outstanding New Student Organization
 - iv. Outstanding Campus Leader (three awards)
- f. All student organizations are expected to meet active standing requirements. A student organization that does not have achieved significant progress towards active standing, per the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#), on June 1 and November 1 will be placed on probation (loss of any or all privileges of university recognition) for 30 days.
- g. Chapters on probation will receive support from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs to secure new chapter leadership and make significant progress towards active standing.
- h. Chapters that do not make significant progress towards active standing during their probationary period will have their recognition withdrawn and discontinued by the University.

Rights and Privileges of Student Organizations

- a. Permission to use the name of the University in connection with its approved programs and activities. No student organization, however, shall advertise or promote its programs or activities in a manner that suggests that the function is sponsored or endorsed by the University.
- b. Permission to use university logos and branding, must be in accordance with the university logo policy, and approved by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- c. Student organizations may petition for the use of university funds. Approved funding is subject to university guidelines.
- d. Student organizations may utilize university virtual communities to create a secure web portal to conduct member communication. Mass mailings and university-sponsored messaging on behalf of a student organization can be requested and sent from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. These communications must be submitted at least 3 business days in advance of the distribution date requested.
- e. The University will conduct up to two membership drives annually for each organization in accordance with paragraph (e) of the **Membership** section below.
- f. The cooperation, guidance, and assistance of university staff.
- g. With these rights, the student organizations are responsible for the consequences of its decisions and activities. All organization leaders and members should be aware of the policies and procedures that govern membership, and their participation in student organizations at the University.

Responsibilities of Student Organizations

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American Military University | American Public University

In addition to the rights and privileges that formal recognition carries, responsibility is placed on each student organization, including its chapter advisors, officers, and individual members, to conduct its affairs within the framework of university policies, procedures, rules, and expectations, and the provisions stated in the constitution of the organization.

- a. Officers and Chapter Advisors can be removed from their duties if there is a violation of policies, rules, or procedures, including without limitation those found in this and any other applicable handbook (*e.g.*, Student, Faculty and/or Employee Handbook). A one-time appeal of the termination may be made to the Associate Vice President of Student and Alumni Affairs in writing. Upon receipt of the full appeal, the documentation will be reviewed and a decision made within 30 days. The decision of the Associate Vice President of Student and Alumni Affairs is final.
- b. A student organization must have an up-to-date copy of its constitution, a current membership list, [Officer Transition Form Update Form](#), and [Chapter Advisor Agreement Form](#) on file with the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. Changes to these documents should be submitted promptly following adoption of the change and, in all events, within seven (7) days prior to an official membership vote. Edits made to the chapter constitution must be submitted to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs for approval.
- c. Officers of a student organization shall be held accountable and responsible for the programs and activities sponsored by the organization, and in the event that the organization and/or its members violate established university policies, procedures, rules, or expectations.
- d. Student organizations are responsible for making their respective programs and activities sponsored by the organization compliant with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, and with university policies, procedures, rules and expectations.
- e. Prior to hosting an organized event or physical meeting, the student organization must complete a request to hold the event, which includes the event purpose, agenda, and copy of proposed vendor contracts for the event.
 - i. All requests must be submitted to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs at least 45 days prior to the event. If deemed necessary by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, the organization may be required to obtain special event insurance.
 - ii. The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs has the right to deny the request or modify the event agenda.
 - iii. The organization is not to sign a contract or enter into any agreements with a vendor without written approval from the University.
- f. Student organizations are required to work with APUS to ensure sound financial management.
- g. Student organizations are responsible for actively coordinating with their approved Chapter Advisor(s) to share information on current initiatives, chapter operations, and activities of the organization.
- h. Student organizations have the responsibility to comply with university guidelines and policies when posting materials and communications.
- i. Student organizations must maintain at least active standing per the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) in order to maintain their recognition status.
- j. Should a student organization wish to request university funds, the Chapter Advisor must submit the [Budget Dispersal Request Form](#) two weeks in advance.
- k. Student organizations have the responsibility to supervise their events to ensure the safe operation of their programs and activities.

American Public University System

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Procedures for Obtaining Recognition at APUS

- a. To obtain recognition as a student organization, a [New Organization Application](#) must be completed.
- b. Upon confirmation of receipt by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, the group will be given temporary status for three months (90 days). The group must then complete the [Chapter Advisor Recommendation forms](#), [Chapter Advisor Agreement](#), and accompanying [Supervisor Acknowledgement forms](#), along with the following:
 - i. Collection of member interest, if required.
 - ii. Proposed organization constitution based on policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook.
- c. Upon submission to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, copies of the completed New Organization Application Packet will be distributed to the Student Affairs Board for review and approval/denial.
- d. Once stand-alone organizations are approved, they may begin operating as a university club.
- e. Organizations seeking affiliation with a national or international affiliate may not submit documents for such recognition until granted provisional status from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- f. An organization seeking recognition by a national or international affiliate that is granted provisional status by the University will have one calendar year to receive such recognition. Once national or international recognition is obtained, the organization will be considered a student organization on campus.
- g. If national or international recognition is not obtained or is denied, the group's leadership may opt to become a stand-alone organization. Organizations may later seek recognition from the national or international organization and later affiliate; however, not all members are eligible for admittance should a charter be granted. Members must meet all national/international and University membership requirements.
- h. If the New Organization Application Packet is approved by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, the provisional chapter will be referred to as "The Provisional Society/Organization for (Insert General Interest or Program Name)". The provisional chapter may not utilize the nationally/internationally affiliated name until the group is recognized by the national or international organization. The provisional group is prohibited from conducting official membership drives or collecting membership dues until the chapter is recognized nationally/internationally.
 - i. Once the provisional chapter's national/international application is approved, the official approval letter will be sent to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. The chapter will then be referred to as an official chapter in all print and electronic publications.
 - ii. During the provisionary period, the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs may terminate a provisional chapter that does not comply with university policies or regulations or with applicable local, state, or federal laws.

Procedures for Maintaining Recognition

- a. Student organizations must follow all requirements outlined in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) and provide evidence by recording qualifying events throughout the year.

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- b. Student organizations with a national /international affiliate may be required to submit annual renewal and financial documents. Chapters are asked to coordinate with the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs if they have questions or need supplemental information.
- c. Student organizations must maintain a minimum of ten active members, unless an exception is granted by APUS.
- d. Student organizations shall be subject to review by the appropriate governing councils and APUS.
- e. When a student organization changes its name, constitution and/or bylaws, those changes are submitted to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs for review and approval prior to communicating an official change.

Withdrawal of Recognition and Disciplinary Action

- a. Failure to meet the terms and conditions of student organizations could result in the organization losing one or more privileges of recognition, including but not limited to being classified as inactive.
- b. An inactive student organization may request active status again by following procedures in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) for active standing.
- c. The privileges of a student organization may be withdrawn for violations of University, state or federal standards, codes, policies, or similar requirements.
- d. Recognition may also be withdrawn or discontinued:
 - i. When a student organization fails to carry out its programs consistent with the organization's stated purpose and constitution;
 - ii. At the written request of the student organization;
 - iii. When, by constitutional provision, the group is dissolved;
 - iv. In accordance with the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#), when a student organization does not achieve active standing during the probationary period; or
 - v. When the student organization fails to comply with the policies and procedures stated in the Student Organization Handbook.
- e. When appropriate administrative forms are not filed or if, for any reason, an organization becomes delinquent in its obligations as a student organization, the University may withdraw the organization's recognition, issue it a warning, or place it on probation or suspension.
- f. Appeals to disciplinary action may be directed to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- g. In the event of a handbook violation, the following disciplinary actions may occur:
 - i. **Warning:** A notice to the Chapter Advisor(s) and officers of a student organization that they will be placed on probationary status if specified obligations are not met within a designated period of time.
 - ii. **Probation:** Loss of any or all privileges for the student organization. Probation will be for a specified duration, determined after the status is reviewed.
 - iii. **Suspension:** Suspension shall involve the permanent, complete withdrawal of all privileges and rights of the student organization. In order to regain recognition as a student organization, the group must register as a newly-forming group, no sooner than one year after suspension.

Procedures for Reactivating an Inactive Chapter

- a. To reactivate an inactive chapter of a student organization, a [Reactivation Application](#) must be completed.

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- b. Upon confirmation of receipt by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, the group will be given three months (90 days) to complete the reactivation process:
 - i. Secure two (2) chapter advisors, including the completion of the [Chapter Advisor Agreement Form](#) and the [Supervisor Acknowledgement Form](#)
 - ii. Identify two (2) chapter officers, to include the President and one additional officer
 - iii. Review and update the current constitution
 - iv. Complete an annual plan covering a 12 month period
 - v. Collect interest, to include five (5) individuals who were not previously members
 - vi. Submit a letter of intent to reactivate, to include why the organization should be reinstated and goals for the introductory three-month period (90 days)
- c. Upon submission to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, copies of the completed Reactivation Packet will be distributed to the Student Affairs Board for review and approval/denial.
- d. Once a chapter is reactivated, the group will be on probationary status and must meet all active requirements by the next Chapter Standards Program bi-annual review, occurring on June 1 and November 1.
- e. Reactivated chapters must hold an election within three months (90 days) of university approval to maintain university recognition.
- f. Professional organizations or honor societies may not submit documents for national or international recognition until receiving approval to reactivate from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

Membership

- a. Full membership in student organizations is limited to those who are officially connected to the University. This affiliation must be that of a full or part-time student, alumni, faculty, or staff member.
- b. Honorary membership can be bestowed on any person desiring such membership. Criterion for honorary membership is set by each individual student organization, with membership requirements outlined in the chapter constitution. Honorary members cannot outnumber voting members.
- c. When a student organization has selective membership (e.g. honor and recognition societies, career and professional/pre-professional groups), the selection of members must be made regardless of any national practices to the contrary, without reference to age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or any other characteristics protected by applicable federal, state or local law.
- d. Membership criteria included in the constitutions of student organizations must align with the policies and procedures stated in the Student Organization Handbook, and abide by the criteria established in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#).
- e. The University, reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to revoke or preclude membership in student organizations, due to: unprofessional behavior, failure to adhere to this or any other applicable handbook, other disciplinary actions taken by the University (e.g., plagiarism, dismissal, conduct issues and/or sanctions on file), a student's voluntary disenrollment, academic status changes, placement of a program hold, and as otherwise may be deemed appropriate by the University.
- f. Student organizations may coordinate up to two new membership drives on an annual basis, which membership drives shall be coordinated with and finally approved by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs and conducted by the University. If prospective members

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cannot be identified, chapters may use proactive advertisements and chapter promotions to gain new members. Membership drive criterion will be identified in the chartering process.

- g. Student organizations must abide by the University's privacy policy, terms of use and all other applicable policies and procedures. Student organizations may only have access to member information that is considered "directory information" and only so long as a member does not have a directory information block (DIB) on file. If a DIB is on file, then a FERPA release may be required. Student organizations may only contact official members, and they are prohibited from soliciting or sending communications on behalf of the organization to non-members. Any communication sent to non- or prospective members must be approved and sent from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

Officer Eligibility

- a. In order to be eligible to hold office in a student organization: students must be matriculated, must not be on academic probation, and be in good standing with the University; and alumni must have successfully been awarded a degree from the University.
- b. Students may not be appointed as the highest ranking officer in more than one student organization.
- c. Officers who miss three (3) consecutive officer/chapter meetings or do not actively participate in chapter activities or dialogue will be removed from their officer position. A leave of absence is permitted when requested and approved by the chapter's leadership board.
- d. Student organizations may establish and apply eligibility criteria for appointed leaders/officers, with the approval of the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, and as outlined in the student organization's constitution on file with the University.
- e. Student organizations should maintain an active officer board, including a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Webmaster. Additional officer positions may be established to fit the needs of the student organization, with prior notification and approval of the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- f. Officer titles, roles, and responsibilities must not conflict with official university programs or services. Chapters in violation will be asked to modify their officer roles if they cause confusion.
- g. The University, reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to revoke or preclude membership in student organizations, due to: unprofessional behavior, failure to adhere to this handbook, other disciplinary actions taken by the University (e.g., plagiarism, dismissal, conduct issues and/or sanctions on file), a student's voluntary disenrollment, academic status changes, placement of a program hold, and as otherwise may be deemed appropriate by the University.

Removal of Chapter Officers

The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs reserves the right to remove an officer from his or her role with a student organization should circumstances require such action.

- a. Grounds for removal of an officer include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Inappropriate behavior and/or language;
 - ii. Behavior that violates University policy and/or procedure;
 - iii. Direct knowledge of or participation in hazing incidents and/or failure to report such incidents;

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

- iv. Direct knowledge of, advocacy for, and/or participation in illegal activities and/or behavior; or
- v. Behavior resulting in unreasonable and/or unnecessary risk for students.
- vi. Missing three (3) or more consecutive officer/chapter meetings, or not actively participating in chapter activities and dialogue.

Campus Leadership Registration

- a. Campus leaders are students, alumni, faculty, and staff who go above-and-beyond to engage the university community, demonstrating leadership and service to the University.
- b. Student organization officers are required to [register as a campus leader](#) and complete the campus leadership training.

Chapter Advisors

- a. All student organizations are required to have at least two Chapter Advisors at all times. Chapter Advisor(s) must complete the [Chapter Advisor Agreement Form](#) online and, upon completion of the form, the faculty/staff member must obtain a [Supervisor Acknowledgment Form](#). To receive approval, the form must be signed by an employee's immediate supervisor and approved by the Department of Human Resources.
- b. In the case of a Chapter Advisor change, a new [Chapter Advisor Agreement Form](#) reflecting the change must be submitted within two weeks of the change.
- c. Student organizations may have specific staff or faculty assigned to work with them as part of a university initiative, professional development or experiential learning opportunity. Staff and faculty must complete and submit the [Chapter Advisor Agreement Form](#).
- d. Chapter Advisors who miss three (3) consecutive officer/chapter meetings or do not actively participate in chapter activities or dialogue will be removed from their Chapter Advisor position. A leave of absence is permitted when requested and approved by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, in coordination with the chapter's leadership board.
- e. Chapter Advisor(s) have the following responsibilities to a student organization:
 - i. Assist in the development of the student organization's establishment paperwork;
 - ii. If applicable, assist the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs in chartering with the national or international affiliate;
 - iii. Develop and secure chapter leadership;
 - iv. Be knowledgeable of the purpose and expectations of the student organization;
 - v. Ensure the officers and members of the student organization are informed of and follow university policies, procedures, rules and regulations;
 - vi. Ensure requests for university services or appeals of administrative decisions are processed through the Chapter Advisor;
 - vii. Ensure officers of the student organization are selected according to the procedures stated in their constitution;
 - viii. Support the transition of chapter leadership between terms, and assist in the onboarding of new leaders;
 - ix. Approve the scheduling of, and attend, all meetings of the student organization;
 - x. Supervise all activities, programs, and events sponsored by the student organization;
 - xi. Abide by the University's expectations for student organizations as outlined in the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#);
 - xii. If applicable, ensure annual national/international renewal paperwork is submitted;

American Public University System

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- xiii. Inform the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs immediately when the student organization becomes inactive, or if a chapter advisor is no longer able to serve in their post.
- f. The student organization has the following responsibilities to its chapter advisor:
 - i. Communicate with the chapter advisor on a regular basis to keep the chapter advisor informed on the progress of the student organization;
 - ii. Inform the chapter advisor well in advance of the schedule (date, time, and location) of all meetings, activities, programs and events sponsored by the student organization;
 - iii. Give the chapter advisor an opportunity to express an opinion on issues that affect the welfare of the student organization and the interest of the University.

Removal of Chapter Advisors

The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs reserves the right to remove an advisor from his or her role with a student organization should circumstances require such action.

- a. Grounds for removal of an advisor include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Inappropriate behavior and/or language;
 - ii. Behavior that violates University policy and/or procedure;
 - iii. Direct knowledge of hazing incidents and/or failure to report such incidents;
 - iv. Direct knowledge of, advocacy for, and/or participation in illegal activities and/or behavior; or
 - v. Behavior resulting in unreasonable and/or unnecessary risk for students.
- b. Student organizations may have the right to remove an advisor from his or her role with the group. Should a student organization believe it is in the best interest of the organization to remove an advisor, the following steps should be taken:
 - i. Student organization leadership meets with the advisor to address and explain any concerns regarding the advisor's role in the organization.
 - ii. Student organization leadership and advisor agree on a specified period of time for the concerns to be properly addressed.
 - iii. If concerns are not addressed adequately, then the group must submit a request to remove the advisor to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. Formal requests must include reasons and justifications for the removal.
 - iv. Only after approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs may an organization inform an advisor that he or she has been removed from his or her responsibilities and/or affiliation with the organization.

Web Conferencing and Virtual Meetings

- a. The University's official web conferencing program is Zoom. Chapter Advisors may be issued a Zoom account to use for student organization general membership and leadership meetings.
- b. When conducting virtual meetings for student organizations, chapter advisors and officers must include the following disclaimer: "By entering the Zoom room your name will be visible to panelists, and if you choose to participate in the chat box, your name will be visible to all participants."
- c. The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs will from time to time hold meetings for student organizations and their membership and will record the meeting.

American Public University System

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Financial Affairs of Student Organizations

Collection of Fees by Student Organizations

- a. Membership fees, payable upon admission into the student organization, must be collected using the University's official PayPal account or paid directly to the national or international organization.
- b. Student organizations who use the University's PayPal account to collect dues will incur a five (5) dollar PayPal fee per student per transaction. This fee covers the charges that are accrued per transaction within PayPal.
- c. Student organizations must receive approval, in writing, from the Student Affairs Board to collect any fees or donations.
- d. Student organizations must receive approval, in writing, from the Student Affairs Board prior to charging additional membership fees beyond the national or international membership fee. Student organizations must outline how the additional funds will be utilized and, should the request be approved, future student organization members must be informed of the collection of the fees and their purpose, beforehand.

Use of University Bank Accounts

- a. Except as otherwise expressly authorized in this handbook, Chapter advisors, officers, and members are prohibited from using a private or other non-APUS affiliated bank account to manage student organization funds. All funds raised, collected, or issued, **must** be maintained within a secured bank account managed by the APUS Finance Department and the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- b. All student organizations that require the use of a APUS bank account must ensure requests for funds are handled appropriately by following the below guidelines:
 - i. Requests for utilizing funds are submitted by the Chapter Advisor to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. Student organizations are not authorized to promise payment or sign agreements of service until approval of the relevant request has been received.
 - ii. If approved, check requests and invoices from vendors must be submitted to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs 45 days prior to the date of payment. Checks will be issued directly to the vendor.
 - iii. Vendors must complete a W-9 form before a payment can be issued.
 - iv. Student organizations are prohibited from using funds for alcohol, illegal paraphernalia, or personal items.

Finances

- a. All student organizations must anticipate, provide for, and promptly meet their financial obligations, or be subject to sanctions by their governing body.
- b. Any student organization wishing to conduct sales, solicit funds, or charge admission to an event must have the approval of the Chapter Advisor and Office of Student Affairs.
- c. In some cases, student organizations with a national or international affiliate may require a separate bank account. These bank accounts will be established to meet the specifications of the national or international offices, and funds will continue to be managed by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

Distribution of University Funds to Student Organizations

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- a. Student organizations are provided university funding based on their respective [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) standings from the previous calendar year.
- b. Student organizations are guaranteed the following annual fund allocations during the January-December calendar year. Funds not requested by December 1, will be forfeited:
 - Platinum - \$1,250
 - Gold - \$1,000
 - Silver - \$700
 - Bronze - \$300
 - Active - \$100
 - Probation and Inactive - \$0
- c. Student organizations may request additional funding by submitting the [Additional Funding Request form](#). Requests for additional funding will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Use of University Funds by Student Organizations

- a. Student organization funding will be recommended by the University President and determined by the Board of Directors during the annual budget meeting, based on the [Student Organization Chapter Standards Program](#) standing. All requested funds must be submitted to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs two weeks prior to the expense, using the [Budget Dispersal Request form](#).
- b. The authority for allocation of annual funds is delegated by APUS.
- c. APUS does not charge student organizations an activity fee to be recognized.
- d. Funds can be requested for meetings, events, conferences or items related to the mission of the individual student organization.
- e. Student Organizations will be notified by December 1st of their chapter standing and their budget allocation for the upcoming year.
- f. Approved funds will be managed and applied by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. Funds that were estimated and approved over the actual cost will revert to the University and not be available or paid to the student organization.
- g. Student organizations may request travel funds up to \$500. Travel funds are subject to approval through the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. If approved:
 - i. Travel funds will be reimbursed to the payee, and will only cover the cost of flight and/or mileage, whichever is less.
 - ii. Additional expenses, including food, taxi, shuttle, rental cars, and entertainment will not be expensed or reimbursed.
 - iii. To receive the reimbursement, the payee must request and receive written approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs prior to making a payment and, following receipt of such approval and payment of the expense, submit:
 1. Proper receipts
 2. W-9 form
 3. Non-employee expense form to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs within five days of purchase.
 - iv. Reimbursement checks may take up to eight weeks to be issued and sent to payee.
- h. Chapters that require national or international organization affiliation dues or the administrative support of the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs for general shipping/printing needs, must budget for these expenses using their annual chapter funding. Chapters that do not meet active standing and require a national or international

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fee or required expense must request additional funding through the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

Funds Raised by Student Organizations

- a. APUS welcomes the idea of adding new programs and services; yet also acknowledges that there may be instances when it is not practical, desirable, or efficient to provide certain programs or services.
- b. Funds raised by a student organization shall only be used for the ongoing support of that student organization and its membership, or in support of a non-profit/charitable organization.
- c. Student organizations may advertise for fundraising conducted through a non-profit/charitable organization website.
- d. Approval to raise funds is required from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- e. Funds raised must be held in the student organization's APUS bank account. Use of funds must be requested from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- f. Student organization activities, fundraisers, events, or basic chapter operations may not be conducted, and any funds resulting therefrom may not be used, in a manner that financially or commercially benefits (whether directly or indirectly) a leader or member of the organization.
- g. Student organization fundraising will not be approved if it is determined to be in conflict with an on-going business operation of APUS.
- h. Chain letters, lectures, concerts, demonstrations, displays, or exhibits, may not be used in any manner promoting commercial companies, products, services, and raffles. Lotteries, games of chance, or use of premiums, are not permitted.

Publications and Other Communication Data

- a. Student and alumni publications, printed or virtual communications, bearing the name of APUS/APU/AMU, must bear the name of the student organization and the following disclaimer: The contents of this publication are that of the author and do not reflect the views of or are otherwise endorsed by American Public University System.
- b. Publications of student organizations may not be sold or distributed outside of the student organization, without approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. Student organizations who publish, sell, or distribute printed or otherwise reproduced materials, shall be responsible for those materials in the areas of libel, invasion of privacy, infringement of copyright or other intellectual property rights, obscenity regulation, and other applicable laws to civil authorities and third parties. The standards of APUS shall conform to the principles of civil law.
- c. Chapter Advisors are required to review any organizational publication or communication prior to distribution. Any publication or communication distributed outside of the organization requires approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- d. Any writer and/or contributor to organizational publications must have a current release form on file with the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

Emailing the Membership

- a. There may be times where the chapter officers will need to contact the membership by email. It is important to respect the privacy of the membership when sending these

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emails. Mail services such as MailChimp can assist you with ensuring your member's email privacy, but if you choose not to use a mail service you must remember to Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) your membership when sending email.

- b. Organizations with membership over 500 members may request the support of the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs for mass emails using the [Mass Communication Request Form](#). Requests must be received at least three (3) business days in advance.
- c. Should a member request removal from the roster, forward the the written request to studentaffairs@apus.edu. The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs will update the roster and send the organization the updated document. Members may not be removed from the roster without a written request, unless determined by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

University Branded Items for Student Organizations

- a. A student organization must obtain written approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs before ordering a product or printing items using a university logo, the seal, or the mascots. The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs may approve or deny the request for university branded material.
- b. If applicable, and subject to the rules of the national or international affiliate, student organizations may use the logo of their respective national or international affiliate.
- c. University logos bearing the name of the organization will be created upon receiving University and national/international affiliate approval (if applicable); however, student organizations must obtain approval prior to the use of the university name on any materials.

Mascots

- a. University mascots are the American Military University Golden Eagle and the American Public University Volunteer. Each has visual elements that are registered marks of the University. As such, they follow the same guidelines for usage as logos and related sub-brands referenced above. The mascots are reserved for initiatives that promote social community building and increased engagement.

Use of APUS Web Resources

- a. Student organizations will be entitled to an informational web page that is located on the public web and internal communities. The web pages are available for student organizations to state information about the organization, which may include: the purpose, general information, membership eligibility, history, and leadership opportunities. All web updates will be submitted to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
- b. The student organization group pages within the University's internal virtual communities will provide a location to share secure information, updates, and resources with all members in a private online environment.
- c. Provisional chapters may request to post their potential chapter name and chapter e-mail address on the Student Activities Center, in the Pending Organizations section. This will

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

allow students, alumni, university faculty and staff to express interest and support for the potential chapter.

- d. Language around not sharing ones login credentials to these private webpages
- e. language that the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs may visit the webpages from time-to-time and remove any content that the Office in its sole discretion deems inappropriate.

Social Media Policy

Social Media Clause

APUS and the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs encourage the use of social media to enhance the student and alumni experience. Therefore, the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs maintains a consistent presence within social media pages, to ensure participants have a safe experience, consistent with the University's mission and values.

In some instances, student organization social media pages are classified as private groups due to the exclusivity of the organization. In these cases, Chapter Advisors are required to escalate and notify The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs of social media policy violations.

General Social Media Responsibilities of Organizations

- a. Add the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs as an administrator to all social media channels and accounts the organization employs
- b. Supply the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs with the username and passwords for all social media platforms that do not have administrator rights
- c. Abide by the school's social media policies as well as other conduct and behavior-related policies set forth in the Student, Faculty, and Staff Handbooks. Violations of these policies within student organizations may be referred to the appropriate department, which may include without limitation, the Student Conduct Officer, Faculty Human Resources, and Staff Human Resources.

Daily Social Media Responsibilities of Organizations

1. Monitoring wall postings; responding to or escalating items as needed
2. Post interesting and interactive links; boosting engagement
3. Manage requests to join virtual communities, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.
4. Respond to messages in a professional and timely manner
5. Invite new members (Facebook) add new connections(LinkedIn)

Social Media Escalations:

The University expects social media participants to self-moderate, respect one another, follow the Student, Faculty and Staff Handbooks, as applicable, and uphold the values and mission of the University. The purpose of the social media policy is to assist organization leaders with best practices for group moderation, and how to address issues as they arise.

If a social media post is in violation of any university policies, or is not in alignment with the University's values, chapter officers and/or advisors must take a screen shot of the offending post and send it to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs by email to studentaffairs@apus.edu. The Office of Student and Alumni Affairs will then conduct an investigation into the post. If possible, hide the post or limit the activity on it until the investigation has concluded. Do not remove the post without prior instruction or approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

Please be aware that if a social media post is found to be in violation of our university policies, or is not in alignment with the University's values, the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs may delete such posts, remove any responsible users from further participation, and take other disciplinary action. Please note however, that the University may exercise this right at any time for any reason.

Organization members who commit a university social media policy violation will be formally addressed by The Office of Student & Alumni Affairs, either through a formal warning, removal from student organization social media pages and/or referral to the Student Conduct Officer.

For more information on the University's social media usage and policy, please refer to <http://www.apus.edu/social-policy/index.htm> or contact socialmedia@apus.edu.

Process for Escalating Social Media Posts

1. Officers and members of an organization shall escalate questionable posts and the person who posted to the Chapter Advisor immediately. The Chapter Advisor shall take a screen shot of the offending post and send it to the Office of Student & Alumni affairs by email to studentaffairs@apus.edu. If possible, hide the post or limit the activity on it until the investigation has concluded. Do not remove the post without prior instruction or approval from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.
2. The Office of Student and Alumni Affairs will then conduct an investigation into the post. If the post violate the APUS social media policy the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs shall take disciplinary action that may result in removal from the organization. The severity of the violation will determine the severity of the sanction, or whether a warning will be issued. Students may also be referred for discipline consistent with policies found in the Student Handbook.
3. Subsequent documented offenses violating the APUS social media policy will result in disciplinary action.

Use of APUS and Other Facilities

Although the request to use APUS facilities in Charles Town, WV may be rare due to the online nature of the University, student organizations have the right to apply for use. APUS may require a student, alumni, staff or faculty identification for admission into an APUS facility. In all instances, APUS reserves the right in its sole discretion to grant or deny a reservation request received from a student organization.

Reserving APUS Facilities

- a. Designated APUS facilities may be reserved for meetings and other noncommercial events by:
 - i. Student organizations for events related to the purpose of the organization;

Conditions for Use of APUS and Other Facilities

The University permits the use of its facilities if the following conditions are met:

- a. Assurance that all APUS regulations, local, state, and federal laws concerning fire and safety regulations, necessary security, and conduct can and will be followed;
- b. Assurance that any financial obligations arising from the activity can and will be satisfied by the sponsor;
- c. Certificate of insurance listing American Public University System and American Public Education, Inc. as an additional insured party;

American Public University System

American Military University | American Public University

- d. Approval of the American Public Education, Inc. CEO or CFO is received;
- e. Precautions to assure the physical safety and health of the participants;
- f. Coordination of scheduling, breaking down the timing of each event to prevent conflict with previously scheduled activities;
- g. No person or group other than the reserving sponsor may use the reserved space;
- h. Prior to hosting an organized event or meeting, the student organization must complete a request to hold the event which includes the event purpose, agenda, and a copy of the proposed vendor contracts for the event;
- i. Student organizations may not serve alcoholic beverages at any organization function without written permission from the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. The request to serve alcoholic beverages must be received with the request to host an event;
- j. The student organization is responsible for any damages to the facility used, including any financial loss to the event location or the student organization;
- k. Exceptions to this policy can be made by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs.

Charges for the Use of APUS Facilities

- a. For events where admission is free or no donation is solicited, APUS may charge to assure adequate protection of the facilities, based on the cost to the University, for the following:
 - i. Special arrangements needed by the user,
 - ii. Identifiable increments to APUS's operating or overhead expense imposed by the use of the facility,
 - iii. Events after building closing hours, or on weekends, to assure adequate protection of facilities.
- b. For events where admission is charged or donations are solicited, APUS may charge rental fees for its facilities.

Responsibilities for Student Organizations Using APUS Facilities

- a. A student organization, its officers, and any individual applying to reserve facilities on behalf of the organization are responsible for:
 - i. Damages to the facilities used, including any financial loss to APUS or a student organization because of a temporary closing of facilities.
 - ii. Ensuring that the facilities are used for the intended and approved purpose.
 - iii. Any violations of APUS regulations and/or state, local, and federal laws that occur in connection with their use of the facilities.
 - iv. Not permitting the reserved facility to be used by other groups or individuals.

Changes to the Handbook and Appeals

APUS reserves the right to make changes and additions to the information in this publication without notice. Major policy and procedural changes that may impact student organizations will be made available to the Chapter President and Chapter Advisor **10** days prior to the change by the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs. Questions, suggestions, corrections, or additions with regard to the information in this handbook should be sent to the Office of Student & Alumni Affairs at studentaffairs@apus.edu.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Policy

APUS student organizations, their advisors, officers and members are subject to the [harassment, discrimination and retaliation policy](#).

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Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination

The University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities, and it is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") not to discriminate in such a manner. Questions regarding Title IX may be referred to the APUS Title IX Coordinator, or the Office for Civil Rights at the United States Department of Education. The University's Title IX Coordinator Caroline Simpson may be contacted by email at: TitleIX@apus.edu, by phone at: 703-396-6428, and by mail at: American Public University System, Inc. Attn: Caroline Simpson 111 W. Congress Street, Charles Town, WV 25414. For more information please see the University's Title IX Compliance Policy and Title IX Grievance Procedures available [here](#).