

TRINITY UNIVERSITY

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Student Organization Handbook

Introduction

Student Engagement & Development Mission Statement

The Office of Student Engagement and Development contributes to a flourishing campus life by fostering meaningful student engagement and providing opportunities for growth, belonging, and connection through experiences that challenge, support, and empower all Trinity University students.

Purpose of Student Organizations

The purpose of student organizations at Trinity University is to support the institution's academic mission by providing opportunities for students' personal development and achievement. Student organization involvement also provides opportunities for individuals to gain a sense of belonging at Trinity through their interaction and engagement on campus and within the city of San Antonio.

Student organization members are expected to act ethically and responsibly, in furtherance of University values, both on and off campus. Organizations must comply with all local, state, or federal laws as well as the policies outlined in the Student Organization Handbook and the Student Handbook. Student organizations cannot commit or promote acts of violence, engage in activities that endanger the health and safety of themselves or others, jeopardize the University's tax-exempt status, or otherwise disrupt the orderly functioning of the University.

Institutional Mission and Sponsorship of Student Organizations

The President of the University and the Board of Trustees have the authority and responsibility for defining the institutional purposes and mission. The University also has the responsibility to determine which student organizations align with its official mission and purposes, and the type and scope of support it will provide to these organizations. Student organizations do not represent the official voice of the University.

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) are recognized by the University for the purpose of supporting student engagement and participation in campus life and are not authorized to establish, maintain, or operate a separate organization holding tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The University's tax-exempt status does not extend to an RSO or to any separately incorporated or organized entity associated with its members. Under federal and Texas tax law, tax-exempt status belongs to the specific legal entity to which the exemption has been granted, and a separate organization must independently establish and maintain its eligibility for applicable federal and state tax exemptions. Organizations wishing to

operate as independent nonprofit entities must do so separately from their recognition and privileges as a University Registered Student Organization.

Please refer to the [Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) for more information related to the Institutional Mission and Student Organizations.

There must be no discrimination in membership based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy (including related conditions), parental status, marital status, family status, religion, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or citizenship status (collectively, "Protected Status"). See the University's [Trinity University Non-Discrimination Policy](#). Most student organizations may not restrict membership based on sex. However, Title IX provides a limited exception for certain student organizations: "Title IX does not apply to the membership practices of a social fraternity or social sorority. [...] Professional fraternities and sororities and service and honor societies are subject to the requirements of Title IX and may not exclude members on the basis of sex" ([Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights](#)). Professional fraternities and sororities, as well as service and honor societies, however, remain subject to Title IX and may not exclude members on the basis of sex.

In addition, due to their self-governing nature, registered student organizations have full autonomy to create specific expectations and qualifications for their executive board positions that may differ from membership qualifications. Student organizations have the ability to self-govern, including but not limited to:

- setting officer expectations/eligibility requirements/duties;
- setting officer term limits;
- developing and implementing an internal adjudication process for membership review and/or officer removal.

Religious, political, and special-interest student organizations facilitate learning about beliefs, viewpoints, and culture. The expression, discussion, and debate created by these student organizations must comply with University policies and cannot disrupt the orderly functioning of the University or threaten the safety and security of Trinity community members.

Purpose of the Student Organization Handbook

This handbook serves as a guide for student leaders and members of recognized student organizations at Trinity University. Student organizations play a vital role in creating a vibrant campus community by providing opportunities for leadership development, community building, service, advocacy, professional growth, and student engagement. Whether you are planning events, managing organizational operations, navigating university processes, or preparing future leaders within your organization, this handbook is designed to help you succeed. The handbook is intended to provide a framework for organizational success while helping student leaders understand the privileges, responsibilities, and expectations associated with recognition at Trinity University.

The *Student Organization Handbook* is reviewed annually to ensure that its information remains accurate, relevant, and aligned with university policies and procedures. Because University processes and policies may be updated throughout the year, student organizations are encouraged to consult the resources and links provided within this handbook for the most current information. Questions not addressed in this handbook may be directed to Student Engagement & Development at getinvolved@trinity.edu or (210) 999-7547. The Student

Engagement & Development team is committed to supporting student leaders and helping organizations thrive as meaningful contributors to the Trinity community.

Student Organizations

Scope and Applicability

This handbook applies to all registered student organizations, their officers, members acting on behalf of the organization, and organizational activities conducted on or off campus that are recognized by the Student Engagement & Development (SED) Office. The policies, expectations, and procedures outlined in this handbook govern the recognition, operation, and accountability of these organizations. Recognition through Student Engagement & Development is a privilege granted by the University and is contingent upon compliance with the requirements outlined in this Handbook and applicable university policies.

Student organizations administered by other university departments or offices may be subject to additional requirements, policies, or procedures established by those areas. Club Sports and Departmentally Sponsored Organizations are required to follow all university policies, as well as federal, state, and local laws.

Types of Student Organizations

Trinity University supports students' right to freely associate in recognized groups by providing logistical, personnel, and facility resources, primarily through the Student Engagement & Development office.

Registered Student Organizations

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), including social fraternity and sorority organizations, are established by students for the benefit of those who join them. They do not share the University's tax-exempt status. Individual student groups may request support for student activity fees through the Student Government Association for one-time events and initiatives.

Departmentally Sponsored Organizations

Departmentally Sponsored Organizations exist because an academic or administrative department has determined that a student organization advances its educational mission, professional objectives, or departmental priorities.

These organizations:

- Support a specific department rather than the University as a whole.
- Provide discipline-specific, professional, academic, or co-curricular opportunities.
- Operate as an extension of a sponsoring department.
- Receive ongoing advising and operational oversight from that department.
- Depend upon the sponsoring department for continuity, leadership development, and institutional support, including funding, space reservations, and event logistics.
- May include honor societies, professional associations, ambassador organizations, advisory councils, or discipline-specific student organizations.

Criteria for Department Sponsorship

A student organization should only be designated as a Departmentally Sponsored Organization when **all** of the following criteria are met:

- **Mission Alignment-** The organization's mission directly supports the educational, professional, recruitment, outreach, service, or operational goals of the sponsoring department.
- **Departmental Ownership-** The department acknowledges responsibility for the organization's ongoing success and sustainability rather than simply providing a faculty advisor.
- **Operational Support** - The department agrees to provide appropriate operational guidance, including support for funding, purchasing, travel, risk management, institutional procedures, and organizational planning.
- **Leadership Continuity-** The department establishes processes to ensure leadership transitions occur successfully and that institutional knowledge is retained from year to year.
- **Compliance Oversight:** The department is responsible for ensuring the organization complies with University policies, procedures, and applicable federal, state, and local regulations.
- **Annual Review-** The department annually reviews the organization's effectiveness and confirms that continued departmental sponsorship remains appropriate.
- **Partnership with Student Engagement & Development** - The department agrees to complete required Student Engagement & Development training, participate in the annual recertification, and collaborate with SED by participating in organizational compliance, leadership development, and risk management education and programs.

Unlike USOs, DSOs are not institution-wide organizations. Their authority, purpose, and sustainability originate with the sponsoring department. They are also ineligible for funding from the Student Government Association.

University Sponsored Organizations

University Sponsored Organizations (USOs) at Trinity University are specifically charged by the University to advance goals aligned with the University's mission and values or with purposes set forth in the University's Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities. They provide programs, services, or leadership opportunities that benefit the broader student community.

These organizations:

- Advance strategic institutional priorities.
- Serve broad segments of the student population.
- Operate as university-wide leadership or governance bodies.
- Receive annual Student Government Association Activity Fee funding and receive tax-exempt status and legal protections based on their close relationship with the University.
- Are advised by full-time professional staff whose position responsibilities include the long-term success of the organization.
- Receive institutional support that ensures continuity regardless of student leadership turnover.
- Represent the University in carrying out institution-wide initiatives.

Privileges and Adjudication of Organizations

Student organizations are granted privileges (including organization promotion, social events, and facility-use privileges) by the University. As the University grants these privileges to groups, it may withdraw them for cause or when it is in the University's best interest. The University or its designee holds sole responsibility for investigation, adjudication, and determination of responsibility for violations of university policy. Investigation and adjudication are not a function of the Student Engagement & Development Office and are overseen by the Dean of Students Office.

Student Organization Good Standing Requirements

Student organizations recognized through Student Engagement & Development are expected to maintain Good Standing with the University. Good Standing indicates that an organization has met all recognition requirements, remains actively engaged with Student Engagement & Development, and complies with applicable university policies and procedures.

Organizations in Good Standing are eligible to access the privileges associated with university recognition, including event approval, use of university facilities, participation in organizational fairs and recruitment activities, eligibility for funding opportunities, and access to institutional resources.

To maintain Good Standing, organizations must:

1. Complete annual registration by established deadlines.
2. Maintain an up-to-date roster in the university's student organization management system, [Tiger Hub](#), powered by Sutable.
3. Maintain a current constitution that accurately reflects the organization's structure and operations.
4. Participate in required meetings with their Student Engagement & Development advisor.
5. Complete all required risk management training.
6. Complete all required financial training.
7. Comply with university policies, procedures, and directives applicable to student organizations.

Organizations that fail to meet one or more Good Standing requirements may be subject to corrective action, temporary restrictions, probationary status, suspension, loss of specific privileges, or revocation of university recognition. Student Engagement & Development reserves the right to review an organization's status and determine whether it has met Good Standing requirements.

Student Organization Procedures

Student Organization Advising

Each recognized student organization is assigned a Student Engagement & Development (SED) staff advisor who serves as a resource, guide, and partner in the organization's success. Organizations are required to meet with their assigned advisor at least once each semester to discuss organizational goals, upcoming events, leadership transitions, challenges, and opportunities for growth. In addition to this required meeting, organization leaders are encouraged to connect with their advisor throughout the academic year using the University's scheduling platform. Organizations should plan to meet with their advisor at the beginning and end of the fall semester and prior to completing annual re-registration in the spring.

Regular engagement with an SED advisor helps organizations remain informed, access available resources, and maintain Good Standing with the University. Organizations that fail to meet required advising expectations may become ineligible for event approval, consideration for Student Government Association funding, and other organizational privileges. Continued failure to engage with an assigned advisor may result in a review of the organization's recognition status. You can schedule an appointment with your SED advisor [here](#).

Student Organization Registration Process

All student organizations are required to operate on an academic year calendar (June-May). Elections must be completed by the end of March. Starting in April of each academic year, student organizations wishing to remain active for the following academic year must complete the [annual registration process](#).

Student Organization Required Training

To help student organizations operate successfully and responsibly, designated organization leaders must complete organizational compliance training. These training opportunities provide essential information about university expectations, organizational responsibilities, and available resources. Completion of all required training is a condition of Good Standing and helps ensure organizations are prepared to effectively serve their members and the Trinity community. Each year, registered student organizations will be required to attend or complete training on topics related to:

- Risk Management
- Financial Operations
- Event Management

Training modalities will include in-person and online options.

Event Planning

Event Planning

Student organizations contribute significantly to campus life by creating opportunities for learning, leadership, service, advocacy, celebration, and community building. Whether hosting a meeting, educational program, social event, fundraiser, speaker, or campus tradition, organizations are expected to plan events that align with their mission and support Trinity University's values.

The event planning process is designed to help organizations create successful, safe, and inclusive experiences while ensuring compliance with university policies and procedures. Student Engagement & Development serves as a partner in this process by providing guidance, connecting organizations with campus resources, and assisting with risk management considerations. All student organization events that utilize university facilities, resources, or funding, or that represent Trinity University, must complete the appropriate event approval process.

Event Approval Expectations

Student organizations are responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals before hosting an event. Event approval enables the University to coordinate resources, address safety considerations, manage logistical needs, and support the event's overall success. Additional procedures and expectations regarding tabling activities can be found in the Student Organization Handbook Appendix.

Student Engagement & Development serves as the approving authority for student organization events and reserves the right to approve, deny, modify, postpone, or cancel events when necessary to ensure compliance with university policies, community standards, or safety expectations. Organizations may not advertise, promote, or publicly announce events until approval has been granted.

Event Review Process

Certain events may require additional review due to their size, complexity, location, or risk level. Student Engagement & Development may refer these events to the University's Event Review Committee or other appropriate university representatives. As part of the review process, organizations may be required to implement additional safety measures, modify event logistics, complete supplemental documentation, secure security personnel, or meet additional planning expectations before final approval is granted. The purpose of event review is not to restrict student organization programming, but to help organizations create successful and inclusive experiences where participants and guests can safely participate.

Tabling Activities

Tabling provides organizations with an opportunity to share information, recruit members, promote programs, and engage with the Trinity community. All tabling activities must receive approval through the event review process and comply with university policies and procedures.

Additional procedures and expectations regarding tabling activities can be found in the Student Organization Handbook Appendix.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Student organizations are expected to make reasonable efforts to create accessible and inclusive events for all participants. When planning events, organizations should consider factors such as physical accessibility, communication access, religious observances, and other barriers that may limit participation.

Organizations are encouraged to consult with [Student Accessibility Services](#) when planning events that may require accommodations or additional accessibility considerations. Whenever possible, organizations should avoid scheduling events that conflict with major religious observances and should remain mindful of the diverse identities and experiences represented within the Trinity community.

Organizational Responsibilities

Student organizations remain responsible for the conduct of their members, guests, vendors, performers, speakers, and external partners participating in organizational activities. External individuals, organizations, sponsors, or affiliates associated with an event must comply with applicable university policies and procedures. Failure to comply with event planning requirements, university policies, approval conditions, or stated deadlines may result in the denial, postponement, cancellation, or modification of an event and may impact an organization's Good Standing status.

Off-Campus Events and Activities

Off-campus events and activities that do not receive funding from University sources are considered independent of the University and are the responsibility of participating individuals and organizations. The University assumes no responsibility for injuries, damage, or liabilities arising from such activities. Student organizations are expected to take reasonable precautions to promote the safety and well-being of participants and should contact emergency personnel and notify appropriate University officials in the event of an emergency.

While these events and/or activities may occur independently of the University, events and Activities will not receive any university funding if they are held at Off-Campus Residences. Trinity University reserves the right to review and investigate off-campus conduct when it becomes aware of behavior that may violate Trinity University policies or impact the safety and well-being of the campus community. When events are funded by the University through SGA or another source, organizations are responsible for adhering to all applicable policies.

Student Organization Finances

Financial Responsibility

- Organizations are responsible for managing funds appropriately.
- Organizations are responsible for complying with university financial policies.
- Organizations must maintain accurate financial records.
- Misuse of organizational funds may result in organizational sanctions.
- Organizations utilizing university accounts must comply with university accounting procedures.

On-Campus Accounts

- Organizations may establish an on-campus account.
- Organizations are responsible for managing account activity.
- SGA funds remaining in the organization's account after approved events will be returned to the Student Activity Fund, per university policy.

Funding Sources

- Student Government Association funding
- Fundraising (must contact [Trinity Annual Giving](#))
- Membership dues
- Donations
- Sponsorships (if applicable)

Fundraising Expectations

Organizations must:

- Clearly communicate the purpose of fundraising efforts.
- Obtain required university approval through [Trinity Annual Giving](#).
- Comply with applicable university policies and state laws.
- Accurately account for all funds collected.
- See Student Organization Additional Finance Guidelines in the appendix for more information

Restricted Uses of Funds

Student organization funds may not be used for (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Political campaign activity
- Gift cards
- Personal expenses
- Legal or insurance expenses
- Scholarships, awards, or charitable donations unless specifically approved by the University
- Other restricted expenditures identified by University policy

Tax Exemption Status

- University-sponsored organizations operate under the University's tax-exempt status.
- Registered Student Organizations do not share the University's tax-exempt status.
 - Organizations using Student Government Association (SGA) funds should make purchases under tax-exempt status.

- Organizations are required to keep an accurate record of their operating budget, separating funds provided by SGA from any financial contributions received from non-university entities.

Ticket Sales, Gambling, Raffles

Organizations must obtain approval before:

- Charging admission
- Selling tickets
- Conducting giveaways
- Hosting gaming activities
- Lotteries and raffles are generally prohibited by Texas law.

Risk Management

Risk management is the process of forecasting and evaluating potential risks to minimize their impact. Risk Management Training is set by the Student Engagement & Development Office annually and is **required** for all student organizations ([Texas Education Code 51.9361 and House Bill 2639/Senate Bill 1138](#)). Organization Risk Management Training must be completed by at least two members of the organization (preferably officers) and pass the subsequent quizzes with a score of 80% or higher. The representatives who are on record as completing the trainings must share the risk management information with the organization's full membership at the beginning of each academic year.

Off-Campus Travel

Off-campus travel that does not receive funding or resources from University sources is considered to be independent of the University and solely the responsibility of participants. The University has no responsibility for off-campus travel, including any injury or damage that may occur during such travel.

Approved Bus Carriers

Trinity University departments and recognized organizations may need to use charter bus services for university-sponsored local, out-of-town, or extended multi-day trips. To meet this need, Trinity has approved a list of carriers with satisfactory ratings from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The list of approved carriers can be found in the Appendix under approved charter buses.

Events with Alcohol

Organizations sponsoring events with alcohol have a responsibility to care about the health and safety of their guests and to create an environment that is well-controlled and monitored. Any organization that fails to appropriately follow these guidelines and recommendations may be subject to the University's conduct process.

Contracts/Agreements

Organizations may not enter into any contract that identifies Trinity University or any office/department that is a part of Trinity University without review and approval in accordance with the Contract Policy. Before a student organization enters into a contract, the student organization is required to complete the Event Information Form and schedule a meeting with its SED advisor at least six weeks before the scheduled event. A license agreement is required for any third-party suppliers on campus.

Contract templates are available on the Risk Management Contract Policy and Procedures web page. All third-party contracts should be reviewed by SED in the event consultation process prior to submission to Risk Management.

In all circumstances, the Office of Risk Management is required to review all contracts, whether Trinity Template Agreements or third-party, and obtain approval and signature on behalf of the University/organization in accordance with the Contract Policy. Contracts that do not adhere to the required timelines identified in the policy may not be approved and signed before the start date, and the Approving Authority assumes the risk of non-compliance with the Contract Policy. Depending on the risk associated with an event, external parties/vendors will be required to provide a Certificate of Insurance with Trinity University listed as an additional insured for elevated-risk events. If an external party/vendor cannot provide a Certificate of Insurance, the student organization will need to purchase insurance on the external party's or behalf.

Films and Movies On-Campus

The federal Copyright Act of 1976 (17 USC), as amended, mandates that legally using copyrighted content, like movies, in public settings requires obtaining the appropriate license. However, neither renting nor purchasing a movie automatically grants the right to exhibit it outside one's home.

Therefore, if a student organization wants to show a movie in a public setting, it must obtain a license to do so. Violating copyright law by publicly screening a movie without authorization can result in lawsuits and, in some cases, even criminal charges, and can prevent those who worked hard on a film from receiving their just compensation. For more information on copyright law, visit the Swank Motion Pictures [copyright page](#).

APPENDIX

The appendices of this handbook are intended to provide student organization leaders with access to university policies, procedures, forms, guides, and resources that support the successful operation of recognized student organizations. While every effort is made to include resources most relevant to student organization management, the appendices are not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of all applicable university policies or resources.

Because university policies, procedures, forms, and resources may be updated throughout the academic year, the appendices may be modified at any time without formal revision of this handbook. Student organizations are responsible for consulting the most current versions of referenced materials and complying with all applicable university requirements.

University Policies & Procedures

- [Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Trinity University Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Commercial Enterprise Policy](#)
- [Solicitation and Promotion Policy](#)
- [Handling and Accounting for Cash Policy](#)
- [Facility Use Policy](#)
- [Contracts Policy & Procedures](#)
- [University Academic Calendar](#)
- [University Religious Observances Calendar](#)
- [Minors on Campus Policy](#)
- [Student Handbook](#)

Registered Student Organization Processes and Procedures

- [Student Organization Registration Process](#)
- [Student Organization Advisor Meeting Request](#)
- [Student Organization Event Planning Process](#)
- [Social Fraternity & Sorority Expansion Process](#)

Student Organization Resources

- [Risk Management Additional Guidelines](#)
- [T-Space Website](#)
- [T-Space Additional Guidelines](#)
- [Tabling Guidelines](#)
- [Authorized Driver Form](#)
- [Student-Participant Release Agreement](#)
- [Student Organization Travel Information Checklist](#)
- [Digital Signage Service Request](#)
- [Approved Charter Buses](#)

- [Trinity Dining Digital Marketing Request Form](#)