



Student Organizations Guidelines

On campus organizations are designed to help the student connect to existing groups and enhance the student's social experience. These organizations exist to create community and sense of belonging where the primary purpose is to build relationships and to have fellowship. Each organization operates as a bridge between our academic and social experience, whereas these groups supplement with networking and connecting student to the life of the seminary. All policies and procedures are subject to change depending upon the type of student organization.

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I. Establishing and Maintaining a Student Organization

A. Definition and Purpose of a Student Organization

At SWBTS, we believe students benefit from active participation in student organizations. **A student organization comprises a group of at least eight SWBTS students** who voluntarily gather for a common purpose. Students are encouraged to form organizations that:

- Advance the mission of SWBTS,
- Provide an environment that facilitates biblical community, while also fostering a desire to serve the community
- Contribute to the intellectual, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical development of students
- Support the Seminary's curricular and extra-curricular programs
- Enhance the overall quality of student life at SWBTS

B. Student Organization Recognition

The Student Life staff recognizes student organizations that evidence clear support of the Seminary's mission and educational aims. More specifically, Student Life recognizes student organizations that adhere to the following goals:

- Strive toward all goals within the context of a Southern Baptist Seminary
- Help students advance significantly in personal, social, and academic growth through a program of services to students
- Cultivate a true spirit of community in all areas of the Seminary
- Serve the campus and surrounding communities
- Set standards that encourage excellence in each member
- Instill in each member the approved purpose of the organization and fulfill that purpose
- Provide structured opportunities for self-governance and effective organization management
- Provide an atmosphere that supports and rewards academic achievement.

SWBTS will not recognize any group that engages in or promotes conduct and/or beliefs that contradict the standards and expectations set forth in the SWBTS Academic Catalogue. **To be recognized as an official student organization, there must be on record in the Office of Student Life a statement or charter of purpose, an updated record of responsible officers, membership lists, and an approved faculty/staff advisor.** Advising by an outside entity or individual is not permitted.

To receive active status, a student organization must submit an application to the Office of Student Life.

The application must include the following information:

- The name of the organization
- The purpose or objectives of the organization
- The name(s) of the advisor(s): advisors must be full-time employee(s) of SWBTS
- The names of the individuals constituting the initial membership of the organization: to be eligible for active status, **at least 8 full-time SWBTS students must indicate an interest in forming the organization.**
- An organization constitution: this must be submitted with the application
- A constitution is the framework of the organization and expresses the fundamentals of the organization's existence. It should include, among other items, a purpose statement, an indication of the number of officers, method for their selection, requirements for membership, fiscal agent (designated officer to handle finances), and general operating procedures.

C. Student Organization Privileges

Student Organizations in good standing with the Seminary receive official Seminary recognition and the following privileges to better serve their organizations and the community:

- Use of the Seminary's name in the identification of the organization and in the sponsorship of activities and events
- Ability to hold meetings and social activities on and off campus
- Use of approved campus facilities and services (e.g., meeting space, audio-visual equipment, maintenance services, etc.)
- Permission to recruit members from the campus community
- Ability to advertise and promote the organization and its activities, according to publicity guidelines
- Failure to receive Student Life approval may result in termination of organization.
- Permission to recruit approved off-campus speakers and guest performers

D. Student Organization Disciplinary Process

1. Loss of Status:

The recognized status of a student organization will be revoked if:

- The organization fails to register before the approved date of an academic year
- The organization violates Student Life policies and procedures
- The organization fails to have at least 8 active members during the academic year unless otherwise negotiated
- Failure to receive Student Life approval may result in termination of organization.

2. Philosophy of Student Discipline

The judicial process is based on the assumption that disciplinary procedures, when required, should be an educational process. Disciplinary sanctions are imposed to help students and organizations develop responsibility and encourage self-discipline. An institution of higher learning is authorized by law to establish and administer codes of conduct and to discipline organizations whose actions negatively impact the campus

community. The Seminary reserves this right. Student organization disciplinary proceedings are not analogous to criminal court proceedings. No particular model of procedural due process is required. However, the procedures should be structured in order to facilitate a reliable determination of the truth and to provide fundamental fairness.

Procedures can be very informal in cases where probation or deactivation is not a probable penalty; more procedural formality should be observed in serious disciplinary cases. In all situations, fundamental fairness requires that student organizations and their leaders be informed of the nature of the charges and be given a fair opportunity to respond to them.

3. Authority and Responsibility for Student Discipline

The Dean of Students is responsible for overall coordination of rules and regulations regarding student discipline for misconduct and serves as the final appeal for student disciplinary decisions. In such cases when organizations and their leaders violate the Code of Conduct, the Dean of Students is responsible for the disciplinary process.

4. Disciplinary Procedures

a. Informal Hearings

In some cases of organization or member misconduct, a formal hearing may not be necessary. This is most often true when the violation is of a less serious nature and the misconduct would not result in probation or deactivation. In such a case, the organization's leaders attend an informal hearing with the Dean of Students to discuss the incident, the group's involvement in it, and any steps that must be taken or sanction imposed to resolve the matter. Informal actions are not subject to appeal.

b. Formal Hearings

This will go directly to the office of the Dean of Students.

c. Sanctions for Student Organizations

Student groups and organizations may be charged with violations of the Seminary's Ethical Conduct Policy. A student group or organization and its officers/leaders may be held collectively and/or individually responsible when violations of this policy occur either during an event sponsored by the organization or by an individual representing or associated with that organization or group. The following sanctions may be imposed upon groups or organizations: warning, probation, fines, loss of privileges, restitution, deactivation, and other educational sanctions. Deactivation includes loss of all privileges, including Seminary recognition, for a specified period of time. In the event that a student organization violates the Ethical Conduct Policy or community standards contained in the Student Organizations Guidelines, the organization will be subject to disciplinary action.

d. Disciplinary Actions

1. Warning: Oral or written (via e-mail) notice to the organization that it is violating or has violated the Ethical Conduct Policy and that continuation or repetition of misconduct may result in a more severe sanction.

2. Restitution: Compensation for loss, damage or injury. Failure to pay such charges may result in additional sanctions.

3. Probation: A status indicating that the organization's relationship with SWBTS is tenuous. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the organization is found to be violating any

Seminary regulations. Note: Probation may include a loss of privileges (e.g., loss of social privileges) for a designated period of time.

4. Loss of Privileges: Such loss may include, but is not limited to, funding, eligibility to hold on or off-campus events, membership recruitment, advertising, use of Seminary facilities and services, etc.

5. Suspension: Short-term revocation of a student organization's status as an officially recognized and registered organization. Any organization that is placed on suspension will be given a trial period in which it must demonstrate a compelling reason for its organizational status to be reinstated by the Seminary. Failure to do so will result in the deactivation of an organization at the end of the suspension period. If an organization is placed on suspension, all rights and privileges of group to self-govern are removed, and any activity or action that is associated with the group including meetings and events, whether formal or informal, must be approved by Student Life in advance. Generally speaking, only supervised internal meetings will be allowed to formulate a comprehensive plan for restructuring the organization or addressing the issues that caused the organization to be placed on suspension.

6. Deactivation: Formal revocation of a student organization's status as an officially recognized and registered student organization. This will include loss of all rights and privileges, which pertain to recognized student organizations. A specified deactivation period may or may not be designated, depending upon the nature of the violation.

E. How to Form a Student Organization

1. Where to Register

Fill out the Student Organization Application in the Student Life webpage for approval.

2. Basic Requirements to Register

a. Secure a full-time faculty or staff advisor. The advisor you select may be replaced if deemed necessary by the Dean of Students, Director of Student Life, or the Student Life Coordinator.

b. Develop a constitution (submitted every three years) and a purpose statement which defines the structure of the organization and embodies the mission of SWBTS. Assistance with this can be provided by the Student Life Coordinator.

c. Submit the completed application with supporting documentation forms to the Student Life office via your application or by email should additional information be needed.

Note: Student Life reviews all applications for recognition of student organizations. Simply following the procedural steps set forth in the Student Organizations Guidelines does not guarantee approval. Generally, a response to a submitted application will be given within a month, and will be sent to the student(s) and faculty member submitting the application.

3. Additional Requirements

- a. Register only SWBTS and the Scarborough College students or their spouses. Please note all officers must be full time students unless previously approved by the office of Student Life.
- b. Alumni of SWBTS or the Scarborough College may be honorary members, but cannot hold offices in the organization.
- c. Re-Register at the beginning of each academic year with updated changes to leadership and roster. Any changes to the roster (e.g., officer changes, etc.) must be reported to the Student Life Office, as they arise.
- d. Obtain approval of all events, activities, and promotion from the Student Life Coordinator a minimum of 6 weeks in advance.
- e. Maintain at least eight active members after one semester of operation.
- f. Have at least one representative from your organization attend all of our semester informational meetings.

F. Annual Maintenance Procedures for Student Organizations

Organizations must annually register their organizations with the Student Life office.

1. Fill out the application form and turn it in to the Student life Coordinator in person or via email.
2. Registration packets should include the following forms, which must be returned to the Student Organizations Coordinator:
 - a. SWBTS Student Organization Application
 - b. Purpose Statement
 - c. Officer Contact Information
 - d. Membership Roster
 - e. Calendar of Events
 - f. Proposed Budget

G. Additional Information for All Student Organizations

1. Only SWBTS recognized organizations are authorized to use meeting space, SWBTS equipment, supplies, funds from Student Life, and any form of campus-wide publicity and distribution.
2. The Office of Student Life must approve all organizational events, activities, and publicity. All event request require a minimum of 6 week notice for processing.
3. Organizations *must* submit a Calendar of Events (list format) at the semester meeting that will be held on or before the first week of class. The calendar should include the following details for each event and routine meeting: date, location, time, contact phone, and event description, and an indication of whether or not the activity/meeting is open to non-members. This information will be used to update the Student Life and campus wide calendars.
 - a. Naming a Student Organization
When choosing a name for a new organization, care should be taken to ensure the name clearly reflects the purpose and mission of the group, and distinctly identifies it from other organizations (including a differentiation in any acronyms that will identify the group). Student Life reserves the right to deny any organization a chosen name at its discretion.
 - b. Notification of Change or Termination (Loss of Status)
The organization's president is responsible for notifying Student Life if there is a change in student leadership. If a student organization wishes to terminate its recognition, a letter stating this must be sent to Student Life immediately. The club president and the faculty advisor of the organization must sign the letter. **NOTE:** An organization that ceases to support the Seminary's mission and policies may lose its recognition status and the accompanying privilege.
 - c. Student Organization Officers
 1. All officers of SWBTS student organizations must be full-time students.
 2. Officers that are placed on academic or disciplinary probation may be subject to removal from office, and will be notified in writing.
 3. The name, address, student ID number, phone number, and e-mail address of all organization officers must be on file in Student Life. Any change of officers should be submitted to the same office within 5 business days of the change.
 4. Student organization officers are responsible for the programs of their organizations, and must ensure that all activities are conducted in accordance with the SWBTS Academic Catalogue and are consistent with Seminary policy governing student organizations.
 5. Student Organization Advisor: Each registered student organization is required to identify a full-time faculty or staff member from SWBTS to serve as an advisor. The advisor should be available to assist the officers with problem solving; advise in the planning of social or fund-raising activities, offer appropriate guidance to the officers, and, in general, serve as a mentor and consultant to the organization's members. Advisors help serve as liaisons between student organizations and the

Seminary and are responsible for helping the organization adhere to Seminary policies and procedures.

C. Campus Services, General Policies, and Procedures

A. Financial Policies and Procedures

1. Financial Policies: For time and convenience, it is best if you can coordinate any necessary purchase with the Student Life Coordinator a minimum of 4 weeks prior to your event. If this procedure is followed we will gladly handle all purchasing for you. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY. NO REIMBURSEMENTS WILL BE GIVEN.** The Student Life office can choose to not purchase and leave that responsibility to the organization due to budgeting requirements. Financial Request for Organizations are first come, first serve.

B. Event Policies and Procedures

1. Event Approval

a. Any event that a student organization would like to put on must be approved by the Student Life Coordinator or Director of Student Life. You must fill out an Event Request Form and have it turned, by email or in person, by the required deadline (see below) or your event will not be approved. No student organization may plan an off-campus formal, weekend retreat, event, etc., without getting its location approved by Student Life. Student Life reserves the right to deny a requested event at its discretion and explanation for denial is not required. In general, submissions for event approval should be submitted to the Student Life Coordinator.

2. Event Requirements

a. Concerts and Major Events: Must be preapproved before contact is made for personalities. An effort should be made to schedule a meeting with the Student Life Coordinator about the event. The Student Life Coordinator could also be invited to your organizations planning meeting instead of holding a separate meeting. This is left to your discretion.

b. Film and Movie Guidelines: Films must be approved by Student Life Coordinator, and Copyright laws must be upheld.

c. Guest Speakers:

Initial planning for any special program using professional speakers or entertainers should begin no later than three months prior to the date of the proposed program. A recognized student organization wishing to bring off-campus professional entertainment and/or a speaker must obtain approval of the speaker and event from Student Life Coordinator before steps are taken to secure the entertainer or speaker.

C. Services for Student Organizations (These guidelines await updates for the 2020-2021 academic year)

1. Food Services

Catering services are available through SWBTS dining services. Arrangements for catering services should be specified on Event Request Form. All food service requests require a minimum of 4 weeks' notice.

2. Event Set-Up

Student Life will work with the Riley Center to handle event set-up, but you must specify how you want the room set-up on the Event Request Form. The student organization is responsible for cleaning up after small scale events, specifically, events held in class rooms. Your media service needs will be met, if specified on the Event Request Form.

3. Advertising

Student Life Bulletin boards may be used to advertise approved on-campus events, meetings, or other Seminary related activities. To obtain approval of flyers or posters, bring an original copy of the advertisement to the Student Life office. You may then make copies, and post them in the appropriately designated places. Posters, flyers, or any other form of advertising are not permitted on walls, windows, doors, stairs, railings, trees, vehicles, or light posts. Also, no materials may be placed on bulletin boards designated for Seminary departments, unless permission has been obtained from that department.

Personal advertisements (e.g., car for sale, room for rent, etc.) can only be posted on the bulletin board located in the RAC, and must be approved by the Student Life Coordinator. Do not advertise on classroom dry erase boards.

4. Copy Machine

The Student Life office will make up to 100 copies for a particular event. If more copies are required you may use the Southwestern Copy Center.

FAQ's

1. How long do I need to submit an event to the Student Life Office?
 - At least 6 weeks in advance. Any event submitted before that timeline will not be considered.

2. How does purchasing items for my student organization's event go?
 - ALL PURCHASES must come through the SWBTS Purchasing Office. When you submit your event request please list all items in detail (where to purchase, what item, how many, when you need it by, etc.).

3. Can I purchase items with my own personal money and be reimbursed later?
 - No. All items must be purchased through SWBTS purchasing office. You will **NOT** be reimbursed if you use your own money.

4. Where do I submit events for my student organization?
 - www.swbts.edu/studentlife. The president of the student organization is the only one who should submit events on behalf of the student organization.

5. Can my student organization receive more money?
 - Occasionally organizations receive outside monetary donations, If you do you must email the Student Life Office and inform them of the amount of the donation. As well as directing the donor to the Office of Institutional Advancement to handle the donation. Confirmation from Institutional Advancement of donation receipt must be given before funds will be approved.

6. If we have leftover funds from the fall semester can they roll over to the spring semester?
 - Yes, but funds from the spring semester cannot be rolled over onto the upcoming fall semester. You also have to email the Student Life Coordinator, Ben Sutton, and request for funds to be carried over.