



**Joseph F. Rice  
School of Law**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

# **Student Organization Handbook**

Welcome to the University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law (“law school”) Student Organization Handbook (“Handbook”). In addition to educating students who are ready and able to practice law, the law school has another goal of developing lawyer-leaders who can use their educational and extracurricular experiences to help their communities as well as prepare them for a fulfilling legal career.

Student organizations are a vibrant and vital part of the student life experience at the University of South Carolina School of Law. The law school is home to over 30 student organizations representing a broad range of interests and purposes. Participation in extracurriculars supports leadership skills, and potential networking opportunities as well as multiple opportunities to give back to both the legal and local communities in a variety of ways.

The University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law Student Organization Handbook gives an overview of the resources and services the law school offers and policies and procedures for all student organizations. While this Handbook is not an exhaustive source of law school or institutional policy or procedure, it is the primary resource for student organizations. The Office of Student Affairs (“OSA”) works closely with student organizations to assist with their needs. Academic competition teams will work with both OSA and the Office of Academic Administration (“OAA”).

The law school reserves the right to amend or modify this Handbook at any time without notice. The Handbook will be placed on the law school student organization resources TWEN site. All student organization members, but especially the leaders, must read and refer to this Handbook to be familiar with its terms and provisions.

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# STUDENT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Student organizations must meet the following **requirements** to be considered active with OSA:

- ❑ **Student Organization Name:** Maintain a student organization name which does not include the University of South Carolina's name (or any variation) in any form. The University of South Carolina does not allow RSOs to represent the university or act on behalf of the university.
- ❑ **Membership Roster:** Must have a minimum of 7 members in good standing at the law school and at least two members in Leadership positions (*see the "officers" section below*).
- ❑ **Advisor:** Must have a faculty or staff advisor.
- ❑ **Governing Document:** Must have a governing document (*see the "governing documents" section below*).
- ❑ **Annual Plan:** Must complete an annual plan each academic year.
- ❑ **Training/Meetings:** Must attend mandatory officer or organization training or meetings provided by OSA, law school and/or university administrations.

If a student organization does not meet the above requirements, the organization will be considered inactive until those requirements are met. Please review the Annual Renewal Process below.

## Officers

Student organizations must elect at least two officers to govern the activities of the organization and act as a liaison with OSA and law school administration. While the titles may differ, organization officers should at least have a president or chair who coordinates and manages the organization's activities with OSA and a treasurer or financial officer who manages the organization's finances. It is also recommended that a secretary or operations manager is elected so that records are retained for future members of the organization. Organizations may also include other officers as needed. Elections for new officers should be held in the spring (preferably before exams/commencement) and new officers should be reported to OSA through the Annual Renewal Process.

The student organization officers must be in good academic standing and periodic GPA checks may occur. Good academic standing means student organization officers must not be on academic probation. For more information, please consult section V of the Student Handbook [linked here](#). Student organization leaders are strongly encouraged not to hold more than two major leadership roles in student organizations in one academic year.

## Governing Documents

All student organizations must have a constitution to serve as a governing document for the organization. Each student organization must provide its constitution to OSA. The constitution should include the following:

- The organization's purpose, mission, and values;
- Provisions on membership, any membership dues and purpose of dues;
- Officers and elections;
- Financial and recordkeeping provisions;

- Any other terms and provisions the organization deems necessary or useful for its activities.

Student organizations should clearly set forth in their constitutions how it will function and be run. Student organizations should keep careful and complete records of activities and finances. Financial records should be maintained to demonstrate adherence to the organization's budget and to produce documentation for reimbursement for expenditures on behalf of the organization. *Please note that if an organization intends to open a private bank account for organization expenses, financial institutions may have additional governing document requirements, including a Tax ID Number provided by the IRS (For more information, see the Student Organization Funding section of this Handbook).*

## Annual Goals & Plans

Student organizations must complete annual goals and plans each academic year. This plan should include the following:

- Student organization goals for the academic year;
- Tentative plans for conference travel, competitions, or programming (meetings & events);
- Proposed budget outlining funding sources and how the funds will be used (support plans for programming, etc.)

OSA will provide a template for student organizations to build their annual plan.

## ANNUAL RENEWAL PROCESS & LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Student organizations must participate in the annual renewal process each spring. The annual renewal process will include guidance from the OSA on updating student organization information as outlined in the student organization requirement section. Student organizations will be required to submit the following updated information for annual renewal:

- Membership Roster
- Officer Information
- Advisor Information
- Governing Documents
- Annual Goals & Plans

Additionally, student organization officers, in-coming and out-going, must participate in the Student Organization Leadership Transition Meeting held in the spring semester. This meeting is scheduled by the OSA to review roles and expectations, pass along notebooks, account balances, etc. This meeting will also provide a step-by-step guide on submitting updated documentation for renewal, including due dates.

# INACTIVE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Sometimes a student organization may become inactive. This could be due to not maintaining the required information for student organizations on file with OSA or due to lack of student engagement. The reasons may include:

- **Membership:** Membership falls below the minimum seven members required or the minimum two leadership positions.
- **Transition:** Failure to attend the mandatory transition meeting at the end of the year or fails to follow the required protocols for officer transition.
- **Renewal:** Failure to complete the documentation required for annual renewal.
- **Misconduct:** If misconduct within a student organization occurs, the organization will be considered inactive until OSA and law school administration investigates the misconduct and confirm that the organization is eligible for reactivation.
- **Other:** The student organization decides to dissolve, disband, or deactivate. If this occurs, the President or designee should email the OSA stating that they would like to disband the organization and provide a short rationale (lack of interest, time, etc.). The OSA will save the email to the organization's file and then deactivate the organization.

The OSA will ALWAYS notify the student organization if it is in danger of becoming inactive.

## Reactivating a Student Organization

To reactivate a student organization, student organization leadership must arrange a meeting with the OSA to discuss the student organization's inactive status and next steps to ensure reactivation is successful.

# STARTING A NEW STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Students desiring to start a new student organization should follow the following guidelines & review the "Student Organization Requirements" section of this handbook:

- Consult the law school website and check with OSA to be sure that a group supporting the proposed activity or purpose does not already exist (or is inactive) at the law school;
- Devise a clear purpose and objective for the organization and consider concrete ideas for how these purposes can be supported through meetings or events;
- Maintain a student organization name which does not include the University of South Carolina's name (or any variation) in any form. The University of South Carolina does not allow RSOs to represent the university or act on behalf of the university.
- Recruit a minimum of seven interested law students, including two student officers;
- Complete the New Student Organization Application [linked here](#). This application is also available on the student organization resources TWEN site. The application must include the following attachments:
  - Membership Roster, Officer Information, and Advisor Information spreadsheet
  - Governing Documents

## ❑ Annual Goals & Plans

OSA will consider New Student Organization Applications as the applications are received. Submission of a New Student Organization Application does not guarantee approval or recognition of the organization. OSA will notify the interested parties if the student organization has been approved and it can commence activities, including election of officers, in compliance with the provisions of this Handbook.

# STUDENT ORGANIZATION EVENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

When planning any student organization meetings or events, organizations should first consult the [Student Events Policies and Procedures](#), which provides information on when organizations should complete the [Student Organization Planning & Room Reservation Request Form](#) and when an organization must coordinate with the Office of Special Events. Student organizations should review and follow these procedures carefully and begin planning any events as early as possible to ensure that there is adequate space in the law school building, if needed.

## Student Organization Planning & Room Reservation Requests

Most student organizations will need to complete the [Student Organization Planning & Room Reservation Request Form](#) for meetings and/or events. In addition to completing the form to reserve space in the law school, the form will also collect general information about the meeting or event. This information will help OSA or OAA support student organizations in the planning process and promotion of the meeting or event. Student organization officers are also encouraged to set up a planning meeting with OSA or OAA to review the financial plan and to coordinate logistics, if needed.

Additionally, student organizations should use this Event Checklist ([linked here](#)) to make sure all logistics are covered. This checklist will also be added to the student organization resources TWEN site. Student organizations should keep a copy of this checklist for each event planned.

As student organizations are planning meetings or event, the following should be considered:

- **Annual Goals & Plans:** Student organizations should use the plan created for the academic year to guide planning to ensure programming meets the organization's mission and goals.
- **Blackout Dates:** There are specific days and times each semester when student organizations are not permitted to hold meetings or events. These are referred to as blackout dates. OSA will provide a list of these dates to student organization officers for planning purposes each semester.
- **Lunch Hour:** No classes meet Monday – Friday from 12:20p.m.- 1:20p.m. during the academic year. Many student organizations and law school offices plan meetings or events during this time.
- **Office of Career & Professional Development:** Career & Professional Development (C&PD) looks forward to supporting your organization and members. Student organizations are an excellent

resource for students seeking exposure to practice areas and connecting with practitioners and peers with similar interests. Additionally, participation and leadership in student organizations provides opportunities to gain valuable professional development skills. To most successfully partner with your organization, we invite you to engage with our office.

We will support your organization by:

- Providing support for your organization's events and programs, including:
- Connections with alums and employer partners
- Promotion through C&PD's monthly newsletters
- Assisting in developing practice area resources and guides
- Advising of any potential partnership opportunities we are made aware of

In turn, we ask that you:

- Review and respond to our communications
- Refrain from planning events or programs on days such as On-Campus Interviews (held in February, July, and August) or the Public Interest & Government Career Fair (held in February)
- Inform us of the following:
  - Any concerns or issues related to career and professional development you are made aware of from your membership
  - Your plans to invite members of the judiciary to participate in programs or events (so we avoid over-asking the same judges and justices)
  - Your plans to host career-related programming aimed at informing students of job search strategies and providing job search guidance (so we can provide any resources and support to provide students with the most accurate and up-to-date information)

• **Speaker Fees/Travel:** Student organizations should not offer to pay any speaker fees or speaker travel without consulting OSA and or OAA.

• **Sponsorships:** If an organization is looking to identify sponsorships for events, they must follow the External Fundraising guidelines outlined in the Student Organization Expenses & Travel Procedures Addendum linked [here](#).

• **Alcohol:** Student organizations must follow all law school and University rules related to the provision of alcoholic beverages, including the University's Alcohol Policy and Guidelines for the University Community <https://sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf302.pdf>. Student organizations cannot use law school funds for alcoholic beverages. Any expenses related to alcoholic beverages, or the provision or consumption of alcoholic beverages, will not be reimbursed.

• **Office of Events:** An addendum to this Handbook outlines the Office of Events regarding the types of events they can assist the organizations with and is [linked here](#) for convenience. Please note, if a student organization is planning an event off campus and needs assistance identifying potential locations, please schedule a time to meet with the Office of Events to get a list of locations.

• **Travel:** Some student organizations, particularly competition teams, travel regularly. If a student organization plans to travel and plans to use allocated University funds, they must follow the



procedures outlined in the School of Law Student Organization Expenses and Travel Procedures Addendum linked [here](#).

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION FUNDING

When planning any student organization meetings or events that will have expenses, organization officers should first ensure that the organization has the funds to support the meeting or event. Most student organizations use member dues, fundraise, and/or seek sponsorships to help support organization activities. Student organizations are responsible for managing their organization funds, typically through a private bank account. See below on the process for opening a private bank account.

### Private Bank Account

Student organizations can have external bank accounts through a bank of the student organization's choosing and consists of opening a business account with the organization's name and Tax ID. The student organization would first need to complete an application with the IRS to acquire a Tax ID ([EIN application](#)) to be able to open an account. Monthly charges may apply because it is a business account. Each bank may require different documents, so student organizations need to research different institutions to see what fits the organization's needs. The law school cannot help with off-campus accounts. It is on the student organization to establish good governance and adopt control measures to oversee off campus bank accounts. Additionally, if a bank suggests that student organization become a non-profit organization (501(c)(3)) – please note that the student organization itself cannot maintain its status as both a student organization and a non-profit. Registering as a non-profit is not permissible for a student organization.

### Apply for Funding

Student organization officers can apply for limited funding from OSA within the law school to support organization events that are open to the entire law school student community. For more information on this process, [please click here](#).

Student organizations should contact OSA or OAA on any questions regarding funding or allowable expenses. Competition teams who receive academic credit should contact OAA for guidance on funding, allowable expenses, and the procedures for coordinating travel. Student organization can also review the School of Law Student Organization Expenses and Travel Procedures Addendum linked [here](#).

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION RECRUITMENT, PROMOTION, AND PUBLICITY

As part of the required annual plan, student organization officers should consider how to recruit new members and to publicize meetings and events. Being conscious about recruiting, promotion, and publicity is the most natural way to convey to the law school community, especially new students, the culture and values of the student organization.



Below are a few ways OAA and OSA help support student organizations in recruitment, promotion, and publicity, as well as a few resources recommended for student organizations to use. Additionally, student organization leaders should review the Marketing & Communications policies to ensure compliance. This policy is an addendum to this Handbook.

- **Student Organization Fair** – Each August, a Student Organization Fair will be held for new students. This is a great way for student organizations to start engaging with fellow students.
- **Student Events Weekly Email** – Student organization meetings and events can be included on the Student Event Weekly email sent by OSA. When completing the Student Organization Planning & Room Reservation Form to request their meeting or event be included.
- **My Law School Student Event Calendar** – Student organizations are encouraged to post all meetings and events, on or off-campus, to the Student Event Calendar on the law school website. When completing the Student Organization Planning & Room Reservation Form, student organizations can request their meeting or event be added. To view the calendar, [click here](#).
- **Canva** – Canva is a free-to-use online graphic design tool. Use it to create social media posts, presentations, posters, videos, logos and more. Visit [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) to get started.
- **Flyers** – Student organizations routinely post flyers around the law building. Organizations need to monitor the flyer postings to ensure they are timely and to take them down after the event has occurred. Student organizations may **ONLY** post flyers on the red glass walls in the building. Signs found elsewhere will be removed. The student organization is responsible for removing out-of-date flyers.

## Marketing and Communications Policies

The mission of the Office of Communications is to promote the School of Law through strategic communication. We are available to assist student organizations in promoting and creating promotional material on an as-requested basis, depending on the scope of the event, advance notice, and the department's resources and ability.

For guidance on the University of South Carolina brand, please reference the [university's communications and marketing brand toolbox](#). We also encourage you to review and adhere to the university's guidelines regarding the [Carolinian Creed](#) and the [ABA Model Rules of Professionalism](#).

Familiarize yourself with this policy to ensure your content and materials align with the law school's guidelines for communicating about and on behalf of your student organization and the law school. Deviation from this policy may result in disciplinary review or other appropriate action.

For further questions or assistance, email COLAWS-COMMS.

### **Digital Screens**

This refers to the TV monitors throughout the building that announce important reminders, upcoming events, and the accomplishments of faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Students are welcome to design digital screens to share announcements and promote upcoming events. Digital

screens should be submitted as .jpg files, and their dimensions should be 1920x1080 pixels. Digital screens will run for no more than 2 weeks leading up to the event. Event digital screen uploads are subject to the Web Communications Manager's approval and discretion.

Pending availability, the Office of Communications is available to assist with design with a minimum of three weeks' notice before the event.

### **Logos**

Canva is an excellent free resource for any student organization interested in designing a logo. Logos that incorporate any element of the University of South Carolina and/or School of Law brands MUST be submitted to the Office of Communications for approval.

### **Photography**

Requests may be made for photography. Please keep in mind the Office of Communications prioritizes Signature Events but may be available for other large impact events on an as-requested basis, taking availability into consideration. Coverage is not guaranteed, nor should it be assumed.

Requests must be submitted to the Office of Communications a minimum of 4-6 weeks in advance to determine alignment with the department's strategic goals and ensure availability. Photos remain the property of the law school and are typically available within a week of the event. Photos taken during a previous event do not guarantee future availability.

### **Print Services**

The university has the capability to print a variety of materials, as well as coordinating mailings for marketing purposes. Most requests take a minimum of 10 business days to fulfill. For a complete list of services, visit the [printing services webpage](#). Contact the Office of Student Affairs for guidance on what information must be provided, and which sections need to be completed on the Print Services request forms.

### **Flyers and Posters**

You may ONLY post flyers on the red glass walls in the building. Signs found elsewhere will be removed. Your student organization is responsible for removing out-of-date flyers.

### **Promotional Items**

Any materials that incorporate the University of South Carolina or School of Law brands, including logos and colors, MUST be approved before dissemination. Please allow a minimum of five business days for the Office of Communications to approve.

### **Social Media**

When publishing content to a student organization account you are acting as a representative of the School of Law. Do not post offensive or discriminatory content that negatively impacts the SOL or endorses any political party or candidate.

Content posted by student organizations may be reposted or reshared by SOL accounts; we refer to this as amplification. This applies primarily to signature events, large impact events, and accolades for student organizations as a whole as well as individual members. **For content to be considered for amplification, you must tag SOL accounts (@uofsclaw).**

The School of Law's social media profiles are curated to maximize visibility and promote authentic engagement. Not every event can be included on the SOL feed. The Office of Communications reserves the right to determine what content is shared to SOL accounts.

### **Website**

All website requests must be submitted to Students Affairs for review before the Office of Communications. Once Student Affairs reviews your request and sends it to the Office of Communications, the Web Communications Manager will reach out to you with questions, recommendations, and project status updates. For ongoing website updates (i.e. journal issue uploads, etc.), student organizations should designate one member to be the point of contact. Student organizations should also expect to provide all materials for upload and respond to emails from the Web Communications Manager in a timely manner.

### **Writing and Public Relations**

Press releases are a great option to inform media of upcoming events. They should include details such as where and why the event is taking place, who is involved or impacted, and the facilitator or speaker's availability for interviews. Press releases must be edited and reviewed by the Office of Communications and/or the Office of Student Affairs prior to distribution; submit content 4-6 weeks prior to the event.

Student organization members may submit stories for consideration on the School of Law's newsfeed. Contact the Office of Communications to discuss written pieces at least one week before the event to ensure it meets our strategic goals and is not already being covered. Once approved, aim for between 300-600 words detailing what happened, its importance, and include up to three quotes from the featured or honored individual(s), facilitator(s), and/or an attendee. These pieces must be submitted within three days of the event's conclusion.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATION RESOURCES**

### **Academic Technology**

Academic Technology is a helpful resource for student organizations. Whether a student organization needs assistance with AV needs for a meeting or has questions about their student organization printing account, Academic Technology is a wealth of information. Please review the following topics:

- **Audio/Visual Needs** – If student organizations know they need to use AV for a meeting or event (for example: Teams/Zoom videoconferencing or have PowerPoint slides) and require assistance, please open a help desk ticket to schedule time with Academic Technology in advance of the meeting or event by using [this link](#). Please tell be sure to select "School of Law" in the field "From whom are you seeking assistance?"
- **Student Organization Email Account** – Many student organizations have a Student Org email account. If a student organization is unsure if they do or do not have an account, they can check in with OSA. If a student organization does not have an account, Student Affairs can assist the student organization in the process of setting one up through Academic Technology.
- **Student Organization Printing Account** – Many student organizations have a Student Org printing account. If a student organization is unsure if they do or do not have an account,

they can check in with OSA. If a student organization does not have an account, Student Affairs can assist the student organization in the process of setting one up through Academic Technology.

## Important Student Organization Documents/ Forms

- New Student Organization Application – [Linked Here](#)
- Student Organization Annual Plan – [Linked Here](#)
- Student Organization Constitution Example – [Linked Here](#)
- Student Organization Membership Roster – [Linked Here](#)

## TWEN

Student organizations have the option of creating/maintaining a TWEN page. Many student organizations utilize TWEN to manage organization activities, hold elections, send organization-wide communications with their e-board, create an organization specific calendar, and more.

If a student organization wishes to create a TWEN page, they will need to contact the Office of Student Affairs ([stuaff@law.sc.edu](mailto:stuaff@law.sc.edu)).

Additionally, Student Affairs maintains a TWEN page with valuable information and resources for School of Law student organizations. The TWEN page is titled Student Organization Resources. Many of the links found in this document are also linked on this TWEN page.

## Student Organization Planning Calendar – [Click here](#)

This calendar is available for student organization officers to use when planning meetings or events.

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Office of Academic Administration**

Jenny Lanford, *Director of Academic Administration*

Email: [vlanford@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:vlanford@mailbox.sc.edu)

Office: Room 127A

### **Office of Communications** – COLAWS-COMMS

### **Office of Student Affairs** – [stuaff@law.sc.edu](mailto:stuaff@law.sc.edu)

Whitney Bedard, *Associate Director of Student Affairs*

Email: [wattsw@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:wattsw@mailbox.sc.edu)

Office: Room 127