

How to Start a Student Organization

Gaining Official Recognition

To become an official student organization at Willamette you need to...

- Find an advisor who is a member of the Willamette University faculty, staff or administration who is not on sabbatical or leave.
- Complete a Student Organization Affiliation Form, available in this packet. **When completing your application, please note the following:**
 - **Do not include “Willamette” in the name of your organization.**
 - **The Office of Student Activities will not facilitate approval of organizations that:**
 - **involve activities that pose potential risk or harm to the safety and well-being of Willamette Students**
 - **involve activities that may include medical liability/risk/supervision or act as a support group**
- Provide a petition signed by at least 10 Willamette fee-paying students in the College of Arts and Sciences who indicate an interest in becoming a member of the student organization.
- Have a membership roster composed of at least 50% Willamette fee-paying students in the College of Arts and Sciences (can be the same as the petition).
- Create a constitution and optional by-laws.
- Meet with a Staff Member from Student Activities to review your application and assess any potential risk that might be associated with your organization.
- **Submit pages 3-7 of this document and your constitution to The Office of Student Activities.**

After submitting this information to the Office of Student Activities, the Club Approval and Finance Committee, and ASWU Senate will review the proposal and vote. A representative from the Office of Student Activities will notify the organization of the decision.

If/when you are recognized as a student organization you receive instructions about final required affiliation tasks:

- Submit a Student Organization Registration Form and G/L Access Agreement.
- Submit a signed Leader/Advisor agreement to Student Activities.
- Attend a Student Organization Orientation

Note: The timeline to become a recognized student organization is approximately 2-4 weeks, depending on edits and the needs of the committee.

Benefits of Recognition

Recognized student organizations...

- Can request ASWU funding.
- Have access to the Office of Student Activities supplies to create advertising for activities, meetings and events: poster-making area, paper, a letter-cutting machine, and poster markers.
- Can reserve rooms throughout campus for meetings and events. (Contact Student Activities for assistance).
- Are invited to participate in Fall Activities and Resources Expo and the Spring Activities Fair. These events are designed to introduce new and returning students to the many opportunities for involvement at Willamette.
- Are listed on the Office of Student Activities Website.
- Can distribute flyers/mailbox stuffers to student mailboxes.
- Have access to the resources available in Student Activities. The staff will help your organization through individual consultation or group meetings with things like budget planning, group facilitation skills, leadership training, fundraising, and more.

Maintaining Recognition

In order to maintain recognition, student groups must...

- Provide an up-to-date roster of officers and members from the current school year (fall and spring).
- Complete Annual Student Organization Registration, by the end of the spring semester.
- Provide an updated copy of a new constitution if any changes have been made during the year.
- Maintain an up-to-date anti racism plan.

Officer Responsibilities

This section is to be read by the organization president(s) or official representative(s).

- We have read and are aware of the policies regarding student organizations at Willamette University (available at <http://willamette.edu/offices/osa/orgs/index.html>).
- We affirm that neither the organization nor the officers or members acting on behalf of the organization will represent itself or themselves as official "agents" of Willamette University, and that any licensed Willamette University seals and marks will be used in accordance with university licensing procedures.
- We understand that we may not sign any contracts on behalf of our organization or Willamette University.
- We affirm that this organization does not discriminate unconstitutionally in its membership practices or in its activities against any otherwise qualified person on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation.
- We affirm that the officers of this organization are currently enrolled, full-time Willamette University CAS students with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher and that voting membership is limited to full-time Willamette University students. Following any election, an officer update form reporting the names of new officers will be submitted to the Office of Student Activities.
- We affirm that this organization will abide by all university, local, state and federal policies, regulations and laws.
- We understand that this organization may be required to purchase additional event insurance for some large scale events held on campus.
- We understand that this organization is required to have a full-time faculty/staff advisor and is responsible for finding an advisor.
- We understand that the club president and club treasurer mail groups are to be used to receive information from the Office of Student Activities. We will not send messages via these mail groups without permission from the Director, Associate, or Assistant Director of Student Activities.

Advisor Responsibilities

In requiring registered student organizations to have advisors, the University assumes that advisors will take an active role in the organization. The nature and style of that role is left to the determination of the organization and its advisor. The student organization advisor is primarily responsible for providing advising and guidance for the organization and to act as a resource person. The duties and responsibilities of the advisor include, but are not limited to, the following functions:

- Have concern for the ongoing function of the organization. This includes attending meetings or reading the meeting minutes and being familiar with the group's constitution.
- Schedule specific times during which the organization members may consult with you.
- Serve as a resource person for planning events and programs, resolving issues confronting the group and orienting new members and officers.
- Encourage the organization to function within University guidelines and not condoning any activity that does not keep with the letter and spirit of University policy. Each advisor should be knowledgeable about University policies and keep current copies of the *Student Handbook* and *Selected Policies Manual* as valuable resources in understanding these policies.
- Remain aware of the organization's financial status and encourage the maintenance of accurate financial records.
- Encourage the learning process by remembering that it is the students' organization and they are free to make their own decisions.
- Attend meetings of the organization advisors when requested by the Office of Student Activities.
- Provide a signature for any documents requiring an advisor signature.
- Be present on the campus for the entire academic year, by not going on sabbatical or taking a leave of absence. Faculty and staff are not eligible to serve as a student organization advisor unless they have a regular presence on the campus.
- By reading this agreement, the WU faculty/staff member certifies that s/he will fulfill the duties of a student organization advisor to the best of their ability and that s/he is familiar with the updated student travel policies and procedures.

Please keep a copy of these documents for your records.

Affiliation Form

To be turned into the Office of Student Activities when applying to be a registered student organization. Please type information (into the fillable fields – PDF) or print legibly.

Organization Name: _____

Description of Organization: Give a brief description of the organization’s purpose and proposed activities. Please attach a copy of the organization’s constitution, by-laws, a petition, and any other informational materials.

Is your organization composed of at least 50% Willamette University CAS students? _____ Yes _____ No

Contact, Budget Officer, & Advisor Information

Students serving in a leadership position must be in good academic standing with a 2.5 cumulative GPA. Any changes to the below information should be **immediately** filed with the Office of Student Activities.

Primary Student Contact: _____

Box Number: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Primary Budget Officer: _____

Box Number: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Advisor: _____

Department: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Advisor and Officer Signatures: Read the Officer and Advisor Responsibilities and sign below.

We verify that we have read and understand the Officer and Advisor Responsibilities. We verify that the information supplied on this application is, to the best of our knowledge, correct. We also agree to hold these positions until an information change has been filed with the Office of Student Activities.

Student Contact’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advisor’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Affiliation Questions: Answer these questions to help the Club Approval and Finance Committee understand your organization's plans and potential impact on the Willamette community. Feel free to answer these questions on a separate page if needed.

Why does Willamette need this group and how will it benefit our students and community?

How does this organization support the educational mission of the University?

Are there other organizations at WU with similar goals to yours? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please list those other groups below.

If yes, please describe how your group meets a different need(s) than that of the other group(s).

If yes, please describe how you plan to work with the other group(s).

What type of activities do you foresee your group organizing and/or participating in?

If activities include regular practices, games, or tournaments, please describe how you plan to secure the necessary field, court, or other spaces needed.

What are your plans for the transition of leadership from year to year within this organization? *Note that holding elections is not, by itself, an adequate transition plan.*

In 5 years what types of things do you hope this organization will have accomplished?

Will students in this organization receive academic credit for their involvement? Yes No
If yes, please describe how this group is a student-driven initiative.

Finance Questions: Answer these questions to help the Club Approval and Finance Committee understand your organization's financial needs. Feel free to answer these questions on a separate sheet if needed.

From what sources *other* than ASWU funding (fees, dues, fund raising, department support, etc.) will you seek funds?
Note: ASWU funding is limited and you should not expect it to fund all of your organization's budgetary needs.

Is this organization affiliated with a national organization? Yes No

If yes, which one? _____

If yes, does this national organization require dues or other regular payments? Yes No

If yes, please explain how this organization will meet these funding requirements.

Primary Function/Type of Organization: Select the *one* category that best describes the purpose of your organization based on the descriptions provided below.

Academic: Group seeks to further intellectual goals, specific to a subject area. Group is linked to and supported by an academic department.

Greek: Group is a social fraternity or sorority recognized and supported by the Interfraternity Council (IFC) or Panhellenic Council (PHC). All groups within this classification must first be established and recognized as an interest group. See the Willamette University Greek Organization Recognition Procedures for more information.

Honorary: Group membership is based on merit, accomplishments, honors, or qualifications in specific areas.

Media: Group exists to promote interest in, creation of, and appreciation of literary or visual media (e.g., newspaper, radio, magazine, etc.).

Multicultural: Group exists to educate, engage, and support cultural knowledge and identities that may include but is not limited to: social justice issues, traditions, celebrations, or intersections of culture in daily life.

Performing Arts: Group exists to promote interest in, creation of, and appreciation of performing arts (e.g., vocal, instrumental, dance, theater).

Religious: Group exists to educate, engage, and support religious and/or spiritual growth, belief, or affiliation.

Service: Group exists to promote interest and support experience in service to community through volunteering and service-learning opportunities.

Social & Support: Group exists to foster relationships and serve as a support system for students' social interests, past times, and causes (e.g., political affiliations, advocacy groups, and hobbies).

Sports & Recreation: Group exists to promote interest in, experience in, and appreciation of physical games, sports, and outdoor activities. All groups within this classification are required to attend the Sport Club Council meetings. Participation in Sport & Recreation Organizations is limited to enrolled students (as defined by the Registrar) at Willamette University.

Organization Interest Petition

This petition must be signed by at least **10 fee-paying students** who, by signing, are indicating an interest in becoming a member of this new student organization. This petition can also serve as the organization's membership roster (which must be composed of at least 50% Willamette CAS fee-paying students).

	NAME	Email address	Student ID number
1.			
2.			
3.			
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14.			
15.			

How to Write a Constitution and By-laws

The constitution of an organization contains the fundamental principles that govern its operation. The by-laws establish the specific rules of guidance by which the group is to function, such as procedures for meetings, decision-making, officer selection, and financial transactions.

Why have a constitution?

By definition, an organization is a "body of persons organized for some specific purpose, such as a club, union or society." The process of writing a constitution will serve to clarify your purpose, delineate your basic structure and provide the cornerstone for building an effective group. It will allow members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is about and how it functions. If you keep in mind the value of having a written document that clearly describes the basic framework of your organization, the drafting of the constitution will be a much easier and more rewarding experience.

How should I go about writing a constitution?

As mentioned previously, we encourage all new clubs and orgs to use our sample constitution when creating a constitution. This will ensure that the constitution includes all the requirements our office has for the constitution, while also adding in extra language that makes your club unique. You are more than welcome to create your own constitution from scratch, but it may require additional back and forth between the committee and you to include certain language. *Your club will not be formally approved until your constitution has all appropriate language.*

Why have By-laws?

The constitution covers the fundamental principles but does not prescribe specific procedures for operating your organization. Bylaws detail the procedures your group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. They provide further definition to the articles of the constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change.

What could be included in the By-laws?

Bylaws must not contradict provisions in the constitution. They generally contain information such as:

- A. Dues (amount and collection procedures, any special fees, when payable)
- B. Committees (standing, special, how formed, chairpersons, meetings, powers, duties)
- C. Order of Business (standard agenda for conducting meetings)
- D. Parliamentary Authority (provisions for rules of order, generally Roberts Rules of Order)
- E. Other specific policies and procedures unique to your organization necessary for its operation

Once we've got them - what do we do with them?

Remember the reasons for having a constitution and bylaws: they articulate the purpose of your organization and spell out the procedures to be followed. Once you have developed your constitution and bylaws, review them **often**. The needs of your group will change over time and it's important that the constitution and bylaws are kept up to date to reflect the current state of affairs.

Make sure every new member of the organization has a copy. This will help to unify your members by informing them about the opportunities that exist for participation and the procedures they should follow to be an active, contributing member. A thorough study of the constitution and bylaws should be a part of officer training and transition. It is also a good idea to review the constitution and bylaws at the beginning of each year or semester. Constitutions usually require a 2/3 vote of the membership for adoption. Bylaws only require a simple majority for passage.

Instructions

1. The following document is a template for your organization to use while writing your constitution. To use the sample constitution, copy and paste the language into a new document.
2. Items highlighted in yellow should be filled in with your organization's name (“insert name here”) or provide guidance and suggested language for you to consider as you write the constitution.
3. Each constitution must include all of the articles and sections provided, with the exception of Article II, Affiliation. If your organization is not affiliated, delete Article II and renumber the subsequent articles.
4. Submit your completed constitution to the SEAL office by emailing student-engagement-group@willamette.edu by April 19th
5. Your document will be reviewed by a staff member and you will be notified if your constitution has been approved or needs to be amended.
6. Please reach out to the SEAL office if you have any questions or need additional support.

[INSERT NAME HERE] Constitution

Article I. NAME

This organization shall be known as **[INSERT NAME HERE]**. The organization may also be known as **[INSERT ACRONYM]**.

Article II. AFFILIATION

[NOTE: only include this section if your organization is affiliated with a national or regional organization, or other entity outside of WU]

[INSERT NAME HERE] is affiliated with **[INSERT NAME HERE]**

Article III. MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

It is the mission of the **[INSERT NAME HERE]** to **[INSERT MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES HERE]**. Describe the types of activities the organization will conduct as well as general information regarding its processes.

Article IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Membership -

A. Membership of the **[INSERT NAME HERE]** shall be open to all students who have paid the mandatory Associated Students of Willamette University student fees.

B. No person will be denied membership with regard to espoused or perceived identities such as: race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or physical or mental ability.

C. Active members shall be defined as those students who **[INSERT ACTIVE MEMBER REQUIREMENTS HERE]**. Only active members may hold office, vote in elections, and vote on the organization's business.

Section 2 Membership Disciplinary Procedures define procedures for disciplining and/or removing an member from the organization, including (but not limited to):

1. A process for reporting concerns within the organization;
2. A notice to the member in question;
3. A process whereby the member is given the opportunity to share their perspective;
4. Identification of discipline process decision-makers; and
5. A list of possible outcomes.

Article V. OFFICERS specify who is eligible to serve as an officer in the organization and any requirements that must be met before their election/selection as well as during their term in office.

Please note, as consistent with University policy, all recognized student organizations must use the following italicized parameters as the minimum standards. Organizations are permitted to enact more stringent requirements than the university, under the condition that the more stringent requirements are reasonable

in nature and consistent with the mission and purpose of the organization.

The officers of the organization must meet the following requirements:

1. Minimum cumulative gpa of 2.5 and not be on academic probation
2. May not be on conduct probation

Section 1 Officers describe specific officer titles for any elected, selected, or appointed leadership position

The officers of the [INSERT NAME HERE] shall be [INSERT OFFICERS HERE; YOU WILL DESCRIBE THEIR DUTIES IN THE NEXT SECTION]

Section 2 Duties of Office describe specific duties for any elected, selected, or appointed leadership positions listed above

[BELOW ARE EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF OFFICERS AND THEIR SUGGESTED DUTIES]

A. President

1. Enforce the Constitution of the [INSERT NAME HERE].
2. Preside over all [INSERT NAME HERE] meetings with an impartial demeanor.
3. Represent [INSERT NAME HERE] on all public relations and official functions.
4. Authorize, with the assistance of the Treasurer/ASWU Budget Officer, the use of all [INSERT NAME HERE] funds.
5. Responsible for attending Student Organization Orientation once per academic year.

B. Vice President

1. Assume all responsibilities of the President when necessary.
2. Responsible for advertising all events.
3. Maintain all applicable calendars and web information.

C. Secretary

1. Presides over [INSERT NAME HERE] meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.
2. Prepare and post the agenda of each meeting at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
3. Prepare and email updated minutes to listserv within 24 hours following each meeting.
4. Maintain accurate attendance and activity/event records including all organization correspondence (email, voice Mail, mail box).

D. Treasurer /ASWU Budget Officer

1. Receive, record, and deposit all [INSERT NAME HERE] funds.
2. Be responsible for retaining all receipts.
3. Have a bi-weekly financial report available at all meetings.
4. Maintain accurate fiscal records.
5. Aid in the authorization with the President of all [INSERT NAME HERE] funds.
6. Responsible for the requisitioning of all funds from ASWU.

- 7. Responsible for abiding by the ASWU Funding Precedence while making requisitions for ASWU funds
- 7. Responsible for attending Student Organization Orientation once per academic year

Section 3 Terms of Office

One term of office for each executive board member, shall be [INSERT LENGTH OF TERM]. There shall be no limit imposed on the number of terms any member may serve.

Section 4 Officer Selection Processes indicate the organization's voting/appointment process for officer selection as well as the time of year it will take place

Section 1 Voting

- A. Votes shall be taken during a meeting that has declared a quorum.
- B. Only active members may vote on the organization's issues.

Section 2 Officers Elections

- A. The officers shall be elected by secret ballot at the meeting prior to spring break in the spring semester.
- B. The person with a simple majority of the vote will be declared the winner.

Section 5 Officer Disciplinary Procedures define procedures for disciplining and/or removing an officer from their position, including (but not limited to):

1. A process for reporting concerns within the organization;
2. A notice to the officer in question;
3. A process whereby the officer is given the opportunity to share their perspective;
4. Identification of discipline process decision-makers; and
5. A list of possible outcomes.

Section 6 Vacancies of Office

If a vacancy exists for any position, a special election shall be held for the vacant position. In the interim the succession of office will be used to fill the position until elections can be held for that position. Succession of office is as follows: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer/ASWU Budget Officer.

Article VI. ADVISOR

Section 1 University Affiliation

1. The advisor will be a Willamette employee: staff or faculty.
2. The advisor will serve as an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the [INSERT NAME HERE].
3. The advisor will be on-campus and not on leave or sabbatical. If the advisor chooses to leave

campus, a new advisor will be selected within two weeks of departure.

Section 2 Duties and Responsibilities

- A. Serve as a mentor, providing direction as to the purpose, goals, and objectives of the organization to the executive board and members.
- B. Ensure that the organization operates within the legal and ethical guidelines of Willamette University, professional organizations, and the state.
- C. Act as the communication link between the organization and the administration.
- D. Provide staff approval/opinion on programming events (if needed for risk management).
- E. Negotiate and initiate University process to sign all binding contracts.
- F. Support the participation and development of members.
- G. Remain well informed of group plans and activities.
- H. Be an expert on the organization's constitution.
- I. Serve on all selection committees (as a non-voting member).

Article VII. MEETINGS

Section 1 Quorum

A meeting shall be declared to have a quorum if a simple majority (51%) of the organization's membership is present.

Section 2 Executive Board

The executive board shall meet at least twice a month during the regular school year.

Section 3 Meetings describe how often the group will meet and if a member is expected to attend a certain number of meetings in order to remain in good standing (if applicable)

Example: Meetings shall be held on a monthly basis starting in August during the regular school year. To remain in good standing a member is expected to attend at least two (2) of the regularly scheduled weekly meetings.

Article VIII. Financial Procedures describe organizational procedures for managing finances. At a minimum, this section must acknowledge that:

1. The organization is required to keep the funds through Willamette University Accounting Office
2. All funds collected will be deposited within one business day
3. All expenditures must be approved by the ASWU Treasurer; pendings that said expenditures be made in compliance with the ASWU Funding Precedence

Article IX. OFFICER TRANSITION

Once elected, new officers shall work with outgoing officers to learn the skills needed to take over the office. At least one meeting will be set for outgoing and incoming officers along with the group's advisor prior to the end of the academic year. New officers shall assume full duties at the last official meeting of the academic year.

Article X. SAFETY AND LIABILITY

[INSERT NAME HERE], and any member of the organization acting on behalf of the committee, disclaim any liability whatsoever for any loss, damage, personal injury or death suffered or caused during an activity, or while in transit as part of an organization trip.

Article XI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution of [INSERT NAME HERE] must be proposed in writing by any active member. Amendments must be tabled for discussion for a minimum of one week, and then votes will be taken on all new amendments. Amendments will be ratified by the approval of the membership by two-thirds (2/3) of in a meeting that has declared a quorum.

Article XII. RATIFICATION

This Constitution of [INSERT NAME HERE] is hereby unanimously ratified by the membership on [INSERT DATE HERE].