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INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVITIES (SOA)

What We Do

Student Organizations & Activities (SOA) engages students in involvement opportunities that build a sense of belonging and community at Northwestern University. Students participate in over 400 student organizations on campus or create one of their own. Our office provides support, advising, and training for students and their organizations. Through educational and programming opportunities, we facilitate and nurture experiences in:

- Leadership
- Campus programming
- Student community service
- Social justice
- Student organization development

We encourage students to visit us to find their passions, develop ideas, and think creatively about their student organizations.

Who We Are

As of this publication, here are the most up-to-date contacts for SOA:

For the most up-to-date contact information, please visit the SOA website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kourtney Gray, PhD</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kourtney.gray@northwestern.edu">kourtney.gray@northwestern.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey Gibson-Jackson</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tgibjack@northwestern.edu">tgibjack@northwestern.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake Fields</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jake.fields@northwestern.edu">jake.fields@northwestern.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Lattal</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu">joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah Brunk</td>
<td>Graduate Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leah.brunk@northwestern.edu">leah.brunk@northwestern.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby Hearn</td>
<td>Graduate Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shelby.hearn@northwestern.edu">shelby.hearn@northwestern.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOA can be found on the Norris University Center 3rd floor along with staff from the Fraternity & Sorority Life (FSL) and Leadership Development & Community Engagement (LDCE) offices, as part of the Campus Life suite.

**Communications with Your Student Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Affairs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOA</td>
<td>FSL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOA sends communication via email bi-weekly during the academic term and as needed to presidents, treasurers, and primary contacts as listed in the group’s Wildcat Connection page. If you are a president or treasurer of a registered student organization and have not received information on a regular basis, please contact Joe Lattal at joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu.

In addition, SOA social media accounts actively share information relevant to student groups including grant announcements, annual requirements, and upcoming deadlines and opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>facebook.com/studentorgsNU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@SOA_NU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STARTING A NEW GROUP

Application Information
If you are interested in starting a new registered student organization (RSO), consider some of the following before you get started:

• What is your organization’s mission and purpose?
• How will your organization serve a new campus need that is not already being served by another organization?
• Do other organizations like yours currently exist on campus?
• Can Northwestern provide the resources your student organization needs to function?
• Will your group be sustainable beyond your time at Northwestern?
• Are other students interested in your organization? At least five total proposed members are required, including two officers.
• Will your organization be open to any interested student?

Please note that student organizations are responsible for a number of policies and procedures, and organizations may not be approved due to the nature of the organization or the risk involved with participating.

Contact the ASG New Groups Chair: asg-newstudentgroups@u.northwestern.edu.

For more information, visit the SOA website.

Use of Northwestern University Name & Trademarks

Please note that new group proposals may only use the name Northwestern, NU, Wildcats or any other licensed trademark of Northwestern University if authorized by university administration and legal counsel.

Deliberation Periods

Deliberations occur once in fall, winter, and spring quarters. The application opening and submission deadlines are determined by the ASG New Groups Chair each term and are updated on the SOA website. The deliberation com-
committee consists of representatives from the ASG funding and student activities resources committees under the advisement of an SOA representative.

**Approvals and Denials**

Approvals and denials are communicated simultaneously to all groups with the exception of decisions that may require communications with other campus departments for clarification (typically club sports and religious/spiritual organization proposals).

Appeals are handled by the ASG New Groups Chair and the process varies each period.

If accepted, a representative of the student group must complete the Canvas new group orientation course by the published deadline during the following quarter in order to maintain recognized status.

**STUDENT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Student Roles**

SOA requires every registered student organization to hold the following positions and display them on the group’s Wildcat Connection page, in addition to general members in the published roster. An individual may occupy multiple roles simultaneously, though it may not be preferred. A Canvas training is provided for each role. Please consult the training section for more details.

- Executive Chair
- Finance Chair
- Communications Chair
- Administrative Chair
- Events Chair
The following roles are also recommended, though not required:

- Membership Chair
- Wellness Chair
- Sustainability Chair
- Outreach Chair
- Technology Chair
- Fundraising Chair

Student groups may structure themselves as best suits their needs with other roles, officers, splitting of duties, and committee/project chairs as needed.

For more information on position requirements in registered student organizations, please contact Joe Lattal at joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu.

How to Renew

Every registered student organization (RSO) must renew their status in the spring term. Information about this process is shared via Wildcat Connection’s bi-weekly newsletter with all student organization executive, finance, and administrative chairs. Registration is hosted on Wildcat Connection and should take less than one hour to complete, aside from a few paper forms and obtaining appropriate signatures. Questions cover group activities in the past year, the group’s membership roster, and other administrative items. For information about registering your group, please visit the annual requirements page on the SOA website.

Advisor Signature

In addition to answering the online questions, SOA requires all student groups to upload an Advisor Acknowledgement form signed by the group’s advisor. The form can be found in the Advisors section of the SOA website as well as in the online registration portal in Wildcat Connection.

Transition Document

The group must also upload a transition document to encourage smooth transitions between outgoing and incoming leadership of the group.
**Full Online Completion and Approval**

Due to the volume of registrations each spring, approval process may take several weeks as SOA staff review each submission. The group will receive auto-confirmation of their submission and will be notified if the registration is approved.

Groups that fail to meet the registration deadline risk losing participation in upcoming organization fairs, having existing space reservations cancelled, forfeiting space/storage on campus, and freezing assets in their SOFO account until registration is completed.

**Constitutions**

All registered student organizations are required to publish a group constitution on their Wildcat Connection page for potential and current members to access. The constitution should be a PDF and stored under the ‘documents’ section of the group’s Wildcat Connection page with access set to ‘public.’ The
constitution must meet the Northwestern University student group template, which can be found here on the SOA website.

The template includes language in purple that must be copy/pasted into the group’s constitution per University requirements. Other sections of the template offer guidelines for groups to develop or revise their constitutions as needed.

Groups must submit an updated constitution each year they complete registration. Groups are encouraged to amend their constitution on an as-needed basis as roles, responsibilities, and priorities may change.

**If Responsibilities Are Not Met**

For any questions about these responsibilities, please contact Joe Lattal at joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu.

If a group abuses responsibilities or fails to register on time or meet general expectations, student group representatives may be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct or have a meeting with SOA representative Tracey Gibson-Jackson (tgibjack@northwestern.edu) to resolve the issue.

**PRIVILEGES WITH RECOGNITION**

- Ability to reserve campus space at the lowest available rate (free, in most cases).
- Presence on Wildcat Connection as a registered student group.
- Opportunity to table at SOA organization fairs.
- Access to technology resources reserved for student groups and campus departments (such as Listerv, organizational email account, copy/print and webspace).
- Access to apply for institutional grants available to registered student groups and student activity fee allocations via ASG funding.
• Access to opening a SOFO account.
• Contracts to be processed and signed by Campus Life to bring speaking engagements to campus, screen films, obtain rights/licenses for productions, rent equipment, host an event at an off-campus venue, and more. For more details, visit the Contracts section under Event Planning on the SOA website.
• Ability to apply for storage space and shared office space.
• Please note recognition does not necessarily mean automatic funding of any sort.

ADVISING

Who Can Be an Advisor?
All registered student organizations must have an approved advisor. Any Northwestern University faculty or staff member is eligible to serve as the group’s official advisor. If your group’s advisor departs or you are a new group without an advisor, please contact Adrian Bitton (adrian.bitton@northwestern.edu) for information.

Graduate students may also serve as an advisor for a group as long as they are also employed by Northwestern University.

Advisor Responsibilities & Resources
For a full list of advisor responsibilities, please consult the ‘Advisors’ tab on the SOA website here.

For a full list of updated advisor resources, please consult the ‘Advisors’ tab on the SOA website here.
FUNDING ALLOCATIONS, USE OF FUNDS, AND FUNDRAISING

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) operate as authorized and sponsored entities recognized by Northwestern University. RSOs may not function as independent 501(c)(3)'s or for-profit entities.

Associated Student Government (ASG)

For more information about ASG Funding for student groups, please consult the ASG website.

For specific funding questions, please email asg-studentgroups@u.northwestern.ern.edu or your ASG funding officer (ie. account/group executive).
**Student Organization Finance Office (SOFO)**

All registered student organizations maintain their assets in a SOFO account. SOFO manages its own policies and procedures for student group asset management. For more information, please visit the SOFO website.

- Organizations may not maintain assets in outside personal/organizational financial accounts with the exception of national Greek letter organizations for dues and expenses per the national organization’s charter.

**Grants and Fundraising**

A full list of grants and fundraising opportunities already vetted by Northwestern can be found on the SOA website under the ‘Org Officers’ menu tab.

**Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding through third-party platforms such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe, and IndieGogo is strictly prohibited and may jeopardize Northwestern’s tax-exempt status or other agreements. As an alternative, groups are encouraged to apply for Catalyzer, the student group crowdfunding platform managed by the Alumni Relations and Development Office. More information including application details can be found at catalyzer.northwestern.edu.

**Corporate Engagement**

Alumni Relations and Development has full-time staff dedicated to assisting student groups with fundraising efforts through corporate engagement and sponsorships. For more information, contact Blendia Hubbard (blendia.hubbard@northwestern.edu).

**Student Activities Scholarship Fund (SASF)**

The Student Activities Scholarship Fund (SASF) was established in 2012 as a supplemental grant to assist students in registered student organizations with financial support to participate fully in their student organization’s programs and events. Student groups such as dance teams, service organizations, and a cappella groups often require their members to pay for group
trips, supplies, and competitions. The SASF is meant to help reduce the financial burden these activities may cause students.

The fund is meant to help those students who could not afford to participate without any external aid. This is a grant for individuals, not organizations. If multiple members of a group require assistance, they must each fill out an individual application. Examples of grantable expenses would include costume expenses for a student in a student organization theater production or travel expenses for a student attending a conference with their student group. Each application will be considered individually based on application answers and financial need.

For more information visit the Student Activity Scholarship Fund page on the SOA website.

ORGANIZATION FAIRS

SOA & ASG coordinate two annual organization fairs. The first occurs during the first days of classes annual each fall, and the second occurs in the early weeks of winter quarter. Groups must respond to communication regarding table requests in order to guarantee their group’s participation in the fair. While the fairs are not mandatory for registered student organizations to participate in, they have proven to be the best way to recruit new students to join. For more information, please visit the Upcoming Fairs page on the SOA website.

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

SOA supports barrier-free general membership in all registered student organizations.

An inclusive and barrier-free student organization or involvement or engagement is defined as one that has no extraneous barriers to general membership
(i.e. applications, interviews, membership fees, auditions, academic class restrictions, questionnaires). This should allow general members full participation in meetings, events, and other organizational activities. Applications and interviews for organizational leadership (i.e. chairs, arrangers, choreographers, and the like), may be used to determine specific leadership roles/positions within the organization, but not as a requirement or prerequisite for general membership engagement.

New member recruitment for all registered student organizations is prohibited during Wildcat Welcome. This means until the first day of classes in fall term, no registered student organization may:

- hold auditions or tryouts,
- conduct interviews,
- lead info sessions,
- directly approach students, or
- aggressively advertise their group

The only exceptions for this are below:

- Info sessions, kickoff events, tryouts, auditions, and other recruiting events can be advertised as events on Wildcat Connection.
- Groups with competitive seasons (typically club sports) that need to start early due to the quarter system can be granted an exception to this rule by SOA or Ben Wagner (bwagner@northwestern.edu). Executive, finance, and membership chairs will receive information about this process over the summer via a Wildcat Connection email.
- Organizations in violation of this recruitment restriction may be denied privileges or forwarded to conduct. Organizations can seek clarification from Joe Lattal (joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu).
- Incoming students may contact you via email, social media, directly, or other means looking for information about your organization. It’s perfectly fine to respond to and engage with new students when they have initiated the interest in your group.

Student organization leadership may be referred to Office of Student Conduct if in violation of recruitment policies.
ANTI-HAZING, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, TITLE IX

All groups must include Northwestern-mandated language regarding non-discrimination to membership as well as non-hazing behaviors in their RSO constitution. For more information visit the Constitutions page on the SOA website.

Information about Title IX incidents can be found on the Title IX page on the Sexual Misconduct Response & Prevention website.

Specific representatives of the organization are required to complete anti-hazing training at the discretion of SOA and the Office of Student Conduct. More information available in the Student Handbook.

EMERGENCIES AND SUPPORT

NU Help

The NU Help app is designed to help students with emergency situations. Northwestern asks all students with smartphone devices to add the app to their phone. More info can be found on the NUHelp App Features page on the NUHelp website.

Dean On Call

A dean on-call is available 24/7. For more information please visit the Dean on-Call page on the NUHelp website.
Title IX Training
For information about reporting Title IX violations and sexual misconduct, visit the Title IX page on the Sexual Misconduct Response & Prevention website.

Student Conduct/Dean of Students
For questions regarding student conduct and student rights or responsibilities, more information can be found on the Dean of Students website.

EVENT PLANNING
Full information and resources regarding event planning for student groups can be found on the Planning an Event page on the SOA website.
Demonstrations

Northwestern welcomes the expression of ideas, including viewpoints that may be considered unorthodox or unpopular. The University encourages freedom of speech, freedom of inquiry, freedom of dissent, and freedom to demonstrate in a peaceful fashion. Regardless of their own views, community members share a corresponding responsibility to welcome and promote this freedom for all. They also share a responsibility to maintain an atmosphere conducive to scholarly, creative, and educational pursuits and to respect the safety and rights of all individuals. In order to promote these interests and to ensure the safe and effective operation of University business, this Policy establishes the parameters community members are expected to adhere to when engaging in free expression and peaceful demonstration. More information about this policy can be found in the University Policies index here.

Undergraduate Events with Alcohol

For information about policies around the presence of alcohol at RSO-spon-
sored events, visit Planning an Event page on the SOA website.

**Outdoor Events**

**Space Reservations**

Norris Event Management handles all outdoor event requests. For more information about requesting space and outdoor event policies, visit the Outdoor Event Request Information page on the Norris University Center website.

**The Rock**

The Rock is a symbolic site that student groups have painted for generations. Read more about it on the Paint The Rock page on the SOA website.

Student groups should only paint the surface of the Rock. Groups who paint the surrounding wall, ground, trees, or any other property may be fined for damage.

Groups planning to have food, hold an event, plan a rally, or amplify noise at all should make an outdoor event request through the Norris Events Management. Painting the Rock on its own does not require a reservation.

**Contracts, Risk Management, and Insurance**

**Contracts for RSO Events**

Northwestern University policy requires all contracts for Registered Student Organizations be submitted to the Campus Life office no less than two weeks before a scheduled event for review and signature. At least six weeks notice is required for any contracts related to events involving alcohol or payments in excess of $25,000.

All contracts must be submitted in person to the contract drop-off box in the SOURCE (Norris Center, 3rd floor) using a cover sheet signed by the RSO advisor. The RSO will be notified when a contract is ready for pick-up or if more information is needed. Failure to follow these policies may result in the cancellation of a proposed event.

There are designated weekly Contract Hours for students to come into the SOURCE and ask any clarifying questions about contracts.
For more information, please consult the Org Officers policy index on the SOA website [here](#).

**Films**

Please consult the Campus Movie Guidelines page on the SOA website.

**Music**

For any event involving music, please connect with Jean Voss ([jean.voss@northwestern.edu](mailto:jean.voss@northwestern.edu)) regarding guidelines and rights needed for live or recorded music performance.

**Marketing and Advertising**

A full list of marketing and advertising policies and resources can be found on the Org Officers Policy Index page on the SOA website.

One recent change is that groups are strongly discouraged from taping down paper flyers on campus sidewalks. ASG, the Office of Sustainability, and SOA support this change. For any questions, please email Joe Lattal ([joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu](mailto:joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu)).

**Drawings, Giveaways, Games, Raffles, and Prizes**

The State of Illinois prohibits any entity without a gaming license to hold games of chance. This means that raffles are strictly prohibited and should not occur at student group events or be part of student group event advertisements.

For groups offering prizes with any cash value, it is highly encouraged that groups maintain a record of amounts awarded, names of recipients, dates, and reasoning for offering prizes associated with a Northwestern event. Documents can be stored in the group’s Wildcat Connection documents page to ensure security and proper archiving.

**Use of Northwestern Name/Licensing Office**

For any apparel, giveaways, sales, or other items where groups seek to use the Northwestern name or any registered trademark or logo of the university,
please consult Ellen Barnes (e-barnes@northwestern.edu) from facilities management.

Security and Police

Some events may require a Northwestern University Police Department presence based on the nature of guests or activities. These decisions are made by Northwestern Risk Management in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel, SOA, and students. Please consult Jean Voss (jean.voss@northwestern.edu) as your group begins planning to learn about options and costs which may be involved.

Campus Event Reservations

For events reserved at the Norris University Center, Norris maintains an index of policies related to student group events held there. More information can be found on the Event Management Policies page on the Norris University Center website.

For events in academic spaces and elsewhere on campus, search for spaces using 25-Live or consult this index of other spaces.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS

Student Group Constitutions

All groups must publish their official constitution based on the constitution template (see Appendix) in the documents section and the ‘About Us’ section of their group’s Wildcat Connection page. The most up-to-date version of the constitution should also be uploaded during the group’s annual registration process. For more information about RSO constitutions, please visit the Policy Index page on the SOA website.
Printing and Copying
RSO finance chairs can request a printing and copying code from Resti Miranda (restituto.miranda@northwestern.edu). Groups are billed at the end of each academic term directly to their SOFO account for print/copy use.

Mail
Any student group who wishes to receive mail or packages can always have items sent to the Norris University Center. Please be sure to include the student group name in the address:

Your Name, Student Group Name
Norris University Center
1999 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60208

Flags
SOA maintains an organized inventory of flags. For more information, visit the Flag Services page on the SOA website.
POLICIES

Travel
When an RSO travels for a group activity, competition, service, or another reason, there are specific university reporting requirements and guidelines to follow.

Chicago Metropolitan Area
Defined as travel within one of the following counties:

- Cook
- DeKalb
- DuPage
- Grundy
- Kane
- Kendall
- McHenry
- Will
- Lake (IL)
- Jasper (IN)
- Lake (IN)
- Newton (IN)
- Porter (IN)
- Kenosha (WI)

Access Chicago travel information

Domestic Travel (within the US):

Access domestic travel information
International Travel
Access international travel information

Vehicle Use

Service Fleet
If your group is involved in local community service or volunteering, you may be eligible for use of the community service vehicles for free. For information on eligibility, orientation, and policies, visit the Community Service Vehicles page on the Leadership Development and Community Engagement website.

Motorpool
Northwestern manages a fleet of vehicles for campus, department, and RSO use. Student drivers must complete the Defensive Driving course and have a clean driving record. For more information on this program, visit the Chicago page.
Metropolitan Area Travel page on the SOA website.

Motorpool Vehicle

All renters must have a “STUDENT”, “FACULTY”, or “STAFF” Wildcard and be currently enrolled or employed by the University to pick up a vehicle. Students are also required to have successfully completed the Defensive Driving course in the last two years. All renters must have a valid chart string to get a vehicle.

Only Northwestern University students, faculty, and staff are allowed in the vehicle. All others are required to get special permission from Risk Management to ride in NU vehicles. Permission is not always given.

Working with Minors

Groups that work with minors (service work, mentoring, etc.) may be asked to complete an additional training through Northwestern risk management. Please refer to the Northwestern Policy Management page for details on changes to the Minors in Programs at Northwestern policy.
Food

For student group events that have food (from signature events down to group meetings), please consult the conditions of your event reservation from the registrar’s office, Norris, or other event host. Groups are held responsible for violations of this policy. Groups are also expected to leave a space exactly as they entered it, meaning cleaning up any food or beverage. Updated information regarding food for student group events can be found on the Food page on the SOA website.

RESOURCES

Technology Resources

@u.northwestern.edu

All RSOs are eligible for a free organizational email account on the Northwestern mail server. This program is managed by Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT). For more information, visit the @u.northwestern.edu Organization Accounts page on the Information Technology website.

Listserv

All RSOs are eligible to maintain their own Listserv for easy communication. This program is managed by NUI. For more information, visit the NU Listserv page on the Information Technology website.

Webspace

All RSOs are eligible for free webspace on the Northwestern server. This program is managed by NUI. For more information, visit studentorgs.northwestern.edu.
Training and Development

Leadership Resources
For a full listing of leadership resources available to all students, please visit the Leadership Resources page on the SOA website.

Online or in-person trainings may be required at the discretion of SOA to access specific privileges and resources. For more information, please email Joe Lattal (joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu).

Clery Form
For groups with overnight travel, a representative must complete a Student Trip Report for Clery compliance. The form can be found on the Student Trip Report Form page on the University Compliance website.

Space for Storage or Office
Norris offers shared storage and office space to approximately 50 RSOs. The request application is communicated via Wildcat Connection newsletter to all RSOs. For more information about application and access, contact Dan Foley (d-foley@northwestern.edu).

SOURCE
Located on the third floor of Norris, the SOURCE (Student Organization Resource Center) is the gateway to Campus Life, the home of three departments: Student Organizations & Activities, Leadership Development & Community Engagement, and Fraternity & Sorority Life.

The SOURCE is a multi-purpose space where all students are welcome to collaborate, learn, and explore in an inclusive environment that cultivates community, advances leadership, and promotes wellness.
Students will find large dry erase board space, several computers and printers, monitors for projection for collaborative meetings, a cell phone charging station, supplies and resources, and a new Mondopad featuring multi-touch high definition display for digital interactive whiteboard and a built-in Windows PC. The room is typically open and available during Norris University Center hours.

To learn more about the SOURCE, stop by or email Joe Lattal (joseph.lattal@northwestern.edu).

**Acknowledgements**

Student Organizations & Activities is here to support you and your organization to foster success at Northwestern and beyond. This file will receive quarterly updates. For the most up-to-date information on a specific topic, please visit northwestern.edu/studentorgs. For questions, advising, or feedback, contact studentorgs@northwestern.edu.