

STUDENT
ORGANIZATION



HANDBOOK

2009-2010

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Abilene Christian University
Student Organization Handbook
2009-10

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a resource for student organizations at Abilene Christian University and serves as a supplement to the ACU Student Handbook. The policies and procedures detailed in this handbook are not intended to be comprehensive and do not supersede the policies in the Student Handbook; they are intended to state the purpose, philosophy, rules, and regulations of student organizations.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AT ACU

Purpose of Student Organizations

ACU is committed to purposeful living in all aspects of University life, including student organizations. With this in mind, the five principles in the Student Handbook for expected student behavior are the same five principles guiding our student organizations.

1. **Integrity:** Conduct as individuals, as an organization, and as a university will be trustworthy.
2. **Service:** The motivating question behind all relationships is “How can I be of service?”
3. **Stewardship:** Being good stewards of the things that God entrusts to us is essential.
4. **Involvement:** Decisions and actions that are beneficial to the University require broad-based participation and teamwork.
5. **Excellence:** Doing the very best requires continuous improvement and learning.

Coordination of Student Organizations

ACU Student Organizations are under the coordination of the Student Life Office. The Director of Student Organizations and Activities is the primary coordinator and serves as the facilitator for student organizations on campus.

The responsibilities of the Director of Student Organizations and Activities include:

- Coordinating communication to students, advisors and ACU faculty/staff regarding student organizations;
- Educating the campus community about opportunities for membership in student organizations;
- Educating the campus community, especially student organization officers and advisors, about the annual update to be completed by student organizations;
- Approving new student organizations;
- Assigning classification for student organizations;
- Coordinating risk management training for student organizations;
- Assisting advisors in mentoring student organizations and upholding ACU policy and procedures in organization activities; and
- Conducting annual assessments of all aspects of the student organization process.

Benefits of Becoming a Recognized Student Organization

By becoming a recognized student organization at ACU, the organizations will receive the following benefits:

- Use of the ACU name to identify association with the institution;
- Ability to act as a student organization on and off the ACU campus;
- Opportunity to apply for funding from the Students' Association (in compliance with other SA bylaws and guidelines);
- Accessibility to resources of the Office of Student Organizations and Activities;
- Review of contracts by ACU Office of Legal Services;
- Recognition as a student organization on the ACU website; and
- Ability to publicize announcements and events through all avenues and media that the University offers to student organizations (e.g., myACU, ACU Student Events Calendar, student organization fair, etc.).

University Recognition as a Student Organization

Student organizations are only allowed to exist and operate as a student organization after they have been properly recognized by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. Student groups may start the recognition process at any time during the school year, but new student organizations will only become recognized at the beginning of each semester. In order to become a student organization, a student group must:

- Seek an endorsement from the Students' Association;
 - The Students' Association will consider whether the group is, in fact, fulfilling a need for the student body that does not already exist on campus. If the Students' Association feels that the need is already being met and refuses to endorse the group, the Students' Association must provide a written reason for its decision to the student group seeking recognition. If the Students' Association refuses to endorse the group, the group may appeal that decision to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities, realizing that the lack of endorsement from the Students' Association will be taken into consideration.
- Complete an application for recognition as a student organization from the Office of Student Organizations and Activities;
- Have at least one full-time ACU faculty or staff member who will serve as an organization advisor; and
- Forward application and endorsement or the written refusal to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities for consideration.

The final decision regarding approval of any new student organization will be made by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.

Maintaining Status as a Student Organization

For existing student organizations on campus, certain requirements must be met in order to maintain recognition as a student organization. They are as follows:

- Have at least one full-time ACU faculty or staff member who serves as an organization advisor;
- Submit the annual update sheet prior to the end of each academic year;
- Submit a current roster of members and officers at the beginning of each semester;
- Attend all required training given by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities (this will depend on the organization's category, as explained below);
- Abide by all University policies governing student organizations, including any specific to the type of organization, which might be communicated through the recognition process; and
- Submit full disclosure of the following to the office of Student Organizations and Activities: size; financial information, including total annual cost for each member; member limit (cap); number of new-member openings; and traditional service projects and activities.

Additionally, the University reserves the right to withdraw recognition from any student organization that fails to uphold the standards established by University policy or whose purpose or conduct does not fit within the University mission. Before withdrawal, the student organization will be provided with notice and an opportunity to meet with the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.

Categories of Student Organizations

During the summer after each school year, the Office of Student Organizations and Activities will assign each recognized student organization to a category that helps determine the type of training needed for student organization leaders and advisors for the following year. If the scope of activities for a student organization changes during the course of the school year, it is the responsibility of the organization to notify the Director of Student Organizations and Activities, who will assess the need for any change in category assignment or additional training. For newly recognized student organizations, a category will be assigned in the recognition process. There are three categories of student organizations:

Category 1: Select officers from these organizations will be required to attend mandatory training that is provided by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities to address risk management related issues. Additionally, these organizations may be required to complete supplemental training as determined by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities, based on the organization's activities. If the leaders and advisors do not attend this mandatory training, it may jeopardize their status as a recognized student organization.

Category 2: Select officers from these organizations will be required to attend mandatory training that is provided by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities to address risk management related issues. If the leaders and advisors do not attend this mandatory training, it may jeopardize their status as a recognized student organization.

Category 3: These organizations have no formal training requirement by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities.

Eligibility Requirements for Members in Student Organizations

Each organization may determine eligibility requirements for individual students joining or participating in their organization. At a minimum, to join or participate in a student organization, a member must be enrolled as a full or part-time student at ACU. Any recent conduct or academic

probation may also impact a student's ability to join or participate in an organization. Further, the University reserves the right to set additional guidelines for member eligibility of specific organizations and certain leadership positions. Organizations admitting new members or allowing current members to participate who do not meet the above requirements may face disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, loss of its student organization's status.

ADVISORS

All student organizations must have Student Life approved advisors, including at least one full-time faculty or staff member of the University. Advisors should sign an Advisor letter agreement and return it to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. Organizations should select advisors who are mature and responsible enough to fulfill this important role, who can attend meetings and participate in organization activities, and who are willing to enforce University policy. Advisors who are unable or unwilling to accept these responsibilities may be removed from their position. Depending on the nature of the organization, organizations may have additional requirements and responsibilities for advisors.

Organizations' Responsibilities to Advisors

Student organizations cannot exist or prosper without active advisors. A good advisor will devote a lot of time and care to the organization. Advisors have a right to expect some things in return. Showing courtesy and respect, as well as simply following the "Golden Rule," is important in all relationships. Treatment of advisors is no exception. The following are a few specific responsibilities that organizations have toward advisors:

1. At the beginning of each semester, advisors should be told the time and place of an organization's regular meetings. From that time on, they should be sent reminders before each meeting. They must be consulted concerning any extra meetings that are called or changes in time or place of regular meetings. Many advisors have family and career responsibilities that they must consider in balancing their commitment to the organization. It is very important that advisors be given as much advance notice as possible. **Each organization should formulate a clear, consistent plan for timely communication with advisors.**
2. Officers should consult with advisors when developing plans for activities. Advisors can assist and guide in determining appropriateness of activities and locations.
3. At least one advisor in each organization should be kept informed of the organization's financial status, particularly during the planning stages of large events. One part of the organization's financial responsibility is to take care of expenses incurred by advisors. Attending organization activities should not be a financial burden to any advisor. The organization should pay for the actual cost of any activity, as well as all other expenses for any activity outside of Abilene.

Advisors' Responsibilities to Organizations

1. Advisors should make an effort to be at organization meetings and activities, and be present at any event that they deem necessary. Advisors must be present at any special events as defined below unless otherwise approved. No voting is to take place without the presence of an advisor. Advisors must take some initiative in making sure that they are made aware of all meetings and activities.
2. One reason for the requirement that organizations have advisors is to provide the organization with additional wisdom and guidance in making organizational decisions. Working closely with the officers, advisors are expected to help address any problems that may arise surrounding the organization. If an advisor feels it is needed, the advisor is free to address the organization directly and make his or her feelings known. From time to time the advisor should remind the organization of the importance of being a positive part of ACU's mission and suggest how it can work as a group to reflect that mission, including following its rules and regulations. The advisor must use his or her judgment in advising officers of the organization as to discussion of events (e.g., appropriate dress for an upcoming banquet or sportsmanship on the ball field).
3. Generally speaking, organization members will look to the advisors as individuals from whom they can learn. This is an important reason to set a good example in dress, manners, speech, attitude, etc. As advisors show that they take seriously the responsibility given them, the students will take more seriously their responsibility as organization members.
4. Be familiar with and enforce University policy.
5. Attend trainings as required by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities.

POLICIES REGARDING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS' EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Hazing

ACU's policy on hazing is simple and straightforward. ACU will not tolerate hazing as defined by Texas law. Moreover, ACU strongly discourages any action that degrades, intimidates, humiliates or endangers any individual. The University reserves the right, for its private disciplinary purposes, to define conduct as "hazing" whether or not it would constitute hazing under the Texas law. All acts of hazing and any act which transgresses ACU's Student Handbook may receive the full range of discipline set forth by the current Student Handbook. Moreover, as set out in the Student Handbook, a student organization may also be guilty of hazing if it condones or encourages hazing, or if an officer or any group of members commits or assists in an act of hazing. In those situations, the student organization may face disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, loss of its student organization's status. Ignorance of Christian principles, cultural meanings, and Texas law will not constitute immunity from appropriate University discipline.

Sexual Abuse and Harassment

ACU's Student Handbook expressly prohibits all forms of sexual abuse and harassment. Please refer to the Student Handbook for a complete description of the option available to victims of sexual abuse or harassment and the possible penalties that the University may impose in such instances. Further, a student organization may also be guilty of sexual abuse or harassment if it condones or encourages such behavior, or if an officer or any group of members commits or assists in such acts. In those situations, the student organization may face disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, loss of its student organization's status.

Work with Minors

Student organizations may not conduct events or activities with non-enrolled minors unless one of two criteria have been met: (1) all individuals participating in the student organization activity have completed self-reporting forms and been subject to a background check or (2) the organizations institute a “buddy system” whereby a participating minor is never left alone with only one individual participating in the student organization activity. In other words, if a student organization implements a “buddy system,” there is no need to complete self-reporting forms or background checks. If your organization is planning an event or activity where participants or members will have unsupervised contact with non-enrolled minors and cannot effectively implement a “buddy system,” please contact the Director of Student Organizations and Activities to find out more about background self-reporting forms and background checks.

Discrimination

In accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws, student organizations are prohibited from illegally discriminating in matters of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, age, or disability. Please refer to the Student Handbook’s Nondiscrimination Policy for more information. If discrimination occurs, the student organization may face disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, loss of its student organization’s status.

Incident and Accident Reporting

If an incident or accident occurs in conjunction with a student organization activity, the organization should contact the Director of Student Organizations and Activities for proper reporting procedures as soon as possible.

Risk Management

Risk management is a process of evaluating potential and perceived risks involved in an organization’s activities and taking corrective actions and proactive steps to minimize accidental injury and/or loss. Student Organizations may adopt their own risk management policy addressing organization-specific procedures and guidelines to ensure that the student organization plans and hosts events and special events where everyone involved has a safe and fun experience. For questions about developing an organization-specific risk management policy, contact the Office of Student Organizations and Activities or the Legal Services Office.

Organization Member Discipline

Each organization should develop standards of behavior for members of its organization. These should be incorporated into a member discipline plan that outlines expectations for member behavior with consequences for failure to abide by community standards. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, removal from activities, loss of member privileges, and ultimately, ineligibility to participate as an organization member.

Student groups have the autonomy to enforce their own community standards. However, if violations to the Student Handbook and/or Student Organization Handbook are referred to Student Life, revised and/or additional sanctions as outlined in these publications may apply.

Each year, organization officers should review this plan with organization advisors, and after advisor approval, submit any changes to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities for final approval.

Constitutions

A current copy of each organization's constitution must be on file with the Student Life Office at all times. Updated constitutions are required any time an amendment is necessary. Charters for new organizations are granted by the Student Life Office. Constitutions are approved at that time as part of the chartering process. Thus, any changes to constitutions must be approved through the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.

It is the responsibility of each organization to periodically review its constitution, especially those sections pertaining to the mission of the organization, voting, member discipline plan, and members' financial responsibility. Each organization must ensure that its constitution is consistent with its mission statement, as well as with ACU's mission.

Student Organization Events and Special Events

Student organization *events* include, but are not limited to, regular meetings and other similar routine activities, while *special events* include, but are not limited to, formals, socials, events involving travel outside the city limits, events involving minors, and events outside the normal scope of day-to-day organization activities.

While student organizations should involve their advisor(s) in the planning of both events and special events, at least one advisor must be present at all special events unless otherwise approved. Moreover, all special events must be registered through the Student Organization website (www.acu.edu/studentorganizations) and approved by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. It is also strongly suggested that when planning a special event, the organization enter a contract for the services (photographers, T-shirts, etc.) and facilities being used. (See the policy regarding university contracts below.)

Pursuant to the ACU Student Handbook, ACU student organizations cannot have alcohol or illegal drugs present at any student organization event or special event. Student organizations are not permitted to have or host dances; however, organizations that exhibit cultural expression through dance as part of their organizational purpose may have performances by organization members as approved by advisors and the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.

Contracts, Releases and Waivers

Student organizations and/or their advisors do not have the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of their organization or ACU. Instead, any contract entered into by a student organization must first be reviewed by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities, as well as the ACU Legal Services Office before being signed by one of a select number of ACU administrators. Most facilities and vendors will have a form contract. If they do not, the Legal Services Office has developed a Services Contract Form which is available at www.acu.edu/contracts.

Once you have a draft contract, please send it to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities along with a completed Contract Review Sheet available online at www.acu.edu/studentorganizations.

This form must be signed by an advisor and the organization's president, and returned with two copies of the contract to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. The Director of Student Organizations and Activities will forward the contract to Legal Services for review and final approval. Please allow two (2) weeks for contracts to be reviewed and returned.

Depending on the nature of the event, a **release and waiver** for participants in organization activities may be required by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities or requested by the organization itself. These may be obtained by contacting the office of Student Organizations and Activities.

Travel

Recognized student organizations may make off-campus trips that are deemed appropriate and approved by the organization. **Organizations must submit the online special events form any time they are traveling outside the city limits** and an organization advisor must be in attendance for an organization activity or event (such as conferences, field trips, socials, etc.). Students and their parents should understand that participation in such off-campus trips and activities *is at the student's own risk*.

For travel in **vehicles owned by ACU**, organizations must comply with the ACU Driver Policy. In order to use an ACU owned vehicle, the trip must be sponsored by a recognized ACU student organization, and an ACU employee must accompany the group. The following is also required:

- For in-town travel, drivers must be 21 years of age.
- For travel outside the Abilene city limits, drivers must be 25 years old.
- Drivers must have a minimum of 6 years driving experience and submit information needed for a motor vehicle report.
- Passenger van drivers must complete the ACU driver certification program.
- Compliance with any other stipulations given by the University.

For the complete ACU driver policy, contact the Director of Student Organizations and Activities or Physical Resources.

For travel in **rented vehicles**, student organizations must purchase comprehensive insurance coverage (because ACU provides no physical damage or liability coverage for non-ACU vehicles), and drivers of rented vehicles must be 21 years of age. If the organization is using a rented vehicle for out-of-town travel, the University may impose additional requirements on the organization.

Students may use their **personal vehicles** to travel to student organization activities within the Abilene city limits. However, the use of personal vehicles for travel to student organization activities outside of Abilene is strongly discouraged. When a personal vehicle must be used for organization travel, it is imperative that the driver and passengers understand that **ACU provides no physical damage or liability coverage for non-ACU vehicles. If a student uses his or her own personal vehicle for student organization business or activity, that person's own vehicle insurance will be responsible for all liability associated with the trip.**

Additionally, while not a requirement, the Office of Student Organizations and Activities advises the following in regards to all student organization travel:

- Comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. This includes, but is not limited to, making sure that all drivers of personal vehicles are licensed and insured and that the vehicle is properly registered and inspected.
- Ensure passengers are seated inside any moving vehicle and secured by their own seatbelt.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Check the vehicle prior to departing to ensure it is in proper working order (tire pressure, headlights, etc.).
- When towing a trailer or using a cargo rack, reduce vehicle speeds to below the legal limit, especially in heavy traffic and check all lights and hitches prior to departing.
- Leave an emergency telephone number with the Office of Student Organizations and Activities, along with a list of all participants.
- Set curfews for out of town trips jointly with the organization's advisors and student leaders.
- Minimize distractions by not using a cell phone or texting while driving.
- Do not drive for over 12 hours in any given 24 hour period and do not leave after 4:00 p.m. for a trip exceeding 8 hours or after 10:00 p.m. for a trip exceeding 2 hours.
- Change drivers every 2 hours.

Political Campaign Activity

Subject to University policies on permission and scheduling, recognized student organizations may use ACU facilities for partisan political purposes, so long as they pay the usual and normal charge, if any, for such use. However, prolonged partisan use of ACU facilities should be avoided. Moreover, subject to other relevant University policies, recognized student organizations may temporarily post political advertising (e.g., signage) on university property during their on-campus events. Student groups may also invite candidates for political office to appear in their candidate capacity only if the candidate appearance meets and adheres to the following:

- The appearance consists of speeches, question-and-answer sessions, or similar communications in an academic setting;
- No political fundraising occurs;
- It is made clear that ACU takes no position with regard to the candidate; and
- All candidates seeking the same office must be provided an equal opportunity to appear.

Any complaint regarding a violation of this political campaign activity policy must be made in writing, outlining the facts surrounding the violation and the section of the policy allegedly violated and should be submitted to the office of the VP for Student Life/Dean of Students. This section does not apply to on-campus Student Association elections, which are governed by rules established by the Student Association in consultation with Student Life.

Gambling/Games of Chance

Illegal gambling is prohibited on ACU's campus and for ACU Students. Moreover, ACU student organizations are prohibited from conducting or organizing events that involve illegal gambling or games of chance, including raffles. However, if your organization would like to host a mock gambling event (i.e., Texas Hold 'Em competitions or a mock casino night), contact the Director of

Student Organizations and Activities for approval. Events will only be approved if the organization can show the event does not constitute illegal gambling and fits within the mission of the University.

T-Shirts and Other Products

Student organizations desiring to sell or distribute T-shirts or other products must obtain the written approval of their advisor and the Director of Student Organizations and Activities before the T-shirts are printed or the products are ordered.

T-shirts should be in good taste and not be questionable or inappropriate in design. Designs and messages on all products must be in good taste; student organizations may not sell or distribute any product that would embarrass the University in view of her constituencies, conflict with the private aims of the University as a Christian institution of higher learning, or violate any of the University's existing contractual obligations. Designs including ACU's name and/or trademarks must also be reviewed by Creative Services. Designs may be submitted electronically or in person to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities after they have been approved by an organization advisor.

ACU Mailbox

Student organizations are required to have an ACU mailbox used for organization purposes. Organizations should have their own mailbox. The annual cost for an ACU mailbox is \$47. There are many benefits to having a mailbox on campus: newsletters are mailed for no charge (make sure they are in mailbox order), others are able to easily contact the organization, the Office of Student Organizations and Activities may make easy contact, and it gives the organization stability from year to year. If an organization does not want a mailbox specific for their use, they must use the mailbox of an on-campus advisor.

Organization Websites

Student organizations are permitted to create and maintain organization websites. ACU will provide server space for organizations that would like to use the student organization template for their websites. Student organizations may create Web pages using ACU systems but are not required to follow ACU style guidelines. They may use ACU-provided templates created for this purpose but are not required to do so. For organizations that choose this option, they will need to attend CMS training and can call 674-4WEB to set this up.

Student organizations may have offsite websites if they do not want to use the standard ACU template for their site. The organizations would be responsible for purchasing server space and the domain name. The domain name cannot specifically associate with ACU. (For example, the domain name could be StudentOrganizationX, but could not be ACUStudentOrganizationX). If an organization chooses to maintain their page offsite, they must provide the URL to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. ACU can still link to that site, provided it honors the ACU student Guidelines and Responsible use for Information and Technology policy: (<http://www.acu.edu/technology/is/policy/index.html>).

Whether on or offsite, student organizations must actively manage their site by keeping information up to date. Moreover, all student organization websites must comply with all applicable policies of

Abilene Christian University and obtain any necessary releases for copyrighted or trademarked material they may choose to post on their website. For help defining fair use as it relates to copyrighted or trademarked material, see the [Podcasting & Copyright FAQ](#) on the Adams Center website (www.acu.edu/academics/adamscenter/resources). All student organizations must also post the following statement on their site: **“Abilene Christian University does not review, approve, or endorse the contents of this website, nor does the University monitor the content of any page except as necessary to investigate alleged violations of University policies, federal, state, or local laws.”**

Advertising

Advertising on myACU student announcements and the Student Events calendar is a privilege for recognized Student Organizations. Announcements and events should be submitted to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. Any flyers to be posted in and around campus must be approved by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities and the appropriate building personnel in which the flyers are displayed.

Financial Responsibility

The treasurer of the organization is responsible for keeping the organization aware of its financial needs and handling the organization’s budget. At least one advisor should mentor the treasurer to ensure appropriate stewardship and accountability of organization funds. Advisors should also actively participate in the budget development process.

Each student organization has the ability to have an on-campus account. If an on-campus account does not currently exist for an organization, the Director of Student Organizations and Activities can assist that organization in opening an account. Certain organizations may be required to have an on-campus account due to the nature of their activities. Account balances must be paid in full by the end of each semester. Failure to pay account balances may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, restriction from participation in University activities.

If an organization has an off-campus bank account, **at least one advisor must be on the signature card.** Together with the treasurer, advisors should establish guidelines on which expenditures need specific advisor approval. The money in each account belongs to the organization members and should be accounted for accordingly. On-campus and off-campus accounts are open to an audit by the University at any time.

Money collected for an organization should not be kept in any student residence overnight.

Fundraising

Fundraising projects by any organization must be approved in advance by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. This is done by completing the Special Events Registration form online after advisor approval. Raffles are not an approved form of fundraising.

Organizations that would like to raise funds through tax deductible donations must get approval by the Office of Development Operations. There are specific laws and regulations that the University must adhere to for these purposes and Development Operations will determine if your plans meet those expectations. Sponsorships, even if not tax deductible, must be approved by both the Office of

Student Organizations and Activities and Development Operations. For questions and coordination of this process, please contact the Office of Student Organizations and Activities.

Room Reservations

Rooms on campus must be reserved for student organization use. Facilities across campus have different processes for reserving rooms. Organizations should check with each building about their process to ensure it is done correctly. The Office of Student Organizations and Activities can help organizations in this process. Keep in mind that room requests are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis and facilities are often booked far in advance.

REGULATIONS

Sanctions may be taken against student organizations that violate ACU regulations and policies. The following are examples of such sanctions (not an inclusive list):

1. Restrictions of various kinds (from further pledging activities, major functions, etc.);
2. Disqualification from organization sports for the duration of a specific sport, for a semester or for a year;
3. Placement of the organization on conduct probation;
4. Suspension from the University for a period of time;
5. Withdrawal of University approval for the organization, thus causing the organization to cease to exist.

The disciplinary process for student organizations will follow the standards outlined in the student handbook for individuals, adjusted as needed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Any questions or clarifications may be directed to the Student Organizations and Activities Office.

Room 121 McKinzie Hall
ACU Box 29004
325-674-2069 (office)
325-674-6475 (fax)
studentorgs@acu.edu
www.acu.edu/studentorganizations

SOCIAL CLUBS

General Information

As recognized student organizations of ACU, social clubs join service groups, academic groups and special interest groups in representing ACU's mission in a variety of unique ways. Leaders and members of social clubs should communicate ACU's mission as well as their own club mission in all of their activities. This section of the Student Organization Handbook serves as an orientation guide for new members and a leadership guide for officers, advisors and active members of social clubs.

The guidelines in this section are intended to state the purpose, philosophy, rules and regulations regarding social clubs to (1) help prospective pledges understand social clubs and their function and (2) clarify and communicate consistent information to all club members and advisors.

Purpose of Social Clubs

Since 1919, social clubs have been a part of the ACU experience. Through social clubs, many students fulfill the need for close, personal contact and for social interaction. Clubs exist because founding members petitioned the University and received approval for their proposed charter. Therefore, social clubs exist as entities granted by the University and must maintain the standards of the University.

Clubs participate in a variety of activities: intramural sports, Sing Song, Homecoming activities, socials and service projects. The University supports the social clubs in their efforts to stimulate a closer bond of friendship among students and enhance each student's loyalty to ACU.

Coordination of Social Clubs

ACU social clubs are under the coordination of the Student Life Office. The Director of Student Organizations and Activities is the primary coordinator and serves as the facilitator for social clubs on campus.

The responsibilities of the Director of Student Organizations and Activities include:

- Establishing and coordinating regular meetings with club officers and advisors.
- Coordinating communication to students, advisors and ACU faculty/staff regarding social clubs.
- Educating the campus community, especially prospective pledges, about the pledging process.
- Educating the campus community, especially Social Club Officers and advisors, about the annual social club calendar and process.
- Supervising and upholding ACU policy and procedures in all club activities.
- Monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the social club process with annual assessment.

Social Clubs as Recognized Student Organizations

In order for a social club to be active on campus, they must be recognized as an official ACU student organization. Social clubs must comply with the policies outlined in the Student Organization Handbook for university recognition. This includes submitting annual updates prior to the end of each academic year and attending any mandatory training that is required by the Office of Student Organizations and Activities.

In addition to the requirements listed in the Student Organization Handbook, social clubs must maintain a minimum membership of ten members. If the membership falls below 10, the social club will be required to meet with the Director of Student Organizations and Activities and may be placed on one year of probation to acquire the necessary membership minimum. If at the end of that year the club still falls short of the minimum membership requirement, their status as a recognized organization may be removed. The organization may go through a re-chartering process once it meets the necessary membership requirement.

Responsibilities of Social Clubs

It is extremely important that all actions of social clubs during the school year, especially induction procedures, reflect a positive impact on the individual participants, other students and/or faculty, citizens of Abilene, Taylor County and surrounding areas. Club officers and their advisors must be acutely aware of the community's response to their actions. One or two unseemly incidents can negate a world of good that is performed by most clubs throughout the year.

- The freedom of choice given to individual clubs is possible only when individual clubs take full responsibility for following approved plans and University guidelines for pledging activities.
- Each club, as a whole, is responsible for the actions of its club members toward potential new club members. The club's responsibility exists without regard to whether its members are acting alone or as a group, and without regard to whether its members are acting with or without the knowledge of the club's officers or advisors.
- The clubs agree to follow and enforce for their members the guidelines developed by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities as well as the University.

Eligibility Requirements for Membership in a Social Club

As with any other co-curricular activity at ACU, there are eligibility requirements for pledging and remaining active in a social club. Any recent conduct probation may impact your ability to participate in club activities. The following list includes the guidelines for eligibility. Students must:

- 1) Have and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 (Members who pledged before the fall of 2008 must have and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0). For transfer students, the GPA of prior institutions will be used to determine eligibility. Once a student establishes a GPA at ACU, transfer GPA's will not be considered.
- 2) Have completed two long semesters of college (completed at least 24 semester hours); there are possible special circumstances that could allow a student to be exempt from this requirement with approval from the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.
- 3) Be currently enrolled as a full-time ACU student (12 or more hours for undergraduate students and 9 or more hours for graduate students).
- 4) Be in good academic standing with the University.
- 5) Have graduated from high school in 2008 or earlier.

Any student found to be ineligible after registering to pledge will receive an ineligibility notice from the Office of Student Organizations and Activities explaining the reasons for the ineligibility. Social clubs will receive a list of eligible students who registered to pledge from the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.

Member eligibility is verified at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Any student found ineligible will receive an email giving information and details about the ineligibility. Ineligible students are prohibited from participating in Intramurals, Sing Song, club meetings, running for office, voting, socials and formals, and any other club sponsored events. Social Clubs will be notified of any member that does not meet eligibility requirements. Club officers and advisors are responsible for ensuring that ineligible members do not participate in club activities. Organizations admitting new members or allowing current members to participate who do not meet the above requirements may face disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, loss of its student organization's status.

Cost of Social Clubs

Each social club charges dues to its members. The additional costs of T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and other items, as well as the costs of socials, Sing Song, etc., must also be considered.

All things considered, clubs at ACU cost approximately \$350-\$600 per year, depending on the club. Expenses during the pledging period may be greater than for a typical semester. Most clubs' dues are \$80-\$200. Clubs may allow students to make several payments during the semester to ease the financial stress, but this is at the discretion of each club.

When a pledge pays dues, it is done with the understanding that if that pledge chooses to walk away from the pledging process, no money will be refunded.

POLICIES

Officer Expectations

Officers, as well as all ACU students, are expected to uphold the principles of Abilene Christian University as stated in the ACU Student Handbook. These principles include integrity, service, stewardship, involvement and excellence. Officers are at all times expected to represent their clubs and ACU well and should take this responsibility seriously. Students in leadership positions are held to a higher standard. With this in mind, a student's disciplinary file will be considered prior to any club elections. Students who find themselves with a recent conduct probation may not be eligible for leadership positions. Students who have been elected to leadership positions and then find themselves facing a conduct probation may be required to resign their office immediately after all appeals have been exhausted. Academic/chapel integrity violations may also impact a student's eligibility to run for office. However, the University reserves the right to immediately remove the student leader from his/her position, if the Dean of Student Life determines that serious misconduct has occurred or that the student's continued leadership presents unreasonable risk of danger to himself or herself or the organization. If at any time a social club officer is known to have broken any portion of the Student Handbook, the Director of Student Organizations and Activities or the advisors of a social club can remove a member from office.

Any club member wishing to run for an office must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) Must meet all eligibility requirements for membership in a social club.
- 2) Must be active during the semester that elections take place.

All social club officers sign a commitment with the Office of Student Organizations and Activities at the beginning of their term indicating their understanding of these principles. The commitment also states that if the principles are not followed, they will forfeit their position as an officer. A copy of the commitment follows.

**Social Club Officer Commitment
Office of Student Organizations
Abilene Christian University**

First Corinthians 4:2 says “those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” As an officer of your organization, it is important to realize that members of your club have entrusted you with your position. With that trust comes responsibility not only to them but also to God. As the Lord said to Ezekiel, “Woe to the shepherds who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?” (Ezek 34:2). As a leader, your own interests are second to those you serve. Jesus gave the ultimate example of this by humbling himself to the position of a servant and washing his disciples’ feet. As a leader of your club, you should seek to follow Christ’s example of serving those you lead.

I, _____, as the _____
Name Office

of _____ for the 2009-2010 academic year, understand that,
Club

as an officer of a social club, I make the commitment to abide by all the principles set forth in the ACU Student Handbook and the Student Organization Handbook as stated through the Student Life Office. These principles include, but are not limited to, integrity, service, stewardship, involvement and excellence. I understand that as an officer and leader on campus I have a greater responsibility and a higher standard because of my decision to serve as an officer. I also understand that I represent my club, the social club system as a whole, and ACU at all times.

If I make the decision to disregard these principles, I agree to resign my office at a time determined by my advisors, the Director of Student Organizations and Activities, the Director of Judicial Affairs and/or the Dean of Student Life. If the office is resigned, a new election will be held to fill the vacancy.

Signature of Officer

Date

New Officers

- 1) The election of new officers for the following school year must occur no later than the Friday following Spring Break.
- 2) Social Clubs will be required to submit a list of members running for office at least 10 days prior to elections for the Director of Student Organizations and Activities to check eligibility requirements of candidates.
- 3) Election results must be turned into the Director of Student Organizations and Activities on or before the Friday following Spring Break.
- 4) Newly elected officers will be expected and required to sign a commitment (on the previous page) with the University regarding their conduct. This commitment will hold officers accountable to ACU policies and procedures.
- 5) New officers are required to attend leadership training and orientation with the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. Meetings will continue throughout the term of office.

Active Lists

Each club must turn in a list of current active members no later than the beginning of the second week of each semester (August 31, 2009, and January 18, 2010). The officer who is responsible for the list should make absolutely sure each individual on the list intends to be active and that everyone who wants to be active has made that decision known. Clubs are strongly encouraged to collect dues or agree to a payment plan BEFORE adding a member's name to the active list.

If payment is not made by the deadline set by the club, the treasurer must notify the Office of Student Organizations and Activities to remove the member's name from the active list.

Inactive Members

When a club member chooses to go inactive, that member forfeits the opportunity to participate in University-sponsored club competitions. These include intramurals, Sing Song, or any other University-sponsored club competition. Policies regarding closed club functions such as meetings, socials/formals, and special activities are a matter of individual club discretion and are to be set out in the constitution of each club; however, inactive members will not be allowed to participate in any pledging activities.

Planning Socials

Advisors should participate in the planning of socials for a club. At least one advisor must be present at all socials, as this is a student organization special event; therefore, advisors' input is crucial to planning. Advisors must be asked about availability on chosen dates to assure that someone is available before any plans are made. When planning a social, it is suggested that a contract for services be used in arranging locations, photographers, T-shirt orders, etc., for the social. Most vendors will have a contract for events. (See student organization policy regarding contracts.) Advisors must approve the social before it is submitted to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities for final approval. Club socials will be considered special events, and clubs will need to comply with the registration process by student organizations for special events (see Student Organization Handbook for more information).

Pursuant to the ACU Student Handbook, ACU student organizations cannot have alcohol or illegal drugs present at any student organization event or special event. Student organizations are not permitted to have or host dances.

ADVISORS

Social club advisors are critical to the success of their organizations. Because of the nature of the activities in which social clubs engage, there are a few additional requirements. Candidates for advisor positions need to be at least five years out of school to be considered eligible to serve as an advisor. Each club should work towards having (at least) one advisor for every 20 members.

The following are additional responsibilities that social clubs have toward advisors:

1. The officers of the clubs, and ultimately the president, are responsible for scheduling and confirming that an appropriate number of advisors will be at every activity, including club meetings. Advisors should be made aware of activities ahead of time and then asked whether or not they will be able to be there. Failure to have an advisor present will result in cancellation of the activity, meeting or event.
2. Though many advisors may not have the time to attend intramural games, members should provide a schedule so that advisors could attend if desired.

Advisors' Responsibilities to Social Clubs

1. Advisors must be present at each meeting and club function (except officer meetings, intramural games, and Sing Song rehearsals).
2. A very important responsibility of advisors is to closely monitor pledging activities. An advisor is required to sign every activity proposal before it is submitted to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. Advisors need to be familiar with what is permissible and what is not. It is necessary for them to know exactly what is being planned for the pledging period and to make sure it is consistent with University policy. Two advisors must be present at each pledging activity.
3. Please read the advisor section for all student organizations for additional information that is applicable to social club advisors (Page 4).

RUSHING

Registering to Pledge a Social Club

At the beginning of the fall semester, the Office of Student Organizations and Activities will hold an information meeting for all prospective members. This meeting gives details of eligibility, the rushing process, the cost of pledging, and the pledging period.

Prospective members will be directed to the Social Club website where they can read this handbook. **Anyone interested in pledging MUST register to pledge.** To register, the prospective member must complete the online registration at www.acu.edu/socialclubs (click on "Register to Pledge"). Failure to register will result in the inability to pledge. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

For the Fall 2009 pledging period, all students must register on or before September 4, 2009, at 5:00 p.m. to be eligible to pledge.

The Realities of Pledging

Each club is limited in the number of pledges it can take. **For women's clubs, there is a pledge class cap of 48.** Men's clubs set their own cap, but their pledge classes are generally smaller than the women's clubs. Because of these limitations, not every student who desires a bid for a specific club will receive a bid from that club. A good faith effort will be made to match every student with a social club.

The intention of rushing is to provide an opportunity for prospective members to spend time getting to know the different social clubs and their members. Each club has unique attributes and something to offer. It is during the rush period that prospective members are able to learn about those attributes and find the club that best suits their own personalities and preferences. It is important to keep an open mind during this process and actively engage in learning about all of the different clubs.

Rushes

The fall rush process lasts approximately two weeks. Following are the types of rushes:

- Teas – for all women prospective members; on a Sunday afternoon at the beginning of pledging; refreshments and mingling; Sunday dress.
- Independent club rushes – a time for members and prospective members to meet and get to know each other. These may be on or off campus and may have a specific theme.

Check the website and online social club calendar to find the schedule of rushes and pledging information.

Ranking

During the rushing process, there will be one ranking day for men and women (September 11, 2009). The prospective members will be required to rank all clubs (male or female accordingly). Ranking will occur in the Living Room in the Campus Center from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., excluding chapel. If a prospective member is unavailable to come rank clubs on the 11th, they must make arrangements to submit their ranking sheet to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities **before** the due date. By having the prospective members rank all clubs, the Office of Student Organizations and Activities is able to attempt to give everyone who is still interested in the process a bid. The pledging contract and medical form must be turned in at this time as well.

Because men's and women's clubs have unique differences, the rushing process has been adjusted to accommodate the needs of each group.

Men

Men wishing to pledge a social club must attend at least one rush for at least three of the six clubs. They must document this as directed by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. Failure to attend at least three clubs' rushes and provide documentation at the time of ranking will result in not being able to pledge.

Women

Women wishing to pledge a social club must attend at least one rush for at least four of the five clubs. They must document this as directed by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. Failure to attend at least four clubs' rushes and provide documentation at the time of ranking will result in not being able to pledge.

There will be a modified selection for the women's clubs. Any club that has more women wishing to pledge their club than they have slots available will participate in this process. Each club will vote on rushees to be offered bids. The Director of Student Organizations and Activities, along with the social club advisors, will then implement a random selection process from a narrowed pool of prospective members based on the club's vote. Any woman not selected for a club will then be considered for other clubs based on her ranking form.

Bid Distribution

In Fall 2009, bids will be distributed on the Thursday evening before Bid Night from 5:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

For male students living on-campus, bids will be delivered to residence hall rooms by Social Club Officers. When delivering bids, **club officers may not enter a resident's room.** For male students living off-campus, bids will be available for pick-up in the Ticket Windows of the Campus Center between 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

For female students, all bids will be distributed by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities the Thursday before Bid Night. All women will gather at a designated location (TBD) at 5:00 p.m. and then will be given a card with instructions to go to a location on campus to receive further information and instructions from the club that has offered them a bid.

PLEDGING

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. Central to this mission is the desire to love and honor God by the way we call all members of the ACU community to love and honor others. The social club pledging period should honor God by honoring others - both current and prospective members - at all times.

The ACU mission challenges each member of the ACU community to treat others with the utmost respect and honor. Commitment to these principles has helped the members of the ACU community create a legacy of excellence of which we can all be proud. Since 1919 members of social clubs have played an unmistakable role in this tradition of excellence at Abilene Christian University. Thus, we can be confident that increased efforts to make the pledging process at ACU even more positive will further enhance the contribution of social clubs to achieving the ACU mission.

ACU desires to incorporate new members into social clubs with a feeling of pride in the group and with a sense of belonging. This needs to be done in such a way as not to interfere with the student's academic and educational responsibilities.

The faculty, administration and Student Life staff hope to achieve a positive, memorable pledging experience for each student participating while upholding the scriptures of Romans 14:19, “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification,” and Romans 15:1-2, “We who are strong ought to bear the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good to build him up.”

Pledging Contract

A pledging contract must be signed by each club member and each prospective member to be filed in the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. The social club president will turn in member contracts at the designated time to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. Contracts will be turned in by the prospective members on the final ranking day. Failure to sign a contract makes both club members and prospective members ineligible to participate in the pledging process. This contract emphasizes the goals and objectives of pledging and must therefore be signed by each member of every club. A copy of the Pledging Contract follows.

2009-2010 Pledging Contract for Prospective and Current Club Members

I, the undersigned, understand that in order to participate in the pledging process, all prospective and current club members are required to sign this contract with ACU. By signing below, I am stating that I have read the following documents, understand what they require of me, and will fully comply with the responsibilities and requirements set out in them:

1. The Texas hazing law;

Specifically, I understand that hazing is illegal in Texas. (Under the Texas statute, hazing is defined as “any intentional knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are students at an educational institution.”) I also understand that **anyone who witnesses or experiences hazing activities and does not report them and the individuals committing the activities is in violation of the statute;**

2. The ACU Student Organization Handbook; and

3. The ACU Student Handbook.

Specifically, I understand that all club activities, including pledging, will conform to the community standards of ACU as underscored by its mission statement and set forth in the current Student Organization Handbook and Student Handbook.

I realize that any violation of this contract may result in a disciplinary response and my removal from pledging activities.

In consideration of ACU’s recognition of social clubs and for being permitted to participate in those clubs and in the pledging process, **I do hereby release, hold harmless and indemnify Abilene Christian University, its officers, trustees, agents, and employees from any and all claims, demand, suits, costs, and charges, in connection with or arising out of the pledging process or travel and transportation to and from pledging activities including, but not limited to, serious bodily injury to myself or others or property damage, except for loss, harm, or injury occasioned by gross negligence or intentional misconduct by Abilene Christian University, its officers, trustees, agents, or employees.**

I further state that I have signed voluntarily under my own free will, and I am of legal age and legally competent to execute this agreement.

Your signature

Printed Name

Date

Pledging Proposals

Pledging proposals will be submitted by club officers to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities by the first Friday of classes. Pledging proposals will include detailed accounts of each activity to occur during both phases of pledging. These proposals must be signed by three club officers and three advisors. After review, the Director of Student Organizations and Activities will return proposals with any necessary revisions. Club officers are responsible for ensuring that all club members and advisors present at any given activity are aware of and have been educated as to what has been approved.

Pledging Hours

Pledging a social club is a significant commitment. To honor the time and commitment made by each prospective member, limits have been set as to the number of hours spent on pledging during any given week.

Phase I

Twelve hours per week is the maximum number of hours to be spent on activities during the pledging phase. Prospective members may also spend an additional three hours per week during this first phase participating in intramural activities. These intramural hours must occur on an ACU designated field as part of an official University game (time spent in practices counts toward the 12 hour limit). Any structured event in which a prospective member participates with his/her pledge class counts towards the 12 hours, including Wednesday night meetings, activities, pledge class meetings, etc. Club officers will be responsible for ensuring that prospective members are not required to attend more than the 12 hours per week of activities and three hours per week of intramurals in the first phase. These hours will be turned in with pledging proposals to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. If a club needs more than three hours of intramurals, these must be included in the 12 hours of activities.

Phase II

Provisional members will not be required to spend more than 15 hours per week for activities associated with their provisional membership. This includes time required for Wednesday night meetings, visits, intramurals, building the homecoming float, etc. Again, club officers will be responsible for setting the requirements for provisional members so they do not exceed 15 hours per week, and then turning in the weekly hours schedule to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. Provisional members will be responsible for managing their own time and ensuring that they are investing an appropriate amount of time in the process.

Residence Life

We desire that every prospective member have time to study, to sleep and to connect with friends on the hall. During pledging prospective members living on campus will have a **curfew**. Curfew is 12:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday, and 1:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m., Friday and Saturday. This curfew will be in place for both phases of pledging. Clubs cannot have any activities during the hours of the curfew, regardless of whether a prospective member lives on or off campus.

The consequences for being late for curfew by an individual prospective member during pledging are:

- 1) The first time a prospective member is late for curfew, he/she will receive a formal warning and will have an 11:00 p.m. curfew for one week (including weekends).
- 2) The second time a prospective member is late for curfew, he/she will have an 11:00 p.m. curfew for the remainder of pledging – including weekends. He/She will also be required to meet with the Director of Student Organizations and Activities and his or her club president.
- 3) If a prospective member misses curfew a third time, he/she will be suspended from the pledging process and may go through the rushing process again the following year.

The consequences for a pledge class being late for curfew due to pledging activities are:

- 1) The first time a pledge class is late for curfew; the entire pledge class will have an 11:00 pm curfew for the remainder of pledging - including weekends. The club president, pledge mom or dad and an advisor will be required to meet with the Director of Student Organizations and Activities.
- 2) If a pledge class misses curfew a second time, pledging will cease for the entire club.

Other than bids being delivered to the residence halls by men’s club members, at no time should any club member or officer be in the residence halls during pledging. The residence halls should be a “sanctuary” for all residents. Any club member wishing to visit a residence hall for a reason not pertaining to club business may do so only after they receive verbal or written consent from the residence director. The following are consequences if a member is in the residence halls:

- 1) The first time a club member transgresses the boundaries of a residence hall, that club member will be suspended from pledging activities.
- 2) On a second offense, the club member will become ineligible to participate in social clubs for the remainder of the semester and will become inactive.
- 3) On a third offense, pledging will cease for the entire club.

GUIDELINES FOR PLEDGING ACTIVITIES

ACU desires to incorporate new members into social clubs in ways that create a sense of community and belonging among all club members. Therefore, any action or communication by the club as a whole or by any individual member that humiliates, intimidates, embarrasses, degrades, threatens or abuses is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

BECAUSE THE CHARGE TO BUILD CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND PROTECT EACH OTHER FROM INAPPROPRIATE TREATMENT IS GREATER THAN THE CHARGE TO PROTECT A PERSON WHO IS MISTREATING OTHERS, ALL MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO REPORT SUSPECTED HAZING TO AN ADVISOR IMMEDIATELY. If disciplinary action taken against a club requires that pledging activities cease, all pledges will be inducted into the club as full members at that time.

Pledging Phases

Pledging is conducted as a two-phase process, the length of which will be determined by the University. Pledges will at all times be treated with respect, both publicly and privately. The first phase of pledging is initiatory in nature; the second phase is provisional in nature.

- a. Phase One Pledging
- i. Pledges during this period work toward unity among the pledges, learning club traditions, and participating in club activities as pledges. During this period they are called by their pledge names (e.g., “Nova,” “Flame,” etc.). Club members as a whole may function separately from the pledge class as is traditional for most clubs during pledging.
 - ii. Expectations/values for Phase One Pledging. Every activity must:
 1. demonstrate Christian values and commitments.
 2. create a sense of unity both within the pledge class and within the club as a whole.
 3. provide a sense of the history, tradition and values of the club.
 4. create a sense of the personal well-being of every member, including pledges. This includes activities that purposefully provide opportunities for spiritual growth including love of God and neighbors, emotional health, and personal integrity both of members and pledges.
 5. honor the current Student Handbook and take place with advisors present.
 - iii. Prohibited Behaviors for Pledging. The University will not tolerate activities that are counter to our Christian values. Under the Texas statute, hazing means *“any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.”* As Christians our accountability is to a higher power than that of only the law. With this in mind, all activities should reflect a spirit of love and respect for all of God’s children. Behaviors prohibited by Abilene Christian University include, but are not limited to:
 1. Any type of personal servitude or requirement to purchase goods for members.
 2. Any activity that creates an environment that endangers new members through restriction of the senses.
 3. Any activity that requires excessive sleep deprivation.
 4. Any activity that requires new members to partially or fully disrobe.
 5. Any activity involving physical touching intended to inflict pain such as paddling, striking, whipping, shoving, electric shock, branding, or burning of new members.
 6. Any activity that requires one to eat or drink anything or place any foreign object in any orifice of the body.
 7. Any activity that requires new members to endure environments that create physical or emotional discomfort or that endanger one’s physical safety.
 8. Any activity that involves kidnapping, “dogging,” abandoning, binding, shaving or confining of new members.
 9. Any activity that occurs without the presence of an approved advisor.
 10. Any failure to comply with the directives of a club advisor or any other University official, including interns from the Office of Student Organizations and Activities.
 11. Any activity that involves placing substances on a pledge or placing a pledge in substances.
 12. Any activity that requires pledges to recite knowledge orally. (Accountability for learning club history and traditions may only be checked by asking pledges to take written examinations without distraction).

13. Any activity that requires physical exertion for the sake of physical exertion.
 14. Any activity that constitutes a negative form of group discipline (punishment).
 15. Any activity that constitutes correction of an individual pledge unless conducted only in the presence of the officers and advisors and is constructive and incremental.
 16. Any activity that involves water unless in a swimming pool with appropriate supervision.
 17. Any yelling of derogatory, insulting or threatening language.
- b. Phase Two Pledging.
- i. The second phase of pledging will focus on overall club unity and community building. The primary pledging activity during this time will be visiting and getting to know older members. Traditional distinctions between pledges and members will be substantially diminished or eliminated. Prospective members will now be called a “provisional member” (or provisional GATA, etc.) and will not be separated as a group from the members. Provisional members may be given a new name that signifies this transitional phase, but recognizes they are now part of the club identity. Provisional members will not wear pledge pins or call members by special names. Provisional members might be expected to serve at official club social events and perform a program or skit. They will be expected to participate in such activities as the building of the Homecoming float, but they should do so alongside older members. If they do not fulfill requirements expected of them during this period (as approved by the Student Life Office), they may not be inducted into the club as full members.
 - ii. Expectations/values for Phase Two Pledging. Every activity must honor the expectations of Phase One pledging with the exception that the purpose of Phase Two pledging is to develop unity in the club as a whole.
 - iii. Prohibited Behaviors for Phase Two Pledging. No pledging activities consistent with the initiatory period will be conducted during Phase Two.

Completion of Pledging Requirements

In order to become a member of a social club, each prospective member must complete a list of requirements set forth by each club. These requirements will include things such as attendance at activities, visits, float hours, etc. A list of the requirements must be submitted by the club officers, with their pledging proposal, to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities for approval *before* pledging begins. Each prospective member must be given a list of these requirements at the beginning of the pledging period so they know what is expected of them.

If a provisional member fails to meet the requirements set forth by the social club, they may not be invited to achieve member status. In such a case, the president of the social club should give these names to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities with appropriate documentation at the conclusion of each phase. After review, the club president will give the prospective members who did not complete their requirements the same documentation.

Morning Activities

There will be no morning activities unless there are no evening activities the night before and no night activities the night of the morning activity to allow adequate time for rest. Any morning activities

scheduled may not begin before 6:00 a.m. For homecoming breakfast, provisional members will be allowed to leave their residences at 5:30 a.m.

Bid Night

Bid Night will be Friday, September 18, 2009. Club members and prospective members must be at their final Bid Night destination by 1:00 a.m. Bid Night will conclude and prospective members will be returned to their residences no later than 5:00 a.m. No other activities may take place for the remainder of the weekend except for a pledge class meeting on Sunday evening.

Blind Folds

Blindfolds, if used at all, must be utilized in safe and appropriate ways, and never for the purposes of fear or intimidation. The following guidelines must be met any time blindfolds are used:

- 1) Blindfolds may NEVER be used during transportation in vehicles.
- 2) No one may be left in a blindfold for more than 10 minutes.
- 3) If the person blindfolded is not sitting or in a stationary position, there must be one seeing person to guide each person that is blindfolded.

Chapel

During Chapel it is important for all club members and pledges to maintain a level of anonymity and decorum so as not to distract others in the ACU community during this public time of worship. Pledging should not be part of the Chapel atmosphere, as this is a special time for community, fellowship and worship on the ACU campus. Pledge classes will not sit together in Chapel. At no time should social club members or prospective members reserve a section for the entire pledge class to sit together. Prospective members should be encouraged to attend Chapel as normal during the school year.

It has been the tradition of many clubs to have a brief meeting with prospective members immediately following Chapel. These meetings must take place outside of Moody Coliseum so as not to disrupt registration of Chapel attendance by both prospective members, and other members of the ACU community. No meeting should take place before each prospective member has been allowed to "slide out" of Chapel. Asking one club member to slide several cards to allow attendance at a post-chapel club meeting is a violation of the Student Handbook.

Visits

Visits must comply with University policy regarding pledging just like any other pledging activity, except an advisor is not required to be present. At no time should any member require something of a prospective member that is against ACU pledging policies. No acts of personal servitude will be tolerated. Any member found in violation is subject to disciplinary action. If a member's visit is required of a prospective member, that member should be make him/herself available for the prospective member to complete the requirement. If the member is consistently unavailable, their visit will not be required.

Fall Break

Pledging activities will not interfere with the fall break holiday for students. No activities may be scheduled between noon the Thursday before fall break and the following Monday.

Incident and Accident Reporting

In the event of a disciplinary and/or other concern, an incident report is available for advisors or any social club member to complete and return to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities. These reports may be used to communicate to Student Life about an individual student or group of students. When Student Life receives incident reports, the concern will be addressed. It is possible that students involved will suffer consequences if any ACU policies have been broken. The use of incident reports is encouraged as they allow for open communication, honesty and integrity among staff, advisors and students.

If any student sustains any type of injury at an activity, an incident report must be filed regardless of whether or not the injury was directly related to participation in the pledging activity. If medical attention (on-site care, trip to ER, doctor visit, etc.) is required, the Director of Student Organizations and Activities should be called immediately. Failure to report an injury may lead to disciplinary action, which can include cessation of pledging activities.

The Wearing of Colors During the Pledging Period

1. All student organizations participating in a pledging process to welcome prospective members will comply with the stated policy regarding the wearing of colors. Failure to comply with established guidelines may result in loss of privileges such as wearing colors.
2. In keeping with the University's tradition, all prospective members and members will be asked to wear "purple and white" on Fridays as a sign of school spirit and unity. Organizations will not ask their prospective members to wear colors other than purple and white on Fridays.
3. The wearing of colors by prospective members during the pledging period is considered a privilege. As such, prospective members may not be "required" to wear colors, but may be "asked" or "allowed" to wear colors. Individual prospective members retain their right to choose to wear the prescribed colors or not. **Prospective members will not be asked to wear colors to church, work, or during any other activity at which such attire might be deemed inappropriate.**
4. All social clubs will submit their proposed plans for the wearing of colors during any pledging activities to the Director of Student Organizations and Activities for approval.

Phase I Colors

Social Clubs may request pledges to wear colors during the initiation phase of pledging between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Colors may not be worn on Fridays, but both pledges and members are encouraged to wear purple and white. At no time can colors be used for discipline by requiring wearing multiple layers of any item of clothing.

Phase II Colors

During the second phase of pledging, provisional members may wear a T-shirt that commemorates their provisional member status. This T-shirt(s) may be worn two times per week and must be in good taste (all club T-shirts must be approved by a club advisor and the Director of Student Organizations and Activities). If provisional members are asked to wear a T-shirt, club members should also wear club memorabilia to show solidarity in promoting club spirit. Provisional members will not be required to wear anything that members are not also wearing, including at club meetings. The entire

club (both members and provisional members) may choose to dress in a particular way together. Provisional members will be allowed to wear colors for homecoming breakfast activities. This is the only exception to provisional members being required to dress differently than members.

Transportation During Pledging

1. Any transportation provided by members during a pledging activity must provide for the safety of the prospective members and be in accordance with all federal and state laws.
 - a. Only licensed and insured drivers (either advisors, members or prospective members) may transport prospective members.
2. All passengers must be seated inside any moving vehicle and secured by seat belts where required.
 - a. The bed of pick-up trucks may not be utilized to transport anyone.
 - b. Placing anyone in the back section of an SUV, where there are no seatbelts, is also prohibited.

Locations for Activities

As plans are made for activities, especially during the pledging period, safety is of greatest concern. Therefore, the University has established the following criteria for acceptable activity locations:

- 1) Area must be well lit. Car headlights are not appropriate forms of lighting.
- 2) Running water and closed-in restrooms must be readily available.
- 3) Advisors must be comfortable with the location.

The final decision on any location will be made by the Director of Student Organizations and Activities. Failure by club officers to provide accurate details or locations for any club activity may result in cancellation of the activity. Maps for all off-campus locations must be submitted to the Office of Student Organizations and Activities with the activity proposals.

HAZING

ACU's policy on hazing is simple and straightforward. ACU will not tolerate hazing as defined by Texas law. Moreover, ACU strongly discourages any action which degrades, intimidates, humiliates, or endangers any individual. The University reserves the right, for its private disciplinary purposes, to define conduct as "hazing" whether or not it would constitute hazing under the Texas law. All acts of hazing and any act which transgresses ACU's Student Handbook will receive the full range of discipline set forth by the current Student Handbook. Ignorance of Christian principles, cultural meanings, and Texas law will not constitute immunity from appropriate University discipline, including dismissal from the University.

As hazing activities have become public across the United States, many universities and national fraternities are working hard to eliminate any activity that could be considered hazing. ACU is working hard to eliminate any practices that could be considered inappropriate. ACU has created policies and procedures that are intended to protect and preserve students, club traditions, and the ACU community.

The State of Texas has set forth the following law regarding hazing.

TEXAS HAZING LAW

The following Hazing Policy was passed by the Texas State Legislature relating to offenses related to hazing at or in connection with an educational institution.

1. "Educational institution" includes a public or private:
 - a) high school; or
 - b) college, university, or other postsecondary educational establishment.
2. "Pledge" means any person who has been accepted by, is considering an offer of membership from, or is in the process of qualifying for membership in any organization.
3. "Pledging" means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
4. "Student" means any person who:
 - a) is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
 - b) has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
 - c) intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after a period of scheduled vacation.
5. "Organization" means a fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or service, social, or a similar group, whose members are primarily students at an educational institution.
6. "Hazing" means any intentional knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are students at an educational institution. The term includes but is not limited to:
 - a) any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
 - b) any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
 - c) any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug or other substance which subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or which adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
 - d) any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely affects the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subsection;
 - e) any activity that induces, causes or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the Penal Code. Sec. 4.52.

Personal Hazing Offense

1. A person commits an offense if the person:
 - a) engages in hazing;
 - b) solicits, encourages, directs, aids or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing;
 - c) intentionally, knowingly or recklessly permits hazing to occur; or
 - d) has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution or firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report said knowledge in writing to the Dean of Students or other appropriate officials of the institution.
2. The offense of failing to report is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, confinement in county jail for not more than 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.
3. Any other offense under this section which does not cause serious bodily injury to another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, confinement in county jail for not less than 90 days nor more than 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.
4. Any other offense under this section which causes serious bodily injury to another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000, confinement in county jail for not less than 180 days nor more than one year, or both such fine and confinement.
5. Any other offense under this section which causes the death of another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000, confinement in county jail for not less than one year nor more than two years, or both such fine and confinement.
6. Except when an offense causes the death of a student, in sentencing a person convicted of an offense under this section, the court may require the person to perform community service, subject to the same conditions imposed on community service probationers by Subdivision (1), Subsection (e), and Subsections (c), (d), (g), (h) of Section 10A. Article 42.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, for an appropriate period of time in lieu of confinement in county jail or in lieu of a part of the time the person is sentenced to confinement in county jail.

Sec. 4.53 Organization Hazing Offense

1. An organization commits an offense if the organization condones or encourages hazing or if an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.
2. An offense under this section is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000, or if a court finds that the offense caused personal injury, property damage, or other loss. The court may sentence the organization to pay a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than double the amount loss or expenses incurred because of such injury, damage, or loss.

Sec. 4.54 Consent Not a Defense

It is not a defense to prosecution for the offense under this subchapter that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

Sec. 4.55 Immunity From Prosecution Available

In the prosecution of an offense under this subchapter, the court may grant immunity from prosecution for the offense to each person who is subpoenaed to testify for the prosecution and does testify for the prosecution. Any person reporting a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution to the Dean of Students or other appropriate official of the institution is immune from liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of the report. Immunity extends to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from the report. A person reporting in bad faith or with malice is not protected by this section.

Sec. 4.56 Offenses in Addition to Other Penal Provisions

This subchapter does not affect or repeal any penal law of this state. Nothing in this subchapter shall limit or affect the right of an educational institution to enforce its own penalties against hazing.

Sec. 4.57 Reporting by Medical Authorities

Treatment of a student who may have been subjected to hazing activities may be reported to police or other law enforcement officials. The doctor or medical practitioner so reporting shall be immune from civil suit or other liability that might otherwise be imposed or incurred as a result of the report, unless the report is made in bad faith or with malice.

Sec. 4.58 Publication of Subchapter

1. Each postsecondary educational institution shall cause to be published or distributed to each student during the first three weeks of each semester a summary of the provisions of this subchapter.
2. The institution shall publish or distribute in the same manner a list of organizations that have been disciplined for hazing or convicted for hazing on or off the campus of the institution during the previous three years.
3. If the institution publishes a general catalog, student handbook, or similar publication, it shall publish a summary of the provisions of this subchapter in each edition of that catalog, handbook, or similar publication.

Section 3 Sec. 4.19

Education Code is repealed

Section 4

If any provision of this Act or its application to any person, entity, or circumstances is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are declared to be severable.

How Can I Tell If It Is Hazing?

There is often a lack of awareness as to whether an activity constitutes hazing. Ask the following seven questions to determine if a particular activity could be considered hazing:

1. Would you be willing to go before God to defend the merit of this activity?
2. Would you be proud to have parents witness and/or participate in the activity?
3. Would you be willing to perform this activity in front of an advisor, University administrator, or the dean?
4. Would you be prepared to go to court to defend the merit of this activity?
5. Would you be willing to share a written description of this activity for other clubs to use?
6. Would you feel ridiculous doing this activity?
7. Will this activity achieve one or more of the goals and objectives of the induction process?

Inappropriate Activities

The Association of Fraternity Advisors has adopted the following assessment strategy for defining hazing, along with a detailed description of inappropriate activities. The Office of Student Organizations and Activities will utilize this assessment strategy and detailed list in reviewing proposals for activities and assessing policy violations. Any violation of policy will result in the determination of level of misconduct and disciplinary action.

“Any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, the following: use of alcohol; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities carried on outside or inside of the confines of the chapter house; wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with fraternal law, ritual or policy or the regulations and policies of the educational institution.”

1. If you have to ask if an activity is inappropriate, it is.
2. If in doubt, call your advisor/coach/national office. If you won't pick up the phone, you have your answer.
3. If you allow these activities to occur, you are an enabler of those who engage in such activities.

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

The following are examples of inappropriate activities by category. It is impossible to list all activities, so this list is not intended to be comprehensive. Each pledge activity can be measured against the definition for each category.

A. Actions that are against accepted sorority or fraternity standards of conduct, behavior and good tastes. An activity or attitude directed toward a pledge or an act which ridicules, humiliates or embarrasses.

Examples:

1. Never doing anything with the pledge(s)
2. Calling pledge “pledgie” or any other demeaning name
3. Silence periods for pledges
4. Any form of demerits
5. Initiates writing progress reports on pledges
7. Scavenger hunts for meaningless objects
8. Phone duty or house duties, if only assigned to pledges
9. Requiring pledges to carry Pledge Handbook or paddles everywhere to get signatures
10. Scaring pledges with what may happen at initiation
11. Deprivation of privileges

B. Anything that causes mental anguish or physical discomfort to the pledge. Any activity directed toward a pledge or activity which confuses, frustrates or causes undue stress.

Examples:

1. Verbal abuse
2. Any form of questioning under pressure or in an uncomfortable position
3. Requiring pledges to wear ridiculous costumes or perform ridiculous activities
4. Requiring only pledges to enter by back door or go up back staircase
5. Stunt or skit nights/events with demeaning and/or crude skits and/or poems
6. Requiring pledges to perform personal service to active members such as carrying books, running errands, performing maid duties, etc.

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Levels of Misconduct (adapted from the 2009-2010 ACU Student Handbook)

Consequences for acts of hazing include, but are not limited to, suspension of club activities or suspension of club from campus. Listed below are levels of misconduct along with possible consequences for each level.

Level One: These actions against the Christian standards of conduct set forth in the Student Handbook are likely to result in disciplinary warnings with or without additional conditions or alternative requirements, such as counseling, community service, or mentoring. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any ridicule and discipline of new members for not remembering or learning club traditions or members’ names.

2. Any type of verbal abuse or intimidation of a new member.
3. Any type of personal servitude or requirement to purchase goods for members.
4. Any activity which degrades, humiliates, or intimidates a new member.

Level Two: These actions are likely to result in a minimum disciplinary response of probation with additional conditions or alternative requirements, including suspension from pledging or from active club membership for a specified period. An entire club may be placed on probation and have its current pledge period terminated. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any blindfolding of prospective members creating an environment which endangers prospective members through restricting their senses.
2. Any type of humiliation based on the physical or personal characteristics or personal convictions of prospective members.
3. Any activity requiring prospective members to place themselves in any foreign substance or shaving or otherwise marking their bodies.
4. Any excessive sleep deprivation of prospective members.
5. Any activity that requires prospective members to partially or fully disrobe.
6. Any activity that occurs without the presence of an approved advisor.

Level Three: These actions are likely to result in an individual's dismissal from the University for one or more semesters, including indefinite dismissals, and the suspension of an entire club for one or more years. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any activity which creates significant emotional trauma for a new member.
2. Any physical abuse such as paddling, striking, whipping, shoving, electric shock, branding, or burning of prospective members.
3. Any physical abuse that forces prospective members to eat or drink anything or place any foreign object in any orifice of the body.
4. Any requirement of prospective members to endure environments that create extreme physical or emotional discomfort or endanger physical safety.
5. Any "dogging", abandoning, binding, or confining of prospective members.
6. Any failure to comply with the directives of a club advisor or any university official.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Any questions or clarifications may be directed to the Student Organizations and Activities Office.

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