Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

University Staff Support for Organizations with Significant University Interest

No. 8005

Policy Effective Date:
12/13/1991

Last Revision Date:
1/21/2015

Policy Owner:
Frances Keene

Policy Author: *(Contact Person)*
James Bridgeforth

Affected Parties:
Undergraduate
Graduate

1.0 Purpose

Whenever the university has a significant interest and responsibility for the activities of a student organization, it is necessary that the university provide appropriate guidance and accountability for the activities of the group. This is necessary whenever a student programming organization is involved with: (1) expenditure of large amounts of state (student activity fee) funds, with resulting accountability requirements; (2) when the group enters into legal contracts in which the university has an interest and/or a responsibility; and (3) when the university has an educational responsibility for training student leaders in skills related to the activities they are providing to the university community.

2.0 Policy

The Director of Student Centers and Activities (SCA) will assign professional staff in SCA to provide staff support for student organizations, whenever a significant university interest exists.

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Criteria for Determining "Significant University Interest"

Since "staff support" involves both allocation of university resources to the group and accountability for the group, it is necessary that the university establish criteria that will be used consistently by the Director of SCA in determining those organizations receiving staff support. Because the activities and programs of student organizations vary so much, it is not possible to have any one single, objective criterion that defines the relationship between university staff and the organization. However, the Director will consistently use the following criteria in making this judgment:

1. The total amount of programming sponsored by the group, and its significance to the university as a whole.
2. The number of programs which the group contracts with off-campus entities.
3. The total dollar amount of programs sponsored by the organization that are subsidized by the university through student activity fees.
4. The total amount of university funding allocated to the group, relative to that allocated to other comparable student organizations.
5. The nature of the student organization's mission.

3.2 "Staff Support" Services

Staff support, in the context of this policy, will include the following:

1. There will be regular contact by an assigned university staff member with the leaders of the organization, including those students directly involved in sponsoring particular programs. Assigned staff will conduct day-to-day mentoring activities.

2. Staff will provide planned skill training to the group.

3. The group will be required by Student Centers and Activities to meet appropriate standards for advance program planning.

4. The university will sign major entertainment contracts on behalf of the organization. This, in turn, subjects the organization to staff involvement in the contracting process, as well as university review/approval of all contracts. Only the assigned staff member, or another qualified staff member assigned by SCA management, will be authorized to make formal offers in such contracting situations (including telephone offers).

5. The Student Organization Accounting Office will administer the funds for organizations. (The assigned staff member and an officer of the organization will co-sign all vouchers.)

4.0 Definitions

1. Staff support: This term denotes a relationship in which the university, in cooperation with a student organization's leaders, assigns a sole faculty/staff advisor who will provide continual education, advising, and direction to the group. This support will apply to both large and small programs, and will include responsibility for approving/disapproving all expenditures of the group, as well as approval of all contracts entered into by the group.

2. Program advising: This term denotes an ad hoc advising relationship that is established by the university with a student organization for a particular program. Program advising may be of two types:

    a. Advising requested by the group (not under the university's Major Entertainment Policy). This type of advising involves no control over the organization's funds but is strictly an advising relationship.

    b. Advising that is required by the university under the Major Entertainment Policy. In this instance, the university official advising the group exercises control through the university's authority over the contract and its conditions.

5.0 References

6.0 Approval and Revisions

Approved December 13, 1991, by the Vice President for Student Affairs, Thomas G. Goodale.

- Revision 1
  Changed name from "University Unions, Student Activities and Recreation," to "University Unions and Student Activities."
   Approved February 26, 1999, by Vice President for Student Affairs, Landrum L. Cross.

Annual review October 29, 2001 by Vice President for Student Affairs, Landrum L. Cross. No revisions.

- Revision 2
  Changed name from "University Unions and Student Activities," to "Student Centers and Activities."
  Approved July 27, 2013, by Vice President for Student Affairs, Patricia A. Perillo.

- Revision 3
  Changed policy title and references herein from "programming" organizations specifically to include any student organization with "specific university interest."
  Approved January 21, 2015 by Vice President for Student Affairs, Patricia A. Perillo.