



STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR MANUAL

Revised Sept 4, 2026

OFFICE OF STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT

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Introduction Letter

Director of Student Engagement

Dear Advisor,

On behalf of the Messiah University Student Government Association (SGA) and the Office of Student Engagement, I wish to thank you for offering to serve as an advisor for one of our many student organizations. It is your participation as an advisor that enables students to pursue their passions and engage with the community.

Your role as an advisor is vital. The student organization that you advise will benefit greatly from your support. Beyond signing forms, approving mass e-mails, and serving as a general resource for your student organization, you have the tremendous opportunity to enrich greatly the lives of the student leaders with whom you work. This is no insignificant matter, and so I ask that you please keep this in mind.

As one way to support you in your important advising role, I offer you this brief manual. It contains a quick overview of your role, outlining your responsibilities as an advisor to the college, your student organization, and your student leaders. Please do take the time to read through this manual in its entirety as it is meant to be a practical resource for you.

Know that the Office of Student Engagement is also a resource for you as you go about your advising duties. Moreover, I welcome any critical feedback from you as we continually seek to strengthen our programs in striving for excellence in all we do. May God bless you as you serve Him.

In Christ,

Curtis Kurtz, M.S.
Director of Student Engagement

The Role of the Advisor

The mission of advisors is to offer direction for student organizations according to their student leaders' goals. Advisors serve to give students actions to achieve their goals, tools to explore possibilities, and encouragement for new ideas.

Because of the significant role that student organizations play in the educational experience, Messiah University requires each recognized, chartered, and executive organization to have an advisor. An advisor must be a full-time employee at Messiah University. Occasionally part-time Messiah University employees can be a club advisor; however, approval will need to come from the Director of Student Engagement. Student organizations should seek an advisor that can dedicate adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities to their respective organization (*see advisors job description and club constitution). Advisors will not be approved if they are on a leave of absence or sabbatical during any part of their term as advisor.

Student organizations should seek out professionals that are allied to, or have a professional interest in, their organization. Executive organizations, in order to offer continued stability and to meet specific educational and developmental goals, have permanent advisors whose official University position descriptions mandate this role. The role and function of the advisor will vary, not only with each organization, but also at times within a single organization. Determining the expectations between the advisor and officers is one of the most important tasks the organization will perform. It is important that expectations are agreed upon and clearly defined early in the advising relationship to minimize confusion and increase effectiveness.

In general, advisors are accountable for the following three areas: responsibility to the organization, responsibility to the individual, and responsibility to Messiah University. Ultimately, organization advisors have final authority on matters of programming, content, and events, and may withhold approval via the Events Calendar Form, Off-Campus Speaker Form, or formal contracts (Note: Only advisors or the Director of Student Engagement may legally sign contracts on behalf of an organization or Messiah University). Disagreements or appeals should be submitted to the Director of Student Engagement, who shall mediate any matters with the organization leadership and advisor.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ORGANIZATION

1. The advisor should pursue opportunities for the education and personal development of students who participate as members and/or officers of student organizations.
2. The advisor should be well informed about all plans and activities of the group. This may be accomplished by attending meetings or consulting with student officers. (Note: Advisors should encourage documentation for all meetings and events presented by a student organization.)
3. The advisor should discourage domination of the group by any individual.
4. The advisor should be familiar with the history of the group and any major events and/or changes that have occurred within the organization.
5. The advisor should assist in the payment process for contracted services (i.e., guest speakers, referees, etc.).

6. The advisor should assist in the orientation of new officers.
7. The advisor is strongly encouraged to attend events sponsored by the organization.
8. The advisor should assist with sponsored events and must be willing to play a more active role if deemed necessary (by the OSE or SGA) to ensure the success of the event. The advisor should use discretion in this role and remember that students can often learn from experiences that are not completely successful.
9. The advisor should review/evaluate programs with their student organization, encouraging reflection and learning
10. The advisor is to review and approve all communications on campus including mass emails and posters.
11. The advisor should verify that the organization has registered all campus events and has reserved the necessary rooms and equipment.
12. The advisor should assist the organization in setting realistic goals and obtaining objectives for each academic semester and/or year.
13. The advisor agrees to renewing their commitment to the club or organization each academic year (*see Appendix II).

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE INDIVIDUAL

1. The advisor should encourage each individual to participate and plan group events.
2. Group members may need guidance as they try to decide to what degree they should participate in activities and/or events. The advisor should seek to assist the students in maintaining a balance between the academic, co-curricular, and other aspects of student life.
3. The advisor should encourage students to challenge themselves and to accept responsibility for their actions in regard to their conduct and their group efforts.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE UNIVERSITY

1. The advisor should guide the organization in accordance with the purposes and educational objectives of Messiah University.
2. The advisor is responsible for seeing that finances of the organization are handled properly, including purchases and payment processes to contracted recipients.
3. The advisor must be aware of University policies and procedures (*see LINK to student organization handbook & student code of conduct).
4. The advisor should examine what their liability is to the student organization as well as what effect the programming and activities of this organization will have on the University. An advisor's common sense should prove to be efficient in handling most situations. Should an advisor have any doubt in their judgment or have questions regarding the liability of a student organizational event, they should contact the Director of Student Engagement.

ADVISOR'S JOB DESCRIPTION OVERVIEW

1. Advisors are required to attend the yearly training sessions offered by the Office of Student Engagement, to have a thorough knowledge of the nature and objectives of the organization.
2. To be enthusiastic about the organization and its purpose
3. To mentor the organization's student leaders
4. To attend important meetings of the organization and/or its committees
5. To attend and acquire training for Oracle to process payments and if needed, P-Card training
6. To foster teamwork
7. To serve as a liaison between the college and organization; To interpret Messiah University policy and procedure as needed
8. To serve as a general resource for the group
9. To communicate with the SGA VP of Organizations and the Director of Student Engagement about any problems of the group
10. To encourage participation of the entire group membership in activities and services of the organization
11. To encourage the organization to identify itself as part of the whole campus community
12. To encourage the organization to evaluate its objectives periodically, to determine how well they are achieving their goals, and how/if they should revise their goals for improvement of the organization
13. To encourage good record keeping, professionalism, and sound financial and business practices

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR ADVISORS

Advisors should frequently reflect on the following questions in the context of their advisory role:

- *Does my leadership allow the organization to identify problems and find solutions independently?*
- *Do I maintain an appropriate balance of advisor support and student autonomy?*
- *Does the organization seek me out for advice or consultation on important issues?*
- *Are the organization and its leaders growing and learning from this experience?*

RESIGNING FROM ADVISING

When an individual is no longer able to continue in their advisory role, he or she may choose to resign from advising. Because organizations are required to have an advisor, the Office of Student Engagement will monitor those without an advisor until a new advisor is found. Once an advisor has made the decision to resign, they should:

- Talk with the organization's leadership and assist them, if possible, in locating another advisor.
- Notify the Office of Student Engagement in writing.

PROBLEMS WITH ADVISORS

If the student leadership of an organization has a problem or issue with their advisor, they should contact the Director of Student Engagement. Students are not permitted to select a new advisor without consultation with the Office of Student Engagement and their current advisor.

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

1. **OneDrive:** Student Leaders and Advisors should be uploading all club related documents to the OneDrive for record keeping purposes and to aid in club and advisor transitions.
2. **Club Email:** All club leaders should regularly check their emails at least 4x a week, and even more so at the beginning of each semester. This is the primary method of communication for the Office of Student Engagement and the Student Government Association.
3. **Canvas:** All club emails have a Canvas account and are a part of the Clubs and Student Senate Canvas course. This course holds information and materials for all student leaders which can be referenced at any time.
4. **Club Grading:** Clubs are graded according to the criteria in Appendix C of the Governance Manual. Each club must be in attendance for required meetings, have prompt communication, demonstrate fiscal responsibility, and regularly engage with the community. Grades for each club will be assigned through Canvas.
5. **Advisor Trainings:** New advisors must attend advisor training at the beginning of the semester in which they formally take the role. Returning advisors must renew their training once every 3 years by attending Advisor Training.
6. **Student Events Calendar:** Clubs should upload their events to the Student Events Calendar. This event tracking will be used when determining the club engagement grade during the club grading process. All events uploaded to the Calendar will automatically be placed on "This Week at Messiah," and any attached posters will be added to the TVs in the Larsen Student Union. Clubs should submit their events using this form: [Master Calendar of Student Events - Messiah University](#). Clubs may view the current calendar here: [Events | Messiah University](#).

FUNDRAISING

All fundraising events must be approved by the Office of Development. Clubs seeking to fundraise may request a loan, without interest, from the Student Government Association. For more information, contact the SGA VP of Organizations regarding Financial Policy, or consult Section 9 of the SGA Governance Manual.

CHARTERED/EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION

Please reference Section 8 of the SGA Governance Manual.

FINANCIAL POLICY

1. **Oracle:** Clubs should prioritize making all purchases through Oracle with their ideal pricing. Oracle is the system that contains all companies who have worked with Messiah University, and therefore have our tax-exemption status on-record. Clubs may get companies added to Oracle, but this process takes several weeks.
2. **P-Card:** Club treasurers may receive P-Card training as needed from the Office of Student Engagement. Clubs should prioritize using Oracle and only utilize the P-Card when needed. This is a general card that all clubs and organizations use. There are only two cards, and they are distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis. The P-Card may not be kept overnight.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR ADVISORS

Student Government Association

Kaleb Curtis, Student Body President

Hailey Horton, Vice President of Organizations

Caleb Garcia, Vice President of Finance

E-mail: SGA@messiah.edu

Office of Student Engagement

Curtis Kurtz, Director of Student Engagement, ckurtz@messiah.edu

Ashley Barnes, Administrative Assistant, barnes@messiah.edu

Conference & Event Services

Jody Brandt, Director of Conference & Event Services, jbrandt@messiah.edu

Cindy Sterling, Office Coordinator, csterling@messiah.edu

Reference Sheet for Student Organization Leaders & Advisors

1. Read the Student Organization Handbook & Website

- a. https://www.messiah.edu/info/21478/clubs_and_organizations/2203/club_forms
- b. Go over the links along the left side of the pages (processes, forms, etc.)

2. Role of the Organization Advisors

- a. Must be in regular communication with organization officers
- b. Should attend meetings on a regular basis
- c. Must attend all programs and events that are open to the University community
- d. Must approve expenses and programming/events

3. Plan Early

- a. From large to small events, planning early will help you get what you need and will make sure that others know what is going on

4. Transportation

- a. You must use Messiah University vehicles and approved drivers
- b. If MU Vehicles are not available, as a last resort, you can calculate mileages, not gas, and use your own vehicle. You must realize that you are taking on personal liability for the event.

5. Event Calendar Forms

- a. You can reserve a room on campus via EMS following instructions within the “How To PowerPoint” located on the [Club Forms Page](#).
- b. Films must be approved by the Office of Student Engagement and the club advisor.
- c. Dances must be approved by the Director of Student Engagement. DJs and all music must be pre-approved and reviewed prior to the event. Advisors must attend all dances.
- d. Outside speaker must be approved by the Office of Engagement and (on occasion) the Dean of Students. You must also get your speaker/artist to sign the Messiah University rider (Appendix A). Advisors must attend these events.

6. Purchases

- a. You must only purchase pre-approved (budgeted) items and advisors must approve all purchases.
- b. You must purchase all club gear and process payments for contracted services.

7. Donations & Solicitations

- a. No student, employee, or student group can accept donations without pre-approval from the Executive Director of Development (John Zeigler). This request can be proposed through the Office of Student Engagement, and the OSE will seek approvals from the Development Office.

8. Contracts

- a. Students are not permitted to sign contracts of any kind on behalf of the University.
- b. Advisors must sign contracts, or resource the Director of Student Engagement.

9. Dual Funding

- a. Student organizations cannot receive funds from other departments unless approved by SGA Vice President of Finance as well as the Dean of the School or budget manager of the department.

Clubs & Organizations

FORMS

All forms can be found at:

https://www.messiah.edu/info/21478/clubs_and_organizations/2203/club_forms

1. **Assumption of Risk & Liability** – If you participate in a club sport, you are required to fill this form out every year for each sport you participate in.
2. **Catering Request Information** – Reference to know how to request catering for your event and policies for catering and catering exemptions.
3. **Club Transportation Release** – Please use this form when using a personal vehicle (not Messiah fleet) when traveling for a club/organization activity.
4. **Equipment Reservation Form** – ITS in Old Main can lend your club various pieces of equipment to make your event a success, such as video recorders, iPads, laptops, projectors, portable screens, tripods, and Blu-Ray players.
5. **Fleet Reservations** – This form is for use by Messiah University students, faculty, and staff for university-related activities only for the use of Messiah cars, minivans, and 15-passenger vans. Only approved and authorized students are allowed to drive Messiah vehicles who are on the current Messiah approved drivers list. To become an approved driver, [click here](#).
6. **Guest Rider Form** – Guidelines and expectations of invited guest speakers/performers to Messiah University are to be respectful and understanding of the context of our Christian community. This is a simple and common-sense list of expectations that we ask guests to observe while on campus. We reserve the right to cancel or refuse payment on any agreement, and/or to ask guest to leave campus, should the guest violate or disregard any of our expectations listed.
7. **Guest Speaker Form** – Along with the Guest Rider Form, this gives us the *Who, What, Where, When, Why* of your guest and the event to which it is tied.
8. **Mass E-mail Request** – Messiah University offers mass e-mail services to recognized student organizations, and employees through the University Press. Mass e-mails are intended for Messiah University news items that arise in the normal course of university business and activities. Mass e-mail news items will be sent only one time. Mass e-mail news items must be initiated by a current Messiah University employee or current student belonging to a Messiah University organization.
9. **Messiah Press Copy Request Form** – Use this service to place both black-and-white and color copy orders with the Messiah copy services which are offered through University Press. Black-and-white copies start at 3.5 cents and color copies start at 39 cents. Using the link below will

allow you to send your order as well as specify delivery date and location. You may use this service for both personal and club related work.

- 10. Messiah University's Master Calendar Events** – A great resource to be sure your event isn't scheduled on the same day as several other events on campus.
- 11. Outside Vendor Form** – This form is to be used if you have an outside organization/vendor coming onto campus that will be selling merchandise or goods at an event or on campus for some reason. Approval must be given in advance.
- 12. Request for Payment Form** – This form is to be used if your organization has an invoice to be paid.
- 13. Request for Reimbursement Form** – This form is to be used if your organization has an individual that needs to be personally reimbursed.
- 14. Tax Exemption Form** – Messiah University's tax-exempt form. Messiah is a non-profit educational institution and therefore is exempt from paying state sales tax. You may provide this form to any retailer to exempt yourself for paying sales tax on an item related to an activity or event at Messiah University.
- 15. Virtual EMS** – This is the college-wide room reservation system that connects your request to the Conference & Event Services office, who will help you through the process of planning your meeting or event with catering, campus events and sound/lighting/technical needs. If your organization already has a Virtual EMS account, log on here: <http://ems.messiah.edu/virtualems/>. If your organization does not have a Virtual EMS account, follow the directions attached.
- 16. W-9 Tax Form** – The W-9 form is used by a company or contractor to request a copy of your social security or taxpayer ID number for tax reporting purposes. An IRS Form W-9 is issued by any individual or company that employs subcontractors, independent contractors, consultants or other self-employed workers. It is used to collect information needed to report to the IRS disbursements made to these individuals or agencies for the purposes of deducting them against expenses on their tax returns.

Appendix I: Sample Constitution and By-Laws

For your convenient reference, a suggested format and sample constitution and by-laws have been prepared. The sample is only an example to follow. It is not to be used as a “fill-in” form. If you need further assistance, contact the Office of Student Engagement.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE	
ARTICLE I.	NAME & PURPOSE
ARTICLE II.	MEMBERSHIP
ARTICLE III.	QUORUM
ARTICLE IV.	OFFICERS, QUALIFICATIONS & DUTIES
ARTICLE V.	ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS
ARTICLE VI.	IMPEACHMENT AND VACANCIES
ARTICLE VII.	FACULTY/STAFF ADVISOR
ARTICLE VIII	DUES
ARTICLE IX.	MEETING
ARTICLE X.	COMMITTEES
ARTICLE XI.	RULES OF ORDER
ARTICLE XII.	BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS
ARTICLE XIII.	RATIFICATION

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION
CONSTITUTION FOR (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) AT MESSIAH UNIVERSITY

PREAMBLE

Introductory Statement of Purpose

ARTICLE I. NAME & PURPOSE

Section A. The name of the organization should reflect the nature of the organization and cannot imply limited or discriminatory membership. The name of the organization shall be _____ at Messiah University.

Section B. The purpose(s) of the organization should be listed. Use descriptive verbs that apply to your organization's purpose. The purpose of (*name of organization*) shall be the following:

1. To provide ...
2. To assist ...
3. To participate ...
4. To promote ...

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

(Types of membership, requirements for membership, and a non-discrimination statement should be listed)

Section A. General membership shall be open to all undergraduate students. *(Specify requirements: i.e., Currently enrolled at Messiah University.*

Section B. Members are considered in good standing *(list requirements: i.e. If they have paid they have paid their dues, attend at least ____ meetings per semester, etc.)* Only members in good standing can vote.

Section C. Non- Discrimination Statement: Membership must be open to all Messiah University students.

ARTICLE III. QUORUM

A quorum of membership for voting purposes shall be reached when _____ percent of the general members are present. *(A quorum is usually a simple majority of members, but can be 2/3, 3/4, etc. Two-thirds quorum is suggested.)*

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES

(List the officer's positions, qualifications for holding office, and duties of their offices.)

Section A. List the officers of the organization

Section B. Qualifications of the officers

Section C. The Duties of the officers shall be as follows:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary
5. Other Officers

ARTICLE V. ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

(List the term of office, nomination, vote counting, installation, and special election processes.)

Section A. The term of office shall be *(one year, one semester, etc.)* beginning on _____ and ending on _____.

Section B. Nominations shall take place on *(day of election, the week of, month preceding election, etc.)*

Section C. Votes shall be counted by *(advisor suggested)* _____.

Section D. Installation of new officers shall take place *(week of month, semester)* _____.

Section E. Special elections shall be held if a vacancy occurs. The elections should occur within _____ *(days, weeks)* of vacancy. Members shall be notified by *(how notified and how much advance notification ... phone, mail, e-mail, direct contact, etc.)*

ARTICLE VI. IMPEACHMENT AND VACANCIES

The process of impeachment of an officer, committee chairs, and filling vacancies should be stated.

Section A. Impeachment of Officers

1. Charges may be brought against an officer by any member of the organization. It will take a unanimous vote of the executive committee, excluding the accused officer, to impeach.
2. The impeachment officer shall then be provided due opportunities for defense. *(suggested two weeks preparation.)*
3. A 2/3 vote of the voting body is then required to effect the resignation of the officer.

Section B. Filling Vacancies

1. All vacancies in elected positions shall be filled for the remainder of the expired term.
2. If one or more officers are unable to assume or continue with their duties, the remaining officers shall hold a special election to fill those vacancies under the guidelines for elections in this document. In the event that such an election cannot be held within a reasonable amount of time due to the University not being in session, the remaining officers shall appoint the replacement with the advice and counsel of the advisor.

ARTICLE VII. ADVISOR

State the procedure for selecting an advisor. Duties and responsibilities should be included.

The group shall have an advisor who is interested in the purpose of and gives counsel to the organization. The advisor must be a full-time employee at Messiah University. The advisor is selected or appointed on an annual basis by the majority of the organization's general membership. The advisor serves as an ex officio member and does not vote. The advisor responsibilities include the following:

1. To have a thorough knowledge of the nature and objectives of the organization.
2. To be enthusiastic about the organization and its purpose.
3. To mentor the organization's student leaders.
4. To attend important meetings of the organization and/or its committees.
5. To foster teamwork.
6. To serve as a liaison between the college and organization. To interpret Messiah University policy and procedure as needed.
7. To serve as a general resource for the group.
8. To communicate with the SGA Vice President of Organizations and the Director of Student Engagement about any problems of the group.

9. To encourage participation of the entire group membership in activities and services of the organization.
10. To encourage the organization to identify itself as part of the whole campus community.
11. To encourage the organization to evaluate its objectives periodically, to determine how well they are achieving their goals, and how/if they should revise their goals for improvement of the organization.
12. To encourage good record keeping, professionalism, and sound financial and business practices.
13. Advisors are required to attend the annual training sessions offered by the Office of Student Development.

ARTICLE VIII. DUES

Provisions for membership fees, dues, and assessments, if there are to be any, they should be set in detail: *(How often dues are expected to be paid, collection and handling procedures, delinquent membership dues, how the amount of dues will be determined, etc.)* The provision for the organization's account, should the organization become inactive or folds should be included (e.g., donate to _____ charity, scholarship fund, etc.)

Section A. Dues collection *(if any, when: academic year, semester, month, etc.)*

Section B. Dues shall be set at the beginning of each academic year by recommendation of the officers and vote by the voting body.

Section C. Delinquent membership dues ...

Section D. If the organization becomes inactive or folds, the remaining funds in the account will be donated to

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

Provisions for setting regular meeting times, stipulations for calling special meetings, and the officers which have the authority to call special meetings should be included.

Section A. Meetings shall be held regularly at a time to be specified by the organization at the beginning of each *(academic year, semester, week of the month, etc.)* There should be at least *(indicate minimum # of meetings per semester)* _____ meetings per semester.

Section B. Special meetings may be called by the *(President, combination of officers and advisor, etc.)* Notifications, how, when?

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES

Names of standing committees, if any should be listed. Include the method of choosing the chairpersons and committee members, the duties of the committees, and provisions for creating ad hoc committees.

ARTICLE XI. RULES OF ORDER

A provision for some accepted rules of order for parliamentary procedure, such as "Robert's Rules of Order" should be provided.

Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide by the presiding officer in all situations not covered by the provisions of the constitutions.

ARTICLE XII. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

State requirements for adopting by-laws and amendments to your constitution. All amendments are subject to final approval by the Committee on Student Organizations.

Section A. By-Laws

1. By-Laws may be created by (*officers, members with recommendations from the officers, etc.*)
 2. By-Laws must be in accordance with this constitution as amended.
 3. By-Laws must be sponsored by at least 2 (two) persons, one being an officer, committee chair, etc.
- Section B.** By-Laws shall be adopted by a (2/3, 3/4, etc.) vote of the voting body. (*2/3 suggested*)

ARTICLE XIII. RATIFICATION

This section should state the requirements for ratification of the newly formed organization. This constitution shall be enforced upon ratification by a (2/3, 3/4, etc.) of the voting body, and upon approval of this constitution by the Committee on Student Organizations. (*2/3 suggested*)

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I.	DUES
ARTICLE II.	MEETINGS
ARTICLE III.	COMMITTEES
ARTICLE IV.	AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

SAMPLE BY-LAWS

BY-LAWS FOR (name of organization)

ARTICLE I. DUES

Section A. Dues will be (*specify amount*) per (*semester, year, month, etc.*)

Section B. Dues will be collected by (*specify meeting day, e.g. second meeting each semester, etc.*)

Section C. Dues will be delinquent if not collected by (*specify day, meeting, etc.*)

ARTICLE II. MEETINGS

Section A. General membership meetings will be held (*specify date, time, etc.*)

Section B. Officers will meet (*specify time, day, etc.*)

ARTICLE III. COMMITTEES

Section A. Ad Hoc Committee

Section B. The purposes of the ad hoc committees are the following:

ARTICLE IV. AMENDEMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Section A. Amendments to the by-laws may be presented by any member in good standing.

Section B. Amendments to the by-laws shall be adopted by a (2/3, 3/4, majority, etc.) vote of the voting body. (*2/3 suggested*)