

# RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATION HANDBOOK

2020 – 2021



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY PANAMA CITY  
OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Recognized Student Organizations</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Definition .....	2
Benefits and Privileges .....	2
Requirements .....	2
Recognition .....	4
<b>New Student Organizations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Definition .....	7
Recognition .....	7
Organization Name .....	7
Governing Documents .....	7
<b>University Policies</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Policy Compliance .....	9
Insurance Clarification .....	9
Responsibility and Liability .....	10
Student Organization Conduct Code .....	10
Title IX Statement .....	10
Hazing .....	11
Medical Amnesty .....	14
Alcohol Policy .....	14
Student Organization Travel .....	15
International Experiences .....	15
Representing the University .....	16
Copyrights and Trademarks .....	16
Non-Profit Status/Tax-Exemption .....	16
Acknowledgement .....	16
<b>Risk Reduction</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Waivers .....	19
Crisis Response .....	19
<b>Campus Resources</b> .....	<b>21</b>
RSO Management .....	21
Student Services .....	21
Academic Resources .....	22
Health & Wellness .....	22

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the FSU Panama City Recognized Student Organization Handbook!

To our organization leaders and advisors, thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm for student involvement. To our student organization members, thank you for being a part of our campus community. The experiences and relationships gained from campus involvement benefits students' academic performance and career success.

In this Recognized Student Organization Handbook, you will find tips on how to lead and manage your organization at FSU Panama City. There are details regarding the annual recognition process, campus resources, and more. Additionally, we have outlined the expectations and responsibilities that all Recognized Student Organizations are held.

While this is a great resource to guide you throughout the year, there are many additional resources to guiding your organization's success including the RSO Financial Guide, RSO Event Planning Guide, RSO and advisor workshops, the Student Organization Code, and more.

We are excited to have you as a recognized part of our campus and look forward to all the great things you will accomplish together this year. The Student Affairs staff is ready to help you create meaningful experiences for our students both on- and off-campus.

Student Engagement Coordinator  
850-770-2195

Associate Director of Student Affairs  
850-770-2171

# RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

All students are encouraged to enrich their university experience and the FSU Panama City campus by engaging with the institution. One method of involvement is participating in a Recognized Student Organization (RSO) which fosters interpersonal relationships, explores educational opportunities, develops professional skills, and enhances academic experiences by serving the campus community and cultivating leadership at FSU Panama City. We believe that the opportunities that come from being an engaged member of an RSO prepares students with the leadership skills needed to be successful after college.

## DEFINITION

A Recognized Student Organization (RSO) is defined as an organization that has been approved by the Office of Student Affairs to function at Florida State University Panama City. RSOs meet the interests and needs of the current student population and include academic, professional, social, service, faith-based, and recreational missions, but the possibilities are limitless as new organizations are continually being created.

## BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES

To be eligible to receive privileges and services, student organizations must complete the recognition process with the Office of Student Affairs each academic year. Below are several examples of benefits for Recognized Student Organizations.

RSOs receive benefits and privileges including:

- Automatically included in a list of current organizations on the FSU Panama City Recognized Student Organization webpage.
- Support and assistance with recruitment, marketing, event planning, and organization development through the Office of Student Affairs and the Student Government Council.
- RSOs are eligible for activity and service (A&S) funds through the Student Government Council and the Student Activities Board Alliance.
- Reserve campus spaces for meetings and events through the Office of Student Affairs. See the Event Registration section of this handbook for more information.
- Campus posting privileges including chalking, distribution of handbills, and posting flyers in compliance with the University Posting Policy.
- Eligibility to win awards such as “RSO of the Year” and “Advisor of the Year” awards at the end of the year banquet each spring.
- Access to computer, printer, and copier in the Student Government Council office – usage of these tools should be for organization business **only**.
- Ability to co-sponsor events with the Office of Student Affairs and/or the Student Government Council.

## REQUIREMENTS

### Recognition

Every student organization seeking recognition is required to apply each academic year, submitting all required documentation and information, attending required meetings and trainings, and informing the

Office of Student Affairs of any changes throughout the year (e.g. officer changes, constitution amendments, etc.). See the section below regarding the recognition process and important deadlines.

## Members

Every RSO is required to have a **minimum of six (6) members** who are currently enrolled students at Florida State University (FSU) or Gulf Coast State College (GCSC). All members will be required to sign a member agreement form as maintained by the Office of Student Affairs.

Involvement in recognized student organizations at FSU Panama City is limited to currently enrolled students at FSU or GCSC. Participation in RSOs can be extended to faculty and staff if their involvement is consistent with the organization's constitution and bylaws. Only students are permitted to be voting members and to hold an officer position.

## Officers

Every RSO is required to have a **minimum of two (2) officers**, of the six (6) members, one (1) of which must be president or an equivalent role (i.e. chair, executive director, etc.). If the organization will be applying for funding through the Student Government Council or the Student Activities Board Alliance, a treasurer (or equivalent role) is also required. All officers will be required to sign an officer agreement form as maintained by the Office of Student Affairs.

## Eligibility

Only currently enrolled students at FSU or GCSC may hold an officer position. Additionally, officers must be enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours as an undergraduate or one (1) credit hour as a graduate student and must be in good academic standing (minimum GPA of 2.0). However, if an organization's constitution requires a higher cumulative GPA, we will uphold the higher standard.

Verification of student eligibility can be obtained through the FSU Panama City Office of Student Affairs for FSU students and through the GCSC Student Government Association for GCSC students.

## Advisor

Every RSO is required to have at least one (1) advisor who has a **full-time faculty or staff** role at FSU Panama City. Graduate or undergraduate students (including Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants) and adjunct faculty may not serve as advisors. This person must also be currently on-campus as this is the person held liable for the organization on behalf of the University. Should an advisor need to leave for an extended period, please contact the Office of Student Affairs at 850-770-2195.

Organizations applying as part of the Seminole-Commodore Alliance must also have an advisor who has a full-time faculty or staff role at Gulf Coast State College.

Advisors will be required to sign an advisor agreement form as maintained by the Office of Student Affairs.

## Selection

When selecting an advisor for an RSO, there are many factors the organization should consider. The advisor should be a caring individual with a genuine interest for students, the organization, and their purpose, programs, and activities. Advisors should be knowledgeable about the University, the policies and procedures related to the organization, and organizational development. Additionally, advisors should be individuals that the organization feels comfortable and confident with working on a regular basis.

Individuals the organization may consider, but not limited to:

- Full time faculty or staff members of the University that are former members of the organization
- Full time faculty or staff members that serve in the University department that relates to the organization

- Full time faculty or staff members of the University that are also members of the local/national community organization related to the organization

The selection of an RSO advisor must be a mutual agreement between the organization and the faculty or staff member. RSO advisors are responsible for the professional guidance of the organization and its relation to the University and greater community.

### **Expectations**

To serve effectively, the advisor is expected to attend officer meetings, member meetings, and organization programs and events whenever possible. The advisor should be aware of all organization activities and finances and should be able to answer any questions or concerns that may arise.

RSO advisors do not have voting rights within the organization. Rather, the advisor's role is to support officers and members through decision-making processes and counsel the organization on University, local, state, and federal policies that may impact the organization.

### **Governing Documents**

Every RSO is required to have and abide by their **organization constitution** as submitted in the recognition process. Organizations must provide an updated version of their constitution each year and all constitutions must comply with the guidelines set in the Sample Constitution document.

If the RSO has by-laws or other governing documents for their organization, these documents must also be submitted in the recognition process. Additionally, if an organization has a local, state, or national affiliation, the affiliated governing documents must be submitted in the recognition process.

### **Training**

Every RSO is required to have at least two (2) officers, one of which must be the president, **attend the RSO Officers' Meeting each year** hosted by the Office of Student Affairs. This required meeting provides organization leaders with important university information and updates pertinent to all student organizations. If RSO officers are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, the officer must contact the Student Engagement Coordinator to arrange a meeting before approval of recognition status.

While RSO advisors are not required to attend meeting, they are welcome to attend but do not count toward the required two (2) officers in attendance.

RSO and advisor workshops are offered through the Office of Student Affairs throughout the academic year to support organizations on topics such as event planning, finances, organization development, and more.

### **Events**

All RSO events are required to be registered with the Office of Student Affairs at least two (2) weeks prior to the event date. The process is designed to assist student organizations as you plan events and provides support in reserving facilities, marketing on university platforms, and improve communication amongst departments and organizations. See the RSO Event Planning Guide for more information about planning events.

### **Finances**

Every RSO is required to meet all fiscal obligations incurred by the organization and abide by FSU Student Government Association [Statute VI.603.3](#) when applicable. See the RSO Financial Guide for more information about funding and financial resources.

## **RECOGNITION**

Recognition of a student organization is a process that must be completed every fall semester by all student organizations to receive and maintain privileges on campus. New organizations may complete recognition applications at any time throughout the year. Through the recognition process, organizations agree to the Student Organization Code, learn and agree to university expectations, and complete the requirements set forth by the university. **Recognition does not constitute university endorsement, support, or concurrence.**

RSOs are expected to provide up-to-date information each year and provide updates (change of officers, advisor, or constitution) throughout the year as needed for verification and continuation of recognized status.

### Authority

The Florida Administrative Code states, “the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee” will be responsible for the annual recognition process of student organizations at Florida State University. At the Panama City campus, the Student Engagement Coordinator with the Office of Student Affairs and the Student Government Council has been designated to oversee this process.

### Process

To become recognized each year, the steps below must be completed:

1. **Complete and submit the RSO Recognition Application.**
  - a. The application can be found on the FSU Panama City Recognized Student Organization webpage under “RSO Resources” at <https://pc.fsu.edu/students/campus-life/registered-student-organizations>.
  - b. Ideally, the RSO president (or equivalent) should be completing this process as this is the student leader that is held liable on behalf of the organization. The president can designate another student officer to complete this process. The advisor or a general member is not permitted to complete the process on behalf of the organization.
  - c. RSO officers completing the application should have the following information:
    - i. Member roster with campus email
      1. TIP: Save your members’ emails on a separate document so you can simply copy and paste them onto the application.
    - ii. Officer roster with campus email and phone number
    - iii. Advisor roster with campus email and phone number
    - iv. Constitution (and by-laws if drafted)
    - v. Projected revenue and expenses (only required if applying as part of the Seminole-Commodore Alliance)
  - d. The application may be started and returned to at another time by the individual that began the application.
2. **All members, officers, and advisors complete the appropriate agreement forms.**
  - a. Once the RSO Recognition Application has been successfully submitted, the Office of Student Affairs will send all members, officers, and advisors the appropriate agreement forms. Each person must sign their form and return to the Office of Student Affairs to complete the application process.
3. **Review the FSU Panama City RSO Handbook.**
  - a. The FSU Panama City RSO Handbook is updated each year with important information for organizations. While much of the information remains the same, there may be changes to processes and procedures for RSO as we work to continually improve our resources for student organizations.
  - b. All RSO officers and advisors should be familiar with this handbook as well as additional resources provided by the Office of Student Affairs and the Student Government Council.
4. **Attend the RSO Officers’ Meeting.**
  - a. The Officers’ Meeting will provide helpful information for RSO officers, discuss important university policies pertinent to RSOs, and outline the benefits of being a recognized student organization at FSU Panama City.

- b. RSO officers must sign in at the training session to get credit for the organization's attendance. At least two (2) officers are required to attend from each organization. If a student holds officer positions in multiple organizations, they can represent each organization in which they hold an officer role.

### ***Timeline***

The annual renewal process at FSU Panama City occurs between August 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Completing the recognition process during this summer timeline allows for organizations to participate in the fall semester organization fair hosted by the Student Government Council.

Recognition applications can be submitted at any time; however, all approvals expire on August 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

### **Approval**

Student organizations applying for recognition are approved only when all requirements and documentation are submitted to the Office of Student Affairs and the requesting organization receives an email confirmation of approval status.

Approval often occurs within two (2) weeks following the submission of all documentation, including agreement forms from all officers, all advisors, and at least six (6) members (including the officers).

Should there be any issues or discrepancies, the organization will receive an email from the Student Affairs staff along with commentary as to why the application has not been approved. An application may not be approved for one or more of the following reasons:

- A general member or advisor completed the application.
- An officer or advisor does not meet the minimum requirements to serve in their role.
- The organization name violates licensing or trademark rules.
- The organization's constitution does not comply with guidelines or requires further revisions.
- Officer and/or advisor agreement forms were not completed.
- The organization did not attend the RSO Officers' Meeting.

The responsibility of addressing these discrepancies and resubmitting the application falls on the organization's officers. Additionally, the Office of Student Affairs reserves the right to request a meeting with or additional documentation from the organization as part of the review and approval process should there be further questions regarding the organization's purpose, activities, structure, etc.



# NEW STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## DEFINITION

FSU Panama City welcomes and encourages the formation of new student organizations. A new Recognized Student Organization can be defined one of three (3) ways:

- An organization that has **never previously existed** at FSU Panama City and will provide a unique opportunity for students to come together over a specific interest.
- An organization that currently exists at FSU Panama City, but **obtains its resources from elsewhere** (i.e. academic department) and is seeking recognized status from the Office of Student Affairs for the first time.
- An organization that has previously existed at FSU Panama City and had recognition status from the Office of Student Affairs but has been **inactive for three (3) or more academic years**.

## RECOGNITION

Prior to the completion of the recognition process, new organizations and their advisor(s) are required to meet with the Student Engagement Coordinator to review the requirements, expectations, and procedures for recognition. Following this meeting, organizations are required to complete the recognition process as established for all organizations. The recognition application can be completed at any time during the academic year; however, all recognition status' expire on August 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

## ORGANIZATION NAME

Students interested in establishing a new student organization are encouraged to consider an organization name that accurately and succinctly reflects the purpose and function of the organization. RSOs that wish to use the university's name as part of their organization's name may do so if sponsorship or endorsement by the university is not implied or stated. If used, organizations are restricted to the following:

- The university's name may only appear at the end of the organization's name and should be followed by the statement "a Recognized Student Organization" (i.e. Student organization at Florida State University, a Recognized Student Organization).
- The title should follow one of these formats: (1) Florida State University; (2) FSU; (3) Florida State University Panama City; (4) FSU Panama City; or (5) FSU PC.

## GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

### Constitutions

A constitution is a set of rules for the organization. Constitutions may be any length but must contain the required components as outlined in the Constitution Guide. RSOs should tailor this sample constitution specific to their organization with the required sections and statements.

Locally and nationally affiliated organizations must draft a campus constitution for their organization to include FSU specific requirements and policies for the organization. Local and national constitutions are required in addition in the recognition process and may be used as a reference for the campus constitution.

A well-written constitution can be a great asset to the organization and serve as a basis for organizational decision making. The organization's constitution should be made available to all members, officer, and advisors of the organization and submitted to the Office of Student Affairs each year.

If students in the organization need help writing or updating their constitution, they can contact the Student Engagement Coordinator.

### **By-Laws**

By-laws often accompany a constitution with "working rules" of the organization but are not the constitution. If the organization wants to put common practices in writing, they will need to draft by-laws. Common topics included in by-laws are committees, rules of order, meeting parameters, etc.

By-laws are not required for each organization; rather, they are an additional tool available for the organization. However, if the organization drafts by-laws, they must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs in the recognition process.

# UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Recognized Student Organizations are afforded privileges and, in exchange, are required to adhere to and fulfill expectations as conditions of recognition. RSOs are expected to adhere to University rules and regulations as well as all federal and state laws and local ordinances. Any RSO that does not meet all requirements and expectations are subject to review and removal of recognition status.

## POLICY COMPLIANCE

University policies are designed with the interests of promoting a safe and healthy community for our students to grow as scholars and engaged citizens. Recognized Student Organizations play an important role in committing to such an environment.

The following is explicitly outlined in University policy regarding Recognized Student Organizations:

“(2) Each recognized student organization’s purposes and activities shall comply with applicable provisions of the United States Constitution, federal laws, the Constitution of the State of Florida, state laws, rules and regulations of the Board of Governors, the Florida State University Board of Trustees, Florida State University, and the Florida State University Student Conduct Code, and the purposes set forth in the Student Body Constitution, and the constitution of the student organization. The student organization and its officers are responsible and accountable for all actions of the organization. Any violation of law, Board of Governors’ rules and regulations, Florida State University Board of Trustees rules and regulations, or Florida State University rules shall be considered as offenses committed by the organization. Its officers or members shall be subject to action pursuant to the provisions of the Florida State University Student Conduct Code. Any violation by a student organization shall render the organization’s recognition subject to review and possible revocation. Benefits of recognition include but are not limited to, use of university name and facilities, eligibility for activity and service fee funding, and participation in university events” (FSU-3.0015).

RSOs at FSU Panama City are responsible for their events and activities, as well as the actions or negligence of the organization membership. Take a moment to thoroughly read the liability information detailed below. Be sure to review the information with your organization at the beginning of each semester and discuss how these issues might affect your organization’s activities. The officers and advisor(s) must initial and sign in their respective agreement forms stating they have read and understand the liability information.

## INSURANCE CLARIFICATION

Florida State University has no insurance covering the activities of student organizations. In accordance with the laws of the State of Florida, Florida State University, and the Florida State University Board of Trustees, the University is unable to provide insurance that covers any student organization or activity. The only exceptions to this rule are for salaried representatives of the Student Government Council acting within the scope of their office. Completing the recognition process with the Office of Student Affairs as a student organization is not recognized by the State Risk Management Trust Fund and does not establish or fall within the State of Florida, Florida State University, or the Florida State University Board of Trustees coverage under that fund. Approval of a student organization or activity by the Office of Student Affairs or the Student Government Council does not establish State of Florida, Florida State University, or the Florida State University Board of Trustees liability coverage for that organization or activity.

## RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY

In consideration of the participants of the organization and its members in the stated activities of the organization and others that may occur during the academic school year, the organization's officers and individual members have both an organizational and personal legal responsibility to adhere to all local, state, and federal laws, and Florida State University administrative policies and procedures. It is understood that neither Florida State University, the Florida State University Board of Trustees, nor the State of Florida can defend the activities of the organization under its present insurance coverage or defray the costs, including attorneys' fees, of defending any lawsuit or claim against the organization, its officers or members. The organization agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the State of Florida, Florida State University, the Florida State University Board of Trustees, and their officers and employees for and against any claims caused by the activities of the organization, its officers, and members. The organization may be held fully liable for its activities and any claims that may result will be against the organization, its officers, members, and possibly advisors.

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONDUCT CODE

The [Student Organization Conduct Code](#) emphasizes Florida State University's commitment to a campus community which exercises the responsible engagement of student freedoms. The pursuit of responsible freedom is consistent with the tenants of the Seminole Creed and efforts to promote civility at the university, as students balance their pursuit of excellence and exploration with consideration to the impact of behaviors on themselves and others. It is encouraged that all RSO officers and advisors read and understand the code as it guides behavior and operations.

Moreover, the code operates as a vehicle for informing students about their rights and responsibilities while reinforcing the development of ethical standards that make responsible freedom possible. FSU Panama City jurisdiction regarding discipline is generally limited to conduct of any student or RSO that occurs on the FSU Panama City campus; however, the University reserves the right to impose discipline based on any student conduct, regardless of location, that may adversely affect the university community and its international programs.

### Accountability

RSOs will be held accountable for violations of University policy and the Student Organization Conduct Code. Lack of familiarity with the code, lack of intent for violation, and intoxication or impairment are not justification to any violations of the code.

Students, faculty, staff, and community members can report any RSO who violates any laws, University policies, Conduct Code, or established protocols and procedures related to student organizations through <https://report.fsu.edu> or by contacting the Office of Student Affairs at 850-770-2171.

RSOs are afforded due process rights throughout the student organization conduct process. Any and all rights afforded to a responding student organization during any conduct action will also be afforded to a reporting individual(s) as appropriate. These rights will be executed in a fair and impartial manner with respect to all reporting individuals and responding student organizations involved in a conduct action.

## TITLE IX STATEMENT

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.F. Part 106 (Title IX).

As a recipient of Federal financial assistance for education activities, FSU is required by Title IX to ensure that all of its education programs and activities are free from discrimination on the basis of sex. Additionally, the Florida Educational Equity Act prohibits discrimination in schools based on race, creed, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veterans' status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other legally protected group status. 1000.05 (2012) Florida Statute. Furthermore, this commitment is reaffirmed in FSU's [Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Statement](#), which is applicable to all faculty, staff, students, visitors, applicants, and contractors.

The University's Title IX Director is responsible for overseeing the development of sexual misconduct policies, insuring compliance with Title IX and relevant federal and state regulations and investigating Title IX complaints alleging student sexual misconduct. The Human Resources Deputy Coordinator will oversee investigations of sexual misconduct by faculty, staff, or visitors. Questions regarding Title IX, as well as concerns about and complaints of non-compliance (including complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, or other sexual misconduct) should be directed to the Title IX Director or at Title IX Deputy Coordinator.

Complaints will be addressed following the University's discrimination complaint procedures, [Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Non-Retaliation Policy and Procedures](#) and the [Student Conduct Code](#). Some acts of sexual misconduct may also constitute violations of criminal law and require mandatory reporting to the FSU PC Police Department (e.g., sexual battery, indecent exposure, sexual abuse, etc.). In such instances, refer to the University's [Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and contact FSU PC Police Department at 850-774-2705. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may also be directed to the Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education.

All student organizations must comply with the University's Non-Discrimination Policy. In cases where the non-discrimination policy conflicts with the organization's religious beliefs, tenets, or doctrines, or an organization's limitation of membership to a particular gender, as allowed by law, the organization may request in writing an exemption from the part of the policy that is in conflict. Requests for exemption will be submitted to the Associate Director of Student Affairs (or designee) who will determine whether the exemption will be granted. Denial of a request for exemption may be appealed to the Associate Dean of Faculty Development and Administrative Affairs, whose decision shall constitute final University action on the matter. The Office of General Counsel at the Florida State University may be consulted as necessary regarding legal issues associated with the request.

**If an organization is Title IX exempt (i.e. social fraternity or sorority organizations), they do NOT need to submit a request for exemption.**

## HAZING

Florida State University believes "no student should be harmed, demeaned, and/or put at any safety risk while joining, during membership, or after membership of any student organization, club, group, or university entity" (Hazing Education Initiative).

All students involved in social activities at Florida State University should visit <https://hazing.fsu.edu> to learn about our community's strong stance against hazing behavior.

On the website, students can hear student leaders discuss the issue, read Florida's criminal hazing law and FSU's policy, test their knowledge about hazing information and resources, report incidents they observe in the community, and list their name and organization's commitment to providing a safe and hazing-free environment.

### Florida's Hazing Law

Florida's hazing law is called the "Chad Meredith Act."

In 2001, University of Miami student, Chad Meredith, returned from a concert and began drinking with two officers of Kappa Sigma, a fraternity he wished to join. After several hours of drinking, the group tried to swim across Lake Osceola near campus. Meredith had a blood alcohol level of 0.13. He drowned 34-feet from shore in 6 feet, 9 inches of water. Although, the fraternity officers protested that the incident was not a fraternity-sanctioned hazing event, a jury found otherwise and awarded the deceased student's family a \$12.6 million verdict in a negligence suit based on hazing.

Under Florida's law, "hazing" includes, but is not limited to:

- Pressuring or coercing the student into violating state or federal law;
- Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance, or other forced physical activity that which could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student;
- Any activity that which would subject the student to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct that which could result in extreme embarrassment; or
- Other forced activity that which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student.

Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective.

In 2005, Florida became the first state to designate hazing as a felony.

A person commits hazing, a **third-degree felony**, when they intentionally or recklessly commit any act of hazing upon another person who is a member of or an applicant to any type of student organization and the hazing results in serious bodily injury or death of such other person.

A person commits hazing, a **first-degree misdemeanor**, when they intentionally or recklessly commit any act of hazing upon another person who is a member of or an applicant to any type of student organization and the hazing creates substantial risk of physical injury or death to such other person.

In Florida and at Florida State University, you cannot defend hazing behavior by stating:

- The consent of the victim had been obtained;
- The conduct or activity that result in the death or injury of a person was not part of an official organizational event or was not otherwise sanctioned or approved by the organization; or
- The conduct or activity that resulted in death or injury of the person was not done as a condition of membership to an organization.

### **Andrew's Law**

Andrew Coffey, a junior undergraduate at Florida State University, was an aspiring new member in the Fall 2017 pledge class for the FSU chapter of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity. On November 3, 2017, Coffey participated in an off-campus fraternity event associated with the chapter's "big/little" ritual, which involved the over-consumption of alcohol. Based on a subsequent police investigation and media reports, fraternity members who were present at the event allegedly discovered Coffey was intoxicated and needed medical attention. These fraternity men feared facing prosecution, and instead of calling for medical attention, members moved Coffey to a couch. Coffey died as a result of alcohol poisoning after he was forced to drink a bottle of Wild Turkey bourbon.

Senate Bill 1080, know as "Andrew's Law," expands the crime of hazing, a third-degree felony, to include when a person solicits others to commit or is actively involved in the planning of hazing. It also expands the crime of hazing, a first-degree misdemeanor, to include when a person solicits others to commit or is

actively involved in the planning of hazing. Finally, the law provides immunity from prosecution to persons who meet specific requirements.

The following language is directly cited in the 2019 summary of Andrew's Law:

"The bill amends and reorganizes the definition of hazing in s. 1006.63, F.S., to include the perpetuation or furtherance of a tradition or ritual of any organization operating under the sanction of a postsecondary institution.

"Currently, s. 1006.63, F.S., protects persons who are members of or applicants to a student organization from hazing. The bill adds a person who is a former member of the organization as a person who is protected under s. 1006.63, F.S.

"Persons who solicit others to commit the crime of hazing or who plan any act of hazing may be prosecuted as if they actively participated in the hazing event under the provisions in the bill. If the hazing results in a permanent injury to the victim, the crime is a third-degree felony.

"The bill provides that a person who provides aid, before medical assistance, law enforcement, or campus security arrive on the scene or if an individual is the first to call 911 seeking medical attention for a hazing victim, and who otherwise cooperates with and assists first responders may not be prosecuted for the crime of hazing. These provisions are named 'Andrew's Law' by the bill" (SB 1080, 2019).

The provisions of this law took effect October 1, 2019.

Source: CS/CS/CS/SB 1080 – Hazing (2019).

[http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/2019/BillSummary/Criminal\\_CJ1080cj\\_1080.pdf](http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/2019/BillSummary/Criminal_CJ1080cj_1080.pdf)

### **Florida State University**

The [Student Conduct Code](#) and [Student Organization Conduct Code](#) outline behavior expected of all students.

Hazing any group or individual action or situation that intentionally, recklessly, or negligently endangers the mental or physical health or safety or which may demean, disgrace, or degrade any person regardless of location, intent, or consent of participant(s). Although hazing is generally related to a person's initiation or admission into, or affiliation with, any group or organization, it is not necessary that a person's initiation or continued membership is contingent upon participation in the activity, or that the activity was sanctioned or approved by the organization, for a charge of hazing to be upheld. The actions of active, associate, new, and/or prospective members of an organization may be considered hazing.

Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

- Interference or impeding with a student's academic performance, employment, religious observances, and activities.
- Forced or coerced participation and/or exclusion in university-related activities.
- Forced or coerced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, or any other substance.
- Forced or coerced wearing of apparel which is conspicuous and/or inappropriate.
- Forced or coerced unreasonable financial expenditures.
- Forced or coerced exclusion from social contact.
- Forced or coerced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.
- Unreasonable monitoring or invasion of personal privacy.
- Branding.
- Subjecting a person to extreme stress, such as sleep deprivations, calisthenics, or other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of a reasonable person.



- Food deprivation.
- Beating, whipping, or paddling in any form.
- Line-ups and berating.
- Physical and/or psychological shocks.
- Personal, organizational, or group servitude.
- Kidnapping or abandonment.
- Unreasonable exposure to the elements.
- Any activity that would be viewed by a reasonable person as subjecting any persons to embarrassment, degradation, or humiliation.
- Expectation or forced or coerced participation in activities that are unlawful, lewd, or in violation of University policy as well as local, state, and/or federal law.

Source: Florida State University (nd). Hazing education initiative at Florida State University. Retrieved from <https://hazing.fsu.edu>.

## MEDICAL AMNESTY

Florida State University supports a safe and inclusive environment that enhances academic pursuits and student success. Institutional core values of the Seminole Creed and Responsible Freedom guide our conduct and inform policy and decisions. A Medical Amnesty Policy benefits our campus by encouraging students to make responsible decision in seeking medical attention in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug use or abuse and in any situation where medical treatment is reasonably believed to be appropriate. This policy seeks to diminish fear of disciplinary and conduct sanctions in such situations and to encourage individuals and organizations to seek needed medical attention for students in distress from alcohol and drug use.

This policy does not grant “full immunity” to a student who acts under this policy (i.e., seeks emergency assistance on behalf of themselves, another student, or a friend experiencing an alcohol and/or drug related emergency) if a determination is made, independent of any information gained as a result of the call for medical attention, that Student Conduct Code charges are appropriate.

Alcohol or other drug consumption (including, but not limited to: excessive consumption; consumption of a dangerous or illegal substance; or consumption by someone with sensitivity) can cause serious harm or pose a threat to life. Given these risks, students are encouraged to make responsible decisions and to seek medical attention in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug consumption and to call 911 (or FSU Panama City Police at 850-774-2705) for medical attention. Students are also encouraged to seek help for any situation where medical treatment is reasonable believed to be appropriate or when problematic use and/or abuse is an issue. If a student is incapacitated, letting that person “sleep it off” or having a friend “look after” that person are not reasonable alternatives to getting them the necessary medical help.

Under this policy, a student who seeks emergency assistance on behalf of themselves, another student, or a friend experiencing an alcohol and/or other drug related emergency will not be subject to disciplinary action under the FSU Student Conduct Code. Although students who qualify for Medical Amnesty are exempt from the Student Conduct process, they are required to complete educational measures and pay for any incurring costs as described in the Medical Amnesty and Policy Procedures section.

Florida State University’s full medical amnesty policy, FAQs, and more can be accessed at <https://dos.fsu.edu/srr/policies/medical-amnesty-policy>.

## ALCOHOL POLICY



Florida State University recognizes high risk or dangerous alcohol consumption and associated conduct undermine the intellectual climate of the university. Moreover, high risk or dangerous alcohol use inhibits the opportunity for maximum intellectual development, respect for the rights of others, and a sense of community and citizenship. Florida State University neither encourages nor condemns the legal consumption of alcoholic beverages. The university recognizes, however, the majority of undergraduate students are below the legal drinking age and there are serious health risks and behavior problems associated with the use of alcohol in the collegiate environment. Consequently, alcohol will be permitted at Florida State University or programs sponsored by Florida State University or its direct support organizations only in those setting which:

- Comply with federal or state laws, local ordinances, University regulations, foreign country laws (in the case of study abroad programs conducted by Florida State University International Programs, Inc.), Student Conduct Code and this policy;
- Present minimal health and safety risks; and
- In no way inhibit the full participation of those who choose not to drink alcohol.

Events and activities that encourage excessive drinking and/or lead to the endangerment of individuals will not be permitted. Any person or organization in violation of federal or state laws, local ordinances, or of this policy will be reported to the proper federal, state, local, or university authorities for appropriate action.

The University's Alcohol Policy can be reviewed in its entirety online at:

[https://healthycampus.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1016/files/FSUAlcoholPolicy\\_Updated\\_11-7-2016.pdf](https://healthycampus.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1016/files/FSUAlcoholPolicy_Updated_11-7-2016.pdf).

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION TRAVEL

The university is not liable for any student who travels. However, the Office of Student Affairs realizes that some Recognized Student Organizations may travel to conferences, competitions, or other events to promote their organization or to convene with other chapters of the large state or national organization. All members of RSOs are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner when they travel and within the Florida State University [Student Conduct Code](#) and in a manner that does not detract from the reputation of the university.

Please note: FSU does NOT provide insurance coverage for personal vehicles or any individuals in the vehicle.

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Florida State University recognizes the importance of preparing students to be successful citizens in a global society and supports international study and intercultural experiences as an integral part of the academic, social, and cultural development process of a university education. The following policy has been developed and adopted to ensure the safety and security of all students participating in international experiences. In addition, the policy attempts to ensure that all international programs are academically and culturally enriching experiences.

The following programs require a [Student International Experience Plan \(SIEP\)](#):

- International awards funded through Florida State University
- International experiences through the Center for Leadership and Social Change, Center for the Advancement of Human Rights, Career Center, and Recognized Student Organizations
- University sponsored or other university funded international experiences

For detailed information on International Experiences and the Student International Experience Plan (SIEP), please go to <https://global.fsu.edu>.

## REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITY

RSOs may engage in activities on- and off-campus that may reflect their affiliation to Florida State University. However, RSOs are not official representatives for Florida State University and do not have the authority to act, engage, or speak on behalf of the University. According to the Florida Administrative Code, the only person(s) who can represent the University in an “official” capacity are university faculty, staff, and administrators.

## COPYRIGHTS AND TRADEMARKS

Recognized Student Organizations may have interest in creating a logo or symbol to visually represent their organization. Specifically, the Office of Trademark Licensing in Tallahassee is responsible for the management and marketing of all “trademarks, logos, likeness, and braded intellectual property of Florida State University.” RSOs should consult with the Trademark Licensing Policy, established through the Office of Trademark Licensing located at <https://licensing.fsu.edu/campus-use/recognized-student-organizations>.

RSOs are responsible for remaining knowledgeable of all University regulations related to copyrights and trademarks that belong to the University. RSOs are recommended to consult with University Communications to remain compliant with such regulations.

## NON-PROFIT STATUS/TAX-EXEMPTION

Official recognition of any organization does not constitute university endorsement or grant university-specific privileges. As a result, tax-exempt status is not granted when organizations receive recognition. If you would like more information on how to register as a tax-exempt organization, please see the FSU Panama City RSO Finance Guide.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The officers and advisor(s) of each organization shall declare in writing by signature in the recognition process that they both fully understand and acknowledge their reliance wholly upon their own judgement, belief, and conscious appreciation of the particular activities and dangers involved in the organization’s events, programs, and functions. Further, they acknowledge and understand that the State of Florida, the Florida State University Board of Trustees, and the Florida State University disclaim liability for any and all damage, injury, or loss of life that may occur with respect to the activities, functions, and programs of the organization. By signing the form, they also acknowledge their responsibility to notify all members of the organization of these terms and conditions, and the provisions stated in Section 6C2-3.0015, Florida Administrative Code, found in the FSU Student Handbook and FSU General Bulletin. The term of recognition is valid for one academic year from **September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>**. They understand that signing this form does not relieve FSU from liability for its negligence, as stated in Section 768.28, Florida Statutes.

# RISK REDUCTION

All members of a student organization, including advisors, are expected to engage with the organization in a manner consistent with common sense and FSU policies and procedures. The University's [Student Conduct Code](#) and [Student Organization Conduct Code](#) governs procedures for alleged misconduct for students and student organizations.

Students and advisors take on responsibility for the actions of their respective organizations when they assume a leadership role within these organizations. A question often asked is "Can I be held responsible if something happens to my organization?" and the answer can be more complicated than a simple "No." Florida State University expects that all parties involved with a student organization engage with said organization in a manner consistent with common sense and in congruence with FSU policies and procedures.

Each organization engages in varying degrees of risk through the execution and implementation of its interests. This is often the case due to the various activities associated with the purpose of an organization as well as the execution of its duties. For example, the execution of a boxing match for a Boxing Club at FSU will have different risk factors associated when compared to a panel discussion moderated by the Debate Club.

## Advisors' Role

Advisors are expected to give reasonable and sound advice to organizations about programs, events, procedures, etc.

FSU advisors to student organizations or other institutional agents will generally be protected by the state risk management program from liability claims if it can be established that they were acting within the scope of their authority and they were not intentionally negligent or in violation of the injured party's civil rights. It is important that FSU advisors' position descriptions or statement of duties and responsibilities include reference to a duty to serve as an advisor to a student organization.

Advisors are encouraged to take prudent and careful actions in the execution of their roles to stay abreast of the organization. Some of these actions may include:

- Attending regularly scheduled and special meetings.
- Attending organizational functions.
- Meeting with organizational officers to discuss goals, directions, policies, and programs.
- Being available to organizations when they need help the most.
- Being familiar with institutional policies and applicable state laws.
- Being generally aware of the activities of the organization.
- Warning participants in activities of the risks involved.
- Being familiar with the constitutional and statutory rights of students.
- Being reasonable, consistent, and using common sense in all aspects of their relationship with the organization.

Advisors may advise organizations concerning the management of their bank accounts; however, advisors should NOT:

- Open a bank account in the name of or for the benefit of a Recognized Student Organization.
- Be included as a signatory on any off-campus bank accounts for any Recognized Student Organization.

- Have access to funds associated with an off-campus bank account for a Recognized Student Organization.
- Allow organizations to have an organization other than a bank to hold their funds.

Advisors should be aware of the scope of their authority. The university grants student organization advisors the authority to make certain decisions or take certain actions within their state responsibilities as an advisor. In some instances, the university may also reserve certain rights (for instance, signing contracts). If advisors remain within the designated responsibilities of their position, they will be able to avoid many unnecessary risks.

Here are some other tips in managing liability and risk reduction:

- Identify specific risks involved in the activity. These could include physical risks (such as an event with physical activity), psychological risks (activities around potentially triggering topics), and liability risks (events involving alcohol, minors, or travel).
- Be willing to tell an organization that what it is doing, or planning to do, is wrong, inappropriate, illegal, or risky and to offer alternative suggestions. For example, if a planned activity may constitute “hazing,” advisors have an obligation to take appropriate steps to ensure that the activity is not undertaken, including informing the Office of the Dean and the FSU Panama City Police Department, if necessary.
- Ensure the organization obtains release of liability/hold harmless agreements from members of the organization participating in activities, such as retreats, off-campus trips, etc.
- Provide proper instruction, preparation, or training for participants in an activity.
- Report potentially unsafe facility, grounds, equipment, or vehicle conditions to institutional officers and assisting the organization in any decision not to conduct the planned activity considering those conditions.
- Give special attention to events which involve consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- Educate the officers of the legal implications of various risks and liabilities of planned activities and events (e.g., alcohol, presence of underage participants, physical dangers, etc.).
- If several members from the organization need to travel a long distance for an activity or event, consider contracting buses to transport attendees to reduce risk. This is especially a good idea if there will be alcohol served at the activity or event.
- To reduce organizational and personal liability, as a requirement for participation in an organization’s activities and events, the Office of Student Affairs requires all members to sign a release of liability form as membership in the organization. Advisors should have knowledge of all members’ status.

Keep in mind FSU provides resources for advisors to help assess and limit liability:

- All organizational events must be registered with the Office of Student Affairs to assist in risk reduction. Approval of events by the Office of Student Affairs does not establish State of Florida, Florida State University, or the Florida State University Board of Trustees liability coverage for that organization or activity.
- The [FSU Student Handbook](#) is the source for university rules and regulations.
- Visit <https://alerts.fsu.edu> for FSU emergency notification information.
- Visit the Faculty Staff Emergency Guide for crucial information about handling emergencies.
- Visit <https://hazing.fsu.edu> for comprehensive information regarding hazing. Hazing is NOT permitted by FSU under any circumstances. Hazing a violation of state law.
- Utilize <https://report.fsu.edu> to share important information regarding incidents or concerning behavior happening in the FSU community including sexual misconduct and stalking, concerning behavior, ADA/accessibility issues, hazing, conduct violations, acts of discrimination, and student organization violations (non-hazing).

## WAIVERS

Waivers should be used for RSO travel, activities that have liability concerns (e.g., 5Ks, bringing minors on campus, inflatables, activities on the bay, etc.) and any other events deemed necessary. The Office of Student Organizations & Involvement in Tallahassee has worked with the Office of General Counsel at Florida State University to prepare several different types of waivers for student organizations. Contact the Office of Student Affairs at 850-770-2170 for additional information.

## CRISIS RESPONSE

While Recognized Student Organizations are advised to plan their activities and events in such a way as to avert crisis, it is important to proactively plan how to respond in the event one should occur. Intentional development of a crisis response plan prior to an event or activity will empower the organization to effectively respond. Educating members prior to a crisis is crucial. All organization members must know who is in charge and be prepared to follow the plan. The following information is intended to assist students in the development of a crisis response plan, but should not be considered a complete plan, rather a guide for designing a protocol that fits the organization's needs.

It is important to understand that crisis can happen to your students and the organization. If this happens, please encourage your students to utilize the resources of FSU PC Police Department, Counseling Services, or any other pertinent office to assist you. It is important for students to be aware of their own feelings, perceptions, and issues so that they can monitor their ability to cope with the difficult situation.

### General Crisis Response Plan

- Develop a crisis response strategy for your organization prior to your event or program.
- Create a step-by-step process for what to do in case of a crisis.
- Designate organizational officers and crisis team who can take charge of a crisis situation.
- Review your crisis response plan on a regular basis and update your plan as needed.
- If medical attention is needed, attend to those needs before doing anything else. You can call 911 for local first responders.
- For assistance with event statements and/or reporting events contact the FSU PC Police Department at 850-774-2705.
- For assistance with crisis management, call FSU's Victim Advocate office at 850-644-7161 or 850-644-2277. The Victim Advocate program provides support to victims of crime. An advocate is on call 24 hours a day to respond to all FSU students who are victimized or any other person who is victimized on our campus or in our community. Services offered include emotional support, instructor notification, referrals, and educational programming for our campus community.
- Contact the Office of Student Affairs at 850-770-2170 or the Office of the Dean at 850-770-2100 to inform them of the situation.

### Sample Emergency Contact Card

Recognized Student Organizations should create emergency contact cards for their organization. Contact cards should be kept in a permanent visible location, as well as brought to organization events and when traveling. These contact cards will enable organization members to react quickly in an emergency and reach pertinent people.

NAME	PHONE
RSO President, Name	XXX-XXX-XXXX
RSO Advisor, Name	XXX-XXX-XXXX

Office of Student Affairs	850-770-2170
Office of the Dean	850-770-2100
FSU PC Police Department, Officer on Duty	850-774-2705
FSU Victim Advocate	850-644-7161 (business hours) 850-644-1234 (nights and weekends)

# CAMPUS RESOURCES

Listed below are some departments and campus resources that Recognized Student Organizations frequently partner with or utilize. This list does not encompass all the resources available on campus but provides a starting point. Students are encouraged to work with a variety of campus services to support their endeavors.

## RSO MANAGEMENT

### Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs can assist organizations with the recognition process, event planning, marketing, officer transition, conduct expectations, and more.

Student Engagement Coordinator  
Barron Building 309  
850-770-2195

Associate Director of Student Affairs  
Barron Building 212  
850-770-2171  
[studentaffairs@pc.fsu.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@pc.fsu.edu)

### Student Government Council

The Student Government Council can assist organizations with recruitment, event planning, funding, and marketing, and more.

Barron Building 309  
850-770-2194  
[sgc@pc.fsu.edu](mailto:sgc@pc.fsu.edu)

## STUDENT SERVICES

### Student Disability Support Services

Collaborating with students to create an accessible and inclusive environment, the Office of Student Disability Support Services identifies, minimizes, and, where possible, eliminates barriers to equal access while encouraging equal participation for all students.

Coordinator of Student Support and Disability Services  
Barron Building 215  
850-770-2172

### Career Services

The Career Center provides unique programs and opportunities for students and student organizations based on career interest or career preparation needs.

FSU Panama City Career Resource Coordinator  
Holley Academic Center C117  
850-770-2288

Career Center FSU Panama City Liaison  
FSU Tallahassee Dunlap Success Center  
850-644-9773

## **ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

### **Academic Advising & Student Success**

Academic Advising and Student Success assist students with academic advising, tutoring services, enrollment, and major changes.

Holley Academic Center C117  
850-770-2288  
[advising@pc.fsu.edu](mailto:advising@pc.fsu.edu)

### **Library & Learning Center**

The Library offers a wealth of scholarly resources including digital and print resources, research support, and test preparation.

Holley Academic Center A110  
850-770-2140  
[library@pc.fsu.edu](mailto:library@pc.fsu.edu)

### **Robbins Center**

The John and Gail Robbins Center for Academic Excellence and Innovation houses the Digital Design Studio (DDS). Students, faculty, and staff can receive support with programs such as Zoom, Adobe Photoshop, Premiere, InDesign, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, or any other classroom software.

Holley Academic Center B101  
850-770-2181

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

### **Counseling Services**

Counseling Services is available at no cost to all currently enrolled students at FSU Panama City and Gulf Coast State College to support students' personal, social, and emotional needs. Also available is the Seminole Exchange Food Pantry and Professio'Nole Clothing Closet to support students' physical needs.

Barron Building 303  
850-770-2174

After hours FSU Crisis Line is available at no cost to students from 3:00 PM until 7:00 AM.  
850-644-TALK (8255)