



Student Group Handbook

STUDENT GROUP HANDBOOK – LAST REVISED JANUARY 2020

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Dear Student Leaders!

This handbook was designed to compile policies and resources for student groups on Grinnell's campus into a single, simple, and straightforward document.

Student groups are essential to our shared community, strengthening self-governance, enhancing cross-cultural learning, and providing spaces for students to organize, learn, and volunteer. They are the core of collective action and play a vital role in forming friendships and belonging on our campus.

The Student Government Association, in partnership with the Office of Student Involvement, will continue to build on this handbook over time. It will be updated as policies change or as our goals are modified to better reflect the needs of student groups on campus. The purpose of this partnership is to increase the possibilities available to student groups, and to enhance the events and programs that groups offer. Our goal is to continue developing programming to better prepare student leaders

An essential part of our mission this year is to implement the student group reform, which will create two new classifications (student organizations and student clubs) and a set of coherent policies that lay out precisely how such groups are recognized and their eligibility for funding. These policies are detailed in this handbook to ease the transition for your group and to allow you to prepare for the upcoming re-registration process next semester. Please note that this handbook is not an exhaustive summary of all policies that may apply to student groups on campus, and that this handbook may be updated at any time.

SGA and Student Involvement stand ready to assist you as we all learn from this transition!

Sincerely,
Eric Kasprzyk
Services Coordinator & Student Programming Chair

Ashley Adams
Associate Director for Student Involvement

Starting a new group: Club or Organization?

The Student Government Association recognizes two types of student groups: student organizations and student clubs. Figuring out which one is right for your group is essential before moving forward.

Student Organizations are envisioned as sustainable and structured student groups, providing continued contributions to the Grinnell community.

Student Clubs are more informal, allowing greater flexibility for smaller groups of students and friends.

Student Organization

Student Club

Requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 executives + 5 members - Constitution - Approval from Student Programming Committee 	Requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 members - Approval from Student Programming Committee Chair
Provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding without limitations - Access to an official e-mail - Optional advisor - Campus space reservation 	Provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding up to \$150 per semester - Campus space reservation

The first step to deciding between the two is formulating a clear mission statement. What is your group going to do that is unique to Grinnell's campus? Double check the list of current student groups to make sure you are not duplicating any existing ones on campus. Then assess your goals for the group and what sort of funding needs it may have.

Neither type is better than the other. They are simply different and designed to provide the opportunity for formal, long-standing organizations, and more informal clubs and associations of students.

There is also nothing wrong in starting out as a club and applying for organization status later in the semester – you can do so at any time!

Student Clubs

If you've decided that status as a Student Club best fits your group, great! The process for creating Student Clubs is simple and fully automated via GrinnellShare. You may access the application there at any time. In order to fill it out, you will need:

- A primary contact and a secondary contact, with one contact designated as the point-person for SGA's Treasurer's Office;
- A short mission statement explaining the purpose of the group;
- A formal description that can be put on GrinnellShare.

Your point-person for the Treasurer's Office will have to create and share a Google excel spreadsheet with [sgamoney], [sga2] and [services] to track your club's finances in order to be eligible for funding.

Please note that clubs may only apply for up to \$150 of funding per semester. Should your club require additional funding, we encourage you to consider becoming a student organization.

IMPORTANT TRANSITION NOTE! All groups that do not specifically apply to become student organizations will automatically default to Student Club status after the extra-ordinary re-registration period in January/February 2020. This will result in your group:

- Having its e-mail deactivated;
- Receiving only up to \$150 per semester should you apply for funding.

You do NOT need to re-apply for anything if you would like to continue as a club.

Your club may apply to become a student organization at any time, but your e-mail will not be re-activated, and you will have to apply for a new one.

Student Organizations

Student organizations are the core of our campus community. They have greater resources at their disposal, but also must fulfill a few additional requirements to ensure they are transparent, accessible, and open to all. Creating a student organization is still easy – it just requires knowing what you want your organization to look like!

Step 1. Develop a clear mission statement and organization description.

Step 2. Decide on a name that reflects your organization's goals. (See Naming).

Step 3. Find two additional members that can form the executive for the organization's first semester.

Step 4. Find five individuals that can be confirmed as members of your group and supporting its application to become a student organization.

Step 5. Develop a Constitution that reflects the mission and goals of your organization as well as the values of its members (See Constitutions).

Step 6. Decide whether your organization wants an advisor and reach out to that person ahead of time if you do (See Advisors).

Step 7. Compile all of your materials and send them in an e-mail to the Services Coordinator: [services]

IMPORTANT TRANSITION NOTE! Student Organizations will NOT be using the regular application method via GrinnellShare. Instead, please fill out the Google Form (<https://forms.gle/UThUpVidJVgTuPzM9>).

Student Organizations: Specifics

Membership Requirement. All prospective student organizations must have 8 individuals endorsing the application: three executive members, and five non-executive members. Primary and Secondary contacts will be listed on GrinnellShare. The identity of the five non-executive members will be confidential, and not available to the Student Programming Committee. For groups where confidentiality is essential, this requirement may be waived by the Student Programming Chair.

Organizations that fall below the minimum amount of 8 members throughout the academic year will have until the next annual re-registration to regain membership. Organizations will not be de-recognized during the academic year except as a disciplinary measure.

Executives and Elections. Each student organization is required to have three executives: a primary contact, a secondary contact, and a treasurer. This requirement does not preclude collective leadership arrangements; it simply requires points of contact for the Student Government Association and Division of Student Affairs.

The founding three executive members may serve in their position for one semester. Afterwards, elections will be required to fill at least the positions of primary and secondary contacts. The process for these elections should be laid out in your organization's Constitution.

Treasurer. Your Treasurer will have to create and share a Google excel spreadsheet with [sgamoney], [sga2] and [services] to track your organization's finances in order to be eligible for funding.

Annual Re-Registration

All Student Organizations and Clubs will be subjected to a regular annual re-registration process with the Student Government Association. This is meant to establish an accurate list of active organizations and clubs on campus for the academic year, with the list being regularly updated as new organizations and clubs are formed. The re-registration process does not preclude organizations or clubs from submitting applications throughout the academic year.

The Student Programming Chair will send out an all-campus e-mail informing you of the re-registration process. All organizations and clubs will have to submit the following information to them to confirm they will be active.

For Student Organizations. Student Organizations will have to:

- Confirm the individuals serving in executive positions (primary contact, secondary contact, and organization treasurer);
- Confirm five non-executive members;
- Maintain a Google Excel spreadsheet to track finances in order to be eligible for funding.

Please note that obtaining access to the organization's e-mail from ITS is not the same thing as re-registering for the upcoming year. Be on the lookout for a specific e-mail from SGA detailing the steps you must take to re-register.

For Student Clubs. Student Clubs will have to:

- Confirm the primary and secondary contacts leading the club;
- Maintain a Google Excel spreadsheet to track finances in order to be eligible for funding.

Constitutions

Student Organizations are required to maintain constitutions. This document is meant to serve as a guide for you, SGA, and the wider campus community on how your organization is run, what its purpose is, and how it stays accountable to its members.

Your organization's constitution should broadly include:

1. Your organization's official name
2. The organization's mission and statement of purpose
3. Membership requirements (if any)
4. The roles and responsibilities of organization leaders
5. How the primary and secondary contacts are elected, how they may be removed, and any qualifications they must meet (include structure and timing of elections)
6. The general structure of the organization
7. If the organization has an advisor, what their relationship is
8. Requirements to amend the constitution
9. A list of amendment dates and other important milestones for the organization
10. Grinnell College's anti-discrimination statement, which may be found in the Student Handbook or below in this document.

Sample Constitution

This document is intended to serve as an example when you are drafting your Constitution. The Constitution of your organization can be more detailed than this example. For additional questions regarding your Constitution or Bylaws please contact the SGA Services Coordinator at services@grinnell.edu or the Associate Director of Student Involvement, Ashley Adams, at adamsash@grinnell.edu

There are specific elements that are required in each constitution, they are notated below with a *.

Article 1 – Name

Section 1 * - The name of the organization shall be

The name of the organization cannot include Grinnell College

Section 2 – Identify any affiliations with national, regional, etc groups and specify what the relationship is with your organization

Article 2 – Purpose

Section 1 * - The purpose of the organization shall be to _____
Be as detailed as possible because this should guide the actions of your organization.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 * - Members _____ (provide a description of the members and list the requirements for membership)

Section 2 * - Anti-discrimination statement

Student organizations are required to include the following Anti-discriminatory Statement:

"Grinnell College is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and nondiscriminatory educational and working environment for all College community members. It is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in matters of admission, employment, and housing, and in access to and participation in its education programs, services, and activities. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender

identity or expression, marital status, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, religion, disability, creed or any other protected class. Discrimination and harassment on any of the bases covered by state or federal antidiscrimination statutes is unlawful and a violation of Grinnell College policy."

Article 4 – Officers

Section 1 * - Election of Officers (*You'll want to include timeline. You must include a primary/secondary contact and a Treasurer*).

- a. Officers of this organization are President, Vice-President, Treasurer.....
- b. Officers will be elected by.... (*vote from members OR application, interview, and selection OR an option your members come up with and agree to*)
- c. Elections will take place (*example: the 2nd week of Fall semester OR 2nd official meeting of the organization OR an option your members come up with and agree to*)
- d. Officer terms will last for..... (*1 academic year OR 1 calendar year OR.... We recommend year terms for consistency and continuity of your organization*).

Section 2* – Removal of Officers

- a. Officers may be recalled if (*these should be behaviors that your organization will not tolerate. Examples below*).
 - a. They are unable to perform requirements of office
 - b. Willfully disobey Grinnell College Student Handbook
 - c. Mismanage funds
- b. Removal shall be initiated at the request of _____ active members of the organization.
- c. Removal process shall be as follows.... (*Your organization should deem what this looks like*).

Article 5– Meetings

Section 1 - Regular meetings of this student organization shall be held (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, etc).

Section 2 – Quorum will consist of a _____% of members who are present at the meeting.

This is often listed as either two-thirds or three-fourth of active membership.

Section 3 – A special meeting may be called by the _____ when necessary and shall be called by them upon the written request of any regular or associated member. Notice of the special meeting shall be given to the organization electronically _____ hours in advance.

Article 6 – Committees

Section 1 – If applicable, list the committees of the organization, the functions of each committee, how chairpersons for each committee are selected, and how members are designated to serve on a committee.

Article 7 – Advisor

If you have an advisor, this section should be based on your conversation with that person regarding expectations of the role with the organization

Section 1 – Duties of the Advisor (*Advisors cannot have decision-making or voting authority as organizations are student-initiated and student run*).

Article 8 – Amendments & By-laws

Section 1: Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any member of _____. It will take a _____ vote of membership to amend this constitution. *The number is typically a majority, quorum, or 2/3 vote.*

Section 2: By-laws may also be written but are not required. By-laws are rules governing the internal workings of the organization and can include for example:

- 1) Standing procedures of the organization
- 2) Ad-hoc committees and how they are determined

By-laws should be easier to amend than the constitution, but still hold a higher standing than being amended through a simple majority vote at any one time.

It is recommended that you include officer descriptions as your first by-law.

Example below:

By-Laws

- 1) Officers
 - a. President
 - i. Acts as a liaison to College community

- ii. Serves as an official representative of the organization
 - iii. Calls and presides over meetings
- b. Treasurer
 - i. Serves as liaison to SGA for funding
 - ii. Maintains accurate and current account of all organizational funds
 - iii. Responsible for making sure funds are being spent to meet the purpose of allocation

Advisors

Advisors are, in almost all cases, voluntary. Because of limited resources, liability, and necessary trainings for advisors, only Student Organizations may formally maintain an advisor at this time.

The potential roles of an advisor include: serving as a mentor, mediating conflict, providing expertise, connecting your organization with campus resources, acting as a contact for the College in cases of crisis, advocating for an organization, and many more.

Be sure to contact Student Involvement regarding the advisor role.

Advisor-Organization Relationship. The nature of the relationship between an advisor and organization is up to the organization itself and its constitutional document. Is the advisor present at every meeting or only at some meetings? Are they an integral part of your organization, or a helpful resource in navigating college bureaucracy? These are questions your organization must ask. The relationship will vary depending on your organization's needs.

Mandatory Advisors. In very rare instances, SGA will require a Student Organization to have an advisor. The Student Programming Committee will designate organizations as "high risk" on the basis of the planned activities and mission of the organization. If these activities could reasonably result in injury and liability for SGA, an organization will be required to have an advisor for liability reasons.

The advisor may still be chosen by the organization. In cases where such an organization cannot find an advisor, it will be assigned a staff member from the Office of Student Involvement.

This provision exists solely to protect students and to mitigate risks and liability.

SGA Funding

Interim Allocation Committee (IAC). The IAC meets for the first several weeks of each semester to fund student groups and events on campus before the Unified Funding Committee convenes. In order to apply for IAC funding, submit a budget to [sgamoney], [sga2], and [services] and be sure to show up to present your budget on the date assigned. Also be sure to have maintained your group's Google Excel spreadsheet, and shared it with [sgamoney], [sga2], and [services].

Unified Funding Committee (UFC). The UFC combines the Student Programming and Services Committee as well as the All-Campus Events Committee into a single funding committee. The UFC assigns funding for the entire semester, and meets within the first several weeks of the semester's start. The Treasurer's Office will inform all students on campus when the funding process begins.

Be sure to send a semester budget to [sgamoney], [sga2], and [services] and to have a Google Excel spreadsheet shared with all of these accounts to ensure your eligibility.

IMPORTANT TRANSITION NOTE! The Unified Funding Committee will meet **AFTER** all Student Organization applications have been considered and approved in the spring semester. This will allow all new Student Organizations to apply for semester funding through the UFC process.

Student Programming and Services Committee (SPC/Services). Throughout the semester, SPC/Services will assign funding for new student organizations and student clubs. It will also consider funding for groups that existed during the Unified Funding Committee process, but who encounter unforeseeable circumstances that require funding before the next semester. The decision to consider additional funding is at the discretion of the SPC/Services Chair.

Alternate Sources of Funding

There are several alternative sources of funding for student groups engaged in a variety of activities.

Multicultural groups can contact Vrinda Varia at variavri@grinnell.edu.

For career-development groups, CLS Career Communities can provide funding assistance (see: <https://www.grinnell.edu/after-grinnell/cls/students/life-skill-development>)

Sports groups can contact Ben Coopride (Athletics) at coopride@grinnell.edu.

If you're not sure which other options are best for you, contact the SGA Treasurer at sgamoney@grinnell.edu or Michael Sims (Student Involvement) at sims@grinnell.edu.

Group Naming

SGA generally allows a wide variety of names for groups. However, certain group names will not be approved:

- Names with obscenities, inappropriate references, or names that are suggestive;
- Names containing “Grinnell College,” or implying official endorsement from the college;
- Names for political groups containing “Grinnell Students,” or implying the student body’s collective endorsement of a particular political position, candidate, or policy.
 - o “Grinnellians,” and similar, informal forms, are allowed.

For any questions regarding the name of your group, please contact [services].

IMPORTANT TRANSITION NOTE! Groups that do not meet this naming guideline will be required to change their name by next semester. Email [services] if you wish to do so.

Sustainability

Think of sustainability, inclusion, and accessibility when planning events and how your group will function! These are some best practices compiled by Green Fund:

Before events

1. **Avoid single-use plastics** and buy reusable or industrially compostable options (i.e. paper or wax-coated plates and cups).
 - a. Reusable items can be stored in the inventory and reused by groups for future events.
 - b. If you must buy single-use plastic, look for **plastics #1 and #2**, as these can be recycled in Grinnell
2. **Shop local** (Hy Vee/Fareway) instead of Walmart when possible. During the summer, the farmer's market is a great option.
3. Take **reusable shopping bags** to the store when buying items for events. If you do not have reusable bags, opt for paper bags and compost them.
4. Buy items in **bulk** and use for many events or store extras in the inventory to cut down on packaging waste.
5. Consider avoiding products containing palm oil as an ingredient.
6. Invite event attendees to **bring their own mug** to purchase fewer single-use cups.
7. Select **no rush shipping** options when available.
8. For event decorations, avoid plastic items that cannot be composted or recycled. Look into items that are industrially compostable, recyclable, or can be reused for future events.

During and after events

1. Compost pizza boxes, paper plates, food scraps, napkins, and other organic materials. You can contact greenfund@grinnell.edu if you do not know where to find a compost bin/unsure what can be composted.
2. Send uneaten food with attendees, set on a table at the Grinnell, or post on Facebook.
3. Make sure recyclable items like metal cans, paper, clean cardboard, and plastics (#1-2) are properly recycled