

# STUDENT ORGANIZATION HANDBOOK



**GREAT FALLS COLLEGE**  
**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
*Office of Student Activities*

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**C117**

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**This publication is to assist Student Clubs and Organizations on the Great Falls College MSU campus to be effective entities in fulfilling the educational mission of the College. The topics discussed are institutional policies of Great Falls College Montana State University (hereinafter referred to as GFC MSU) procedures except those that are labeled \*. This publication may be revised/updated as needed by the Student Activities Coordinator.**

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## **I. Student Organization Policy (Policy 307.1, Effective 02/07)**

The College recognizes the value of student organizations in campus life and, consequently, provides the opportunity for groups to be formed and to meet on campus. However, because their memberships are comprised of students at Great Falls College Montana State University, student organizations should have some relationship to the main educational mission of the College. It is neither the College's intention nor responsibility to sponsor, endorse, or otherwise support particular student organizations. The fact that a student organization has access to College facilities should not be construed, nor may a particular student organization represent, that Great Falls College Montana State University sponsors, endorses, or otherwise supports the organization or any of its views, philosophies, or activities.

(The term "student organization" will apply to any club, entity, or program of study that wishes to function as an officially recognized group on the campus of GFC MSU).

## **II. Receiving Recognition**

A student organization seeking official recognition from GFC MSU for the first time must meet the following criteria:

1. Have a Constitution
  - a. The Constitution and/or Bylaws will be reviewed by the Student Activities Coordinator.
2. Have a Mission/Purpose for their group (stated in the group's Constitution)
3. Have a faculty or staff advisor
4. Have a membership composed of at least 85% enrolled students

A student is an individual who is enrolled in one or more credits per semester at GFC MSU. An officer of a student organization must be enrolled in six or more credits per semester excluding the summer semester.

Any changes to the student organization's Constitution after they have been recognized must be immediately submitted to the Student Activities Coordinator. Once the student organization has been introduced to the campus for the first time, the organization must submit an annual recognition application to the Student Activities Coordinator by the end of September.

The Recognition Application will include:

1. A current Constitution
2. A Mission/Purpose for their group. This is stated in the group's Constitution
3. The Advisor(s) Agreement
4. President's/Spokesperson's Agreement and a list of other officers.
5. Current membership list showing that 85% of the membership is current, enrolled students (due within one month after recognition has been approved and membership has been established)
6. Completed Event Request for a meeting room

The officers of the student organization must understand that their name and contact information may be used in the group's marketing as part of the benefit of being a recognized group.

After the Recognition Application is received, it will be reviewed by the Student Activities Coordinator and the club's Advisor and President/Spokesperson will be notified of approval or denial.

### **III. Programs of Study**

Programs of study are deemed recognized. The following forms will need to be updated and returned to the Student Activities Coordinator at the beginning of every fall semester:

1. Advisor Agreement
2. President/Spokesperson's Agreement
3. Additional Information as deemed necessary by the Student Activities Coordinator

### **IV. Benefits of Being a Recognized Group**

#### **A. Meeting Space**

Benefits include use of meeting room space on campus for meetings or activities and use of College equipment for those events. Consumption of food and/or beverages is not permitted in computer equipped classrooms and other posted areas. The Student Activities Coordinator and GFC MSU Event Coordinator must be notified a week in advance of the room set up. Then, any minor adjustments can be made no later than 24 hours in advance (see Event Request). Food can be purchased from the cafeteria, but must be arranged no later than a week prior to the event.

## B. Internal Advertising and Postings

The GFC MSU Campus recognizes the value of providing students, faculty and staff the opportunity to distribute promotional material and to publicize College/community events on campus. The College, however, reserves the right to place restrictions on the time, place and manner of the use of campus facilities and equipment, consistent with laws, statutes, policies, and contractual provisions affecting university system employees and students. All postings must be approved by the Information Desk. Bulletin board postings, index cards, posters and table tents are allowed after approval. Approved postings will be designated by an official stamp indicating the date of approval and the date of removal. Postings without official stamps, as well as material that remains posted beyond the removal date will be removed. When possible, the Information Desk will post printed materials in locations requested. Postings are allowed in pre-approved areas only. For questions, please contact the Information Desk or the Student Activities Coordinator

The following are guidelines for approval:

- Requests for approval to distribute printed information materials must be obtained from the Information Desk.
- Requests for approval to distribute printed information materials must be obtained from the Student Activities Coordinator
- Small posters and index cards advertising items for sale, rentals, etc., are allowed only on the Commons/Cafeteria bulletin boards.
  - Cards must be approved and stamped by the Information Desk.
  - The College assumes no liability for any situation which arises from arrangements made through information provided by private postings.
- The Information Desk staff will post, remove and dispose of posters in a timely manner.

The full version of the policy is available at:

[http://www.gfcmsu.edu/about/policies/PDF/600/602\\_1.pdf](http://www.gfcmsu.edu/about/policies/PDF/600/602_1.pdf)

### 1. GFC MSU Logo Use

The Great Falls College MSU logo may only be used with permission from the Marketing Specialist or the Executive Director of Development, Marketing, & Communications. It may not be modified in any way, including color, dimensions, or additions to the logo. The logo is owned and licensed by the College.

## 2. Bulletin Boards

When submitting posters and flyers for posting, you may request specific posting areas, for example:

- Cafeteria Commons Area
- Second floor at the top of the ramp
- Easels at main entrances
- Bulletin boards in classrooms
- Enclosed bulletin boards near the library, near B116 and near the Bookstore.
- Bulletin boards outside the Chemistry Lab
- Bulletin board outside the ASGFC office
- Bookstore
- Digital signage

## 3. Display Cases

Display cases are available for the use of internal and external groups. They can be used to highlight program or student achievement. They should contain information relating to academic or campus community life important to significant positions of the faculty, staff, administration and students. Reserve space in display cases through the Marketing Specialist. Reservations are first-come, first-served. Displays are generally changed monthly.

### C. Great Falls College MSU Website

If the group desires to create a website affiliated with the College's site, they must contact the Student Activities Coordinator for further information.

Submit requests for announcements or news page postings for the website or digital signage to the Student Activities Coordinator who, if request is approved, will provide instructions for postings. Our goal is to keep information on our website up to date and accurate, so in the request please ensure to notify the Student Activities Coordinator of how long your announcement will be posted, along with contact information and as many details as possible.

### D. Event Requests

Student organizations must fill out an Event Request form from Great Falls College MSU to

hold fundraisers or activities on or off campus. This is designed to prevent student events from conflicting with each other. If the event is off campus, the student organization may need to return completed Acknowledgment of Risk forms to the Business Office depending on the activity. Event Requests must be turned in to the Student Activities Coordinator who will work with the organization's officers and GFC MSU's Event Coordinator to arrange the set-up if the event is on campus or check for any other off-campus scheduled student organization events. Each student organization utilizing GFC MSU rooms, equipment, and ground must use them properly to avoid damage and/or unnecessary abuse. The organization is responsible for replacing or paying for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

#### E. Acknowledgment of Risk

GFC MSU considers students and those who participate in activities sponsored by student organizations (including programs of study) to be adults who understand the nature and risk of such activities; therefore, these individuals accept personal responsibility for their conduct without the need of supervision. This includes bodily injury or personal property damage/loss during activities. Members and students of student organizations are advised to have appropriate medical insurance, skill training, and protective equipment where applicable. Each student organization or program of study utilizing Great Falls College MSU rooms, equipment, and ground must use them properly to avoid damage and/or unnecessary abuse. The group is responsible for replacing or paying for any lost, stolen, or damaged items. They must realize that the collective group or its individual members are viewed as representatives of Great Falls College MSU by the outside community. A blank, sample Event Request form is provided at the end of this publication, as well as a copy of the Acknowledgment of Risk form.

#### F. Use of State Vehicles

To travel to functions in a state vehicle, a driver from the student organization must read and complete the GFC MSU Vehicle Use Agreement located at [http://facstaff.gfcmsu.edu/forms/leave\\_travel/VehicleUseAgreement.pdf](http://facstaff.gfcmsu.edu/forms/leave_travel/VehicleUseAgreement.pdf). After completing the form, it must be returned to the Business Office for approval. Once approved, the driver can schedule the use of a vehicle in advance of the travel date with the Maintenance Department.

#### G. Travel Forms

To travel for any official event on behalf of GFC MSU, these two forms must be completed by each student or advisor who will be traveling:

- Travel Request ([http://facstaff.gfcmsu.edu/forms/leave\\_travel/TravelRequest.pdf](http://facstaff.gfcmsu.edu/forms/leave_travel/TravelRequest.pdf))

- Student Travel (<http://students.gfcmsu.edu/forms/Student%20Travel%20Form.pdf>)

## V. Finances

### A. Dues

Student organizations may charge dues to their membership if those dues are outlined in their Constitution and/or Bylaws.

### B. Fundraising

Student organizations are encouraged to fundraise. Student organizations can fill out an Event Request form and follow procedures above to hold fundraisers on or off campus. The campus will only host sales activities directly related to students (e.g. bake sales for the benefit of a recognized student organization). If a policy regarding the solicitation of funds, goods, and/or services from area businesses is implemented, all groups should include those items in the Event Request or contact the College's Event Coordinator.

### C. Commercial Activities/Fundraising

The sale of goods or services and solicitation of funds from any source not affiliated with the College is prohibited in the building, on campus grounds, and at all campus-sponsored activities. Exceptions to this policy must be granted in writing by the CEO/Dean or CEO/Dean's designee.

### D. Monetary Requests

Recognized student organizations are eligible to request funds from the ASGFC MSU. To do so, a student organization must complete and return a Monetary Request prior to an ASGFC MSU Executive Cabinet meeting. The officers of ASGFC MSU will review and schedule the request as an item during the next ASGFC MSU Senate meeting. A member of the student organization must present the request in-person at the Senate meeting, and after discussion the Senate will vote on the request the following week at the next Senate meeting. The Senate may deny, approve, or return the request to the Student Organization asking for more information. A member of the Executive Cabinet of ASGFC MSU will contact the individuals listed on the Monetary Request. Questions that may be asked include:

1. Have other options for fundraising been researched?
2. What other plans does the student organization have for fundraising if the ASGFC MSU Senate denies or reduces the request?

A copy of the Monetary Request form is included at the end of this publication. Program requirements will not be funded per Great Falls College MSU.



### E. Accounts and Purchasing

Student organizations who have funds are required to open an account with the Great Falls College MSU Business Office to maintain good financial standing for continued recognition. The Business Office will provide instructions on the policies and procedures for expending funds to purchase supplies, printing, and food on campus for day-to-day operations and/or special activities.

## VI. Officers

### A. Role\*

The role of a student organization officer is a very unique position. Officers should understand that they are students first and be able to adequately balance their studies with the activities of their organization. As they lead their group, they should understand the responsibility of adhering to College policies, academic integrity, and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; [http://www.gfcmsu.edu/about/policies/PDF/300/302\\_3.pdf](http://www.gfcmsu.edu/about/policies/PDF/300/302_3.pdf)). For the organization to continue its presence on the campus, the officers are encouraged to be active within the group and support it by having monthly activities and/or meetings.

### B. Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated at Great Falls College MSU. The consequence for the first such violation is at the discretion of the instructor and may range from a failing grade for the particular assignment/test to an automatic failing grade in the course in which the act of academic dishonesty occurred. Students may be prevented from withdrawing from a course in a case of academic dishonesty. Faculty must report all violations of academic integrity to their respective Department Chair and the CSAO/Associate Dean for Student Affairs. A student who has violated this policy may not represent the College in any official manner and may not hold an officer position in any student organization or in the ASGFC MSU.

## VII. Advisor's Role

An advisor is a Great Falls College MSU contract professional staff or faculty member. Student organization advisors play a vital role in assuring that the organization's experiences are meaningful to students, as well as play a crucial role in managing institutional risk and

liability. The most successful student organizations are those in which the Advisor takes an active interest and plays an active role in the group.

It is therefore critical and essential that the Advisors are fully aware of their responsibilities, which include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing continuity within the organization and assisting in the training of new officers each year
2. Encouraging opportunities within the organization that will contribute to the students' development and education
3. Being well informed of all plans and activities of the group, and attending formal activities
4. Providing direct assistance in the planning of the programs, and indirect help in preparing for formal events by advising of additional resources available
5. Regularly attending meetings and frequently consulting with the organization officers
6. Assisting the organization in keeping their financial and organizational records current, and being aware of the expenditure of student time, abilities, duties, and finances within the program
7. Being open to calls for assistance from the organization, and advising on compliance with State and Great Falls College MSU policies
8. Reviewing, evaluating, and approving the annual Recognition Application, roster, Monetary Requests, and Event Request forms to be submitted to the Student Activities Coordinator.

#### **VIII. Student Activities Coordinator's Role**

The Student Activities Coordinator supports student organizations and their advisors through provision of advisor and officer training, and being available for advice and assistance with questions from student organization leaders or advisors. The Student Activities Coordinator encourages opportunities for students to learn leadership, organizational and human relations skills, and since student organizations often enhance the student experience in this way the Student Activities Coordinator will serve as a resource to help student organizations succeed. The Coordinator will guide students through the process of creating new organizations, maintain relationships with existing organizations, and serve as a liaison between the organizations and the College when necessary. The Coordinator will also maintain documentation of all organizations, including rosters, meeting times/places, advisor and officer's names, and other relevant information.

## **IX. CSAO/Associate Dean for Student Affairs' Role**

The CSAO/Associate Dean for Student Affairs is charged with support and oversight of student life at Great Falls College MSU. In that role, the Associate Dean should be informed of all groups recognized by the Student Activities Coordinator.

Students who are members, and especially students who are leaders of student organizations, are held to a high standard of behavior as representatives of Great Falls College MSU. Any violations of the Student Conduct Code by student organization members in their roles in the organization may jeopardize their continued involvement with the organization. The office of the CSAO/Associate Dean for Student Affairs is responsible for enforcement of the Student Conduct Code.

## **X. Losing Recognition**

Student organizations recognition may be revoked or denied based on any of the following conditions:

1. Notice of dissolution from the student organization officers/advisors
2. Failure to hold meetings or events over a 12-month period
3. Failure to complete the annual Recognition Application
4. Failure to comply with stated criteria and all responsibilities outlined in the Recognition Application
5. Failure to conduct events in a responsible manner, such as causing disorderly diversion or disturbance that i n t e r f e r e s with Great Falls College MSU's operations. (This section shall not be construed as denying the right to peaceful assembly)
6. Failure to follow through on risk management.

Prior to revocation, the student organization will be notified and be given the opportunity to take corrective measures. The student organization can also meet with the CSAO/Associate Dean for Student Affairs to be given a hearing according to Complaint Procedures in Great Falls College MSU policy.

## **XI. Final Comments**

It is important for both advisors and student members of the student organization to realize that their respective roles within the group represent only a small portion of their lives; the student member is, after all, first a student, while the Advisor is first a professional. Both have responsibilities that must come before their activities in the

organization, and it is important that neither lose sight of that fact in their expectations of the other. For the student members and advisor(s) alike, membership with the student organization should be a pleasantly memorable and instructive experience.

Blank copies of requests and forms are provided at:

<http://students.gfcmu.edu/clubs.html>