

**TITLE VII**  
**Registered Student Organizations and Agencies**

## **Chapter 1**

### Freedom of Speech

**Section 1** All Registered Student Organizations (RSO) are recognized to have freedom of speech, which cannot be limited or restricted by any officer or body of the Student Government Association. An RSO's political affiliation or speech is not relevant to any proceeding conducted by the Student Government Association. No officer of the Student Government Association shall use an RSO's political speech or affiliation as reason to deny or limit space or funding.

## **Chapter 2**

### Registered Student Organizations

**Section 1** All Registered Student Organizations (RSO) are associations of primarily undergraduate students at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, which is democratically directed by its members, independent, and registered by the Student Government Association. An RSO shall enhance the social, cultural, educational, and/or recreational experience of undergraduate students at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

**Section 2** An organization shall not be considered independent of other organizations if it receives or enables its members to receive specific monetary reward from another organization, or if its primary objectives are substantially determined by another organization, except in the following cases:

1. Recognized Fraternities and Sororities of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; to include Service Fraternities and Sororities.
2. As specified by an Act of the Student Senate or if the organization holds a charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a non-profit corporation.

**Section 3** A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of an RSO must be members of the SGA. Not less than ten (10) SGA members must be active members of the RSO at all times. For purposes of this definition, "membership" shall refer to active members with full voting and participation rights. Membership must be voluntarily and actively entered into by each member, and may not be automatically conscriptive. This definition does not preclude an RSO from establishing additional classes of membership defined in alternative ways. In such situations, an RSO must maintain not less than ten (10) SGA members as active members of its organization at all times, in addition to alternative forms of member classification. Members may be empowered by an RSO to act on its behalf, within the parameters of its valid goals/objectives/activities, and with the approval of the RSO leadership.

**Section 4** Officers must be full-time students, in addition to the SGA membership requirement. Part-time students, and non-SGA members of an RSO, may not hold full officer positions.

**Section 5** To become an RSO, members of the organization must complete an activation packet, which includes: a constitution, mission statement, and future goals. All activation packets must be submitted to and approved by the Secretary of the registry in order to gain RSO status.

1. An RSO must be governed by democratically elected fee-paying undergraduate students.
2. The process for voting, by the membership, must be established within an RSO's constitution. The process for establishing voting membership must be reasonable; as to allow access to all undergraduate students. Those RSOs with policies of exclusivity, which are deemed to be within the bounds of Federal and/or State law, are exempt.
3. Membership of any kind cannot be denied on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, or veteran status; unless such practices are deemed to be within the bounds of Federal and/or State law.
4. A process for the impeachment of RSO officers must be included within the RSO's Constitution.

**Section 6** The application form must include: Officers' names, addresses, and telephone numbers; Membership list of at least ten (10) undergraduate students, with members' names, addresses, and telephone numbers; Name of an initial contact person for the SGA, including address and telephone number. Application forms are available at the SGA office.

**Section 7** The Mission (or Purpose) Statement shall give a brief description of the purpose/function of the proposed organization. It shall include examples of the kind of activities the organization plans to undertake. It may state the organization's philosophy.

**Section 8** The application material must include a Statement of Non-Discrimination signed by the organization's initial leadership. The statement form may be obtained from the SGA. An organization seeking to incorporate its own Statement of Non Discrimination must consult with the Secretary of the Registry.

**Section 9** Each RSO must maintain a current Officer List with the Secretary of the Registry. The initial officer list is a part of the application form. The Secretary of the Registry must be informed of any and all changes in officers, as well as a semester update. RSOs must obtain an Officer List form from the Secretary of the Registry which will be kept on file with the Secretary of the Registry.

**Section 10** Student organizations seeking recognition must prepare and submit its Constitution or By-laws (herein referred to as its "governing document") to the Secretary of the Registry as part of the application process. Prior to submission, the organization must adopt the governing document by a majority vote of its members in attendance at a scheduled meeting.

The governing document must contain the following safeguards/procedures:

1. A fair and democratic method for the election and removal of officers.
2. Reasonable procedure for resolving disputes among members within the organization.
3. A statement of Free Speech/Expression.
4. Clear procedures for conducting its meetings and planning its activities.
5. Record-keeping procedures.
6. Definition of voting membership requirements

**Section 11** Each RSO, shall submit their constitutions for review and re-registration not less than every two (2) years. Constitutions which have not been submitted for review and re-registration by the prescribed time shall be considered void and the RSO will be considered inactive.

### **Chapter 3** Rights and Privileges

**Section 1** All RSO's shall have the following rights and privileges:

1. Recognition by the University or Massachusetts as an officially recognized Registered Student Organization.
2. Access to the use, of campus facilities, both indoor and outdoor.
3. The waiver or discount of designated fees for the use of various University facilities services.
4. Ability to reserve space and equipment on campus with special rates and privileges.
5. The waiving of Massachusetts State sales tax on RSO purchases.

6. Free access to tables on the Campus Center Concourse for informational and fund raising purposes.
7. Assistance from the Campus Activities Office in the way of mail and telephone service, scheduling space, program development, leadership training and organizational development, financial accounts and budgeting support.
8. Assistance from the Student Legal Services Office

#### **Chapter 4** Denial of Registration

**Section 1** The Secretary of the Registry shall deny registration of the following:

1. Any group which does not comply with the definition of a Registered Student Government Organization as defined in Title VII, Chapter 2, Section 1 of the SGA Constitution and by-laws.
2. Any group that is an extension of a University department or class and whose primary purpose for existing as an RSO is to support the goals of the department or class.
3. Any group, that has significantly congruent missions and goals of an RSO already in existence. Slight differences in mission or goals are not enough to warrant registration.
4. Any group that restricts undergraduate membership with the exception of fraternities, sororities, and governmental bodies as defined in the SGA Constitution and by-laws.
5. Any group that is in violation of any of the policies as outlined in the SGA Constitution and by-laws.

#### **Chapter 5** Suspensions and Withdrawals

**Section 1** The Secretary of the Registry shall suspend the registration of any RSO which is in violation of any defined University of SGA policy.

1. An RSO's registration shall be suspended if the RSO fails to actively pursue the mission and goals established in the application for registration.

**Section 2** Upon suspension of a RSO, all of its accounts shall be frozen and all services provided through the Campus Activities Office shall be foregone until such time when suspension is lifted.

1. A RSO shall remain suspended until it has complied with all University regulations and those policies stated in the SGA Constitution and by-laws. Compliance shall be determined by the Secretary of the Registry.

**Section 3** If withdrawn, a RSO shall become defunct, all of its accounts shall be closed. All assets of the organization will be disbursed as outlined in Chapter 8, of the SGA Constitution and by-laws.

1. The Secretary of the Registry shall withdraw the registration of any organization which has been suspended for more than three (3) consecutive semesters.
2. The Secretary of the Registry shall withdraw registration to any organization which has failed to reactivate their registration within one (1) year after the deadline.
3. The Secretary of the Registry shall withdraw any RSO that has a documented history of University or SGA policy violations. This includes, but is not limited to, the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Bill of Rights, the Equal Rights and Opportunity Provision, or Financial Policies Act.
4. Any RSO may withdraw from registration by a majority vote of its members at a meeting called for the purpose which was adequately publicized to the members. For a vote calling for the withdraw of registration, quorum for the RSO shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership.

**Section 4** The Secretary of the Registry shall maintain records of all withdrawn organizations for two (2) consecutive semesters following withdrawal date.

**Section 5** Prior to re-registration, suspended organizations must demonstrate that they are in compliance with Title VII. This includes compliance with any orders executed by the Secretary of the Registry or the Student Judiciary with respect to its suspension. A finding of compliance is determined by the Secretary of the Registry, at a scheduled hearing with a two-thirds (2/3) majority of its voting membership present. Decisions of the Secretary of the Registry may be appealed to the Student Judiciary or the Coordinating Council. Re-registration may occur at the first registration period following demonstration of such compliance.

**Section 6** An organization which has had its recognition revoked may not register until it has demonstrated compliance with any orders of the Secretary of the Registry or the Student Judiciary. A finding of compliance is determined by the Secretary of the Registry, at a scheduled hearing with a two-thirds (2/3) majority of its voting membership present. Decisions of the Secretary of the Registry may be appealed to the Student Judiciary. Reregistration may occur at the first registration period following demonstration of such compliance.

**Section 7** Any RSO may withdraw from registration by a majority vote of its members at a meeting scheduled for that purpose. The members must be informed of the meeting and its purpose a minimum of fourteen (14) days prior to its occurrence. Notification of the pending withdrawal must be submitted to the Secretary of the Registry at the same time. The Registrar shall withdraw the registration of any organization which has been suspended for more than three (3) consecutive semesters. In the event of withdrawal of registration, all assets of the organization will revert to the SGA General Fund for allotment/distribution among existing RSOs. The Registrar shall maintain records of all withdrawn organizations for three (3) years following withdrawal of registration.

## **Chapter 6** Appeals

**Section 1** All decisions of the Secretary of the Registry may be appealed to the Coordinating Council during regular sessions, where a majority vote shall be necessary to overturn the decision of the Registrar.

**Section 2** The decision of the Secretary of the Registry may be overturned by the Student Judiciary only upon a finding that the application, from information provided to the Secretary of the Registry, did in fact meet the qualifications for RSO recognition. The Student Judiciary does not possess the right to waive any of the requirements with respect to initial registration, nor may it consider evidence not previously presented to the Secretary of the Registry during the time of application.

## **Chapter 7** Nonprofit Status

**Section 1** All RSOs will be structured and operated "not for profit" according to University policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, the Policy for Management of University Funds, and the following:

1. No RSO will have as part of its official or unofficial purposes, functions enabling members of the RSO to profit financially from its activities, either directly or indirectly except as approved by the student employment office.
2. Funds outside SATF appropriations will be applied to the purpose of the RSO.
3. All equipment purchased with SATF funding is the property of the SGA and is subject to all SGA, University, State, and Federal inventory procedures and audits.
4. In the event of suspension of withdrawal, all property purchased by the RSO shall be placed under the direct control of Secretary of Finance.

## **Chapter 8** Grievance Procedures

**Section 1** If a grievance shall arise between RSOs, to include the SGA, parties shall have the right to file a petition with the Student Judiciary.

1. The decision of the Student Judiciary shall be final unless the Judiciary suspends action due to an upcoming appeal.
2. Failure to enact the Student Judiciary's decision shall result in automatic suspension of RSO status until such time as the remedy is enacted.
3. In the event that the Media RSO shall be petitioned or petition another RSO, the Student Judiciary shall show deference to precedence established by the Federal Courts and/or the Courts of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **Chapter 9** Media Organizations

**Section 1** Any RSO whose expressed mission is for the establishment of a newspaper, television station or program, radio station or program, or newsletter, shall be recognized to have freedom of the press in accordance with the United States Constitution.

1. No Media RSO shall be penalized or subject to penalty due to the subject matter expressed within their medium, with the exception of slander and intentional misrepresentation of SGA members or organizations.

## **Chapter 10** Student Businesses

**Section 1** A Student Business is a business which is established and operated by undergraduate students of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Student Businesses shall provide goods/services to the entire University community, as well as, educational and employment opportunities to the undergraduate students of the University.

**Section 2** A Student Business or an association which desires to be registered as a Student Business must adhere to the following criteria:

1. The active membership of a Student Business shall solely consist of members of the Student Government Association, as defined by Article II, section 1, of the SGA Constitution.
2. Student Businesses must consist of three (3) or more SGA member at all times.



3. A Student Business must open for operations on a continuous basis during Fall and Spring academic sessions.
4. The Student Businesses must act in accordance with the Equal Opportunity policies or the University of Massachusetts.
5. Student Businesses must have a system of governance and management established in writing, Personal Guidelines and Operations Manual (PGOM), which is in accordance with the SGA Constitution and by-laws.
6. Student Businesses must accept the Guidance of the Center for Student Businesses (CSB).

## **Chapter 11**

### Student Business Registration Procedure

**Section 1** In order to initiate the process for starting a Student Business, the association desiring to establish the business must obtain an application from the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, which shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. The name and goals of the Student Business.
2. The current membership of the association.
3. Accompanying the application must be three (3) copies of the PGOM which shall include, but not be limited to the following:
  - A. The name and mission statement of the Student Business.
  - B. The criteria for defining membership.
  - C. The governance structure.
  - D. The hiring, firing, succession, and vacancy procedure for any officer position.
  - E. The PGOM amendment process.
  - F. Internal grievance procedures.
  - G. Operational policies and procedures.
  - H. A copy of the Minutes of the meeting in which the Student Business's PGOM was approved by the association.

- I. The application must be date stamped before submission to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs.

**Section 2** If the application is complete and meets the standards set forth by Title VII, the Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall approve the application and forward the application to the Center for Student Businesses.

1. If the application is denied, the Secretary of Administrative Affairs must submit a letter explaining the decision within ten (10) calendar days and forward an original date stamped copy to the applying association. Copies shall also be forwarded to the CSB, Campus Activities Office, and SGA President.

**Section 3** The CSB's Governing Board is not required to approve an application. However, any denial must be followed within twenty (20) calendar days with a detailed letter explaining the decision along with the minutes of the meeting to the applying association, secretary of Administrative Affairs, SGA President, and Campus Activities Office.

1. Upon approval by the CSB Governing Board, a dated stamped statement, signed by the Director of CSB, along with the minutes of the voting meeting shall be forwarded to the applying association, Secretary of Administrative Affairs, SGA President, and Campus Activities Office.

## **Chapter 12**

### Amending a PGOM

**Section 1** Any amendments to a Student Businesses PGOM shall be forwarded to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, in addition to the minutes of the meeting in which the vote was held. If the amendment does not contradict the mission or goals of the Student Business and is in compliance with the SGA Constitution and by-laws, it shall be approved by the Secretary of Administrative Affairs and forwarded to the CSB Governing Board.

1. The CSB Governing Board shall approve or disapprove a PGOM amendment by a majority vote. The decision and the minutes of the meeting shall be forwarded to the Student Business, Secretary of Administrative Affairs, and the Campus Activities Office.

## **Chapter 13**

### Student Business Rights and Privileges

**Section 1** A Student Business shall have these additional Rights and Privileges:

1. A mailbox service through the CSB

2. Access to the CSB computers, office equipment and professional advice; within the guidelines established by the CSB.
3. SATF accounts into which all Student Business funds must be deposited.
4. Ability to apply for business space in the Campus Center/Student Union through the CC/SU Commission.
5. Ability to apply for business space in any on campus residential area through Housing Services.

## **Chapter 14** Agencies

**Section 1** An agency is a Co-Curricular Organization formally recognized by the Student Government Association and established for the purpose of serving the student population at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

1. An agency must adhere to the charter under which it was created, unless amended through the procedures established in Title VII.
2. An agency must work to benefit all students, unless established to serve a specific population at the University.
3. All agencies must adhere to the Equal Opportunity Policy of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

**Section 2** The following are agencies listed with the Student Government Association:

1. Student Center for Educational Research and Advocacy
2. Student Legal Services
3. Office of ALANA Affairs
4. The Center for Student Business
5. Commuter Services and Housing Resource Center
6. Campus Center/Student Union Commission
7. Union Video Center
8. WMUA

9. University Productions and Concerts

10. Distinguished Visitors Program

## **Chapter 15** Agency Registration Procedure

**Section 1** Any organization desiring to be an agency must receive an application from the Speaker of the Senate. The application shall include, but shall not be limited to the following:

1. A charter for the agency, which shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- A. The name of the agency
- B. The mission of the agency
- C. Daily operational policies and procedures
- D. The non-student, permanent staff person (s) relationship to the Agency and their decision making responsibilities, if applicable
- E. A complete budget for the Agency desired, to include: (if applicable)
  1. Salary cost for permanent staff
  2. Rate of pay for part-time or student staff
  3. Travel Cost
  4. Cost of equipment
  5. Cost of office Supplies and misc. items
  6. A letter from the CC/SUC granting approval for the use of space, if applicable

**Section 2** The Speaker of the Senate shall review the application to ensure it is in compliance with the SGA Constitution and by-laws. If the application fails to comply, the Speaker of the Senate shall issue a letter to the organization explaining the decision to deny the application.

**Section 3** If the application complies with the SGA Constitution and by-laws, the Speaker of the Senate shall write a motion for the passing of the charter and the creation of the Agency.

1. The motion shall be placed on the agenda for a Senate meeting during regular session.
2. The motion shall require two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass.
3. Upon passage of the motion, the Agency shall become officially recognized by the Student Government Association and have all rights and privileges afforded an Agency.

**Section 4** If a motion to create an Agency fails to receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote, another motion with the purpose of creating the same Agency cannot be put before the Senate until one (1) year after the initial failure.

**Section 5** All agencies previously approved by the SGA shall be deemed recognized under this act.

## **Chapter 16**

### Violations of Title VII

**Section 1** Failure to meet these requirements shall result in action taken by the Secretary of the Registry. The Secretary of the Registry shall conduct his/her own investigation into the matter, hold hearings open to the parties involved, and hold a private deliberative hearing. At his/her discretion, and with due regard to the nature of the violation, the Secretary of the Registry shall render his/her decision and make his/her recommendations to the Student Judiciary. The Student Judiciary shall review the Secretary's decision and/or sanction and determine whether to uphold the decision and/or sanction. The Student Judiciary may rule to uphold the decision or sanction recommended by the Secretary, or may strike down the decision (and therefore the sanction). If the decision is struck down on the grounds that no violation occurred, the matter is resolved. If the decision is struck down on the grounds that the Student Judiciary believes that a violation occurred, but that the Secretary's decision is inaccurate, the matter is sent back to the Secretary for re-deliberations and, if necessary, additional hearings. If the decision is upheld but the sanction is struck down, the Student Judiciary shall recommend it's own sanction.

**Section 2** Upon approval of the decision and sanction by the Student Judiciary, the Secretary of the Registry shall send written notice to the RSO. The RSO shall have ten (10) calendar days to file an appeal with the Student Judiciary. If an appeal is filed properly, then the matter shall be handled by the Student Judiciary, as outlined in Title IV of the By-laws of the SGA. The appeal may be brought by a chief officer of the RSO, individually, or it may be brought by the members of the RSO. If an appeal is filed by a non-officer member, it must be signed by five (5) additional members. If more than one petition is brought by members/officers of that RSO, relating to the same decision of the Secretary of the Registry, the Student Judiciary must consolidate all valid petitions, and conduct consolidated inquiry.

**Section 3** The following sanctions may be applied:

1. *Warning* - A written statement to the chief officers and the SGA liaison informing them of the unauthorized conduct, ordering the RSO to desist, and advising that disregard of this notification will result in either suspension or revocation of its RSO status. The RSO representative to the Secretary of the Registry shall meet with the officers of the RSO in order to assist and advise the organization in any way permitted within the scope of its authority.
2. *Loss of Privileges* - A written statement to the chief officer of the RSO, informing her/him that the Secretary of the Registry/Student Judiciary has suspended one or more specific privileges for a specified period of time. The privileges suspended may not be arbitrary, but must relate to the type of violation determined to have occurred. The RSO representative to the Secretary of the Registry shall meet with the officers of the RSO in order to assist and advise the organization in any way permitted within the scope of its authority.
3. *Suspension* - A written statement to the Chief officer of the RSO, informing her/him that the student organization's RSO status has been suspended for a specified time period. Suspension may be granted without prior warning, but should only be done if the nature of the violation warrants it. In addition, the Secretary of the Registry must meet with the Chief Officers in order to restructure the RSO as necessary, prior to re-instituting its RSO status. The Secretary of the Registry shall register the organization once it has demonstrated its compliance with SGA policy, and provided that the consequences of any previous abuses have been resolved and effectively dealt with. The Secretary of the Registry shall notify the Senate and the Campus Activities Office that the RSO is suspended, in which case: the RSO in question shall be listed as suspended; funds under deposit will be frozen and audited; the Secretary of the Registry shall formally announce the suspension in the Collegian.
4. *Revocation* - A written statement to the Chief officer of the RSO, informing her/him that the student organization's RSO status has been revoked. Revocation may not be granted without prior warning or suspension. In addition, if the organization seeks to re-register as an RSO, the Secretary of the Registry (or a sub-committee) must meet with the Chief Officers in order to re-structure the RSO as necessary, prior to re-instituting its RSO status.