

# STUDENT ORGANIZATION POLICIES

## Student Organizations

### Preface

Methodist University is committed to creating and sustaining a campus learning environment where students can immerse themselves in the dynamic student engagement activities provided to enhance the educational experience beyond the classroom. The University manages and advises a broad range of student organizations, clubs, fraternities, and sororities. Participation in these organizations are limited to currently enrolled Methodist University students. As such, students are not only bound to the Student Code of Conduct, but student organizations, as a whole, are as well.

When a report of an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct is received by the Student Involvement Center, the Dean of Students Office, Public Safety, or any other University office, the procedures described herein will be activated. Methodist University has the right to address any alleged misconduct of any student organization or student group and/or any individuals affiliated with such groups.

The processes for adjudicating Student Code of Conduct violations are separate from may be pursued independently of federal law, state law, or local ordinances. The University may determine how the alleged violation/s impact the student organization's status and/or affiliation with the University until the conduct process has been completed. The University may choose not to pursue the alleged violations of any student organization when deemed appropriate. The University may choose to restrict students' contact with the organization and vice versa when facts and circumstances dictate such action to be appropriate. Finally, the Dean of Students office may determine which University personnel should be informed of the status and outcome of the conduct process.

These procedures do not apply to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence or any other Title IX-related offenses. Title IX cases are investigated and adjudicated as outlined in the Methodist University Handbook.

### Interim Measures

In some circumstances, the Dean of Students office may issue interim measures pending consideration of the case through these procedures. Interim measures may include but are not limited to: an order for the organization to cease and desist all activities and operations, a loss of privileges, membership recruitment restrictions, and the issuance of No Contact Orders. It is the obligation of the Dean of Students office to determine if and when interim measures are justified. Interim measures will vary dependent upon, but not limited to, factors such as: 1) the physical and emotional safety of the campus community including the organization's members, 2) the maintenance of public order, and 3) the effective sustainment of the educational process. If interim measure are justified, the Dean of Students office will issue, in writing, all measures to the organization's leadership and any specific individuals associated to the situation. Failure to comply with the interim measures may result in a violation of the Code of Conduct.

### Group Responsibility

Any student organization, club, fraternity, or sorority can be held responsible for the actions of the organization as a whole or the actions of individual members. Students are responsible for the behaviors of inactive members, former members, and/ or guests who are associated with the alleged violations. Each student organization has the responsibility of taking reasonable measures to assure that their actions and

behaviors are not in violation of University policies. Therefore, it is the duty of each organization to educate its members on the Methodist University Code of Conduct, University policies, policies connected specifically to the organization, and applicable laws and statutes in order to reduce the risk of harm and potential for violations of any policies, laws, and statutes.

When determining if a student organization will be held collectively responsible for individual actions of its members or guests, all available evidence and circumstances surrounding the specific incident will be fully reviewed and evaluated. Finding a group responsible for any violation does not require a minimum number of individuals being found responsible for said violation. A student organization may be sanctioned for activities and/or behaviors not officially sponsored by the organization when the majority of the individuals found responsible for the activities and/or behaviors are members of the student organization.

### **Preliminary Review**

All reports or complaints of alleged misconduct involving a student organization or group will be initially reviewed by the Associate Dean of Students/Director of the Student Involvement Center or a member of the staff of the Student Involvement Center. The Director will meet with the complainant/s, if identified, to hear an oral complaint and explain the investigation, adjudication, and appeal processes. Complaints are not recorded and investigative techniques are not applied during the preliminary review. Following the meeting with the complainant/s, the leader/s within the organization will be requested to meet with the Director. During said meeting/s, the Director will inform the leader/s of the complaint and conduct processes. Meeting/s with student leader/s will not include investigative techniques and recordings. Following the preliminary review, the Director will formally notify the Dean of Students office of the complaint/s and fully recuse any and all staff within the Student Involvement Center of all conduct proceedings from that point forward. In some circumstances, the Director may issue an order for the organization to cease and desist all activities and operations at the time of the preliminary review.

### **Investigation**

Upon receiving notice of the complaint/s from the Associate Dean of Students/Director of the Student Involvement Center, the Dean of Students office will initiate a thorough investigation into the complaint/s. The Dean of Students office has the authority to appoint additional staff members to assist with investigations. Investigations may include, but are not limited to, collection of written statements; questioning of complainant/s, respondent/s, any and/or all members associated with the organization, and witnesses; review of video; and photo and written evidence.

After a complete review of the alleged violations, the Dean of Students office may choose to determine if a violation occurred and take one of the following actions: 1) Clear all individuals and the organization as a whole of any and all alleged violations associated with the reported incident; 2) Formally charge individuals and not the organization as a whole by submitting, in writing, a Notice of Alleged Violation to the identified respondents and/or the organization's leadership; 3) Formally charge the organization as a whole, not including individual students, by submitting, in writing, a Notice of Alleged Violation to the organization's leadership; and 4) Formally charge individuals and the organization as a whole by submitting, in writing, a Notice of Alleged Violation to the identified respondents and the organization's leadership.

In such cases that the individuals and/or organization accepts responsibility for the alleged complaint, the Dean of Students office will notify the organization in a conduct decision letter of the final determination and sanctions. Organizations and/or individuals (when individuals and not the organization are held

accountable) may submit appeals. It is not permissible for individuals to submit appeals on behalf of oneself when only the organization was found responsible.

### **Adjudication**

Upon receiving a Notice of Alleged Violation, individuals and/or leadership associated with the organization identified in the complaint will be provided a fair and impartial hearing conducted by the Student Organization Hearing Board. The Student Organization Hearing Board will be composed of three members from the Administrative Hearing Board appointed by the Chair of the Administrative Hearing Board AND to include two students from either the Student Community Court or the Student Government Association appointed by the Chief Justice of the Student Community Court. A member of Administrative Hearing Board will serve as the Chair of the Student Organization Hearing Board. Participation on the Student Organization Hearing Board may not include any member directly affiliated with the responding organizations and its members AND may not include any staff members affiliated with the Student Involvement Center.

The Dean of Students office will present the findings of their investigation to the Student Organization Hearing Board with a written statement and verbal presentation. The Board may question the representative/s from the Dean of Students office. The Dean does not participate in the Hearing and will only answer procedural questions after the initial presentation and questioning phase has concluded.

During the hearing, the complainant/s will be given the first opportunity to present the complaint. If specific individuals are identified in the complaint, they will be heard by the Board next in no specific order. Leaders from the organization will next be heard by the Board. Witnesses will be the last individuals to present their statements. Throughout the testimony and questioning phase, a University-affiliated advisor may be present during the hearing.

After all testimony and questioning has been completed, the formal hearing will conclude. All key individuals associated with the case will be informed by the Board that they will deliberate, vote, and recommend a decision to the Dean of Students. Afterwards, individuals are excused from any further participation in the hearing. Deliberation will begin and the Board will vote on each charge individually. Recommended decision/s and sanction/s will be presented in writing to the Dean of Students by the next business day. The Dean of Students will provide the decision/s, sanction/s, and appeal procedures in writing two business days after receiving recommendations from the Board.

### **Appeal**

Organizations may appeal the decision/s of the Student Organization Hearing Board to the Appeal Board. Appeals must be submitted two business days after the decision is sent via email to the organization in writing. Appeals must include the completion of an appeal form which is available in the Dean of Students office or online. Organizations may appeal for any of the following reasons: 1) Information is available that was not available at the time of the decision, 2) The sanction that was given is inconsistent with the Methodist University Code of Conduct, and 3) The Methodist University personnel/staff failed to follow established procedures which significantly impacted the rights of the organization (students). Appeal procedures do not include a re-hearing of the case. The decision of the Appeal Board is final.

### **Sanctions**

If the organization is found responsible, sanctions may include, but are not limited by the following: 1) Written Reprimand, 2) Community Service Hours, 3) Educational Activities, 4) Restitution, 5) Social

Suspension, 6) Loss of Membership Recruitment, 7) Probation and Suspension-Related Restrictions, 8) Probation, 9) Temporary Removal, and 10) Permanent Removal. Organizations found responsible for similar violations within a two-year period, may receive more punitive sanctions.