2023-2024

Student Organization Handbook
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A. The Basics

As leaders of the 35+ student organizations here at Richmond Law, you are a vital part of life on campus. This handbook is a resource intended to support your work.

If you have any questions about the materials covered in this handbook, please contact the Associate Dean of Students. We are here to help you make your organizations as successful as possible!

Organization Requirements

In order to be recognized as an official Law School Student Organization, each group must provide the Associate Dean of Students with:

- Faculty advisor;
- A “critical mass” of students interested in the group – generally translated into 10 or more potential members;
- One designated organization leader and one budget officer;
- A current set of by-laws

All student organizations should have a description posted on the Law School website. If you’d like to update your organization’s listing, contact the Director of Communications and Marketing.

Leadership Roles

Organization Leader

An organization leader’s primary responsibility is to serve as the liaison to the Dean’s Office, the Alumni and Development Office, and to the general public. They are required to provide their contact information so that prospective students, alumni, or the general public can submit inquiries regarding the organization or an upcoming event.

Treasurer/Budget Officer

The treasurer/budget officer is responsible for following appropriate funding and financial procedures and for keeping track of all the organization’s expenses, reimbursements, and balances. Our Budget Coordinator is available for assistance as needed.

Organizational Transitions

At the end of the academic year, when a new leadership team is transitioning in, students should make every effort to ensure that the new team has access to all materials and communications tools used by the organization (social media accounts, websites, etc.).
Sending/Receiving Mail

Hard copy mail for student organizations will be placed in the mail folder belonging to the organization’s leader. All student mail folders are located outside of the second-floor entrance of the Law Library. Packages will be delivered to the Dean’s Office and you will be contacted for pickup. All mail should be addressed as follows:

Recipient Name
Richmond School of Law
203 Richmond Way
Richmond, VA 23173

If you need assistance with mailing or shipping, contact the Administrative Coordinator.

Storage Lockers

Student organization lockers are located on the third floor. Each student organization will be assigned one locker shelf. For inquiries regarding student organization lockers, contact the Associate Dean of Students. Note that no food or drink should be stored in lockers.
B. Important Contacts

Sue Allorelli
Budget Coordinator
(804) 287-6837
saltorel@richmond.edu
Contact Sue for questions regarding:
- organization budget process
- reimbursement requests
- fundraising activities
- organization budgets & reallocations
- purchasing through Dean’s office
- travel assistance

Rhianna Shabsin
Director of Alumni Relations
(804) 289-8016
rshabsin@richmond.edu
Contact Rhianna for questions regarding:
- alumni participation in events
- contacting individuals or smaller groups of alumni
- recording alumni participation

Renee Russell
Director of Communications and Marketing
(804) 287-1855
rrussell@richmond.edu
Contact Renee for questions regarding:
- communications strategies
- websites

Alex Sklut
Associate Dean of Students
(804) 289-8186
asklut@richmond.edu
Contact Dean Sklut for questions regarding:
- organization guidance and oversight
- member transitions/elections
- leadership questions/issues

Katy Olney
Assistant Director of Student Affairs
(804) 289-1846
kolney@richmond.edu
Contact Katy for questions regarding:
- accessibility advice
- leader training
- records manager

Will Thompson
Administrative Coordinator
(804) 289-8184
wthompson@richmond.edu
Contact Will for questions regarding:
- borrowing keys
- general office support
- checking out organization credit cards (including payments for organizations without credit cards)
- venue and other contracts

Mary Ruth Keys
Associate Director of Communications and Events
(804) 289-8895
mwalkers@richmond.edu
Contact Mary Ruth for questions regarding:
- event planning
  - room reservations
  - catering requests
  - food waiver request forms
  - event setup assistance
  - parking requests
  - event registration setup
- event publicity
  - The Docket
  - events calendar
  - flyers/d-flyers
  - bulletin boards
  - print and electronic invitations
- other event/space related needs
C. Finances and Budget

Budgets for advocacy boards, journals, and the McNeill Society are determined by the Dean’s Office. The budget must be approved before any expenses are incurred. If there are extenuating circumstances, contact the Associate Dean of Students and the Budget Coordinator to request use of budget funds before the start of the academic year. Note that this should be a rare occurrence and justification must be approved prior to incurring any expenses.

All other organization budgets are determined by the Student Bar Association (SBA).

**General Information & Strategy**

Organization budgets are comprised of all anticipated expenses and associated activities for each organization for the duration of the academic year. All expenses are charged to each organization’s index number. Index numbers can be provided by the organization’s treasurer or the Budget Coordinator.

In order to effectively manage the approved budgets, please note the following policies.

**Amending Approved Budgets and Budget Reallocations**

Budget reallocation requests from journals, advocacy boards, and the McNeill Society must be submitted to the Associate Dean of Students or the Budget Coordinator for budget review. Your request should include the amount needed and a justification for the request.

Additional funding requests for SBA-funded organizations must be submitted to the SBA Treasurer and approved prior to incurring any expenses.

**Unauthorized Expenses**

Unauthorized expenses include but are not limited to:
- gift cards
- furniture
- personal items
- computer equipment
- alcohol purchases in excess of 40% of an organization’s total expenditures

Incurring unauthorized expenses may result in a demand to the organization or individual for repayment and/or other sanctions by the Associate Dean of Students and/or the Student Bar Association.

Expenses incurred in violation of Events policies and procedures may require reimbursement to the University by the individual(s) incurring the charges. Refer to Section E (Policies) of this handbook regarding the use of the University’s catering services and the list of approved vendors and products.

Note that all items printed with the school’s logo or common words (such as “Richmond Law”) must be ordered from an approved vendor and approved by Collegiate Licensing. See Section E (Policies) for more information.
Receipts & Reimbursements

Submitting Receipts
Original and detailed receipts are required for all reimbursement requests, including on-campus services (University Catering, Printing Services, Spidershop, etc.). Receipts for reimbursement must be dated no more than 60 days from the date of purchase. All receipts should be submitted to the Budget Coordinator and should include the reason for the expense and the name of the event, if applicable. Bank and credit card statements are not acceptable forms of expense documentation. However, paid online receipts or copies received directly from the vendor will suffice for an original receipt.

Receipts for on-campus services (University catering, print shop, Spidershop) that are charged directly to a student organization index should be submitted to the Budget Coordinator and should include the reason for the expense and the name of the event, if applicable.

Meal Receipts
For any meal receipts, if fewer than 10 guests are included on the receipt, please write the names of each guest on the receipt. Include both the title and company name for any external guests. If more than 10 guests are included on receipt, simply write “10+ attendees” on the receipt. Any meal receipt submitted without this information will be returned delaying the reimbursement process.

The maximum gratuity on meal receipts is 20%. Meal receipts must be itemized. Delivery orders do not need to be tipped at 20%, but can be based on level of service. We recommend tipping no more than $20-25 on a delivery order.

Missing Receipts
The University no longer offers a missing receipt form. You will not be reimbursed if you do not have a receipt.

Reimbursements
All reimbursement requests should be submitted to the Budget Coordinator for processing.

Accounts Payable processes checks on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. They require 10 business days to process payments. Students have the option to choose direct deposit or a physical check when submitting requests for reimbursement. Direct deposit is the quickest avenue for reimbursement and can be set up in Bannerweb.

Payments
The following are two valid forms of payment available for the purchase of goods and services by organizations.

Option 1: Student Organization P-Cards (Credit Cards)
The Student Organization Purchasing Card (SOC) is a corporate MasterCard issued to provide an efficient way to process orders of University business and travel-related purchases. Qualified purchases within a predetermined purchase limit ($500/transaction maximum) can be charged directly to the SOC.
Training by the Dean’s office is required before using a SOC. Contact the Budget Coordinator if you need to schedule a time for training. Receipts should be turned in within 72 hours of purchase and can be submitted by hard copy or electronically.

✔️ The SOC can be used to purchase:

- office supplies
- small, replaceable equipment (ex. calculators)
- subscriptions
- books
- videos
- printing at off-campus locations
- miscellaneous one-time purchases
- ground transportation
- parking
- other travel and social expenses

❌ The SOC cannot be used to purchase:

- any computer and computer-related equipment (this must be purchased through Information Services [IS] or the department must receive written approval from IS to make the purchase)
- furniture (the University’s Design Services must approve any and all furniture purchases; please contact the Budget Coordinator or Director of Budgeting & Operations for assistance or questions)
- on-campus purchases at the dining halls, cafes, Print Shop, or the SpiderShop.
- alcohol

Option 2: Invoice submitted to the Budget Coordinator

Invoices that require payment by check can be brought directly to the Budget Coordinator for processing. All requests should first be authorized by the organization Treasurer. Checks will be mailed directly to the vendor; you may not pick up checks for vendors from Accounts Payable.

Gifts/Prizes/Awards Reporting Form

In the event that you are giving away a gift, prize, or award, you may need to submit additional information to the University. View the Gifts/Prizes/Awards Reporting Form online.

❌ Gifts of cash, gift cards, and gift certificates are not permitted. Gifts of any kind to University of Richmond faculty and/or staff are not permitted.

The following guidelines pertain to non-cash gifts.

- **Prizes and awards** are tangible personal property bestowed on University students in recognition of performance-related activities.
- **Gifts** are tangible personal property given in recognition of a particular achievement of participation in an activity.

University or SBA funding may not be used to purchase gifts for students. However, organizations with dues or fundraising accounts may use these funds to purchase gifts to show congratulations or appreciation in recognition of an academic or other professional milestone. Any gifts over $15 require approval from the Associate Dean of Students.

Gifts to show appreciation to outside speakers and judges are permitted in modest amounts. Gifts should be approximately $10 in value.
**Deposits**

**Checks**
Submit checks to the Budget Coordinator for deposit. All checks must be made payable to “University of Richmond” and should be submitted for deposit within 60 days of the check date.

**Dues**
Any dues collected by student organizations must be submitted to the Budget Coordinator for deposit. These funds will be kept separate from funds allocated by SBA. All checks should be made payable to the University of Richmond and should be submitted for deposit within 60 days of the check date.

**Student Travel**

**Airfare**
Airfare can be charged to the Law School’s credit card. Please see the Budget Coordinator to make reservations. You must have all of the following information before we can make any reservations:

- Name, phone number, email address, and date of birth for each traveler
- Destination(s)
- Travel dates
- Website/link to proposed itinerary OR preferred airline, departure, and return times
- Travel insurance should not be purchased.

Note: Names listed on reservations must match the traveler’s U.S. government identification.

**Mileage**
Students will be reimbursed for mileage at the University’s mileage reimbursement rate. Gas expenses will not be reimbursed. Transportation expenses will not be reimbursed for local/virtual events.

**Student Meals**
Students can be reimbursed up to $40 per day if itemized receipts are submitted. Gratuity should be no more than 20%. Expenses for individual travelers should be on separate receipts.

**X Alcohol purchases are not reimbursable.**

**Lodging**
See the Budget Coordinator if a credit card authorization form is needed in order to make hotel reservations. Itemized hotel folios should be turned in after a hotel stay.

**X Airbnb or similar rentals are not permitted.**

**Guest Speakers**

**Honoraria**
The University typically does not pay an honorarium for a guest speaker, unless there are exceptional circumstances that warrant it. Contact the Associate Dean of Students to request honorarium approval prior to confirming with speakers.
Speaker Reimbursements
Reimbursements for guest speakers’ mileage and meals may be permitted and should be submitted within two weeks of travel. Contact the Budget Coordinator to confirm before making any commitments to the speaker.

1. The organization treasurer should provide the Budget Coordinator with a list of speaker names in advance of the event along with their mailing address, email, and phone number. If the speaker prefers to reimburse someone else (a firm or a university) we will need the name, address, and Federal ID# if the recipient. Having this information in advance will allow for faster reimbursements.

2. Encourage speakers to make any travel arrangements as soon as possible in order to get the best price. Be sure to let them know the University will not pay for travel insurance or upgrades.

3. Ask speakers to send all receipts for which they will be seeking reimbursement to the organization Treasurer within 2 weeks of the event.

4. After approval, the organization Treasurer can turn them into the Budget Coordinator for processing.

Hotel Accommodations
The Law School has a discounted nightly rate available at the Graduate Hotel. Hotel reservations can be made through the Associate Director of Communications and Events.

✗ Airbnb or similar rentals are not permitted.

Mileage
Speakers will be reimbursed for mileage at the University's mileage reimbursement rate.

✗ Gas/fuel expenses are not reimbursable.

Only Coach Travel Permitted
If a speaker is utilizing airlines, bus, or train service to travel to/from the Law School, only coach travel will be reimbursed and travel insurance should not be purchased.

Exclusions
The Law School will not pay for a student organization to obtain a membership card to Sam’s Club, Costco, BJ’s, etc., nor can anyone be reimbursed for paying a membership fee.
D. Social Media and Websites

These social media guidelines and best practices are designed to help Richmond Law student organizations run successful social media accounts.

Requirements

All student organizations with social media accounts should have a written code of conduct that expresses your values and regulates how members of the social media community may engage with your content.

Some examples include:

- We welcome respectful discussion in our comments.
- We will acknowledge and rectify any errors or mistakes promptly.
- Comments must be relevant to the topic posted. Irrelevant comments will be deleted.
- Comments that use profanity or hate speech, or are a personal attack, will be deleted and the user will be blocked.

Upon graduation, students with administrative privileges to a student organization’s social media account should terminate those privileges and ensure that they’re transferred to another student to take over account duties.

Setting Up Accounts

Be Strategic

Before beginning an account, define the goals, target audience, voice, and the best platform(s). Revisit these frequently to see if they’ve changed and adjust accordingly. Consider starting with one platform before moving on to create accounts on other platforms.

Do Your Research

See what similar student organizations at other law schools are doing. This is a good way to see what type of content is relevant and engaging.

Handles

When naming an account, choose something easily recognizable (and available across platforms, if setting up multiple accounts). Keep the “name” and handle consistent. If it’s necessary to differentiate the account name/handle, abbreviate to Richmond Law (RL) or UR Law.

Content

Quality Graphics

Professional equipment is not required to have a successful social media account. However, quality images and videos will go a long way even if they are taken on a phone. (Note: Wipe cell phone camera lenses before taking pictures or videos to prevent smudgy images.)
Phrases to Avoid
Refrain from using phrases such as “comment below,” “tag a friend,” “like this post,” etc. Consider encouraging engagement organically by asking a question in a caption or story.

Be Accurate
Check to ensure the location, names, titles, and/or facts and statistics are correct before posting.

Get Permission
Proactively ask visitors and guest speakers for their permission to use their image. Before an event, send them the Photo and Video Release Form and ask that they fill it out in completion. Be sure to get permission before tagging someone in an image or caption.

Accessibility
Use captions for videos and add alt text when posting on social media.

Maintaining an Account

Post Consistently
Stick to a manageable posting schedule. For Facebook and Instagram, a recommended goal is three posts per week, with increased frequency as time allows. More frequent posting (e.g. a couple times a day), is more common on Twitter, unless you’re using the channel in a specific/targeted way (e.g. only during an event or conference).

Be Engaging and Engaged
Encourage conversation and engagement from followers. Try to respond with a like or comment with 24 hours.
- Show support and community. Tag other student organizations on campus in posts that involve them and like/comment on their posts.
- Monitor engagement according to your written code of conduct.

Make a Smooth Transition
Pass along account information when the executive board changes so that new pages do not need to be created for the same organization every year. This will prevent future members and followers from being confused as to which page/profile is “official.”

Follow Your Policy
People may leave comments that are negative, critical, or inappropriate/irrelevant. Stick to your code of conduct when it comes to engaging with comments.

Additional Resources

Content Management
- Planoly – Social media management website and app. Helps organize content into a feedmap. The free subscription will not post automatically but will remind you when it’s time to make a post.
- Later – Social media management tool, similar to Planoly, but specifically for Instagram.
- Airtable – Content calendar website good for planning content across multiple platforms.
**Content Creation**
- Canva – Create graphics without needing Adobe software.
- Unfold – App for creating stories.

**Photo Editing**
- Snapseed – Photo editing app.
- VSCO – Photo filter app.

**Captioning**
- Rev – Captioning services. Costs $1 per minute.
- Clipomatic – Captioning app good for automatic captioning of a video with one person speaking (i.e. Instagram stories).

**Websites**
Student organizations that would like to host organization websites are encouraged to set-up a site through the University’s Wordpress account. Contact the Director of Communications and Marketing to set-up such an account, or to discuss general website strategy. Wordpress training resources are available through the University’s Technology Learning Center.

**Helpful Contacts**
Let us know when you’re launching an account or website so that we can help expand your reach! Contact the Director of Communications and Marketing.
E. Policies

As a student organization at Richmond Law, you are expected to comply with all University of Richmond policies. Failure to comply with University policies may result in disciplinary action, reimbursement requests being denied, or other serious consequences.

Food and Beverage

The University monitors all food and alcohol served on campus. This means that alcohol consumption at events must be recorded in EMS/Centralized Scheduling Service. You are required to inform the Associate Director of Communications and Events whenever you plan on serving alcohol at an event on campus.

Current University policy regarding alcohol served at on-campus events can be found here. A few key takeaways can be found below.

Alcohol Purchasing

Alcohol must be purchased from University Catering or through an approved caterer.

✗ Student organizations are not permitted to purchase alcohol and have a member of their organization serve as a bartender.

ID Checks and Wristbands

At events where students are in attendance and alcohol is being served, photo IDs must be checked for each person wishing to consume alcohol, even if they’re visibly over the age of 21. Additionally, all attendees over the age of 21 wishing to consume alcohol must be identified by a wristband. Wristbands will be supplied by the Dean’s Office.

Event Manager

Policies require a Law School staff member to serve as an Event Manager at on-campus events where alcohol is served. The Event Manager is responsible for monitoring entrances/exits to/from the event, checking photo IDs and issuing wristbands, and overseeing the event. Because a staff member must be present at on-campus events where alcohol is served, it’s very important to plan in advance.

Other Alcohol Guidelines

- Serving Food with Alcohol
  - If alcohol is served at an event, food must be served commensurate both with the quantity of alcohol available as well as the time of day.
  - As a general guideline, events that start during traditional dinner time (5-7 p.m.) and that also serve alcohol should offer a meal. Events or receptions serving alcohol and hors d’oeuvres should provide a minimum of six pieces of food per attendee per hour. Food quantity is subject to review and approval by the Dean’s Office.
- Student Organization Budgets and Alcohol
Student organizations are not permitted to spend more than 40% of their annual expenditures on alcohol or alcohol-related expenses. Alcohol-related expenses include gratuities on a bar tab, cost of bartenders, etc.

- Police or Security Needs
  - Campus police will be notified for large (100+ people) receptions or parties. If they determine that security is needed, additional fees may apply.

- Self-Service Bars
  - Self-service bars are not permitted.

- Removing Alcohol from Premises
  - Alcohol is not permitted beyond Law School premises.

Non-Alcoholic Beverages
The University has contracted with Pepsi for exclusive beverage representation on campus. Therefore, only Pepsi products are to be sold, dispensed, served, or sampled on campus. Per this agreement, products must be purchased through the University’s retail outlets (ETC or the bookstore) or Heilman Dining Center.

- The purchase of Pepsi products from any non-campus retailer is not permitted.

Pepsi products include soft drinks, bottled water (Aquafina), Gatorade, Starbucks coffee, Izze, Naked Juice, Bubly, and more.

If you plan on purchasing beverages using University funds, you are required to purchase them through the University. To order, call (804) 289-8512 (Monday–Friday, 9 am.–4:30 p.m.) at least three business days prior to your event.
Catering

There are three primary catering options for events taking place on campus:

1. UR Catering
2. Food from a vendor on the Approved Vendors List
3. Food from a vendor not found on the Approved Vendors List (pickup ONLY)

**UR Catering**
The University offers full-service and drop-off catering options through UR Catering. All requests for university-provided catering must go through the Associate Director of Communications and Events. This request should include the date, start and end times, number in attendance, and a general idea of catering needs (for example, boxed lunches or a continental breakfast). Because UR Catering tends to book up far in advance, it is recommended to make your request at least four weeks prior to your event.

After a request has been submitted through the EMS room reservation system, it is forwarded to the Catering department’s scheduler. Based on UR Catering’s calendar and staff availability, the scheduler will mark the request as approved or denied.

- If approved, a catering event manager will reach out to you to discuss an exact menu and other logistics.
- If denied, you will be instructed to choose from vendor on the Approved Vendors List.

**Food from a vendor on the Approved Vendors List**
The University maintains a list of approved vendors who can be used for catering events on campus. Vendors found on this list have already been vetted by the University and have specific certificates on file that permit them to come onto campus. The Approved Vendors List can be found online. Note that this list is updated monthly, so a vendor found on the list now may fall off the list if any of their certificates expire and are not renewed.

**Important!** After choosing an approved vendor, you must fill out a Food Waiver Request Form and submit it to the Associate Director of Communications and Events at least five business days prior to the scheduled event. Once submitted, it will be sent to the University for approval (which can take several business days to process).

**Food from a vendor not found on the Approved Vendors List**
If you choose to source food from a vendor who is not found on the Approved Vendors List, it must be picked up from the vendor. Because they are not on the Approved Vendors List, they are not permitted to come onto campus to deliver.

- **Deliveries to campus from non-approved vendors are prohibited.**

**Important!** You must submit a completed Food Waiver Request Form to the Associate Director of Communications and Events at least five business days prior to the scheduled event. Once submitted, it will be sent to the University for approval (which can take several business days to process).
Fundraising

Students and student organizations are prohibited from soliciting financial support from alumni or any outside sources including foundations, corporations, or law firms without the prior written consent of the Associate Dean of Students.

Requests for permission to solicit must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean of Students and must include:

1. a statement describing the purpose of the solicitation and any related events and/or activity(ies),
2. the names and affiliations of all prospective donors, and
3. exact copies of all proposed solicitation materials.

Please understand that the Associate Dean of Students may need to consult with others within the Law School and the University, and therefore it may take up to four weeks from receipt of a complete solicitation request to receive a decision regarding the request.

Donations Involving Goods & Services Received

If an approved fundraising activity involves offering tangible goods or services for cash, no tax-deductible receipt can be issued. This includes items donated for auction purposes. These activities still need to be pre-approved by the Associate Dean of Students.

Cash Donations

If the approved function or activity generates cash gifts with no tangible goods or services received by the donor, the Dean’s Office should be notified immediately for the purpose of generating an official thank you/receipt and to record the gift. (This includes donated items, not used for fundraising such as restaurants donating food - a gift in kind.) All monetary gifts need to be turned into the Dean’s Office for forwarding to the Alumni and Development Office for posting to your organization’s account. Businesses and individuals rely on charitable donations for their tax deductions. The IRS only acknowledges official gift receipts when presented on official university letterhead.

Fundraising on Behalf of Third-Party Non-Prosfits

Student organizations who wish to solicit funds for a third party should have all donations made out directly to the third party. Funds should not be directed to Richmond Law with the expectation that they will be donated to the third party by the school in the future. For example, checks should be made out directly to the organization, not to the Law School.

Fundraisers to benefit an outside non-profit organization must be run through a student member of the student organization hosting the event. For example, when a student organization wants to host a trivia night with the proceeds donated to a local shelter, a member of the student organization must be responsible for collecting donations and making the donation to the non-profit organization. Funds cannot be run through the University.
Contracts

All contracts and contractual agreements must be entered into an online system that is monitored and reviewed by the University. Once reviewed by University approvers, contracts are submitted to Dean Perdue for review and signature.

Students, faculty, and staff are not permitted to sign contracts. This includes, but is not limited to, catering contracts, hotel/room block agreements, facility rental or event space agreements, event/event equipment rental contracts, speaker agreements, etc.

After your event has been approved, you must contact the Budget Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator to begin the contract review and approval process. Keep in mind that this process may take several weeks, depending on the terms and conditions of the agreement. Contracts must be submitted to the University for approval prior to any deposits or payments.

Alumni Outreach

We welcome and encourage student-alumni collaboration and communication. If you’d like to reach out to any alum on behalf of your organization (for purposes including, but not limited to, making a presentation, filming a video, or fundraising), you must contact our Alumni and Development Office first. The best way to do this is to reach out to the Director of Alumni Relations. Our staff will be able to help you discuss the best outreach approach.

Logo Use and Licensing

All logo use requests should be submitted to the Director of Communications and Marketing. Any items ordered with the school’s logo or the school name (such as t-shirts or other promotional products) must be ordered from an approved vendor and approved by Collegiate Licensing.