

MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Section 503

SUBJECT: REGULATION OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

PURPOSE: To foster and promote responsible involvement in student co-curricular activities and organizations

A. Introduction

Co-curricular student organizations play an important role in complementing classroom learning and contributing to the sense of campus community. MCCS values the contributions that these student associations make to the educational process. Because of this importance, all student organizations are required to operate in accordance with certain reasonable rules and expectations, and those organizations that are registered with a college are accorded the privileges and benefits set forth in this policy.

B. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, “student organization” means a group of students who regularly use college facilities, equipment or other resources for a common purpose under a common name, and who represent such name and purpose to other members of the college community. “Registered student organization” means a student organization that has registered with a college under Section G of this policy.

C. Policy

All registered and unregistered student organizations are subject to regulation by a college. All registered student organizations are accorded the privileges and benefits set forth in this policy.

D. Responsibilities of All Registered and Unregistered Student Organizations

All registered and unregistered student organizations have responsibilities that include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. Purpose

All student organizations must be formed for a co-curricular student-focused purpose consistent with the college’s goals and standards.

2. Membership, Participation and Leadership

Membership, participation and leadership in organizations must be open to all registered community college students. An organization may not unlawfully discriminate in

selecting members, controlling participation and/or in electing officers. Organizations that select their members or leaders on the basis of a commitment to a set of beliefs may limit membership and participation in the organization to students who, upon individual inquiry by the organization, affirm that they support the organization's goals and agree with its beliefs, provided that such qualification criteria do not operate to constitute unlawful discrimination.

3. Activities

a. Planning

Organizations must notify the college sufficiently in advance to plan appropriately for organization events.

b. Conduct

All student organizations must conduct their activities consistent with their constitution and application for recognition; pertinent laws; the mission and policies of their college and the MCCS; and college and MCCS policies including, but not limited to, those governing student conduct, alcohol possession and use, drug possession and use, hazing, non-discrimination and harassment. Organizations must not conduct activities that interfere with the rights and privileges of other members of the campus community; prevent or disrupt any college or MCCS function or activity; obstruct the legitimate movement of any person about the campus or in any college building or facility; or involve high risk of physical, financial or emotional harm.

4. Politically Related Events

This policy permits organizations to engage in constitutionally protected political speech and activities. Nonetheless, student organizations may not conduct activities that constitute partisan political activities in violation of law or policy. Because the laws and policies regulating such activities in public facilities are complex, all student organizations must consult in advance with the chief student service official prior to using college or MCCS names or resources to invite a candidate running for elected office, solicit funds for such candidates, use an on-campus address, telephone, computer, service, equipment or personnel in connection with, or to endorse, such candidacies.

5. Financial Responsibilities

Organizations may not incorporate or become separate registered tax-exempt organizations, and must manage organization funds prudently and ethically and in accordance with sound accounting practices. Off-campus or benefit fundraising must not be the main focus of the organization. Colleges shall have upon request access to all books and records of an organization.

6. Contracts and Other Like Commitments

Organizations must consult with the appropriate official designated by the college before executing any commercial contracts or making plans for sales, fundraisers or corporate sponsorships by any outside group. This will ensure that such arrangements are appropriately managed and commercially reasonable, and do not constitute unrelated business activity for a college.

7. Safety

Organizations are responsible for the safety of participants. Because organizations may be held personally liable in case of accidents, organizations must consult with the college to determine whether to obtain insurance for particular activities. Colleges reserve the authority to oversee, limit and stop any unsafe activities.

8. National Affiliation

A student organization may be affiliated with a national organization, but the local campus organization and student members must make all decisions ensuring that they reflect that college's goals, policies and student needs.

E. Sanctions for Non-Compliant Student Organizations

Each college reserves full authority to take appropriate action against any student organizations and/or their members who violate a law, college or MCCS policy. For an organization, such action may include loss of recognition, resulting in loss of access to college services. For an organization's members, such action may include discipline and reference to law enforcement authorities.

F. Benefits Accorded Registered Student Organizations

Organizations that apply for, qualify for and maintain registration pursuant to Section G below are accorded certain benefits and privileges by the college. These include, as college resources allow, the following:

1. Recognition in college publications and web site;
2. Establishment of an account with a financial institution approved by the college and appropriate purchasing privileges in accordance with college and MCCS policies and expectations;
3. Publication of meetings and activities in a college calendar;
4. Posting privileges on an existing bulletin board, student organization website or other posting locations, if any, reserved for registered student organizations;

5. Right to establish membership dues and conduct appropriate fundraising activities approved by the college;
6. Use of the college's name, marks and logos in the student organization's title in accordance with MCCS policies on trademarks and licensing; a campus mailbox and e-mail address; and certain Information Technology Services' equipment and services; and
7. Eligibility for student fee allocations and other grants, stipends, awards and honors presented to student organizations and officers of student organizations; and use of campus office and storage space reserved for student organizations, if any.

G. Registration Applications and Renewals

1. Initial Applications

To register, an organization must complete a college's recognition packet. Typically, such a packet contains the organization's proposed name and description of proposed activities; the names of at least five currently registered students who are willing to serve as officers or members; evidence that the proposed organization will not duplicate the goals, activities or name of another existing student organization; evidence that the proposed activities do not create undue risk of harm or liability to others; proposed advisor; and a copy of the organization's proposed constitution and/or bylaws.

Once registered, an organization must ensure that the information in its registration packet is accurate throughout the academic year. Should the organization change its focus, leadership or fundamental activities during the academic year, the organization must promptly submit updated forms.

2. Annual Renewal

Registration expires at the end of the academic year. An organization that wants to keep its registered status must renew its registration at the start of each academic year by the process so designated by the college.

3. Approvals

Those initial or renewed registrations that meet the college's registration standards will be approved by the college.

H. Other Provisions Regarding Registered Organizations

1. Advisers

All registered organizations must have an adviser approved by the college. Advisers should be employed by the college on at least a half-time, regular basis and, whenever possible, be a faculty member in order to promote student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom.

2. Resource Limitations

While the colleges encourage creativity and entrepreneurial spirit among students, resource limitations may impose practical constraints on the number and range of student organizations that can be registered in any given year. Benefits may not be available to every student organization because of lack of institutional funding or because of additional criteria and processes that may be reasonably required of certain student organizations. In some cases, a college may need to charge for services provided to student organizations. Decisions about resource allocation will be at the discretion of the college and will be made on a case-by-case basis.

REFERENCES: 20-A M.R.S.A. §12706(1)

DATE ADOPTED: June 24, 2009

DATE(S) AMENDED: