Forming a New Student Organization at GW

The George Washington University has nearly 500 student organizations. Assembled under a wide variety of causes and interests, student organizations exist to provide a diverse array of student activities that benefit and enrich the student experience. The Office of Student Life is thrilled that you are interested in adding to the amazing community of organizations on campus, and we are eager to assist you in the process of forming a new org. The best place to start the process of creating a new org is with a review of the process on how to do so and what is required of you. Follow the steps below to form your new org:

1. **Develop the initial idea for a student organization and check to see if anything similar already exists at GW**
   - Check the Directory of Student Organizations to see what other organizations are like your concept and that you do not overlap with the mission of an existing group.
   - Think critically about: what the organization will bring to GW; the types of programs services, or initiatives your group will implement; what the organization will gain from becoming a recognized student org on campus; and the resources or support you will need in order to make the organization successful here; or if you could join an existing group with membership and bring your idea to them.

2. **New Org Consultation Meeting: Meet with a staff member from the Office of Student Life to discuss your idea**
   - You are required to meet with a Student Life staff member about your idea prior to submitting your application materials.
   - The New Organization Consultation Meeting will serve as a starting point to allow you to gain a better insight into what it takes to start a group at GW and receive feedback on your idea. The Student Life staff member will walk you through the steps on how to proceed, the requirements of student organizations, what is needed for your constitution, and how you should prepare for your presentation. New Organization Consultation Meetings may take place at the Student Organization Resource Desk anytime the Desk is open or through the virtual hours.

3. **Recruit your initial members and potential officers**
   - You are required to have at least 10 members. Out of the 10 members, 3 must be officers - with one officer serving in an administrative role (president) and one serving in a financial role (treasury).
   - Starting a student organization is difficult and time consuming work. It is not only a requirement to have at least 10 members, it is also to your advantage to get people interested in the group that can help you develop your needed materials.

4. **Put thought into your organizations’ action plan**
   - After you have a good idea of what your group will do, why it will do it, and who will be involved, start thinking about how you are going to make this all happen. What is your mission? What long term goals do you have? What short term goals will be set in order to achieve your long term goals and mission? How will you recruit and retain members?
   - It is helpful to think of this planning effort as the first step to developing your constitution
5. **Draft your organization’s constitution**
   - *As a new organization your membership will need to draft a constitution which aligns well with your stated mission and goals, as well as includes GW’s three required clauses.*
     - i. The required clauses for the GW Constitution, as well as a template to guide you through the constitution writing process can be found on [GW Engage](https://gwengage.gwu.edu) at the Org Help portal under “Documents.”

6. **Create your presentation outline**
   - *Your organization will need to present your idea in front of the New Organizations Committee* – a group of students that make recommendations to the Student Life on which groups should or should not be given recognition.
   - Prepare a presentation no longer than 5 minutes that covers the thoughts from your action plan (step 4), the highlights of your constitution (step 5), your purpose, how you are unique, and what your organization brings to campus.
     - i. [View the rubric](https://gwengage.gwu.edu) the committee uses to make their decisions.
   - Outlines may be in the form of a PowerPoint presentation or Word document.

7. **Submit your application to become a new organization on campus via GW Engage**
   - Enter into the Engage system’s registration portal – and complete the Organization Registration form. You can see our [step-by-step guide](https://gwengage.gwu.edu) for how to successfully complete the registration form if you need additional assistance.
   - You will need to upload the following into your registration portal form within Engage:
     - i. A roster of all members (min of 10) – see step 3
     - ii. Your prepared constitution – see step 5
     - iii. Basic information about your group, including the name, summary, etc.

8. **Schedule a meeting with the New Organization Committee**
   - After your application is submitted, the Student Life staff member on the New Organization Committee will reach out to you to arrange a time for you to present your idea to the Committee. The Committee sees presentations on a rolling basis, once per month.

9. **Present your proposed organization**
   - As many officers as possible should attend the presentation and be knowledgeable about the group. Utilize your outline to cover all pertinent information in 5 minutes or less. The Committee will then ask any questions they may have for the group.

10. **Await final Committee/Student Life decision**
    - **If approved**, your organization will be notified within 7 days. Once approved, you will have one month from your approval date to attend a New Organization Orientation meeting. This will serve as your first advisory meeting as an organization. Additionally, your Engage portal will be activated at your new organization orientation. You will need to add members of the group to your portal and update the org profile with key information once this has been done.
    - **If denied**, your organization will be provided a rationale as to that decision. Your organization may choose to appeal the decision to the Committee, but only on the basis that the decision made was reached due to a clerical error or as a result of a bias.