

Virginia Highlands Community College
Student Club/Organization Resource Manual



This resource manual has been developed to assist students and club/organization advisors in ensuring their clubs/organizations are developed properly and run smoothly. Questions regarding clubs/organizations should be directed to Student Services in ISC 128.

Why get involved?

Research indicates that there are numerous benefits to being involved in college and reveals those students who are involved:

- receive better grades
- are more successful in their academic program
- are more likely to stay in school and graduate in a timely manner
- feel more satisfied with their college experience
- are more marketable when job searching and applying to four-year colleges
- develop valuable leadership and interpersonal skills

Furthermore, involvement offers students the opportunity to connect with peers and college faculty and staff members. VHCC has numerous opportunities to get involved and gain leadership skills.

Definitions

Clubs: Student groups designed to meet a specific interest of students. These may be academic, social or interest based. These clubs have an advisor, are initiated and led by students, are approved by the Student Affairs Committee, and are overseen by Student Services.

Organizations: Student groups designed to serve the entire campus community such as the Student Government Association or groups tied to outside affiliations like Rotaract or PTK. These organizations have an advisor, are initiated and led by students, are approved by the Student Affairs Committee, and are overseen by Student Services.

Networks: Groups closely tied to a department on campus that bring together students with like interests or needs. These groups are not tied to specific academic classes and are open to the whole campus. Networks are advised and funded through the sponsoring department, are driven and led by college employees, notify the Student Affairs Committee of their existence and purpose (but don't require an approval), and do not fall under Student Services. Networks are required to follow fundraising and room reservation policies and are asked to notify Student Services of events to avoid duplication or conflict with events conducted by clubs or organizations by completing the *Student Event, Project, Fundraiser or Local Funding Request Form*.

New Club/Organization Checklist

VHCC has many clubs & organizations designed to enhance the collegiate experience through extracurricular activities. If students are not fully served by the clubs/organizations already active, they may apply to start a new club/organization. Below is a checklist to aid in this process.

Step One:

___ Develop a club/organizations name and purpose. What functions will this club/organization accomplish that the current clubs/organizations do not?

___ Secure a full-time VHCC employee who agrees to serve as a club advisor. If you are having trouble locating one Student Services may be able to help recruit an advisor.

___ Fill out the *Probationary Application for New Student Club/Organization* located on the Clubs & Organizations page of the VHCC website and turn it into Student Services for Probationary Approval.

Step Two:

___ If approved for Probationary Approval, hold an interest meeting to investigate whether there is sufficient interest to sustain a club/organization. Make sure you follow probationary approval guidelines described on the next page.

___ Collect names of other students that are also interested in your proposed new club/organization.

___ Develop a constitution, in consultation with your advisor, (including constitution of any outside organization affiliation) that will structure the operation of your club/organization. A sample framework is included on the following pages.

Step Three:

___ Once you are sure that there is enough interest to sustain the club/organization, submit the completed *Application for New Student Club/Organization* and constitution to Student Services. This application will be forwarded for consideration by the Student Affairs Committee.

___ Meet with the Student Affairs Committee to answer questions. The Student Affairs Committee will then discuss and decide approval amongst themselves. If approved, the Application will be forwarded to the Vice President of Instruction & Student Services and the President of the College for final signatures. The decision of approval/disapproval of the club/organization will be emailed to the student proposing the club as well as the club advisor after a decision has been made by the committee and approved by the Vice President and President.

___ Establish a club account with the VHCC Educational Foundation in the Institutional Advancement Office.

Probationary Approval

All new clubs/organizations must be approved by the Student Affairs Committee, the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, and the President of Virginia Highlands Community College. Until this process is complete, clubs/organizations are considered probationary and **may not**:

- Use the college's name in association with their proposed club/organization off campus
- Begin fundraising

Probationary approved clubs/organizations may meet for up to three months to gather interest and decide if the club could sustain longer than the interest or enrollment of the student proposing the club before they must officially apply to become a club. During this time the group should be working closely with their advisor and Student Services. They must follow all guidelines set forth in this manual. Any inappropriate behavior during the Probationary Approval period of the group may impact the ultimate approval of the club.

Constitution Guidelines

All constitutions should address specific topics. While they do not need to follow the outline exactly, this should be helpful in developing new constitutions.

Article 1: Name of Club

Name of club/organization (and national affiliate if applicable). If the organization has a national affiliate, copies of their bylaws and constitution must be presented for review and added to your file.

Article 2: Purpose

The purpose should state why the club/organization exists and specifically state the objectives (without listing specific activities) of the club. The activities of the club/organization will relate back to the purpose.

Article 3: Membership

A statement defining who is eligible for membership must be included. It is the intent of the inclusive nature of VHCC that all students are eligible for any club/organization unless the organization purpose prevents this philosophy (i.e. Honor Club that requires certain GPA). No one shall be denied membership because of race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, age, disability, or marital status. Recommended statement: "Membership in VHCC organizations is open to any member of the College community willing to subscribe to the constitution and bylaws of the organization. (See VHCC Policy 6.5.9.0.D.)"

Article 4: Meetings

Section 1: Number of Meetings

The number of meetings (i.e. per month/semester/year) should be listed. VHCC has an activity hour when it is suggested student clubs/organizations meet.

Section 2: Quorum/Majority Defined

For most clubs/organizations, decisions are brought to the membership for a vote. Before a vote can be taken, a quorum must be met. A quorum is defined as the minimum number of members who have to be at the meeting for the group's business to be conducted. Quorums and majority numbers should be identified.

Article 4: Dues

Most clubs/organizations will not charge dues, but for some organizations aligned with a national organization the amount of dues required and the benefits they provide should be explained.

Article 5: Officers

List of the officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, etc.) and their specific duties and responsibilities. Any qualifications (full-time status, GPA, etc.) should be stated. Include a specific method of election including the time of election, length of service and election process. Include a procedure for removal of an officer and what the process of replacing an officer that has been removed or resigned.

Article 6: Committees (optional)

Some clubs/organizations have internal committees. If this applies, discuss the different committees, responsibilities, and how they are constructed.

Responsibilities of Clubs/Organizations

1. Conduct all activities in compliance with College policies and procedures, the constitution and the laws of the United States, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the town of Abingdon. Any policies or laws applying to individuals also apply to recognized student clubs/organizations. For further information, please refer to the Student Handbook.
2. Annually submit a list of officers and their contact information by October 1st of each academic year to Student Services. If a change in officers occurs throughout the year, clubs/organizations should forward this information along as well.
3. Submit appropriate forms (attached and found online) for meetings, proposed events and fundraising. The purpose of the approval is to ensure:
 - a. This event is appropriate for VHCC.
 - b. This event does not conflict with another club/organization event/fundraiser or student activity.
 - c. The fundraising proposal does not conflict with the activities of the VHCC Educational Foundation.

All forms should be submitted to Student Services at least one month prior to the proposed event. Earlier submission will allow for the event to be advertised in the Stall Street Journal.

4. Submit for review or approval any changes or amendments to the constitution to Student Services. Approval will be decided by the Student Affairs Committee at their next meeting.

Responsibilities of Club Advisors

All student clubs/organizations must have an advisor who is a full time employee at VHCC. Clubs/organizations are responsible for the recruitment and selection of their advisor.

- a. Club/organization advisors should attend club meetings and club/organization-sponsored events, provide support and training for officers, and help ensure a smooth transition when new officers assume their duties.
- b. The advisor is to handle all financial transactions with the club/organization's money.
- c. Club/organization advisor's signature must be included on all event and fundraising proposals. This signature provides assurance that the advisor is aware of the activities of the club/organization and plans to provide oversight of the event.
- d. Ensure that students who travel off campus for any club/organization related activity fill out the *Assumption of Risk Form* and *Code of Conduct*.

Inactive Clubs/Organizations

Clubs/organizations that have not been active for the span of one year may be placed on inactive status. Active is defined as regular meetings, events and email notifications. Student Services will notify the Student Affairs Committee of this inactivity. A list of inactive clubs/organizations will be kept on file with Student Services. If a new club/organization is proposed that aligns with the inactive club/organization, it may be possible to reactivate the club/organization through the old constitution. The Student Affairs Committee would need to approve reactivation. Once a club is listed as inactive if there is no club advisor or student interest it will be dissolved. All remaining funds will be deposited into the Student Activities Budget.

Email, Blackboard and Websites

VHCC student clubs/organizations are eligible for campus e-mail addresses, blackboard sites and websites. Advisors should begin the process for requesting these services through the Student Activities Coach to ensure adherence to College policy. Clubs/organizations must abide by the college's email policies.

Facebook & other Social Media

Clubs/organizations are welcome to use social media to advertise their events and club/organization purposes; however they should do so in a responsible and respectful manner. For each social media account that is created on behalf of a club, the advisor must be an admin on the page. In addition, the *Webmaster/Media Specialist*, must be added as an admin on the page to ensure continuity between clubs across all social media.

Publicity of events

Clubs/organizations must gain approval from Student Services to post information for upcoming events (these events should have already been approved by Student Services. The College has informational TV screens located throughout the campus. Clubs/organizations may forward information regarding their *approved* events to Student Services. Once the message is approved, Student Services will forward the information to the Coordinator of Public Relations & Marketing to be posted on the screens. All information (TV screens messages/flyers) must list the name of the sponsoring club, date and time of the event and location of the event. Flyers, once approved, may **NOT** be taped on walls or any of the glass entrance doors for safety reasons.

Club/Organizations Budgets and Financial Support

- Club/organizations budgets are maintained by the VHCC Educational Foundation. Advisors should submit the appropriate forms to deposit and request checks to the Office of Institutional Advancement. This budget will roll over from year to year.
- Clubs that remain Inactive for three years will be evaluated by the Student Services Office and VHCC Educational Foundation. All remaining club funds may be redistributed and repurposed at that time.
- Each club/organization is eligible for \$100 per academic year from Student Services to support their activities. The advisor should request a transfer of funds from Student Services to their foundation account by filling out the *Application for Club Seed Money*.
- In addition, clubs/organizations may petition for additional funds up to \$500 (once per academic year) from Student Services on the condition that they match these funds through fundraising and Student Services has enough funds available. These funds are to be used for events to benefit students or travel to conferences/competitions. Advisors should fill out the *Approval for Student Event, Fundraiser Request, and Local Funding* form at least one month in advance of when money is needed.

Fundraising Policies

Clubs/organizations wishing to fundraise should first consult with Student Services and the Vice President of Institutional Advancement. Fundraising includes any event with an admission fee, sponsorship solicitation, and seeking in-kind gifts.

- Clubs/organizations MUST complete the *Approval for Student Event, Fundraiser Request, and Local Funding* form one month in advance of planned fundraiser. Please be aware that clubs/organizations may be limited in who they solicit in the community due to other college clubs/organizations already soliciting those businesses.
- Activities should not compete with ongoing solicitation conducted by the VHCC Educational Foundation.
- Food sales must get prior approval due to possible competition with snack bar sales.
- Funds raised must go toward or support the overall purpose of the club/organization.
- Fundraising activities must not inconvenience, harass or annoy other members of the college or local community.

Forms

- For a list of current Student Activities Forms please visit <http://www.vhcc.edu/current-students/student-life/student-activities-forms> or go to the faculty and staff Z-drive at Shares > Counseling > FORMS > Updated Forms.