Before you decide to start a new student organization, investigate to determine if an RSO currently exists to meet your needs. The Campus Activities Office publishes a listing of RSO’s in both printed and electronic formats. Visit the Campus Activities Office for a copy of the Campus Activities brochure, or visit us on-line.

After investigating what the University’s RSO’s currently offer, you may determine that an existing RSO is just what you are searching for or maybe even much more. Contact a member, officer, or advisor of the RSO to learn more about joining.

By joining an RSO with similar interests to yours, you will avoid duplicating efforts of providing events, programs, and services to the University community. You will also avoid competing for members and funding.

Ultimately, however, an Emerging Student Organization that duplicates the purpose of an existing RSO will not be officially recognized, as detailed in the “Policy for Recognition of Student Organizations:"

“
A student organization seeking official University recognition should have a goal, purpose, and identity that is both unique and singular. Any group whose purpose duplicates that of an existing organization will not be recognized. The limited number of potential members, dictated by the University’s enrollment, will not support an infinite number of student organizations.”

The first phase in the recognition process involves the initial formation of your new student organization. Once you have determined that your group will not duplicate the purpose of an existing RSO, submit a completed “Emerging Student Organization Interest Form” to the Campus Activities Office. This will enable your group to be classified as an Emerging Student Organization and enjoy the privileges associated with such classification.

After you have submitted your completed form, you should complete the “Intent to Organize Packet.” The following tasks should then be priorities:

- **Recruit members.** All Emerging Student Organizations must have a minimum of 15 members during the recognition process. After receiving official University recognition, RSO’s must maintain a minimum of 10 members.

- **Identify an advisor.** All Emerging Student Organizations must identify a University employee to serve as advisor for the organization. All advisors must be faculty or staff members employed by the University on a full- or three-quarter-time basis. For many new student organizations, identifying an advisor proves to
be the most difficult task of the recognition process. The following steps may prove useful to you in identifying an advisor:

1. Develop a description of your ideal advisor. With the assistance of students interested in the organization, answer questions such as the following: How involved would you like your advisor in planning meetings and events? What type of personal or work experiences would you like your advisor to have? How much time would you like your advisor to commit to the organization?

2. Develop a list of advisor candidates. Seek suggestions from faculty, staff, and students interested in the organization. Contact the Campus Activities Office for suggestions as well. Keep in mind the possibility that the best advisor for your organization may be a faculty or staff member with whom you have never taken a class or whose office you have never visited.

3. Contact advisor candidates. Set up a meeting with your top candidate or candidates. Bring copies of any documentation (constitutions, statements of purpose, etc.) with you, along with any information you feel will give the candidate more information about the organization. Discuss the expectations you have of your advisor with the candidate.


- **Draft a constitution and by-laws.** All RSO constitutions and by-laws must include the following provisions. Refer to the “Writing a Constitution” chapter for additional information.
  1. The preamble, statement of purpose, or mission statement must be consistent with the University's mission, goals, values, and policies.
  2. Members must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average throughout their membership.
  3. Officers must maintain a minimum 2.3 cumulative grade point average throughout their term.
  4. Membership criteria must not discriminate on the basis of religion, creed, physical ability, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.
  5. Membership criteria for non-University students, if applicable, must include a method of monitoring such members’ compliance with University policies and procedures. Additionally, a provision limiting non-University student membership to a maximum of one-tenth of the total membership of the organization must be included. All non-University members must be non-voting members of the organization.

- **Contact a local, state, national, or international affiliate.** If your group is planning to be affiliated with a local, state, national, or international organization, contact the organization’s membership or expansion office. They will be able to provide you with information on and requirements for establishing your local chapter. Regardless of the affiliate’s requirements, the University’s requirements supersede them. Contact the Campus Activities Office for assistance with identifying local, state, national, or international affiliates.

- **For service organizations, contact the Associate Director of Service-Learning and Volunteerism.** The Service-Learning and Volunteerism Office also maintains requirements of service organizations, including minimum number of service learning projects per semester, minimum number of service hours performed per semester, and active involvement in University service initiatives. Refer to the “Starting a Service Organization” chapter for additional information.
The second phase in the recognition process involves the completion of an “Intent to Organize Packet.” The Intent to Organize Packet is reviewed once per semester. The submission deadline is always the day before fall break or spring break. Requests from Emerging Student Organizations will be considered only once per organization per academic year. “Intent to Organize Packets” include the following credentials:

1. **Intent to Organize Form**, including signatures indicating acceptance of the University’s standards for recognition.

2. **Officer and Advisor Contact List.**

3. **Roster** of a minimum of 15 members with Student ID Numbers.

4. **Proposed Schedule of Events** with names, descriptions, and dates of proposed events.

5. **Constitution and By-laws.**
   a. The preamble, statement of purpose, or mission statement must be consistent with the University’s mission, goals, values, and policies.
   b. Members must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average throughout their membership.
   c. Officers must maintain a minimum 2.3 cumulative grade point average throughout their term.
   d. Membership criteria must not discriminate on the basis of religion, creed, physical ability, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.
   e. Membership criteria for non-University students, if applicable, must include a method of monitoring such members’ compliance with University policies and procedures. Additionally, a provision limiting non-University student membership to a maximum of one-tenth of the total membership of the organization must be included. All non-University members must be non-voting members of the organization.

6. **Constitution and By-laws** of local, state, national, and international affiliates, if so affiliated.

7. **Cover Letter** from the organization’s president addressed to the Director of Campus Activities/University Center, petitioning for University recognition (typed).

8. **Letter of Support** from the organization’s advisor addressed to the Director of Campus Activities/University Center, supporting University recognition for the organization (typed).

The third and final phase in the recognition process involves the administrative review of your “Intent to Organize Packet.” The sequence for an Emerging Student Organization to become officially recognized involves the following steps:

1. The organization submits a completed “Intent to Organize Packet” to the Director of Campus Activities/University Center.
2. The Director of Campus Activities/University Center forwards the "Intent to Organize Packet" to the President of the Student Government Association for review by the Student Organization Committee.

3. Following review by the Student Organization Committee, the President of the Student Government Association forwards the "Intent to Organize Packet," along with the Committee's recommendation for or against recognition, to the Director of Campus Activities/University Center.

4. Following review, the Director of Campus Activities/University Center forwards the "Intent to Organize Packet," along with the Director's recommendation for or against recognition, to the Vice President of Student Life.

5. The Vice President of Student Life grants or denies official recognition to the organization based on recommendations from the Student Government Association, the Director of Campus Activities/University Center as well as the organization's compliance with the University's mission, goals, values, and policies.

6. The Director of Campus Activities/University Center will notify the organization's president, or chief executive officer, and advisor of its status.

Guidelines for Emerging Student Organizations

As discussed earlier in this chapter, once you have submitted a completed "Emerging Student Organization Interest Form" to the Campus Activities Office, your group will enjoy the privileges associated with being and Emerging Student Organization. With those privileges, however, come certain responsibilities. The following guidelines detail both what is expected of your new student organization and what rights you may exercise as a group.

1. An Emerging Student Organization shall not use the University's name or services, nor shall it sponsor or publicize any events, including fundraisers, until it has received official recognition.

2. An Emerging Student Organization may not receive or solicit funds from any University department, office, or organization, nor from any off-campus donors.

3. To help Emerging Student Organizations become organized and recruit members, the following privileges will be extended. Any other special considerations will be authorized at the discretion of the Director of Campus Activities/University Center.
   a. To conduct a maximum of three informational meetings.
   b. To post notices approved by the Campus Activities Office for informational meetings.
   c. To attend Club Rush if the organization is designated as “emerging.”

4. An Emerging Student Organization may exercise these privileges only while actively pursuing official recognition. An Emerging Student Organization violating this policy will jeopardize its prospects for official recognition.

5. A maximum six month time limit for the recognition process applies, beginning with the date of submission of the "Emerging Student Organization Interest Form."