

Oberlin College & Conservatory

Creation of a Chartered Student Organization

Policy Title: Creation of a Chartered Student Organization aka Chartering Process

Responsible Position for Policy: Tina Zwegat - Director of Student Activities & Orientation, Associate Director of the Student Union

Office/Department Responsible for Policy: Student Union Office (Wilder 111)

Division Responsible for Policy: Student Life

Original Issue Date: ()

Last Revision Date: (05/27/2020) (Date you are submitting this edited version)

Log of Previous Revisions: (02/2020) (8/26/2016)

I. **Policy Purpose:** Any group of students must be chartered in order to use the name of Oberlin College, or its buildings, facilities, or services. This includes anyone on the Oberlin campus who wishes to publish literature intended for on or off-campus distribution, bring outside speakers or performers, carry out activities for the benefit of non-members, participate in off-campus activities in the name of Oberlin College or request yearly student activity fee monies.

II. **Policy Statement:** A group shall be considered as fully recognized if it has had its charter approved by the Joint Chartering Sub-Committee, Student Senate, the Student Life Committee, and General Faculty and has submitted a current list of officers to the Student Union Office.

If an organization is changing the name of the organization, it need only submit an addendum to the original charter, to be approved by the Student Union. If the organization changes its purpose, then the organization will need to resubmit its entire charter as though it were new.

Charters are to be submitted to the Student Union Office. Staff in the Student Union Office is responsible for entering the charter in the database and coordinating its progress through the chartering process. Questions about charters should be directed to the staff in the Student Union Office.

In an attempt to maintain a reasonable number of student organizations, charters with a purpose similar to an existing organization will not be entered in the chartering process.

III. **Policy Scope/Eligibility:** Policy applies to all students wishing to start new organizations.

IV. **Administration:** Tina Zwegat - Director of Student Activities & Orientation, Associate Director of the Student Union

V. Procedures:

I. **Format of a Charter:**

- A. All charters must include the following sections: Name, Purpose, Membership, Officers, Finances, Operating Procedures, and Amendment Procedures. Explanations of each section appear below:
1. **Name:** The official name of the organization. This should include an acronym, if one is to be used (acronyms can not be a duplicate of existing organization All posters must include a sponsoring student organization department.
 2. **Purpose:** The organization should give the general goals of the organization, including a brief explanation as to how said goals will be met. The following clauses must be included in the purpose section of all student organization charters:
 3. "(group) acknowledges the values and principles of Oberlin College, as expressed in the Oberlin College Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures Handbook, the Preamble of the Constitution of the Association of Students of Oberlin College, and the Oberlin Statement of Goals and Principles in the Preface to the Oberlin College Bulletin."
 4. "(group) acknowledges the Preamble of the Student Financial Charter: to establish and outline the financial system of the Association of Students of Oberlin College. The system shall regulate and administer the collection and allocation of the Student Activity Fee; this fee being designed for the creation of social, cultural, religious and educational activities for students; for the improvement of student life, and to augment the general student welfare."
- B. **Membership:** The charter must specify that the organization is open to ALL Oberlin Students. It may allow non-students to be members, but if so, then it must state that a majority of its members must be Oberlin students. Organizations are strongly discouraged from demanding dues from their members. The membership section must include the following:
1. "(group) will not discriminate against anyone based on race, sex, gender identity and expression, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability or economic status."
- C. **Officers:** Every student organization must name an officer who will assume the duties of liaison to the College and an officer who will assume the duties of Treasurer, responsible to the SFC for all financial transactions. This section should indicate that an officer's list would be turned in by May 1 of each year with the officers for the following year. The charter should also, as specifically as possible, give information

about eligibility, method of selection, terms of office, date of selection, and the duties of each officer. All officers must be enrolled students of Oberlin College.

D. Finances: Organizations should specify where they would get money to operate. Being chartered does not guarantee SFC funding. Groups involved in commercial operations must designate a student in the group who will meet with appropriate administrators to determine the effects of their activities on the tax-exempt status of the college. In addition, this section should include the following statement:

1. "Surpluses and losses will be dealt with as directed in the Student Financial Charter. In the event that the organization disbands, any disposable properties will be distributed to appropriate divisions of Oberlin College through the Dean of Students or his/her designee. Remaining funds revert to the Student Finance Committee."

E. Operating Procedures: The organization should have rules by which their meetings are organized. Many groups follow some version of Robert's Rules of Order, Feminist Process or any other process that is approved by the organization. Organizations also must determine and state a method of publicizing their meetings and activities to the entire student body.

F. Liability: If an organization is entering into any activity that could cause liability issues, the following statement must be added to the charter:

1. "Each participant in (Group) acknowledges that such participation is at his or her sole risk and Oberlin College shall not be liable for any claims, demands or injuries relating to (group). Participants in (group) are responsible for their own health or medical insurance. Oberlin College does not provide coverage for any losses or injuries sustained by a participant in (group)."

and the following:

2. General Release and Waiver of Liability: Each participant in (group) will be required to sign and deliver to Oberlin College, a General Release and Waiver of Liability satisfactory in form and substance to Oberlin College prior to participation.

G. Amendment Procedures: The charter must allow for amendments and revisions to be made. Amendments may require the approval of the Joint Chartering Sub-Committee, Student Senate, Student Life Committee, and General Faculty.

Please sign your name and the names of five founding members at the end of your charter, and add your OCMR and e-mail addresses.

II. **Other Important Information:**

When a group is part of a larger, non-college organization, the campus organization must be sure that the guidelines established by the larger group do not violate any College regulations. The organization must certify this, upon request, to the Student Senate.

Organizations involved in hazardous activities must submit a statement to the Student Senate from the Oberlin College lawyer and the Oberlin College insurance officer regarding liability incurred by the organization and Oberlin College during the execution of its activities.

When an organization performs a function, which brings its members into contact with the student body (including, but not limited to dances, fund-raising activities, and tabling), at least half of the people involved with the organization of the activity must be students.

III. **Obligations of an Organization to Retain Active Status**

Restrict its activities to those in agreement with the provisions of its charter, or revise the charter.

Function as an organization for some part of each college year, unless otherwise specified in its charter.

File with the Student Union Office, before May 1 of each year, a list of its officers, liaisons and the General Faculty advisor for the next academic year, and later, file changes to this list, as they occur. An officer list must be submitted or the organization will be suspended and its account frozen until one is turned in.

Comply with all regulations in this document.

IV. **The Charter-Pending Process**

Once a charter is submitted to the Student Union Office it follows these steps before it is considered officially chartered:

- A. Submitted to Student Union (date)
- B. Submitted to Senate Organization Coordinator (date)
- C. Approved by Student Union and Senate Organization Coordinator (date)
- D. Submitted to Joint Chartering Sub-Committee (date)
- E. Approved by Joint Chartering Sub-Committee (date)

- F. Submitted to Student Senate (date)
- G. Submitted to Student Life Committee
- H. Approved by Student Senate and Student Life Committee (date)
- I. Submitted to General Faculty
- J. Approved by General Faculty
- K. Filed at Student Union (date)

8.29.16