

2026/2027 | Office of Student Life

Handbook for Student Clubs and Organizations

Wilmington University
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www.wilmu.edu/studentlife

Contents

Student Life Mission:	3
What is an Advisor?	4
Role of the Advisor	4
What is a Club Officer?	5
Officer Requirements.....	5
Guidelines for Starting a New Club	6
Club Guidelines and Requirements	8
Recruiting Members	10
Successful Recruiting	10
Team Building	11
Points to Enhance Team Effectiveness	11
What is Team Building?	11
Retaining Members	12
Easy Ways to Boost Member Morale	12
The Key to Retaining Members: Information	12
Activities or Events	13
Giving Back	13
Tips for Planning Successful Events/Activities.....	13
Fundraising Guidelines.....	15
Helpful Websites for Fundraising Ideas	15
Alcohol Policy	16
Use of Social Media Policy.....	16
Wilmington University	17
Coach and Club Advisor (Paid or Volunteer) Code of Conduct	17
Wilmington University.....	18
Coach & Club Advisor Behavioral Expectations and Agreement Form	18
Wilmington University.....	19
Club Member Expectations and Agreement Form	19

Student Life Mission:

The purpose of the Student Life division is to provide student services that will enhance student learning and develop the student as a whole. We will expose students to social, cultural, and co-curricular programs that promote student learning, personal growth, and opportunities for connection with other students. Our department will operate as a cohesive unit where professionalism and mutual respect are essential.

We are dedicated to collaborating with other key stakeholders at the University, an essential support group that enhances the student experience. We are passionate about making our students' college experience a positive one. We are committed to consistently improving our services to ensure that programs are of the highest quality possible and meet the diverse needs of our students. Innovation, higher education, best practices, and care and concern for students will be guiding principles for our operations.

What is an Advisor?

For each of our student organizations at Wilmington University, being an Advisor may mean very different things. You could assume numerous roles and become very involved with your group. Some examples of roles you may fill are mentor, team builder, conflict mediator, educator, motivator, and policy interpreter.

You may, however, decide to allow your students to lead the organization. By guiding students and allowing them to take on challenges, you help them grow while enabling them to make decisions and learn from their own mistakes.

Ultimately, by agreeing to be an advisor, you accept responsibility for the development of the students you oversee and the organization you support. In addition, it is your responsibility to inform the students of policies and procedures that have been put in place to promote the progress of the University as a whole.

Role of the Advisor

- Must be a full-time staff member or faculty of Wilmington University
- Must be present at all events, activities, and trips. If the advisor is unable to attend, it is their responsibility to designate an alternative chaperone (a full-time or part-time employee of Wilmington University), or the event, activity, or trip must be canceled.
- Must be aware of all organization meetings. During meetings, advisors must be available to address any questions or concerns students may have.
- Liaison to the Office of Student Life (OSL). The advisor must communicate regularly with the Office of Student Life regarding events, activities, and fundraising.
- All events and fundraising activities must be approved through the Office of Student Life (OSL). Requests for events and fundraising activities should be submitted at least one month in advance, and proper documentation must be provided for all such requests.
- Monitor/approve the treasurer's report and minutes of every meeting.
- Keep a file of pertinent information regarding the organization, such as minutes, treasurer's reports, bylaws, and the current member list.

What is a Club Officer?

A club officer represents the university both on- and off-campus. Being a student club officer means taking on a leadership role within a student organization to help guide its vision, coordinate activities, and support fellow members. Officers are responsible for tasks such as planning and leading meetings, organizing events, managing communication, and ensuring the club follows university guidelines. They work as a team to make decisions, delegate responsibilities, and represent the club to the broader campus community. As leaders, student officers foster collaboration, encourage member participation, and help create a positive and inclusive environment. This role provides valuable opportunities to develop skills in communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management.

Officer Requirements

- Must be a current student
- Currently holds a 2.75 cumulative GPA or higher and has passed 24 Wilmington University credits.
- Has not been placed on academic or probation within the past three (3) semesters at Wilmington University.
- Has not been found guilty of any violation of the Wilmington University Student Code of Conduct in the last two years.
- Must attend the Student Leadership Summit.
- Specific requirements for officer roles are at the discretion of the club, as mandated by law.
- Must complete any required trainings as it relates to University Policies and/or legislation.

Guidelines for Starting a New Club

All student organizations fall under the Student Government Association (SGA). All new clubs will have a two-step approval process.

For a group of students to receive preliminary approval to be recognized as an organization under SGA auspices ultimately, the club must do the following:

- A. The first step is to submit an **application** with the club's proposed name, its mission, requirements of members, if the organization will be a chapter of a national organization (if so, you must include charter guidelines), the name of the advisor (must be full-time WilmU employee) with their attached agreement, and proposed meeting times to receive preliminary approval from the Director of Student Life.
- B. The second step is to hold an interest meeting, confirming the attendance of at least five interested students. A log of students who attended the interest meeting, along with their contact information, must then be submitted to the Director of Student Life.

The Director of Student Life will review the proposed student organization's application. All applications will be reviewed but subject to approval. Applications will be reviewed within 30 days. If the application receives preliminary approval, students can hold an interest meeting. Students have 30 days to host an interest meeting and obtain signatures from at least five students. Students are unable to solicit membership until they have received written preliminary approval.

Once the interest meeting is held, the list of signatures must be sent to the Director of Student Life for final review. If the organization is approved, it becomes an officially chartered organization of the Wilmington University Student Government Association.

You must have written approval from the Director of Student Life before the formation of the club. The advisor of the new organization will receive notification from the Office of Student Life after the application is reviewed and a final review is completed.

All new organizations will have a 60-day probationary period immediately following the approval of the club. There must be a minimum of at least five (5) members (comprising students currently enrolled at the University) to maintain charter status officially. Within this 60-day period, the organization must submit the following:

1. List of all members
2. The club's executive board, including their office position (i.e., president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer)
3. By-laws
4. Meeting times, dates, and locations

All student organizations must abide by the Guidelines for Student Organizations and all

University policies. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, including disbandment of the club.

Club Guidelines and Requirements

To maintain an active status and ensure a thriving campus community, all student clubs must adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) **Minimum Membership** – To maintain chartered status, organizations must be comprised of at least five (5) currently enrolled students at the University, of which two students must hold positions on the Executive Board. Furthermore, each organization must maintain at least a President and a Secretary. Finally, organizations are also required to submit the Club/Organization Information Form (see attachment H) by Oct. 15 of each academic year.
- 2) **Officer Requirements** – Clubs must have designated officers (e.g., President and Secretary) responsible for leadership, organization, and communication with Student Life.
 - a) **Leadership Training**- Club officers will be required to attend the Leadership Summit in the fall.
 - b) **Hazing Policy Training** – By Oct. 31, all officers and advisors are required to complete Hazing training.
 - i) If officers and/or advisors do not complete the required training by the deadline, they will be immediately removed from their posts. If an officer is removed from their post, they will be unable to hold any post in any club for the remainder of the academic year.
 - ii) The club advisor is responsible for finding a replacement for a vacant President or Secretary position; other positions are up to the discretion of the club advisors.
 - iii) If there is a new appointment at any time during the academic year, Advisors will be required to notify the Director of Student Life of a new officer within five (5) business days of appointment.
 - (1) New officers will have one (1) month to complete training.
 - iv) Officers and Club Advisors will be required to complete the training annually.
- 3) **Faculty/Staff Advisor Meetings** – The club's advisor must meet with the club at least once per academic block in the fall and spring semesters to provide guidance and support.
- 4) **Student Life Event Participation** – Clubs must actively engage in the campus community by participating in at least one (1) Student Life event per academic year (e.g., club fairs, service projects, or campus-wide events).
- 5) **Meeting Reports** – Minutes must be recorded for each student organization meeting and distributed to all members and the advisor. The Secretary should be responsible for keeping all minutes throughout the year. A chartered organization of the Student

Government Association (SGA) is responsible for having a representative report to the SGA Executive Board at least once a month. Clubs are required to send meeting minutes and updates to Troy.J.Donato@wilmu.edu, studentlife@wilmu.edu, and the SGA Secretary to ensure proper record-keeping and communication.

- 6) **Financial Responsibility** – Club funds, dues, or event budgets must be managed appropriately and recorded, with oversight from the club’s advisor. Additionally, clubs must obtain approval from Student Life before incurring any expenses. If an organization is going to have dues, raise funds, levy fines against its members, make expenditures, etc., the treasurer will be responsible for tracking these funds. A report must be given at each monthly SGA meeting.
- 7) **Event Approval & Planning** – Student Life must approve all club-hosted events or fundraisers in advance to ensure proper coordination and compliance with university policies.
- 8) **Code of Conduct** – All club members must adhere to the university’s Student Code of Conduct and uphold a respectful, inclusive, and professional environment. Students must follow the Wilmington University Code of Conduct (see Student Handbook – www.wilmu.edu/studentlife/handbook) at all official University and organization-sponsored events.
- 9) **Annual Renewal** – To remain in good standing, clubs must submit an annual renewal form, including an updated membership roster and advisor confirmation, by Oct. 15. To disband an organization due to lack of members or funds, a notice of the circumstances must be given to the Director of Student Life by the Advisor of the said organization. All funds and real property purchased by the organization will be held in escrow for a minimum of twelve (12) months and then become the property of the SGA. The organization will be responsible for all the debts it incurs. If an organization disbands, it must re-file for charter before the SGA again recognizes it.
- 10) **Recruitment Event Requirement** – Clubs must host at least one (1) recruiting event per year in the fall, which may be in person, virtual, synchronous, or asynchronous.
- 11) **Community Service** - It is highly recommended that each club complete 25 hours of community service annually.

Failure to meet these requirements may result in probationary status or loss of club recognition. If you have any questions, please contact Student Life for assistance.

Recruiting Members

Without members, there would be no organization! This makes recruiting one of the most significant activities your group participates in. So, what are the keys to making your group successful and highly participatory?

"In the great mass of our people, there are plenty of individuals of intelligence from among whom leadership can be recruited," -Herbert Hoover

Successful Recruiting

Recruitment should be:

- ✓ Personal
- ✓ Specific
- ✓ Meaningful
- ✓ YEAR-ROUND
- ✓ The responsibility of all of the members
- ✓

How do you Make Recruitment Personal?

Know your group and its purpose. What is the passion behind the group? What are the ambitions and goals of the group? Define who you are and who you want to be, and that will make it easier to sell your group to prospective members.

How do you Make Recruitment Specific?

Knowing who you want to be a member of your group will also help you. We have a diverse population at Wilmington University, offering a wide variety of personal interests and needs. Analyze different characteristics of members (major, interests, age, etc.) and target that group of students.

How do you Make Recruitment Meaningful?

The activities and involvement of the students should benefit both the members and the organization.

Make Recruitment Year Round

We cannot stress enough the importance of making recruitment a year-round process. With semesters and blocks starting and ending at various times throughout the year, we are constantly meeting new faces. It is essential to ensure that students are aware of your organization throughout the year, including the summer. *Ensure your club participates in Wildcat Welcome Week.*

How do you Make Recruitment the Responsibility of all Members?

Word of mouth is the best recruitment tool you have; why not use all the assets in your group? Have members tell friends and peers about the group and even host "u bring a

friend" meetings. It is also essential for all your members to understand the importance of making new members feel welcome. Everyone wants to feel like they belong.

Team Building

Points to Enhance Team Effectiveness

- ✓ Determine a specific team goal
- ✓ Learn the strengths of each team member
- ✓ Clarify group expectations and discuss University policies
- ✓ Identify barriers that may keep the team from achieving its goals
- ✓ Use effective communication skills
- ✓ Develop a plan to accomplish the goal
- ✓ Put the plan into action
- ✓ Evaluate the plan and the procedure

What is Team Building?

"When a team in an organizational development context embarks upon a process of self-assessment to gauge its effectiveness and thereby improve performance, it can be argued that it is engaging in team building, although this may be considered a narrow definition." (Wikipedia)

The process of team building includes:

- Clarifying the goal and building ownership across the team.
- Identifying the inhibitors to teamwork and removing or overcoming them, or if they cannot be removed, mitigating their adverse effect on the team.

To assess itself, a team seeks feedback to find out both:

- Its current strength as a team.
- Its current weakness.

To improve current performance, a team uses the feedback from the team assessment to:

- Identify any gap between the desired state and the actual state.
- Design a gap-closure strategy.

Retaining Members

To retain members, your group will need to foster member loyalty, interest, and best efforts. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by giving your members a sense of belonging. Letting all members know that they are welcome and needed by allowing them to be part of your planning and execution of objectives will help them feel respected and appreciated.

Communication is also an essential element in retaining members. By being upfront with students about goals, objectives, and policies, you provide them with important tools. They will be able to decide if the group values are consistent with their own and how they will contribute to the total outcome of the group.

As with recruiting, retention should also be an ongoing objective for your group. Current members of your organization that drift away take with them good experiences or leadership that could benefit your group. Keep seniors involved by remembering that their goals have changed since they first joined, so the organization needs to be sensitive to that.

Easy Ways to Boost Member Morale

- ✓ Offer feedback
- ✓ Provide a sense of unity
- ✓ Compliment good work
- ✓ Initiate recognition (Press releases, awards)
- ✓ Initiate social interaction
- ✓ Allow for new challenges

The Key to Retaining Members: Information

Ensure that you provide your members with all the necessary information to develop into fully functioning team members. It is important to establish rules and recognize policies to set standards for your organization early on. This will minimize "surprises" for members and give them both boundaries and goals.

Activities or Events

All activities, trips, or events must be cleared through the Office of Student Life.

The [Student Travel Approval](#) form must be submitted for each trip at least two weeks before departure. The Student Activities: [Event Approval Form](#) must be submitted at least one month before the event. Additionally, any flyers for meetings and events must be submitted to Student Life for approval.

Obtain emergency contact information for every person attending the trip and leave with someone who is not traveling with the group. Read over the [Transportation Policies](#) and make sure that the Student Emergency Contact Sheet and Group Trip Itinerary are filled out.

Do Your Paperwork Now to Make Next Year Easier!

After an event, evaluate and follow up, and request feedback from staff and attendees. Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss what went well and areas of improvement.

Giving Back

We highly encourage each organization to participate in at least 25 hours of community service each school year. To submit your event form, participate in, or help with scheduling community service events, please contact Dr. Taylor McCusker at taylor.e.mccusker@wilmu.edu or 302.356.6968. All club community service opportunities will be posted on the ADC online calendar.

Tips for Planning Successful Events/Activities

- ✓ Plan an initial meeting with the event committee.
- ✓ Establish a budget. Consider facility rental, catering, equipment rental, printing costs, transportation, and accommodations.
- ✓ Choose a date. Have at least two (2) dates in mind: a preferred date and a just-in-case alternative date. That way, when you start checking out available facilities, you'll be able to choose the best option. Be sure to factor in national and religious holidays, school vacations, and semester breaks.
- ✓ Select a location. If you are using space at the New Castle camps, contact Kim Conwell at kimberly.n.conwell@wilmu.edu for reservations.
- ✓ Apply for and be sure to have written confirmation of approval from the Office of Student Life.
- ✓ Determine your audience-Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, and/or Off-Campus Guests.
- ✓ Determine a realistic expectation of the number of people who will attend the event.

Requiring RSVPs is a great way to determine a more accurate number of attendees.

- ✓ Identify one person who will be the primary contact for the event.
- ✓ Develop a detailed preliminary agenda. Be sure to include a timeframe for each component of the event.
- ✓ Promote your event. Advertise the event through flyers, the website, bulletins, video messaging on TVs, the Calendar of Events, and word-of-mouth, among other methods.
- ✓ Reconfirm everything! A couple of days before the event, take some time to reconfirm everything.

Fundraising Guidelines

All fundraising activities must have approval from the Office of Student Life. An approval form must be submitted one month in advance for each fundraising activity. Approval must be granted to ensure the activity doesn't violate any University policies.

All required monies for any trips or activities, including those that require fundraising, must be deposited and be available at the time of the trip departure. No trips will be approved unless all the necessary funds have been deposited by the predetermined deadline.

All checks must be made payable to Wilmington University and mailed to the University address to the attention of the Office of Student Life. All money raised will be deposited into the Student Activities account and earmarked for the particular club. No outside accounts may be maintained for any student club or organization.

Helpful Websites for Fundraising Ideas

fundraisingideas.com

Fundraising.com

Fund-raising.com

GuideToFundraising.com

Wilmington University

Alcohol Policy

It is the responsibility of every member of the University community to know about the risks associated with alcohol use and abuse. This responsibility requires students to be familiar with relevant college policies and federal, state, and local laws and to conduct themselves in accordance with these laws and policies. It should be understood that possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by individuals under the age of 21 is a violation of state liquor laws. Likewise, it is illegal for anyone to supply alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 21.

Use of Social Media Policy

All members of the University community are advised to exercise caution and common sense when posting personal information on the web, as sharing information with the public can have long-term and far-reaching consequences. The Student Affairs Department will take disciplinary action against any student, advisor/coach who posts photos, captions, or disparaging comments that depict students or members of the University community. Please note that, regardless of privacy settings, items placed on social network sites are not truly private.

Acknowledgement:

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by

the above policies. Name of Team/Club

Print Name

Member or Coach/Advisor

Signature

Date

Wilmington University

Coach and Club Advisor (Paid or Volunteer) Code of Conduct

- Every Coach or Club Advisor has an ethical obligation to maintain a professional relationship with students and to prioritize the well-being of students over their interests. Conflicts of interest are endemic to romantic relationships between coaches or advisors and students. The costs to the team/club and the University necessitate a strict prohibition on amorous relationships between coaches/advisors and students.
- Coaches and advisors may not serve or consume alcohol with students, student workers, or recruits.
- Coaches and advisors should use their best judgment when visiting restaurants or establishments where alcohol is served and should not consume alcohol in the presence of students.
- Conduct inconsistent with Wilmington University values is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.
- Coaches and advisors may not have students stay overnight at their personal residence nor transport them in their individual (or university-owned) vehicles or other forms of transportation.

Acknowledgment

I have read the above statements and understand my responsibility to comply with Wilmington University's expectations of conduct.

Coach/Club Advisor Name

Signature

Date

Wilmington University

Coach & Club Advisor Behavioral Expectations and Agreement Form

Serving as a Club Advisor is an essential function of Wilmington University. Appropriate conduct is both expected and required of you; therefore, the following expectations apply during any activity, meeting, and outings involving Wilmington University on and off campus:

- No use of alcohol.
- No use of drugs.
- No inappropriate or romantic relationships with students.
- No activity that violates criminal law.
- No gambling/gaming activities.
- There is no use of strippers, gentlemen's clubs or an equivalent, or escort services.
- No activities or events at any location that may cause a perception of impropriety.
- **DO NOT** engage or allow the student to engage in any activity that would bring harm to you, other students, or the reputation of Wilmington University.

Violations of any of these rules will result in a report to the Vice President of Student Affairs. Coaches or Club Advisors (paid or volunteer) involved in such violations will automatically be suspended from their duties until the Vice President of Student Affairs or their designee reviews the circumstances. It should be clear that Wilmington University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviors or activities. Violations may result in termination of the role as Coach or Club Advisor, as well as termination from any other positions at Wilmington University. Remember, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of students. Therefore, if at any time you find yourself in a situation where you need assistance with students, you must contact Taylor McCusker, Director of Student Life, taylor.e.mccusker@wilmu.edu, or (302) 356-6968. If you are unable to reach her and believe the situation warrants it, please contact campus security or the police immediately.

By signing below, I affirm that I have read, understand, and will abide by the above provisions.

Name of Club/Team: _

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Wilmington University

Club Member Expectations and Agreement Form

As a club member, appropriate conduct is both expected and required of you; therefore, the following expectations apply during any activity, meeting, and outings involving Wilmington University on and off campus:

- No use of alcohol under the age of 21.
- No use of drugs.
- No inappropriate or romantic relationships with Coaches, Club Advisors, or Volunteer Staff.
- No activity that violates criminal law.
- No gambling/gaming activities.
- No use of strippers, gentlemen's club or an equivalent, or escort services.
- No activities or events at any location that may cause a perception of impropriety.
- **DO NOT** engage in any activity that would bring harm to you, other students, or the reputation of Wilmington University.

Violations of any of these rules will result in a report to the Vice President of Student Affairs. Members involved in such violations will automatically be suspended from their duties (if applicable) or participation in club activities and meetings until the Vice President of Student Affairs or their designee reviews the circumstances. It should be clear that Wilmington University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviors or activities. Violations may result in suspension or expulsion from Wilmington University.

Remember, you are responsible for your safety. Therefore, if at any time you find yourself in a situation where you need assistance, you must contact your coach or club advisor. If you are unable to reach your club advisor or coach, contact Taylor McCusker, Director of Student Life, taylor.e.mccusker@wilmu.edu or 302-356-6968. If you are unable to reach her and believe the situation warrants it, please contact campus security or the police immediately.

By signing below, I affirm that I have read, understand, and will abide by the above provisions.

Name of Club/Team: _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

