



LEE
UNIVERSITY

Lee University Student-Led Organization Sponsor Handbook

Lee University
Office of Student Engagement
Updated September 16, 2022



Student-Led Organization Sponsor Handbook

Welcome!

There is a long and storied tradition of student life, student leadership, and student-led clubs and organizations on the Lee University campus. Student-led clubs and organizations – ensembles, Greek, service, recreational, and more – are central to the Lee experience and our thriving campus community. Some of Lee’s most successful alumni have shared a common experience of student life, impacting the world around them in meaningful ways. Many of the values that drive them daily resonate with what they learned as a student leader. Numerous alumni remain in the Cleveland and Lee community and serve as club sponsors in a variety of capacities.

Being a sponsor for a student-led organization is an opportunity to promote transformative, life-changing growth and development in the lives of students. Sponsors act as the trustees of their respective clubs, intentionally providing support and mentorship and keeping them accountable to their espoused values and constitutional commitments. This handbook is designed to provide a broad guide for sponsors’ responsibilities to their students and clubs.

Sponsors have a proven impact in the development of students, particularly those involved in leadership. Lee is grateful for their passion in serving students, as well as their commitment to the mission of their clubs. The sustainability and flourishing of student life at Lee University is dependent on a clearly communicated, positively directed partnership between active club members, sponsors, and administration.

Sponsors are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures contained within this handbook and within the *Club and Organization Manual*. Advisors should read and understand the contents and recognize that their organizations will be held accountable for operating within the parameters and policies described in the student organization handbook. This sponsor manual is intended to be a summary; it is not a comprehensive listing of all the rules and guidelines pertaining to student-led organizations. Student Life reserves the right to change procedures and/or policy listed at any time. Additionally, all students are subject to the guidelines found within the [Student Handbook](#).



Introduction

Student organizations are an integral component of the sense of community at Lee University. The campus has many groups that provide students with opportunities to build relationships, serve others, develop leadership skills, and explore their gifts and talents. Student-led groups are also central to fostering student learning outside of the classroom, while helping them integrate their learning experiences. These organizations represent a variety of interests and are a key factor in providing students with an enriching and supportive campus environment.

The first and foremost point of contact for all sponsors of student-led clubs and organizations is the Office of Student Engagement (studentengagement@leeuniversity.edu). This manual has been created to provide clarity and support to head sponsors and sponsor teams.

Our prayer is that God will help each group achieve its mission to make Lee University and the surrounding community a richer place.

For more information regarding leading, joining, and/or starting a student-led club or organization, you may contact the Office of Student Engagement, with the contact information listed below.



Alex Staup

Director of Student Engagement

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☎ (423) 614-8405

🏠 Office of Student Life (OSL)



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Secretary for the Office of Student Engagement

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5	Office of Student Conduct	9
Lee University Mission Statement.....	4	Campus Security	9
Student Life at Lee University	4	Lee University Counseling Center .	10
Contact Information	4	Center for Student Success (The Hub)	10
Sponsor’s Role Defined	5	Residential Life & Housing	10
What is a Sponsor?	5	Racial & Ethnic Relations	10
Why be a Sponsor?	5	Sponsoring a Greek Club	11
Sponsor Application.....	5	Introduction.....	11
Sponsor Expectations	5	Induction	11
Responsibilities to Lee University	5	Induction Review Committee	11
Responsibilities to Student Organization.....	6	Tap Night.....	11
Responsibilities to Individuals within the Group.....	6	Hazing Guidelines.....	12
Sponsor Qualifications	6	Head Sponsor Meetings.....	12
Sponsor Stipulations.....	7	University Induction Guidelines	12
Sponsor Termination	7	Hazing	12
Sponsor Tips.....	7	What this Means for You	13
Types of Student-Led Organizations...	8	Title IX Policy and Sexual Harassment	13
Referral Offices	9	Nondiscrimination Policy	14
Office of Student Engagement.....	9	Discipline	14
Office of Student Care	9	Sponsor Role in Club and Student Discipline	14



Lee University Mission Statement

Lee is a Christian institution which offers liberal arts and professional education on both the baccalaureate and graduate levels through residential and distance programs. We seek to provide education that integrates biblical truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures with truth discovered through the study of arts and sciences and in the practice of various professions. A personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior is the controlling perspective from which our educational enterprise is carried out. The foundational purpose of all educational programs at Lee is to develop within the students knowledge, appreciation, understanding, ability, and skills which will prepare them for responsible Christian living in a complex world.

Student Life at Lee University

Contact Information

Several staff are involved in the support and leadership of student-led clubs and organizations. Those with direct involvement are listed below:

Office of Student Engagement

Alex Staup, *Director of Student Engagement*
astaup@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8405

Jen Condon, *Secretary for the Office of Student Engagement*
jcondon@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 473-3784

Office of Student Engagement, 1161 Paul Conn Pkwy, Cleveland, TN 37311

Vice President for Student Life

Suzanne Holt, *Interim Vice President for Student Life*
sholt@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8406

Jason Robinson, *Administrative Liaison to the Interim Vice President for Student Life*
jrobinson@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8177

Ariane York, *Administrative Assistant for the Office of Student Life*
ayork@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8406

Office of Student Life, 1161 Paul Conn Pkwy, Cleveland, TN 37311



Sponsor's Role Defined

What is a Sponsor?

A sponsor is a faculty, staff, alumni, or community member who provides support and guidance to officers and members of a student-led organization. Sponsors not only serve students in an official capacity, but also as student-advocates, advisors, mentors, and more. Sponsors offer key insight and developmental perspective for the betterment of their respective student-led organizations and the entire campus community. Sponsors act as trustees of their respective organizations and should not act in the day-to-day operations of student organizations, but instead seek to challenge the student leadership with whom they work and support them as they make decisions.

Why be a Sponsor?

Working as a student-led organization sponsor offers an opportunity to be a part of the transformational Lee experience. Working closely with student leaders not only fosters growth in the next generation of leaders, but also gives faculty, staff, and members of the Lee community the opportunity to promote skills such as leadership development, ethics, teamwork, commitment to diversity, self-discovery, and more for sponsors. Investment in the broad Lee experience, both in and out of the classroom, more deeply informs and empowers personal and relational development for everyone involved.

Sponsor Application

Individuals interested in sponsoring a student-led club or organization can [apply through the Office of Student Engagement](#). After filling out a brief application, sponsors must be approved by the Office of Student Engagement. Preference for sponsorship will be given to current employees of the university; however, community members may be eligible to sponsor a club or organization pending approval from Student Engagement. All sponsors are subject to the policies and procedures of the university.

Sponsor Expectations

All sponsors are expected to exemplify the espoused values of Lee University and the broad Christian community. Sponsors should be familiar with the Lee University [Community Covenant](#), [Student Handbook](#), and other policy documents. Sponsors must also abide by the tenants and policies found in the Staff Handbook. The expectations listed below are not exhaustive but help establish clarity for the role as it serves student-led organizations.

Responsibilities to Lee University

1. **Training** – Sponsors are expected to attend and participate in sponsor trainings hosted by the Office of Student Engagement.
2. **Communication** – Consistent and clear communication is vital to the success of student-led organizations. Sponsors should maintain active communication with the Office of Student Engagement.



3. **Reporting and Investigation** - Sponsors are expected to report any violations of student conduct and may be asked to assist with ensuing investigations.
4. **Crisis Response** - Sponsors may be asked to assist in responding to various crises within the organization they support.

Responsibilities to Student Organization

1. **Support** - Sponsors should support their respective club or organization by fostering an atmosphere for growth. Sponsors should **not** participate in the day-to-day operations of the organization, but assist in broad support and advising.
2. **Challenge** - Sponsors have the unique opportunity to challenge their student-led organizations in positive ways. A way in which sponsors can challenge their student-led organization is ensuring the organization's decisions and actions are exemplifying club values, constitution, and other organizational goals.
3. **Advocacy** - Sponsors should serve as student advocates in their communication with the Office of Student Engagement and Lee University. They may help identify and listen to various needs, while assisting in the development of channels of communication for other needs and questions.
4. **Active Engagement** - Sponsors are expected to attend and oversee various club functions, including meetings, campus events, induction ceremonies, etc.
5. **Continuity** - Sponsors provide continuity within an organization as members depart and graduate. They exist as a resource for organizational history and mission; sponsors may help the organization develop and remain committed to long-term goals as the group's memory and continuity link.
6. **Evaluation** - Sponsors should assist in (at least) annual evaluation within the organization. Student Engagement recommends the use of 360-degree evaluations and may serve as a further resource.

Responsibilities to Individuals within the Group

1. **Mentoring** - One of the most crucial services of a sponsor is mentoring leaders and members within a student-led organization. Mentoring may occur through personal relationship, modeling the way, practical experience, and more.
2. **Navigating Commitments** - Student leaders face many pressures and expectations. Sponsors can support students in finding rhythm among academic, co-curricular, and personal commitments to grow into integrated persons.
3. **Personal Responsibility** - Sponsors should encourage students within the organization to accept responsibility for specific roles within the group.

Sponsor Qualifications

Any faculty, staff, alumni, or community member is eligible to serve as a sponsor. All sponsors must be approved through the Office of Student Engagement. Student Engagement will maintain an updated list of official sponsors. Each organization is required to have at least one official and active sponsor; in the event an organization



does not, the director of Student Engagement may assume temporary sponsorship, or the club may be considered inactive. The following stipulations apply:

Sponsor Stipulations

1. **Constitutional Congruency** – Student-led organizations may outline further qualifications for sponsors within their constitutions. Sponsors must meet those qualifications accordingly.
2. **Recent Alumni** – Recent alumni may not be authorized to serve as sponsors unless otherwise approved by the Office of Student Engagement. Sponsors must be at least four-years removed from active membership within the organization, or there should be no active members with whom the sponsor was an active member, in order to be eligible.
3. **Sponsors Related to Active Members** – Immediate relatives of active members (parent, sibling, etc.) may not serve as active sponsors. Exceptions may be permitted by the Office of Student Engagement on a case-by-case basis.
4. **Sponsor Application** – Sponsors must be confirmed through the Office of Student Engagement by filling out a [Sponsor Application](#).

Sponsor Termination

Sponsors may be terminated by the university if they fail to uphold the values of the university and outlined in this handbook. The university holds a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of misconduct among sponsors, including (but not limited to) harassment, hazing, inappropriate relationships, misuse of funds, secrecy, etc.

Sponsor Tips

1. **Give Praise** – Students thrive through positive reinforcement. Student leadership can be difficult as students navigate the oft-competing interests of academics, cocurricular responsibilities, social life, familial duties, and more. Offering supportive praise can enrich and reassure students.
2. **Know about Money** – Student-led organizations may manage various budgets supported by the university, alumni associations, fundraising, etc. You are a vital resource in assisting student leaders within clubs and organizations manage those budgets and use funds wisely. Sponsors should be aware of the financial state of the organizations they sponsor.
3. **Know University Policies** – Sponsors should have a general understanding of university policies as it relates to student-led organizations, extracurricular activities, and student conduct. They should communicate questions and refer students as needed to the Office of Student Conduct.
4. **Be Aware of your Roles** – The sponsor role is unique as it offers both uplifting support and developmental challenge. Remember, the organization is **student-led**. Your role as a sponsor is to work behind the scenes to keep the organization consistent with its values.



5. **Communicate Expectations with the Students** – Clarity of expectations and your role with student leaders is crucial. Students should know what they can and cannot expect of you as a sponsor and mentor.
6. **Use Resources** – The Student Engagement team is available for any needs you might have as a sponsor. Be sure to utilize the resources listed throughout this handbook in every way you can – from student services, leadership development opportunities, and more.
7. **The Power of the Peer Group** – The single most potent influence on the outcome of the college experience for students is the peer group (Astin, 1993). As much as staff, faculty, alumni, and community members think they can impact students' experiences, development and success are largely shaped by the peers around them. Consider effective ways as a sponsor to utilize peer leadership in supporting and challenging the organization.
8. **Be Aware of Institutional Influences (Formal and Informal)** – Every institution carries with it its own *modus operandi*. There are many formal and informal structures and functions that impact the way student-led organizations work at Lee. Consider the full scope and culture as you devise the best strategy in supporting the students involved in your organization.

Types of Student-Led Organizations

Academic Clubs

Departments support co-curricular engagement through a host of honor societies and academically focused clubs. For questions about academic clubs, contact Student Engagement (studentengagement@leeuniversity.edu).

Choirs and Ensembles

There are many choirs and ensembles as part of the Lee community. The School of Music assists in overseeing and supporting these groups. Questions regarding ensembles can be directed to music@leeuniversity.edu.

Mosaic Council

The Mosaic Council (MC) supports the many clubs on Lee's campus dedicated to celebrating and shaping diversity at Lee. Questions regarding MC can be directed to Gloria Scott-Richmond (grichmond@leeuniversity.edu).

Greek Clubs

Greek clubs serve both a service-oriented and a social purpose in the Lee community. Lee's thriving Greek community offers ten clubs.

Questions regarding Greek life or the Greek Council can be directed to Student Engagement (studentengagement@leeuniversity.edu).

Recreational Clubs and Club Sports

There are several club sports teams and recreational clubs at Lee that engage students in active lifestyles and intercollegiate competition.

Questions regarding club sports may be directed to campusrec@leeuniversity.edu.

Service Clubs

The Leonard Center supports dozens of service organizations that foster the talents, skills, and passions of students to serve Lee and the community. Questions about service clubs can be directed to service@leeuniversity.edu.

Social Clubs

There are many clubs dedicated to community development and social activities at Lee. Contact Student Engagement for questions about social clubs (studentengagement@leeuniversity.edu).

Spiritual Life Clubs



Through its co- and extra-curricular programming, Lee seeks to help students invest in faith communities that foster spiritual growth.

There are several clubs that emphasize this

development. Questions about spiritual life clubs can be directed to Student Engagement (studentengagement@leeuniversity.edu).

Referral Offices

Office of Student Engagement

The Office of Student Engagement is directly responsible for student-led club and organizations' support and all facets of campus engagement.

Office of Student Engagement

Alex Staup, *Director of Student Engagement*

astaup@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8405

Jen Condon, *Secretary for the Office of Student Engagement*

jcondon@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-3784

1161 Paul Conn Parkway, Cleveland, TN 37311

Office of Student Care

Student Care offers several resources for holistic development, including workshops, readings, videos, personal support, and more. Student Care also oversees the Title IX compliance for the institution by coordinating prevention programming and investigations.

Office of Student Care

Brittany Gates, *Director of Student Care and Title IX Coordinator*

bgates@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 473-3817

Higginbotham Administration Building, CEN 117

Office of Student Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct is responsible for promoting the community values of the university and conducting disciplinary procedures for the students and clubs.

Office of Student Conduct

Chris Gates, *Director of Student Conduct*

cgates@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8410

Ally Seward, *Secretary to the Director of Student Conduct*

aseward@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8410

1161 Paul Conn Parkway, Cleveland, TN 37311

Campus Security

Campus Security is a service-driven department committed to providing security and promoting safety for the Lee University community.



Campus Security

Matt Brinkman, *Director of Campus Security*
security@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 303-4444
Physical Address: 1000 Barnes St NE, Cleveland, TN 37311
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3450, Cleveland, TN 37311

Lee University Counseling Center

The Lee University Counseling Center (LUCC) exists to provide professional and psychological services to support the holistic personal and emotional development of Lee University students. LUCC provides individual counseling sessions, group counseling, and trainings.

Lee University Counseling Center

David Quagliana, *Director of Counseling Center*
counseling@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8415
Watkins Building, 100 8th St, Cleveland, TN 37311

Center for Student Success (The Hub)

The Center for Student Success (the Hub) offers comprehensive services focused on supporting students in their academic journey at Lee University. Students may receive personalized coaching, individual tutoring, supplemental instruction, peer mentoring, career counseling, and more at the Hub.

Center for Student Success (The Hub)

thehub@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 473-3761
Paul Conn Student Union, 304

Residential Life & Housing

Residential Life & Housing seeks to help students know that they matter by fostering purposeful community, promoting responsible living, and encouraging life-long learning in a Christ-centered environment.

Residential Life & Housing

Jarad Russell, *Director of Residential Life & Housing*
housing@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-6000
Higginbotham Administration Building, CEN 316

Racial & Ethnic Relations

The mission of the Office of Racial & Ethnic Relations is to help racially, ethnically, and internationally diverse students, employees, and alumni know that they are valued members of the Lee University community. The office works to advocate for, empower, and support those from racially, ethnically, and internationally diverse backgrounds.



Racial & Ethnic Relations

Gloria Scott-Richmond, *Director of Racial & Ethnic Relations*
grrichmond@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8238
Higginbotham Administration Building, CEN 119

Sponsoring a Greek Club

Introduction

The Greek community at Lee has a rich and storied history, from the inception of Upsilon Xi in 1962, to the thriving campus community of ten clubs that exists today. Because of the nature of the Greek experience and the abundant opportunities for development, responsibilities for Greek club sponsors tend to be slightly more significant. This section is intended to provide further information and support for those who support the Greek community as sponsors.

Induction

Induction Review Committee

The induction review committee is comprised of Chris Gates, Director of Student Conduct; Taylor Smith, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations; and Alex Staup, Director of Student Engagement. The committee works directly with club presidents, induction chairs, sponsors, and other executive committee members to plan and execute transformative and safe induction experiences for new members. Induction guidelines can be found in the subsequent section.

Director of Student Conduct

Chris Gates, *Office of Student Conduct*
cgates@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8410 | OSL

Director of Alumni Relations

Taylor Smith, *Alumni Relations*
tsmith@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8316 | HAB 209

Director of Student Engagement

Alex Staup, *Office of Student Engagement*
astaup@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 614-8405 | OSL

Tap Night

Every club should plan for a sponsor to attend and oversee all Tap Night activities. On Tap Night, the vice president for student life and director of student conduct will hold an information meeting for new members. Each club must have a sponsor representative attend this meeting.



Hazing Guidelines

Hazing is not tolerated by the university under any circumstances. In addition to support offered through the Induction Review Committee, the hazing guidelines are provided as part of this handbook.

Head Sponsor Meetings

At least once a calendar year, the Office of Student Engagement will host a meeting of all head sponsors in the Greek community. The purpose of this meeting is to maintain focus on mission, offer necessary training, and communicate updates regarding policies and guidelines.

University Induction Guidelines

A comprehensive listing of the Lee University Induction Guidelines are available through the office of Student Conduct. All campus groups with any induction process should adhere to these guidelines.

Hazing

The [Lee University Student Handbook](#) states emphatically, **“Hazing will not be tolerated by the university under any circumstances”** (p. 26). Lee University strives to be in compliance with all Tennessee laws related to Greek club induction activities. The [Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-7-123](#) prohibits hazing and defines it as follows:

Hazing means any intentional or reckless act in this state on or off the property of any higher education institution by one (1) student acting alone or with others that is directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student or that induces or coerces a student to endanger the student’s mental or physical health or safety. “Hazing” does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization; and

“Higher education institution” means a public or private college, community college or university.

Each higher education institution shall adopt a written policy prohibiting hazing by any student or organization operating under the sanction of the institution. The policy shall be distributed or made available to each student at the beginning of each school year. Time shall be set aside during orientation to specifically discuss the policy and its ramifications as a criminal offense and the institutional penalties that may be imposed by the higher education institution.

How can a club, its sponsors, and its members think through activities to determine if they involve hazing? The following list of questions can help provide guidance. According to FIPG (2013), “If there is one question that has a negative answer, then you know that this activity should be eliminated” (p. 34).

- Is this activity an educational experience?
- Does this activity promote and conform to the ideals and values of the club?



- Will this activity increase the new members' respect for the club and its members?
- Is it an activity that new and current members participate in together?
- Would you be willing to allow parents to witness this activity? A judge? The university president?
- Does the activity have value in and of itself?
- Would you be able to defend it in a court of law?
- Does the activity meet both the spirit and letter of the standards prohibiting hazing and biblical principles?
- Would you be willing for all induction activities to be posted on social media for public consumption?

More information can be found in the Student-Led Club and Organization Handbook document regarding hazing.

All campus groups, including athletic teams, ensembles, Greek clubs, and residence communities, are expected to abide by these guidelines. Lee employees and all sponsors are required to report concerns and issues regarding hazing.

What this Means for You

In an effort to be as clear as possible, we want to outline guiding questions to help you determine what these guidelines mean for you.

- **If your club or organization hosts some sort of initiation process**, your process should be focused on educating your new members about your values, **not** degrading, humiliating, or endangering them.
- **Hazing does not only occur when someone is severely harmed**. Remember that hazing is considered any action that endangers the mental or physical health of another person; this means that any level of endangerment, whether something bad happens or not, is not tolerated by our community.
- **Our goals are for clubs and organizations to be the best they can be**. This is not possible when any culture of hazing is prevalent.
- **When in doubt**, consider other ways to teach your new members about your club or organization's values and purpose. If you have questions about a certain activity, contact the Induction Review Committee.

Title IX Policy and Sexual Harassment

The university is committed to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex. In accordance with federal standards, the Office of Student Care is responsible for Title IX compliance and serves as the first responder for any concerns regarding Title IX, including sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination on the basis of sex.

Office of Student Care

Brittany Gates, *Director of Student Care and Title IX Coordinator*

bgates@leeuniversity.edu | (423) 473-3817 | CEN 316C



Sponsors are vital to preventing sexual harassment on the Lee University campus. Due to their involvement in the lives of students and responsibility to the university, sponsors are considered *Responsible Employees*, and are expected by the university to report sexual harassment to the Title IX coordinator upon receiving a report.

Additional resources and information can be found on the [Title IX webpage](#), along with both the university's [Title IX Policy](#) and [Non-Title IX Policy](#) for alleged prohibited conduct that does not meet the definitions of Title IX sexual harassment and non-discrimination.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Lee University forbids harassment and discrimination of any kind relating to age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, gender, gender identity, physical or mental disability, or genetic information. The university strives to encourage a campus atmosphere that is wholesome and accepting. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violate the dignity of individuals, impede the realization of the university's educational mission, and will not be tolerated. Those in violation of the harassment and discrimination policies of the university are subject to disciplinary procedures. The university reserves the right to uphold policies based on biblical standards in all areas of campus life.

Discipline

It is the goal of the vice president for student life and their staff to be always fair and consistent. Though some offenses have disciplinary consequences, other sanctions will be determined at the discretion of the vice president for student life and/or the Office of Student Conduct. When such decisions are rendered, the following criteria will be taken into consideration: temperament, attitude, previous discipline history, and specific circumstances. It is the university's desire that through this individualized approach to discipline a student will benefit from the experience in a positive manner rather than it being merely punitive. It should also be noted that the various appeal processes that are in place may at times overturn an original decision.

Sponsor Role in Club and Student Discipline

Sponsors may be asked to assist in disciplinary cases regarding a student-led organizations and/or their affiliated students. Sponsors are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation or disciplinary process. The role of a sponsor is to support the learning objectives of the disciplinary process, and they should remain in consistent communication with administration regarding any issues. When possible and needed, sponsors should encourage their club members to engage in self-discipline.

