Congress of Student Organizations

A Handbook for Students and Advisors

2025 – 2026

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Student Organizations General

STUDENT ORGANIZATION OBLIGATIONS

This handbook outlines general guidelines for student organizations to keep and maintain recognition. These are in addition to the campus policy regarding the establishment of student organizations.

- Each organization must turn in a recognition form each semester.
    - Fall form is due on September 23, 2025
    - Spring form is due on January 27, 2026.
- Each organization must turn in a reviewed constitution & bylaws.
    - The date on when it was last reviewed is to be included in the document.
- Each organization must hold at least one meeting each month during the fall and spring semesters (4 total per semester)
    - A club may choose not to meet in either Aug. or Dec. for Fall, and Jan. or May for Spring.
        - Notify the CSO Advisor if your club does not meet during one of these months.
- Meeting minutes must be taken for each meeting and turned into the CSO Advisor by the 15th of the following month.
    - See the guide on the website for what is required for meeting minutes.
- Each organization must elect a representative to sit in on the Congress of Student Organizations.
- An organization may NOT miss a CSO meeting.
- Each organization must operate in cooperation with all BSC policies and procedures.

CSO Representative

- A CSO representative must be available for all designated CSO meetings.
- A CSO representative may represent only one club at a time.
- If the representative is not available, another must represent the club. Only another officer listed on the club's recognition form, or the club's advisor, may fill in.
    - The CSO rep reports on activities happening with their club and reports back to their club regarding information dispersed at CSO meetings.
    - The CSO rep should be checking their BSC email frequently.
    - The CSO rep is responsible for ensuring all documents are turned into the CSO Advisor.

CSO Meetings Guide

A general guide for what a CSO meeting looks like:

1. Roll is taken.
    a. Attendance will only be accepted following the conditions outlined in the section above.
2. Each CSO rep will report club activities to the Congress.
3. The CSO Advisor will discuss opportunities or general reminders for the clubs.
4. Any other agenda items, such as grant applications or meeting minutes will be discussed.

Student Organization Recognition

Why Recognition is Important

Bismarck State College has a policy regarding the establishment of a student organization. This policy requires that student organizations obtain recognition biannually from the CSO Advisor.

Recognized organizations are granted several benefits from the college, which include:

- The use of BSC facilities and equipment
- A BSC staff or faculty advisor **(must be full time status)**
- Administrative assistance with organization related business
- Banking and bookkeeping advising
- Use of BSC's mail service
- Acknowledgement of compliance for risk management purposes
- Listing in official BSC publications

A club that does not gain recognition will not be able to make use of these benefits.

What the Recognition Process Looks Like

- The Recognition form can be found on the CSO webpage of the BSC website.
    - The Fall recognition form should be turned in by September 23, 2025.
    - The Spring recognition form should be turned in by January 27, 2026.
- The recognition form must be completed with **all** officer information for the current semester. This includes:
    - Officer titles
    - Student names
    - Student ID numbers
    - BSC email addresses
- A student may only hold 2 officer positions per club, and a total of 3 positions across all clubs.
    - The CSO rep is considered an officer position.
    - The CSO rep position may not be held by the same student across multiple clubs.
- A BSC staff or faculty member may only be the primary advisor for one club at a time.
- ❖ The club advisor must sign the recognition form and return the form to the CSO Advisor along with a reviewed copy of the constitution and bylaws.
- ❖ When the CSO Advisor determines the submission is complete and accepted, the CSO Advisor will issue a certificate of recognition to the club advisor.
- ❖ If the submission is not accepted, the CSO Advisor will notify the club advisor as to why recognition was refused.
- ❖ Recognized organizations are responsible for remaining in good standing by adhering to the requirements of Bismarck State College, and CSO's policies & procedures.

Student Organization Funds

Accounts

All organization accounts are opened upon the approval of the CSO Advisor.

All organization money (dues, sales, fund raising, raffle sales, etc.) must be deposited through the BSC Student Finance Office located on the first floor of Schafer Hall.

All finance questions should be directed to BSC's accounting department.

Income

Under no circumstances is a club to pay for any expenses with cash collected. **All** income must be properly deposited through the BSC Student Finance Office.

Under no circumstances may organizational money be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages or other items that are contrary to the State Board of Higher Education or Bismarck State College policies.

Deposits

Deposits are required to be submitted to the Student Finance Office on a weekly basis. If at any time the club has in its possession $300 or more a deposit should be made prior to the weekly deposit.

Checks collected must have the club's name or club fund number written in the upper left-hand corner of the check.

Each deposit submitted must have a Department Deposit Receipt completed and submitted with all income collected.

The Department Deposit Receipt can be located on the CORE portal.

Fundraising

If collecting funds for a scholarship, criteria and process must be first created. All scholarships must go through the Financial Aid Office process for proper recording.

If your organization is hosting a fundraising event and it requires seed money, contact the Office of Student Finance 48hrs in advance for further assistance.

CSO Grants

Purpose:

The CSO Grant Proposal is an opportunity for recognized organizations to be awarded funds for activities that will benefit the students at Bismarck State College during the Fall and Spring semesters.

Overview:

Grants for organization activities are distributed from student fees. The total amount of student fees that CSO receives varies and depends on the number of students enrolled at Bismarck State College as well as the number of credit hours for which they are registered. Due to this variability, the amount available for each club may be adjusted at the discretion of the CSO Advisor.

Grant requests made during the Fall or Spring semesters for an event occurring during the summer semester will only be put forth to the council for voting upon the CSO Advisor's approval.

Grants and Newly recognized organizations:

Newly recognized organizations, or organizations that have regained recognition after it was rescinded, are placed on a one-year probationary period beginning on the date of recognition.

During the probationary period, the organization

- Will not be awarded an amount greater than $300.
- May not seek grant money for any activity that occurred outside of the state of North Dakota.

What they can be used for:

- Registration fees.
- Traveling expenses for events.
- Lodging expenses for events.
- Purchasing start-up equipment (ex. Chess boards for a chess club).

Procedure to Apply:

1. Obtain a CSO Grant Proposal Application from the CSO webpage on the BSC website.

2. Complete the application and submit it to the CSO Advisor via the CSO email, along with an itemized budget list.

   a) This must be sent in at least one week prior to the next CSO meeting and before the agenda is sent out.
   b) This must be applied for at least one week prior to the date of the event.

3. The CSO Advisor will review the application and place it on the agenda of the next CSO meeting.

4. At the CSO meeting, discussion will occur and the CSO representatives will vote on the proposal.

   a) A 2/3 majority of the active, recognized organizations is required to vote on a grant proposal. Voting will not take place if a simple majority is not met.
   b) Email votes will not be accepted.

6. The CSO Advisor will work with the club/organization advisor(s) to get the funds transferred if the grant is approved by the CSO reps.

Advisor Requirements

• A group must have at least one, full-time BSC staff or faculty member as an advisor.

• An Advisor has the primary responsibility to ensure their club/organization is adhering to CSO procedures and BSC policies.

• An Advisor is a Campus Security Authority (CSA). They are people designated by BSC to whom students and employees should report crimes, or who has responsibility for campus security.

• An Advisor is to aid, review, and assess the planning and execution of programs/events/and funding proposals.

• Advisors must submit proper document to the CSO Advisor prior to an off-campus event that falls under the “Off-Campus Travel of Student Groups” policy.

Creating a Constitution and Bylaws

Your constitution/bylaws are the governing documents for your organization and contain the procedures for elections, meetings, and recalls. Additionally, they establish the structure of your organization, state the purpose, and outline basic policies for membership.

These documents need to be reviewed every year, and the reviewal date listed in the document

Preamble
The preamble serves as a brief overview of the reasons you are establishing the constitution.

1. Name of the Organization
This is usually a single sentence citing the full official name of your organization.

2. Statement of Equal Opportunity

This is a paragraph that states that your organization will not discriminate against students based upon race, religion, age, creed, color, sex, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, veteran's status, or political beliefs or affiliations.

3. Object and Purpose
State the main objective of your organization.

4. Advisors
State who the advisor(s) for your organization shall be. If the role of the advisor is not tied to a position, such as the Chair on Engineering, state who will appoint the advisor.

5. Elections
This section should state when elections of members or officers occur and who has the right to vote in elections.

6. Officers
This section should list each of the officer positions, including qualifications, duties, and terms of office.

* Officer positions that must be listed: CSO Representative, President, and Vice President
*Officer positions are to be held by BSC students only.

7. Meetings
This section should list how often your organization will meet as well as how meetings will be run, including what parliamentary procedure (if any) will be used.

*CSO requires all clubs/organizations to meet a minimum of once a month.

8. Committees
This section should list any committees your organization should have, what each committee's function should be, how often they are required to meet, and how committee chairs are appointed.

9. Recall of Officers or Members
This section should outline the procedures your organization will use to remove an officer from their position, or to expel a member from the organization. It is very important to make sure that this is not easy to accomplish without overwhelming support (usually 2/3), to protect the rights of the individual members of your organization.

10. Amending the Constitution
State how your organization will make changes to the document in the future if needed.

11. Ratification of the Constitution
State how the constitution will be adopted by the organization.

Example of SGA's Constitution & Bylaws

Room and Table Requests

To reserve the Alumni room, Library Conference Room, or a foyer in the student union, a request form must be filled out for the specified time and date. A variety of meeting times are available as building hours allow.

To book one of these room/foyers:

- The club advisor or club president must fill out the "Student Clubs Room & Foyer Request" form found on the CSO webpage with the appropriate information.
    - This should be done at least two weeks before the event.

- After the form is filled out, it will be sent off to the CSO Advisor. If approved, the CSO Advisor will complete the necessary paperwork to secure the requested space.
- Any questions should be directed to the CSO email: bsc.csorgs@bismarckstate.edu

BSC Policies

CSO follows all Bismarck State College Policies and the Student Code of Conduct.
A full list of polices can be found on the BSC website

Establishment and Operation of Student Clubs and Organizations

Off-Campus Travel of Student Groups: Procedure

Food and Beverage Operational Procedure

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs Policy

Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Policy

Hazing Policy

Sexual Harassment and Title IX Compliance

Use of Computer and Network Facilities

Status Guidelines

Removal or Resignation of a Representative:

If an organization's CSO representative fails to meet the necessary responsibilities required of their position at any point in the semester, the CSO Advisor may choose to recall that representative. If a representative is recalled and removed from the Congress of Student Organizations, the CSO Advisor will immediately send a letter to the advisor and the president (if applicable) of the organization to notify them of the situation. During the interim, while a new CSO rep is being selected, another club officer or the club's advisor should attend all CSO meetings.

Loss of Recognition:

An organization's recognition will be rescinded for any of the following reasons:

- The organization is found guilty of local, state, or federal crimes in a court of law.
- The organization did not gain recognition after inactive status of a full year.
- The organization has reached the final step in the probation process as outlined on pg. 10.

Regaining Recognition:

An organization that has had recognition rescinded is considered inactive and is ineligible to be seated at the Congress of Student Organizations. To regain recognition, an organization must submit a new recognition form to the CSO Advisor. Organizations seeking to regain lost recognition will be placed on probation for one year **if** recognition is granted. This probationary period begins on the day that recognition is awarded by the CSO Advisor. Clubs awarded recognition will be presented with a certificate. Probation does not affect the privileges of the organization but only limits the grant amount that an organization may receive to the same limitations as new organizations.

Inactive Organizations

A club will automatically be declared inactive if it does not gain recognition for the new semester. An advisor can also request that the club be placed on inactive status if club membership is

not sustainable. Upon the CSO Advisor's approval of this request, the organization will be placed on inactive status for up to 1 academic school year. During this time, attendance at CSO meetings, turning in meeting minutes, turning in recognition forms, etc. will not be needed from the organization. If the organization fails to turn in a recognition form and therefore not gain recognition before the one academic school year time limit, then the CSO Advisor will automatically declare the club suspended.

During inactive status a club will:

- Still receive generic emails from the CSO Advisor
- Remain listed on college listings.
- Still be able to hold member drives to try and get the group going again.
- Be able to book a room/foyer for the purpose of a membership drive.

During inactive status a club cannot:

- Host regular events.
- Host a major event (such as a fundraiser, dance, excursions, etc....)

Suspended Organizations

An organization is considered suspended if the organization has remained inactive for 1 academic school year, has had its rights revoked through the probation process which is outlined on pg. 9-10, or has been placed on suspended status by the Community Standards Coordinator due to a hazing investigation (see Hazing Procedure). An organization that is suspended will have its rights that are granted upon recognition revoked but will have 1 full semester to gain recognition.

For example: If the club is declared suspended in October, then the club will have the rest of the Fall semester and the following Spring semester to regain recognition. If recognition is not regained after 1 full semester after notice of suspension, then the club shall be disbanded by the authority of the CSO Advisor at the end of the current semester.

Disbanding of a student organization:

It shall be the responsibility of the advisor of a student organization to communicate plans to disband an organization to the CSO Advisor with a dated letter.

The CSO Advisor also has the authority to disband an organization following the suspension/probation steps as outlined on pg. 9-10.

Should an organization choose to reorganize after having been disbanded, the advisor must complete the recognition process as a new organization.

Probation:

The probation system functions on a step system. If a club or organization fails to meet its obligations, it will be placed along the probation sequence.

1. Warning

A written warning could be sent from the CSO Advisors if a club or organization fails to:

- Turn in meeting minutes for the previous month (they serve as proof of meeting).
- Have representation at a CSO meeting.

- Turn in the recognition form by the deadline but continues group activities past one start-up meeting.
- Turn in a reviewed copy of the governing documents by the deadline without sufficient explanation.

2. Account hold
If actions continue after being notified on 3 separate occasions, the account for the club/organization will be "frozen." The club/organization will not be allowed to apply for grants until the account is unfrozen, nor use the club's funds.

In addition, a meeting with the CSO Advisor must be held to go over the club/organization's actions and discuss what can be done to rectify the situation moving forward.

3. Loss of rights
If a club/ organization does not show improvement to the CSO Advisor after the meeting or continues to not follow requirements after notice of the account being frozen and needing to meet with the CSO Advisor is given, then the organization will have its rights granted to it by BSC revoked and be declared suspended.

Procedure for Biannual Recognition and Establishment of New Organizations:

a. Clubs and organizations must obtain recognition biannually from the CSO Advisor(s). The recognition form, for the current academic year is available on the CSO web page on the BSC website. This form must be completed with all officer contact information and with the understanding that by submission of the form, the club or organization agrees to follow the CSO handbook.
b. Clubs and organizations must turn in the most recent and updated version of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other governing documents with the biannual recognition form.
c. When the CSO Advisor(s) have determined that all submissions are complete, the CSO Advisor(s) shall issue a certificate of recognition to the club/organization advisor. If the submission is not acceptable, the CSO Advisor(s) will notify the club or organization of the reason(s) why recognition was refused.
d. Recognized clubs and organizations are responsible for maintaining good standing under the requirements of the Congress of Student Organization Handbook.

Services provided to recognized clubs and organizations are:
a. One voting Representative at CSO meetings.
b. Use of College facilities and equipment.
c. A full-time staff or faculty advisor.
d. Banking and bookkeeping services.
e. Use of the College's mail service.
f. Listing in official College publications.

The CSO Advisor reserves the right to make changes to the CSO handbook and will inform the club advisors of said changes, if any are to be made.

Date of last Reviewal: June 2025

List of CSO Meeting Dates

All CSO meetings are held at 3:00 PM in the Alumni Room of the Student Union

CSO meeting dates

09/23 - CSO meeting in Sept

10/14 - CSO meeting in Oct

11/04 CSO meeting in Nov

12/02 CSO meeting in Dec

01/27 CSO meeting in Jan

02/24 CSO meeting in Feb

03/17 CSO meeting in Mar

04/14 CSO meeting in Apr

Other Important Dates

08/20 @ 3pm - Advisor Open House

08/27 @ 10-2pm Club Fair (active participation)

09/29 – 10/04 Homecoming

01/15 @ 10-2pm Club Crawl (passive event)

04/23 @ 10-2pm Spring Carnival (active participation)