# Student Organization Operations Manual

2026-2027

1303 San Jacinto
Houston, TX 77002

South Texas
COLLEGE OF LAW
HOUSTON

PRIVATE AND INDEPENDENT
SINCE 1923

# Revision History

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# PART I

## OFFICE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

### Welcome

Welcome to the Student Organization Operations Manual for South Texas College of Law Houston.

Student organizations are an integral part of the law school experience. Through leadership, professional development, service, and community engagement, student organizations enrich campus life and provide opportunities for students to develop skills, build relationships, and contribute to the law school community.

The Office of Student Engagement is committed to supporting student leaders and fostering an environment that promotes collaboration, professionalism, integrity, and service. We encourage student leaders to approach their responsibilities thoughtfully and to uphold the values and standards of STCL Houston.

### Purpose of the Operations Manual

The Student Organization Operations Manual serves as the official resource for recognized student organizations at STCL Houston.

This manual establishes the policies, procedures, and expectations that govern student organizations and provides guidance to support effective leadership, responsible stewardship of resources, and successful programming. It is intended to promote consistency, accountability, and compliance with institutional policies while empowering student organizations to contribute meaningfully to the law school community.

Student organizations and their officers are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the contents of this manual and with any additional policies issued by the Office of Student Engagement.

### Mission Statement

The Office of Student Engagement creates and fosters leadership and involvement opportunities that enhance personal, interpersonal, and organizational development for STCL Houston students.

#### *Core Competencies*

- Engagement
- Communication
- Recruitment and Retention
- Management
- Leadership

#### *Definitions*

In this Operations Manual, unless the context requires a different meaning:

1. **Advisor** means a full-time member of the faculty who counsels the members of a student organization.
2. **Class day** means a day on which classes or reading periods before semester or summer session final examinations are regularly scheduled or on which semester or summer session final examinations are given.
3. **Student** means a person enrolled or accepted for admission or readmission at the law school while present on the campus.

4. **Student Officer** means a student who has been elected or appointed to a student leadership position in their Student Organization, which includes but is not limited to President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and any other student leadership position.
5. **Dean** means the President and Dean of STCL Houston.
6. **Associate Dean for Students** means the Associate Dean of Students, their designee, or their representative.
7. **Assistant Dean** means Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Engagement, their designee, or their representative.
8. **Director** means the Director of Student Engagement, their designee, or their representative.
9. **Organization** means a student group holding a valid provisional or permanent recognition certificate from the Office of Student Engagement.
10. **Law School** means STCL Houston.
11. **Law School facility** means a classroom, auditorium, parking lot, or any other area of the campus.

## Types of Student Organizations at South Texas College of Law Houston

### *Academic Organizations*

Academic organizations promote scholarship, professional development, and academic excellence. Many are affiliated with academic departments, honor societies, or national organizations. Membership requirements vary and may be based on academic achievement, leadership, or demonstrated interest in a particular field of study.

### *Mutual Interest Organizations*

Mutual interest organizations bring together students with shared interests and frequently engage in service, professional, or social activities.

### *Multicultural Organizations*

Multicultural organizations promote awareness, appreciation, and understanding of diverse cultures and experiences within the law school community and beyond.

### *Spiritual and Religious Organizations*

Spiritual and religious organizations provide opportunities for students with similar faith traditions or spiritual interests to connect and build community.

### *Rights of Student Organizations*

Student organizations are recognized on the assumption that their activities and programs contribute to the students' educational, professional, civic, and social development. Neither the student organization nor its representatives may suggest that either is acting with authority or as an agent of STCL Houston. Student organizations have the following rights:

- Use of the STCL Houston name as part of the student organization's formal name, specifically at the end of the organization's name. Example: The Chess Club at STCL Houston.
- The right to recruit new members from the STCL Houston community.
- Access to support and resources provided by the Office of Student Engagement.
- The right to hold events and use law school facilities free of charge or with a minimal fee.
- Invitation of off-campus speakers and artists to appear for regularly scheduled meetings and assemblies, subject to scheduling in accordance with the Speaker Request Form.
- Distribution of literature relating to the organization's purpose and activities in those areas authorized by the law school
- The right to be listed as a Recognized Student Organization.

### *Responsibilities of Student Organizations*

- To manage and carry out activities within its own constitution; local, state, and federal laws; and law school policies, rules and regulations.
- To conduct its business and fiscal operations in accordance with standards of good business management and practice.
- To be cognizant of the organization's special role as an integral part of STCL Houston and to act accordingly in the best interest of its members, the law school, and the surrounding community.
- Comply with this Operations Manual and all policies issued by the Office of Student Engagement.

# PART II

## MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

### Participation in Student Organizations

Participation in student organizations enhances educational experience by providing opportunities for leadership development, professional growth, service, and community engagement. Through involvement, students develop practical skills, build relationships, strengthen communication and leadership abilities, and contribute to the STCL Houston community.

### Eligibility to Participate in Student Organizations

All student organizations must comply with the law school's Academic Deficiency Policy contained in the Student Handbook.

Students on academic probation (cumulative GPA below 2.300) are ineligible to:

1. Hold office in a student organization. Student officers must maintain eligibility throughout their term. Officers whose GPA falls below the required standard must resign immediately. Failure to do so may result in the organization's termination and loss of organizational privileges.
2. Participate in intramural or interschool advocacy competitions, including moot court, mock trial, client counseling, and negotiation competitions. Students who become academically ineligible will be disqualified, and the law school may withdraw its sponsorship as appropriate.
3. Participate in Law Review, Corporate Counsel Review, or CURRENTS: Journal of International Economic Law. Students who become academically ineligible will be administratively dismissed from these programs.

### Grade Checks of Officers

The Director of Student Engagement will verify the cumulative GPA of all Student Officers during the first two weeks of the semester. The Director will notify students who are considered ineligible for office based on this process. The student leader may appeal their eligibility to the Associate Dean for Students, whose decision will be final.

**Appeals**

- A request for review under this Regulation must be submitted in writing by the affected Student to the Associate Dean of Students within three (3) business days after notification of ineligibility. Failure to submit a timely appeal will result in immediate relinquishment of the office.
- The request must state the grounds upon which the student seeks review of their ineligibility. The student may provide additional supporting documentation to support their eligibility by delivering those documents to the Associate Dean of Students for consideration within three (3) business days after the notification of ineligibility.
- Within five (5) business days after the request has been received, the Associate Dean of Students, or their designee, shall render a decision on the request for review and shall notify the student of that decision in writing.

### Membership in Student Organizations

Membership in a STCL Houston student organization may not be restricted on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, consistent with the Assurance of Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Executive Order 11246 as issued and amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## Non-Student Members of Student Organizations

Only currently enrolled STCL Houston students are eligible to hold office in recognized campus organizations. Provisions for membership of faculty and staff members may be made, but non-students may not outnumber student members in any of the organizations.

## Single-Sex Student Organizations

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at the law school unless such programs and activities are specifically exempt from the law. The law school is required to comply with the provisions of Title IX.

Therefore, compliance with Title IX is a condition of being a registered student organization at the law school.

Since the passage of this law and the publication of the implementing regulations, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has developed a clear set of criteria for determining when single-sex organizations are exempt from Title IX's provisions. These criteria are as follows:

- The organization must have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Members must be limited to students, staff, or STCL Houston faculty.
- The organization must be a "social fraternity" as defined by the Department of Education. The Department of Education defines "social fraternity" as a group that can answer "no" to all the following questions:
- Is the organization's membership limited to persons pursuing or having an interest in a particular field of study, profession, or academic discipline?
- Is the membership limited to individuals who have a high level of achievement in scholarship or any other endeavor?
- Are the members permitted to hold membership in other fraternities or sororities at the law school?
- If a group answers "yes" to any of the questions, it is not a "social fraternity" and, therefore, is not exempt from the requirements of Title IX and must accept members of both sexes. An affirmative answer to any of these questions is evidence that the organization is professional, service, or honorary in nature and not a social fraternity or sorority for Title IX purposes.

United States Department of Education-Office for Civil Rights Rationale: The rationale for this distinction is based on the intangible educational advantage afforded by membership in such professional, service, and honorary organizations. Many such honor and service organizations have school and alumni recognition and reputation, which enhance student members' careers. Members frequently gain enhanced status, which, as alumni, is often influential in decisions affecting law school policy. This type of educational opportunity and benefit is significant and may not be denied to students on the basis of sex. *(U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights).*

## Declaration of Non-Discriminatory Practices

The law school is required to file with the federal government each year a report declaring its compliance with the Civil Rights Act. Failure to comply could result in loss of support for our student financial aid programs, federal funds for buildings, and ineligibility for federally funded grants in support of institutes, conferences, research, and other activities. The law school cannot properly declare its compliance with the Civil Rights Act if it practices discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin, except as may be provided by law, including the granting of official recognition to student organizations which practice such discrimination. We request your cooperation with the following:

Any student organization that practices discrimination, except as provided by law, will be in danger of removing its charter and withdrawing law school recognition. This means that any student who presents for membership in your organization must be accepted if they meet the requirements applied to all potential members. In the case of recognized social sororities and fraternities, this means that any student who represents themselves for participating in intake activities must be accepted for this program and must be treated in the same manner as all others. All requests for literature related to your organization and to new member intake must be filed without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin. Charges of discrimination will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.

## Annual Registration Renewal

Student organizations should submit an End of Semester Activity Report by November 1 and April 23 each year. The Director of Student Engagement will review each report to determine continued eligibility for recognition. Organizations determined to be inactive or otherwise ineligible will be notified by email.

The End of Semester Activity Report should include current officers, office hours, events held, attendance figures, and the nature of each activity (e.g., member meeting, speaker event, social event, or pro bono event). The President or designee is responsible for ensuring that this information remains current.

The officers listed on the most recent registration submission are recognized as the organization's authorized representatives.

Student organization officers are expected to participate in the annual Student Leadership Retreat and other training opportunities offered by the Office of Student Engagement.

Organizations that fail to complete the registration process by the applicable deadline may be designated inactive and lose the privileges associated with recognition.

## Organization Viability

To maintain active status and remain in good standing with STCL Houston, student organizations are expected to:

1. Meet regularly (at least monthly) throughout the academic year.
2. Elect officers annually in accordance with their constitution and bylaws. Officers must be in good standing with the law school.
3. Maintain a minimum of ten eligible members, including two officers.
4. Sponsor at least one educational, pro bono, networking, or charitable event each semester.
5. Maintain current organizational records, including constitutions, bylaws, officer rosters, and faculty advisor information.
6. Comply with all applicable law school policies and procedures.
7. Organizations assigned office space are expected to maintain and document a minimum of eight office hours per week.

Failure to satisfy these expectations may result in an organization being designated inactive or otherwise losing the privileges associated with recognition.

## Meetings

Organizations must provide members and advisors with reasonable advance notice of meetings and conduct meetings in accordance with their constitution and bylaws. Organizational disputes may be referred to the Director of Student Engagement.

# PART III

## FINANCE AND ORGANIZATION OPERATIONS

### Student Organization Accounts

Treasurers should first review Student Organization Accounts, Reimbursements, Direct Payment to Approved Vendors, Financial Oversight, and Organization Funding before making purchases or approving expenditures.

#### *Bank Accounts*

Student organizations are required to use the STCL Houston Student Organizations umbrella account. The following procedures apply to deposits and reimbursements:

a. **Membership dues** should be paid through the Student Organizations page.
b. **Funds** raised through approved fundraising activities should be deposited through the Student Organizations page.
c. **Payments** for student organization merchandise and promotional items should be processed through the Student Organizations page.

#### *Deposits*

a. When cash or checks are received, complete the Student Organization Deposit Slip located in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement** and submit the completed form, cash, and/or checks to the Office of Student Engagement.
b. All checks must be made payable to **South Texas College of Law Houston** and should include the student organization's name and purpose of the payment on the memo line.
c. A receipt will be provided for all deposits.

#### *Reimbursements*

a. Students requesting reimbursement for student organization expenses must submit their own Student Organization Check Request Form, supporting documentation, and a signed Student Organization Expense Authorization Form by the 5th of the month following the purchase (e.g., July purchases are due by August 5; August purchases are due by September 5, etc.).
b. All purchases made by the same individual during a calendar month must be submitted together, as only one reimbursement check will be issued per person each month. Late submissions will be returned and must be included with the following month's reimbursement request.
c. Include itemized receipts, proof of payment, and all required supporting documentation.
d. Upload the completed Student Organization Expense Authorization Form with the request.
e. Submission of a reimbursement request does not guarantee reimbursement. All requests are subject to review for policy compliance, availability of funds, and completeness.
f. Once a complete reimbursement request has been approved, reimbursement checks are typically processed within ten (10) business days. Processing times begin after all required documentation has been received and approved by the Office of Student Engagement.

### Direct Payment to Approved Vendors

Student organizations may purchase goods and services from vendors listed on the Preferred Vendors List available in **STANLEY → Procurement Services → Preferred Vendors**. Using an approved vendor allows the law school to pay the vendor directly, eliminating the need for students to pay approved expenses out of pocket and seek reimbursement.

Before placing an order, student organizations should verify whether the vendor is listed on the Preferred Vendors List. If the vendor is listed, students should submit the vendor invoice through the Student Organization Check Request Form in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**. In the form select

“Request Type = Direct Payment”. The submission must include the vendor's name and Banner ID (G#) from the Preferred Vendors List, as well as the vendor invoice.

If the student organization plans to deliver the check directly to the vendor on the day of the event, include instructions in the "Description of Expense" field on the Student Organization Check Request Form requesting that the completed check be given to the Office of Student Engagement for pickup. To allow sufficient time for review and payment processing, invoices should be submitted no later than two (2) weeks before the scheduled event or the vendor's payment due date, whichever occurs first. Once approved, the law school will process payment directly to the vendor. Same-day or expedited processing is not available.

Student organizations wishing to use a vendor not listed on the Preferred Vendors List must first submit a Vendor Application in **STANLEY → Procurement Services → Vendor Registration**. The Procurement Department will contact the vendor directly to complete the required onboarding documentation, including Form W-9 and any additional documentation required by the law school.

Because vendor setup depends on the vendor's timely completion of the required documentation, student organizations should allow a minimum of four (4) weeks before payment can be processed. Submission of a Vendor Registration does not guarantee that a vendor will be approved or established in time for a scheduled event. If vendor setup is not completed before payment is required, the student organization will be responsible for following the reimbursement process outlined in this Operations Manual.

## Financial Oversight

The Treasurer is responsible for monitoring the organization's financial activity, maintaining awareness of available funds, and communicating the organization's financial status to the executive board. Treasurers should maintain copies of Student Organization Expense Authorization Forms and compare approved expenditures with reimbursement activity and account balances provided by the Office of Student Engagement. While the Treasurer provides financial oversight, each student is responsible for submitting their own reimbursement request and supporting documentation through the Student Organization Check Request Form.

Treasurers are encouraged to review their organization's financial records regularly and promptly address any discrepancies or questions with the Office of Student Engagement.

## Payment Processing Fees

Transactions made through the Student Organizations payment portal may be subject to payment processing fees. Any applicable fees will be displayed at the time of payment before the transaction is submitted.

## Organization Funding

Student organizations are required to maintain their organization funds through the Office of Student Engagement.

### *Funding Sources*

Student organizations may obtain funding through one or more of the following sources:

1. An annual allocation of **$290** is provided by the law school to each recognized student organization at the beginning of the academic year.
2. Membership dues and approved fundraising activities.
3. Additional funding requested through the Student Organization Fundraising Application Form, located in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**. Applications should be submitted at least **two weeks** before funds are needed and are reviewed based on the organization's demonstrated need, alignment with the law school's mission, and the availability of funds.
4. Appeals of funding decisions must be submitted in writing to the **Assistant Dean of Admissions & Student Engagement** within **five business days** of the decision.

For complete eligibility requirements, procedures, and funding guidelines, refer to the Student Fundraising Policy located in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**.

### *Funding Process*

**Student Bar Association (SBA)**

1. The SBA receives a portion of its student fee allocation each semester after the last day to withdraw without receiving a failing grade.
2. The Office of Student Services initiates the transfer of student fees, which is approved by the Office of Student Engagement and processed by Accounting Services.
3. SBA funds must be used in accordance with the approved budget and all applicable law school policies and procedures.

**Remaining Student Organizations**

1. Each recognized student organization in good standing receives an annual allocation of **$290**, which is deposited into the organization's account at the beginning of the fall semester.
2. Students are responsible for paying approved expenses and submitting their own reimbursement requests through the Student Organization Check Request Form located in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**. Requests must include all required receipts, proof of payment, and supporting documentation.
3. Student organizations must provide the South Texas College of Law Houston Tax Exemption Certificate to applicable vendors. Organizations are responsible for any sales tax incurred when the tax exemption certificate is not used.

### *Funding Criteria*

STCL Houston may provide funding for student organization activities that meet the following requirements:

1. Activities must support an educational, pro bono, charitable, or other mission-related purpose and be open to all STCL Houston students.
2. Student organizations are generally responsible for conference-related expenses. Funding for conference attendance is limited to students serving in approved regional or national leadership positions and must comply with the Student Organization Conference Travel Policy.
3. Speaker events require advance approval through the Speaker Request Form.
4. **All speakers** must complete the Photo/Video Release Form before the event.
5. Food, receptions, and events serving alcohol require advance approval through the 25Live Student Event Request process and must comply with the Alcohol Service Policy.
6. Student organizations are responsible for complying with all institutional policies governing the purchase, storage, service, and removal of alcohol at campus events.

Refer to the applicable policies and forms located in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement** for completing requirements and procedures.

### *Conference Funding*

Student organization conference funding is governed by the Student Organization Conference Travel Policy. Students must receive written approval from the Office of Student Engagement before making travel commitments or incurring travel expenses. For additional requirements, including eligibility, allowable expenses, and reimbursement procedures, refer to the Student Organization Conference Travel Policy.

## Fundraising

Student organization fundraising is governed by the Student Fundraising Policy. Organizations are responsible for reviewing and complying with the policy before conducting any fundraising activity. Refer to the Student Fundraising Policy for applicable procedures, limitations, and approval requirements.

1. Fundraising Planning
    a. Identify the purpose of the fundraiser and how proceeds will be used.
    b. Establish a realistic budget and fundraising goal.
    c. Develop a marketing and event plan.
    d. Assign responsibilities and maintain appropriate financial records.
2. Food Sales
    a. Food sales require prior approval.
    b. Food prepared outside a regulated commercial kitchen must display the required health notice.

## Alumni and External Solicitation

All fundraising efforts involving external constituents are coordinated through the Office of Advancement and Alumni Engagement. Individual students, student organizations, and other campus groups may not independently solicit monetary support from alumni, friends, corporations, foundations, law firms, or other external supporters of STCL Houston.

Organizations that identify potential external donors or sponsors should coordinate those opportunities through the Office of Advancement and Alumni Engagement. For additional requirements, refer to the Student Fundraising Policy.

## General Limitations on Fundraising Activities

- Solicitation by credit card or telephone card companies.
- Fundraising events/programs that solicit students, alumni, friends, parents, faculty, or staff, except for those approved and supported by the Office of Advancement and Alumni Engagement. This includes galas, luncheons, or any other event where tickets or table sponsorships are sold.
- Fundraising using crowdfunding platforms (e.g., Kickstarter, GoFundMe, Patreon, etc.).
- Fundraising for any candidate for political office or political campaigns.
- Raffles, lotteries, or other games of chance.
- Sale or distribution of items that violate the law school's trademark rights or existing contracts.
- Receipt by individuals who organize a fundraising event/program of proceeds from the event/program (i.e., using Venmo, Zelle, CashApp, or another bank transfer mechanism).

## Collecting Gifts

For approved fundraising activities, student organizations may accept donations through the following methods:

1. Cash – Cash donations may be accepted and must be submitted promptly to the Office of Student Engagement for deposit. Students may not deposit donations into personal bank accounts or use personal payment accounts to transfer funds to the law school.
2. Checks – Checks must be made payable to STCL Houston and include the student organization's name and the purpose of the payment on the memo line.
3. Online Payments – Online donations and event payments should be processed through the Student Organizations payment page.

All off-campus fundraising activities must receive prior approval from the Office of Student Engagement and the Office of Advancement and Alumni Engagement. Organizations should submit the Fundraising Application Form at least four weeks before the planned activity.

### *Charitable Bake Sales*

Student organizations may conduct charitable bake sales in accordance with applicable local health regulations.

1. Only non-potentially hazardous baked goods prepared in a private home may be sold or offered in exchange for donations.
2. Foods requiring temperature control (e.g., meat, pizza, dairy-based dishes, or other potentially hazardous foods) may not be sold or exchanged for donations.
3. Food prepared in a private home must display the following notice:
    a. "This food was prepared in a kitchen that is not subject to regulation and inspection by the City of Houston or any other health inspection agency."

For additional requirements, refer to the Student Fundraising Policy.

## Tax-Deductible Gifts

Gifts made directly to student organizations are generally not tax-deductible because most student organizations are not recognized nonprofit organizations authorized to issue tax-deductible receipts.

Organizations seeking significant financial support from external donors or those with questions regarding tax-deductible gifts must coordinate with the Office of Advancement and Alumni Engagement before soliciting or accepting funds. In certain circumstances, a gift may be accepted through an academic department or other institutional account in accordance with law school policies.

For additional requirements, contact the Office of Advancement and Alumni Engagement before pursuing large donations.

## Trademark and Branding Standards

Student organizations must comply with the South Texas College of Law Houston Brand Standards when using the law school's name, logo, trademarks, or other institutional branding on apparel, promotional materials, merchandise, publications, websites, and digital media.

For additional requirements regarding the use of institutional trademarks and branding, refer to the South Texas College of Law Houston Brand Standards.

## Logo and Letterhead

Student organizations may not use or reproduce the STCL Houston letterhead, official stationery, business cards, or other institutional branding without prior authorization. The law school's name, logos, trademarks, and brand elements may be used only in accordance with the South Texas College of Law Houston Brand Standards.

When appropriate, student organization correspondence should identify the organization as:

"[Student Organization Name], a student organization at South Texas College of Law Houston."

For additional requirements regarding the use of institutional branding, logos, and letterhead, refer to the South Texas College of Law Houston Brand Standards.

## Official Student Organization Records Maintained by the Office of Student Engagement

The Office of Student Engagement maintains official records for each recognized student organization, including constitutions, bylaws, officer rosters, advisor information, and other organizational documents.

Student organization presidents are responsible for submitting updated officer and membership information to the Office of Student Engagement by November 1 and April 23 of each academic year.

# PART IV

## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### Event Planning and Approval

#### *Planning an Event*

Student organizations are responsible for the planning, conduct, and management of all organization-sponsored events and activities. Organizations and their representatives are expected to comply with all applicable law school policies and procedures and to conduct themselves in a professional manner that reflects positively on both the organization and STCL Houston.

Organizations planning to host an on-campus event or meeting, including speakers, tabling events, workshops, receptions, and general meetings, must first submit a 25Live Event Request through **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**. Event requests are subject to review and approval by the Office of Student Engagement and other law school offices, as applicable.

For additional requirements regarding event planning, approvals, and procedures, refer to the applicable policies contained in this Operations Manual.

### Specific Guidelines for Campus Events

All student organization events and activities must support the educational mission of South Texas College of Law Houston and comply with applicable law school policies and procedures.

**General Requirements**

1. Events should be open to all STCL Houston students unless otherwise approved by the Office of Student Engagement.
2. Events should support the educational, professional, pro bono, charitable, or leadership development mission of the student organization.
3. Student organizations are expected to conduct all events with civility, professionalism, and respect for participants and guests.
4. Students may not disrupt or interfere with any law school-approved event. Violations may result in disciplinary action.
5. Organizations must comply with all applicable event procedures, including publicity, facility reservations, risk management, and approval requirements outlined in this Operations Manual.
6. Event materials submitted to the Office of Student Engagement should be provided in an approved electronic format (e.g., PNG, JPEG, PDF, or Microsoft Word).

### 25Live Event Request Process

Student organizations planning to reserve space for an event or meeting must submit a 25Live Event Request through STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement at least two weeks before the proposed event date.

The 25Live Event Request serves as the primary event approval process and identifies any additional approvals or forms that may be required based on the nature of the event, including:

- Audio/Visual (AV) support (e.g., microphones, podiums, projectors, or music)
- Events serving alcohol
- Security, facilities, and other operational support, as applicable

Submission of a 25Live Event Request does not constitute approval. Student organizations may not advertise an event, confirm vendors or speakers, enter into agreements, make purchases, or proceed with event plans until all required approvals have been received.

Verbal conversations, phone calls, Teams messages, emails, or other informal communications do not constitute official event approval. Official approval is granted only through the established event approval process.

Event requests must be submitted sufficiently in advance to allow the Office of Student Engagement and other campus departments, including Property Services, Security, and Information Technology, adequate time to review, coordinate, and prepare for the event. Late submissions are not guaranteed approval and may be denied when operational support cannot be reasonably accommodated.

Changes to approved events must be submitted promptly to the Office of Student Engagement at studentengagement@stcl.edu.

Student organizations are responsible for monitoring their STCL Houston email and responding promptly to requests for additional information during the event approval process.

For additional requirements, refer to the applicable event policies contained in this Operations Manual.

### Common Reasons for Approval Delays

Late submissions are reviewed as staffing and operational considerations permit. Expedited review is not guaranteed. Approval delays may occur when:

- The 25Live Event Request is submitted fewer than two weeks before the event.
- Required fields or supporting information are incomplete or inaccurate.
- Event details are unclear, inconsistent, or insufficient to allow appropriate review.
- Required approvals for Property Services, Audio/Visual (AV), alcohol service, security, or other operational needs are not identified at the time of submission.

### Speaker and Guest Presenter Procedures

Student organizations may invite off-campus speakers and guest presenters to participate in educational programs and events, subject to approval by the Office of Student Engagement.

1. Attorneys serving as speakers or panelists must be licensed and in good standing with the applicable licensing authority. Non-attorney presenters whose professional expertise is directly relevant to the educational program (e.g., HPD, DEA, FBI, or other government agency representatives or subject matter experts) may be approved by the Office of Student Engagement on a case-by-case basis.
2. A Speaker Request Form must be submitted through **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement** at least five business days before the event. Speaker participation is not approved until the Office of Student Engagement completes its review.
3. Organizations must certify, as part of the Speaker Request Form, that the proposed speaker is not a current candidate for public office or appearing on behalf of a political campaign.
4. Approved speakers must complete the Photo/Video Release Form before participating in the event.

For additional requirements, refer to the Speaker Request Form and related policies available through **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**.

### Candidate Restrictions

Student organizations may not invite or host current candidates for public office or individuals speaking on behalf of a political campaign at events held on the STCL Houston campus.

## Alcohol Service Requirements

Student organizations planning to serve alcoholic beverages at an approved event must comply with all applicable institutional policies and procedures.

1. The Consent to Serve Alcohol, embedded within the 25Live Event Request, must be completed and submitted at the time the event request is filed.
2. The 25Live Event Request must include the bartender's name and current Texas bartender license number. This information is reviewed as part of the event approval process.
3. All alcoholic beverages must be stored in the designated Emilie Slohm Pantry until the event.
4. Upon arrival, students must check in with Security to obtain access to the designated storage area.
5. Students must notify Security at least 30 minutes before the event to retrieve alcoholic beverages from storage.
6. All remaining alcoholic beverages must be removed from campus within 30 minutes after the event concludes. Alcohol may not be stored in student organization offices, lockers, or any other campus location after the event.
7. A licensed Texas bartender must be used for all student organization events where alcoholic beverages are served. The bartender must bring their physical Texas bartender license to the event. Security will verify the license on-site before the bartender is permitted to serve alcohol. License verification is required for every event, regardless of whether the bartender has previously worked on campus.

For additional requirements regarding alcohol service, refer to the applicable law school policies and procedures.

## Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability

Student organizations conducting on-campus or off-campus activities involving physical activity, travel, or other potential risks must ensure that all participants, including students and non-students, complete an Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability Form before participating. The organization's President is responsible for ensuring compliance with this requirement. The form is available in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**.

## Event Planning Guide

### *Brainstorming*

Before planning an event, organizations should consider:

- Purpose and intended outcomes.
- Target audience.
- Date, time, and location.
- Room setup, equipment, and accessibility needs.
- Food, refreshments, or admission fees.
- Budget and funding sources.
- Applicable law school policies and required approvals.

### *Planning*

Once an event is approved, organizations should:

1. Select a date that does not conflict with other campus events.
2. Reserve space and complete all required event requests.
3. Develop an event budget and identify funding sources, if needed.
4. Coordinate speakers and vendors. Students may not sign contracts on behalf of the organization or the law school.
5. Develop a marketing plan and begin promotion at least two weeks before the event.

6. Ensure compliance with all applicable law school policies, including security, safety, food service, alcohol service, and liability requirements.
7. Refer to the STCL Houston On-Campus Venue Checklist or STCL Houston Off-Campus Venue Checklist for a step-by-step planning guide.

### *Implementation*

1. Assign responsibilities for setup, event operations, and cleanup.
2. Arrive early to verify room setup, technology, and event logistics.
3. Conduct the event professionally and address unexpected issues as they arise.
4. Restore the event space to its original condition immediately following the event.

### *Evaluation*

After the event, organizations should:

1. Evaluate whether the event achieved its objectives and document lessons learned.
2. Review attendance, expenses, and overall event outcomes.
3. Submit the Student Organization Check Request Form and all required supporting documentation through STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement. Expenses must have been pre-approved through the Student Organization Expense Authorization Form.
4. Thank speakers, volunteers, sponsors, and other contributors, as appropriate.

# PART V

## MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS, AND SERVICES

### Bulletin Boards and Posting Procedures

Student organizations may publicize approved events by posting flyers on designated campus bulletin boards. All flyers must be approved and stamped by the Office of Student Engagement before they may be posted.

The following requirements apply:

1. Flyers must promote a STCL Houston student organization event or activity and support the law school's mission. Advertisements for personal services, property rentals, commercial businesses, or other unrelated promotions will not be approved.
2. Flyers must be submitted to studentengagement@stcl.edu at least **ten (10) calendar days** before the event to allow time for review, approval, printing, and posting. Earlier submission is encouraged when additional promotional time is needed.
3. Flyers must be submitted in portrait orientation, 1080 × 1920 pixels, 300 dpi, and PNG format.
4. At a minimum, each flyer must include:
    a. Sponsoring student organization
    b. Event title or purpose
    c. Date
    d. Time
    e. Location
5. Once approved, the Office of Student Engagement will print, stamp, and notify the organization when the flyers are available for pickup in **Suite 234C**. Approved flyers will also be posted to the digital signage monitor in the Student Lounge by the Office of Student Engagement; no additional submission is required.
6. The Office of Student Engagement prints only the flyers needed for official campus posting and organizational records. Requests for additional informational handouts or mass distribution copies will not be accommodated. Organizations wishing to provide supplemental information are encouraged to include a QR code on the approved flyer linking to additional event details, speaker biographies, registration forms, agendas, or other relevant resources.
7. Organizations are responsible for posting one flyer on the designated bulletin boards located on Floors 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7, and for delivering one flyer to the Clinical Programs Office (10th Floor). An additional copy will be provided for the organization's records.
8. Flyers may be posted only in designated locations and may not cover other posted materials, emergency exit signs, elevator buttons, or other safety-related signage.
9. Organizations are responsible for removing all posted flyers no later than the day after the event.

### Digital Signage

The digital signage monitor located in the Student Lounge is used to promote approved student organization events and activities.

Approved event flyers submitted through the Bulletin Boards and Posting Procedures will automatically be displayed on the Student Lounge digital signage monitor by the Office of Student Engagement. No separate submission is required.

The Office of Student Engagement reserves the right to determine the content, scheduling, and duration of all digital signage displayed on institutional monitors.

## Institutional Social Media Promotion

STCL Houston's institutional social media accounts are intended to promote the law school and are not intended to promote every student organization event.

Student organizations are responsible for promoting their own events using appropriate communication channels, including organization social media accounts, email, direct invitations, digital signage, bulletin boards, newsletters, and other approved methods.

The Marketing Department may feature selected student organization events or activities that support institutional priorities, highlight significant achievements, or are of broad interest to the law school community. Student organizations should not rely on institutional social media as their primary method of event promotion.

Student organizations using the law school's name, logo, or other institutional branding on apparel, promotional items, printed materials, websites, social media, or other communications should comply with the South Texas College of Law Houston Brand Guidelines.

## Web Pages

The Office of Student Engagement maintains a web page for each recognized student organization. To ensure accuracy and minimize frequent updates, each organization's web page will include, at a minimum:

- The organization's mission or purpose.
- Contact information for the current President.

Requests to include additional officer names, biographies, photographs, or other organization-specific content are subject to the discretion of the Office of Student Engagement.

## Mail and Mailroom Policies

Student organizations may use the law school's mailing address to receive organization-related correspondence and deliveries. Students should not use the law school's address to receive personal mail or packages.

Mail and packages addressed to recognized student organizations are delivered by Mailroom personnel to the Office of Student Engagement, Suite 234C, where they may be picked up by an authorized student organization officer.

Student organizations are responsible for promptly collecting mail and packages upon notification from the Office of Student Engagement.

## Office Space and Keys

The Office of Student Engagement assigns shared office space to selected student organizations based on operational needs and available space. Office assignments are reviewed annually before the beginning of the fall semester and may be modified or reassigned at the discretion of the Office of Student Engagement.

The following requirements apply:

1. Each assigned office is issued two keys, which are assigned to the organization's President and one additional designated officer. All key recipients must complete a Student Office Key Agreement before a key is issued.
2. All office keys must be returned to the Office of Student Engagement at the end of the spring semester or immediately following the election or appointment of new officers.

3. Failure to return an assigned office key may result in institutional administrative holds, including the withholding of grades, diplomas, or bar certification, until the key is returned.
4. Student organizations not assigned office space may use the Student Organization Workroom located in Suite 234C, subject to Office of Student Engagement procedures.

## Student Organization Workroom

The Student Organization Workroom, located in Suite 234C, is available to recognized student organizations for organizational business and event preparation.

Student organizations are expected to use the workroom responsibly, maintain a clean and orderly environment, and return all equipment and furnishings to their original condition before leaving. Personal property and organization materials should not be left unattended unless specifically authorized by the Office of Student Engagement.

The Office of Student Engagement reserves the right to establish additional procedures governing the use of the workroom and may temporarily restrict access as operational needs require.

## Organization Records and Historical Information

Student organizations are responsible for maintaining records that support effective leadership transition and organizational continuity. Organizations are encouraged to retain important documents, including constitutions, bylaws, meeting minutes, budgets, event planning materials, marketing files, photographs, and other historical records.

At the conclusion of each academic year, outgoing officers should transfer all organizational records, electronic files, account information, and relevant resources to the incoming executive board.

The Office of Student Engagement may maintain official organizational records, including constitutions, historical documents, and other administrative records, to support institutional continuity and compliance.

# PART VI

## RECOGNITION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Starting a New Student Organization

Students interested in establishing a new student organization should review the Student Organization Capacity and Creation Policy, available in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**.

The policy outlines the application process, organizational capacity, eligibility requirements, Interest Group process, evaluation criteria, and the requirements for obtaining and maintaining recognition as a STCL Houston student organization.

Questions regarding the recognition process should be directed to the Office of Student Engagement at studentengagement@stcl.edu.

### Student Organization Conduct

Student organizations and their members are expected to conduct all organization activities in a manner consistent with the mission and values of STCL Houston. This expectation applies to both on-campus and off-campus activities conducted on behalf of, or sponsored by, a student organization. Organizations and their members must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, as well as all law school policies, procedures, and regulations.

Organizations are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure their members comply with applicable policies and are expected to address conduct that reflects negatively on the organization or the law school. Individual students remain subject to the Student Code of Conduct regardless of whether disciplinary action is also taken against the organization.

### Administrative Review

The Office of Student Engagement reviews reports of alleged violations involving student organizations. The Director of Student Engagement may dismiss the matter if no violation is found or conduct an administrative review with organization leadership and the faculty advisor to gather additional information before making a determination.

### Sanctions

If a violation is substantiated, the Director of Student Engagement may recommend appropriate sanctions to the Assistant Dean of Admissions & Student Engagement. Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, sanctions may include:

- Written warning
- Probation
- Suspension of specific organizational privileges
- Suspension of organizational recognition
- Revocation of organizational recognition
- Other appropriate administrative action

### Appeals

Student organizations may appeal disciplinary decisions by submitting a written appeal to the Assistant Dean of Admissions & Student Engagement within five (5) class days of notification. The appeal must identify either:

- A procedural error that materially affected the outcome; or
- Why the imposed sanction is inappropriate given the circumstances.

If organizational recognition is permanently revoked, the appeal shall be made to the Associate Dean for Students, whose decision is final.

# PART VII

## POLICIES, FORMS, AND RESOURCES

The following policies, forms, and resources are available in **STANLEY → Departments → Student Engagement**. Student organization officers and members should review and use the applicable documents before conducting organization business or activities.

### Getting Started

- Student Organization Capacity & Creation Policy

### Event Planning & Risk Management

- STCL Houston **On**-Campus Venue Checklist
- STCL Houston **Off**-Campus Venue Checklist
- STCL Houston Speaker Request Form
- STCL Houston Photo/Video Release Form
- STCL Houston Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability Form

### Fundraising & Financial Management

- Student Organization Fundraising Policy
- Student Organization Fundraising Application Form
- Student Organization Deposit Slip
- STCL Houston Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate
- Student Organization Expense Authorization Form
- Student Organization Check Request Form

### Student Organization Travel

- Student Organization Conference Travel Policy

### Student Organization Gifts & Recognition

- Student Organization Speaker Gift Policy

### Technology Use

- Student Organization Zoom Access & Use Policy