



2019 Working Group on Voluntary Student Organizations

INTRODUCTION

Over 600 Voluntary Student Organizations (VSOs) at Stanford enrich the social, cultural and educational experiences of students, influence the larger university community, and enhance diversity at Stanford. VSOs are organizations: (1) in which membership is not mandatory and is nondiscriminatory, (2) open to all current Stanford students registered in a degree-granting program, (3) in which students make all organizational decisions and take responsibility for adhering to university policy, and (4) whose purposes and procedures are consistent with the goals and standards of the university.

VSOs play an important role in strengthening leadership skills for their members and contributing to the university community more broadly, as well as fostering student engagement, agency and belonging. In advising and setting policies for VSOs, the university prioritizes student well-being, safety, and the integrity of financial practices within the organization.

CHARGE

The form and functions of student organizations have evolved over the years. Many organizations have grown in sophistication to include student, alumni and other participants of different ages engaging in activities under the guidance of volunteer and paid coaches and teachers. This evolution has introduced complexities not envisioned in our original policies, and we believe it is time to reassess and realign university policies and organizational expectations. Toward this end, Vice Provost for Student Affairs Susie Brubaker-Cole, and Associate Vice Provost for Inclusion, Community and Integrative Learning Emelyn A. dela Peña, charge the “2019 Working Group on Voluntary Student Organizations” to review and make recommendations on the following questions:

1. Keeping student safety and well-being at the forefront, how can non-students be appropriately involved in the activities of VSOs?
 - a. What are the appropriate types and levels of non-student participation? What specific roles should non-student participants (including alumni, community members and post-docs) play in VSOs?

- b. What conditions need to be met for non-student participation? What controls need to be in place?
 - c. What type of oversight is necessary? What type of training should be provided?
 - d. What resources and support are needed?
2. How can we make sure that VSO financial practices align with university policy and accounting standards?
 - a. What type of educational resources are needed?
 - b. What type of oversight is needed?
 - c. What policies, controls and practices are needed?
3. What is the appropriate scope and function of a Voluntary Student Organization?

PROPOSED PROCESS AND TIMELINE

September 2019

- Invitations for participation on the working group, including representatives from:
 - Hass Center for Public Service
 - Office of the Vice President for the Arts
 - Office for Religious Life
 - Office of General Counsel
 - Department of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation
 - Stanford Student Enterprises
 - Office of Student Engagement (OSE)
 - Centers for Equity, Community and Leadership
 - A student nominated by ASSU
 - An ASSU senator or other executive officer
 - An OSE student staff member
 - A committee member at large appointed by the Stanford Alumni Association
 - One staff member from the Stanford Alumni Association

Late September 2019

- One initial meeting and assignments into three sub-committees to consider the above questions.
- Sub-committees to meet independently

October 2019

- One full working group meeting with report-outs from the sub-committees
- Sub-committees continue to meet independently

November 2019

- Subcommittees submit preliminary findings and recommendations to the full working group
- Working group to discuss findings and recommendations
- Revisions by subcommittees

December 2019

- One final meeting of the full working group
- Submit final report to Susie Brubaker-Cole