**Group Recognition: Applying to Start a New Organization**

# The Columbia Law School Student Senate seeks to encourage the existence of a diverse offering of activities and associations that augment a student’s law school experience. Student organizations provide important opportunities to students during their law school careers to participate in interesting events and projects and exercise positions of leadership that may both enrich and enlighten their Columbia legal education.

Recognition allows student leaders to be contacted by the Senate and Student Services with important information and helps ensure that Student Activity Fee funds are used to benefit all law school students and that groups are organized to enrich the social and general welfare of the students.

Several benefits attend recognition, including:

* a [law.columbia.edu](http://law.columbia.edu/) email account, and the Student Organization News and Information (SONI) system
* access to Student Activity Fee funding
* access to the room reservation system

# OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF RUNNING A STUDENT GROUP

You should be familiar with Student Services' CLS Student Organization Handbook (<http://www.law.columbia.edu/current_student/student_service/studentorgs_abc/Handbook>) and The Guidelines (VI.B of the Student [Senate By-Laws](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UJ7erKXNkFft-4v7Ylx1rmJ4-qSN45zEpca9c8zsKvU/edit)). For example,

You must demonstrate that you won’t be redundant to an existing student group and that your existence will benefit our community.

* Membership must be open to AND limited to all law school students.
* Your spending will be audited by the Student Senate Budget Committee.
* Leaders must also be members of the organization.
* Recognized organizations may not be officially subject to another University authority (e.g., no Law School chapters of Business School organizations).
* Recognition may be withdrawn for violation of the Student Senate Constitution/By-Laws, any other University or Law School regulation, or your group's own constitution/by- laws.
* Beneficial Purpose Requirement. According to the Senate By-Laws, the proposed organization MUST have a purpose that is "sufficiently related to the law school community and sufficiently unrelated to the purpose of any other recognized organization so as to offer a distinct benefit to a substantial number of law school students." When thinking about this, try:
	+ Listing currently recognized organizations that seem most REDUNDANT. Ask whether the proposed organization can effectively achieve its purpose by working with an existing organization.
	+ Listing currently recognized organizations that seem the most ANALOGOUS but DIFFERENT (e.g., for a Texas Society, consider the California Society (a.k.a., CalSoc)). Ask whether the proposed organization's activities or services will be analogous. The more analogous, the more difficult it will be for the Committee to credibly distinguish the proposed organization from the existing organization. Organizational documents (proposed and existing) will aid this inquiry.
	+ Asking how much interest the proposed organization has already received (e.g., number of members, inquiries, etc.). How many active members does the proposed organization anticipate in a WORST case scenario? In a BEST case scenario? Please verify your assertions and predictions, as the Committee is likely to test them.
	+ Budgetary implications of recognition.  The Committee will carefully examine proposed organization applications and ask difficult questions, such as why Organization X cannot work through existing (and very similar) Organization Y to achieve its purposes.

Recognition Process

Step 1: Email the application (described below) to Daniel Rosenfeld dbr2128@columbia.edu. Deadlines are provided in the next section.

Step 2: The Student Senate Parliamentarian will correspond with you, and then the Senate’s Recognition Committee will review your application and will determine whether to recommend your new student organization for recognition by the Student Senate. You will be notified of when the Committee will be meeting to review your application and will have the option of attending this meeting.

Step 3A: If your new student organization receives a favorable recommendation from the Recognition Committee, the Senate will vote on the Committee’s recommendation at its next full meeting.

Step 3B: If the Recognition Committee **does not** recommend that the Senate recognize your student group, you will have the opportunity to amend your application in light of the explanation for rejection provided by the Parliamentarian, and the Recognition Committee will review any amended applications and produce a final recommendation. The Senate will vote on both favorable and unfavorable recommendations of the Committee at the next meeting designated for these appeals. You may appeal the recognition committee’s vote at this meeting.

Deadlines

Applications must be submitted April 1st for the 2018-2019 school year.

Contents of an Application

Under the Senate By-Laws (VI.C.1), you must submit the following three items. Email these to senate@law.columbia.edu AND the current Senate Parliamentarian with “Senate Group Recognition” at the beginning of the subject line. Please review the deadlines above for when to submit your application as well as Article VI of the [Senate By-Laws](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UJ7erKXNkFft-4v7Ylx1rmJ4-qSN45zEpca9c8zsKvU/edit). Please attach these items to an email in three separate documents.

1. A list of at least 12 founding members (name, class years, & email addresses)
	* Please identify officers by title, especially those responsible for finances and record keeping; a president and a treasurer are recommended
	* The Committee may waive the requirement of at least 12 founding members “upon a group’s showing that its beneficial purpose does not require a standing membership”
2. A suitable constitution, submitted both as a PDF and also as a Word Doc.

According to the Senate Bylaws (VI.B.2), your Constitution and/or bylaws **must** contain the following:

* The organization’s name,
* A clear statement of the organization’s purpose,
* The requirements for membership and leadership,
* The procedure for selecting and removing leadership,
* The duties of leadership,
* The procedure for arriving at decisions (e.g., majority voting), and
* The Senate’s Nondiscrimination Policy (Bylaws VI.B.5) – this is **very important**, the language must be included **verbatim**, or by section reference to the Senate’s Bylaws.
1. Submit the completed application form.

**NEW STUDENT ORGANIZATION APPLICATION FORM**

**Name of New Student Organization: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

To answer some questions, these resources will be helpful:

* [Partial list of existing groups with details](http://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.law.columbia.edu%2Fcurrent_student%2Fstudent_service%2Fstudentorgs_abc%2Falphabet_orgs&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNEpYbB5_vdkrIQGPdXwXj0dxsJHUQ)

**PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY EXISTING GROUPS THAT PERFORM FUNCTIONS THAT ARE *ARGUABLY* SIMILAR TO YOUR GROUP**

**Please excerpt for us the mission statement of that group or those groups.**

**Please identify the names and contact information of their leadership.**

**Would the mission of your group be hindered if it were undertaken by the leadership of one of those existing groups?  Does the leadership of that group agree?  (To answer this question, please contact the leaders of those groups and let them know that you're trying to form the group.  Your application should describe to us who you contacted, as well as a description of the communication.)**

**ORGANIZATIONAL OUTLOOK AND PROSPECTS**

**Please describe how your group will “offer a distinct benefit to a substantial number of law school students.”­­**

**Why do you believe your group will continue to generate interest in years to come?**

**ACTIVITIES**

**What activities do you anticipate in your group's first semester of existence?**

**What activities will be routine?**