

# Middlebury

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## Student Life. A. Student Organization Policies

### 1. General

- a. All student organizations are subject to College policies.
- b. All recognized student organizations must register annually with the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership and have constitutions that have been approved by the Constitution Committee of the Student Government Association. The Constitution Committee may not approve a constitution with provisions that are in violation of Federal, State, or local laws, or *Handbook* policy.
- c. All recognized student organizations must have an adviser who is a current, full-time Middlebury College faculty or staff member or contract employee of the College. An adviser may inform an organization about its legal responsibilities and make appropriate suggestions about policy, but does not have authority to control policy or make personnel or financial decisions.
- d. Approval of a constitution does not guarantee funding. The Finance Committee of the Student Government Association administers funding of student organizations by allocating the Student Activities Fee. This fee is separate from the comprehensive fee and is not a part of the College's general budget.
- e. Student organizations are financed, in whole or in part, by the Student Activities Fee, which all students must pay in order to register for each term. Since these funds are collected by the College for the general student body, the College and the Finance Committee of the SGA bear fiduciary responsibility for student organizations.
- f. Recognized student organizations also have the right to schedule the use of College facilities, use the College name and logo in reference to their group, and be eligible for programs and services through the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership (CCAL). A complete listing of student organization rights and responsibilities may be found in the CCAL office. The Center for Campus Activities and Leadership may suspend or revoke any organization's registration, affiliated members, advisors and/or coaches at any time, in its sole discretion, for any abuse or violation of the outlined rights and responsibilities, or any reasonable cause deemed to be in the best interest of the organization or the College.
- g. The College assumes that individual students are responsible and accountable for their own behavior, and that groups of students and student organizations are responsible for their collective behavior. Failure to comply with College policy may result in disciplinary action against an individual or group. Serious violations of the policy may result in a suspension of the groups for up to one year; and repeated infractions may lead to additional penalties.

### 2. Discrimination

- a. Middlebury College complies with applicable provisions of state and federal law which prohibit discrimination in employment, or in admission or access to its educational or extracurricular programs, activities, or facilities, on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, marital status, place of birth, service in the armed forces of the United States, or against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability.
- b. Any student organization that discriminates on the basis of any of the aforementioned qualities or characteristics is antithetical to the mission of the College and is not appropriate as a model for society at large.
- c. No student organization may discriminate in its membership, programs, or activities on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, marital status, place of birth, service in the armed forces of the United States, or against qualified individuals with disability on the basis of disability.
- d. Middlebury College recognizes the long-standing importance of religious belief and practice in American society, and the diversity of religious belief and practice within the Middlebury community. Students and student organizations may pursue their own religious beliefs, and the articulation of those beliefs, through religious practice and community life. When allegations arise that those beliefs and practices have resulted in actions that discriminate against an individual or group, the procedure outlined in item *g.* below should be followed.
- e. A student organization may require candidates for leadership positions or offices to fulfill certain prerequisites prior to election or selection, and may restrict leadership roles and voting to those members with demonstrated prior affiliation with the organization. Such procedures, including all prerequisites, restrictions, and nomination requirements, must be consistent with *Handbook* policy, including anti-discrimination language, and must be stated in detail in the organization's constitution.
- f. An organization may express in its constitution ideals or preferences regarding beliefs its leaders might hold. No student may be precluded from being on a ballot or participating in a selection process on the basis of any of the qualities or characteristics referred to in item *c.* above.
- g. Students who believe themselves to be the victims of discrimination by an individual or a group on the basis of the aforementioned qualities or characteristics, or who believe an organization has violated College policy, may submit a written complaint to the dean of the College, who initiates the investigative process through established judicial procedures. The dean of the College may refer the complaint to appropriate administrators for investigation. The dean of the College, or a designate, has the authority to adjudicate and enforce College policies for student organizations.

### 3. Freedom of Association

Students bring a variety of interests previously acquired to the College, and they develop many new interests as members of the

academic community. They should be free to organize and join associations to promote their common interests.

- a.** In order to ensure the integrity of recognized student organizations as Middlebury student activities, the membership, policies, and actions of a student organization will be determined by vote of only those persons who hold bona fide membership in the College community.
- b.** Affiliation with an extramural organization does not in itself disqualify a student organization from institutional recognition. College policy prohibits student participation in or affiliation with single-gender fraternities or sororities.
- c.** Students are free to organize informally for any legal aim, subject to the rules and regulations of the College. If they seek official College recognition that makes them eligible for student activities funds and other student organization privileges as outlined in the Rights and Responsibilities, they must have a written constitution formally approved by the SGA Constitutions Committee and be registered annually with the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership.

#### **4. Anti-Hazing Policy**

Hazing is a violation of Vermont law and is not permitted at Middlebury College. (See Anti-Hazing Policy in Student Conduct chapter)

Individuals or groups may not force others or expect others to participate in any activity against their will, as a precondition for membership in a social house, or as a precondition for membership in any organization, club, or sport.

#### **5. Freedom of Inquiry and Expression**

- a.** Students and student organizations are free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. They should always be free to support causes by orderly means, which do not disrupt the regular and essential operation of the College or community. At the same time, it should be made clear to the academic and larger community that students or student organizations speak only for themselves in their public expressions or demonstrations.
- b.** Officially recognized student organizations may invite to the campus and hear any person of their choosing. The College reserves the right to ensure orderly scheduling of facilities, which prevents unnecessary conflict with other College events and provides adequate preparation for the event. It should be made clear to the academic and larger community that sponsorship of guest speakers does not necessarily imply approval or endorsement of the views expressed, either by the sponsoring group or the College.
- c.** Student organizations bear full responsibility for arranging and financing any Department of Public Safety provisions that may be necessary in connection with controversial speakers. The Deans offices and the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership (CCAL) have the right to receive full and accurate information regarding Department of Public Safety measures at any time they so request. The Deans' offices and CCAL also have the right to specify security measures to the organizations as seem appropriate. If the College, through the offices of the deans, CCAL or the president, judges that security arrangements are inadequate and that the sponsoring organization is either unwilling or unable to make proper arrangements, the event may be canceled by the dean or president. If time permits, action to cancel an event will be taken only after full consultation with the Community Council.

#### **6. Student Publications and Media**

Student publications and the student press are a valuable aid in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and of intellectual exploration on the campus. They are a means of bringing student concerns to the attention of the faculty and College authorities and of formulating student opinion on various issues on the campus and in the world at large.

Student publications are financed by the Student Activities Fee, which all students must pay in order to register for each term. Since these funds are collected by the College for the general student body, the College and the Finance Committee of the SGA bear fiduciary responsibility for publications. There is no set limit to the number of publications produced each year, and the SGA has final jurisdiction in this matter. Each existing publication will be reviewed annually, including a preliminary check of the organization and publication by the Finance Committee and a final review by the SGA itself. Despite the legal and financial dependence of publications, the College, the SGA, and the Community Council must provide sufficient editorial freedom and financial autonomy for the student publications to maintain their integrity of purpose as vehicles of free inquiry and free expression in an academic community.

The editorial freedom of student editors and managers entails the corollary responsibility to abide by the canons of responsible journalism, including the avoidance of libel, indecency, undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity, and the use of harassment and innuendo.

The constitutions of student publications must provide clear statements of general policy and the nature of their responsibility to the student body at large.

As safeguards for the editorial freedom of student publications the following provisions are set forth:

- a.** The student press will be free of censorship and advance approval of copy, and its editors and managers are free to develop their own editorial policies and news coverage.
- b.** All student publications financed and published by the College must include a clear statement on the editorial page that opinions expressed in the publication are not necessarily those of the College or the student body.
- c.** Advertisements in publications may not include references to alcohol, directly or indirectly.
- d.** Procedures for the selection of editors and managers of student press organizations must be submitted to the Constitution Committee of the SGA for approval annually, at least four weeks in advance of the selection itself. The SGA Senate has the power to remove an incumbent editor or manager by a two-thirds vote, in accordance with the procedures outlined below, but the SGA must ensure that editors and managers of student publications are not arbitrarily suspended or removed because of student, faculty, administrative, or public disapproval of editorial policy or content. Suspension or removal must be premised upon a finding of violation of the canons of responsible journalism or failure to appear at removal proceedings as described below.

**1.** A charge against an editor or manager may be filed only by a person aggrieved by the alleged offense. The charge must be stated in detail, and presented in writing to the president of the SGA within 10 school days of publication or broadcast of the offending material. The president will present the charges to the SGA Senate. Should the aggrieved party be the president of the SGA, the Student Co-Chair of Community Council will bring charges to the SGA Senate. Should both parties be aggrieved, the Speaker of the Senate will bring the

charges.

2. Upon receipt of the written charges, the SGA Senate will determine by majority vote whether to initiate removal proceedings against the editor or manager charged. Removal proceedings may commence no earlier than three school days after the vote to initiate the proceedings.

3. The editor or manager charged, the aggrieved party, and the student staff member who wrote or broadcast the offending material must be present at the removal hearing. The president of the SGA will give notice to all parties of the time and place of hearing. Witnesses may be called by either side to support or refute the charges, or to determine the extent to which the editor or manager charged is responsible for the alleged offense.

4. At the commencement of the hearing, the editor or manager charged and the aggrieved party will each be allowed no more than 15 minutes to make an oral presentation before the SGA. Written defenses or allegations may be distributed to SGA members by either side at any time after the initiation of removal proceedings. Each side will be allowed access to all materials so disseminated. After the oral presentations, questioning will be allowed. The president of the SGA presides over the hearing and is responsible for keeping order.

5. A vote to remove must be taken within 15 school days of the vote to initiate removal proceedings. An editor or manager who has been removed by the required two-thirds vote may not serve for the remainder of the academic year as an editor or manager of the organization from which he or she was removed.

6. If an editor or manager is removed under these procedures, the organization that originally published or broadcast the offending statement must publicly retract it.

### **7. General Provisions for Recognized Student Organizations**

Any student organization that wishes to use College funds or the College's name in any way that implies recognition or sanction must have a constitution ratified by the Constitution Committee of the SGA, file Registration Form and current list of responsible officers and advisors with the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership (CCAL), and conform to such regulations as the Community Council and CCAL may specify. Student Activities Fee funds will be allocated only to recognized organizations that have ratified constitutions and have submitted budgets detailing plans for the use of the money. Student activities funds may not be used for direct political action or for disbursement to any organization that is not an officially recognized Middlebury College organization. Individual students wishing to use campus facilities should consult their Commons office for assistance.

The College, through the offices of the deans and the president, retains the right and ultimate authority to protect itself from criminal or civil action that could be taken against the College because of the conduct of a student organization. When advised by counsel that a forthcoming activity of an organization carries with it the possibility of legal action, the College may cancel the activity or request the organization to make appropriate changes in its plans. When time permits, the College will inform both the organization in question and the Community Council of its reasons prior to taking action.

### **8. Scheduling and Advertising Events and Use of College Facilities**

a. The Center for Campus Activities and Leadership and Commons offices handle all student requests for use of space. Student organizations schedule spaces through the CCAL while lounges and other residential spaces are reserved through the respective Commons office. The offices should be provided a written description of events, equipment to be used, refreshments to be served, and the name(s) of the person(s) in charge. Requests for use of the McCullough Student Center must be placed through CCAL.

b. Political organizations may use College facilities at the invitation of College departments or recognized organizations and with the approval of the executive vice president and treasurer. Their presentations must be open to all. They may not use the occasions for fund-raising.

c. Bulletin boards for advertising events are supervised by the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership. Posters are permitted on designated bulletin boards or kiosks only. The organization or individual sponsoring an event or making an announcement is responsible for removing the material within 24 hours after the conclusion of the event or within 30 days of the posting, whichever occurs first. Please refrain from posting flyers on doors, walls, windows, buildings, lamp posts, trees or stairwells. Flyers found in these locations will be removed by College staff. Fines and/or disciplinary action may result from violations.

d. Private parties at which alcohol is being served are prohibited from advertising the availability of alcohol. Events open to the public for which have obtained a Middlebury College Friends Catering Permit has been obtained may advertise the function and any entertainment performing at the event. References to alcohol may not be made in any publicity (e.g., posters, newspaper ads) on campus, except for licensed events under the College's catering permit which may include a reminder to "please bring two forms of i.d."

e. Plans to charge admission to events must be approved by the Center for Campus Activities and Leadership or Commons office and may be referred to the Finance Committee of the SGA.

f. Profits accumulated through fund-raising activities by any organization that received student activities fees may be used for any purpose subject to the following restrictions:

i. The purpose of the organization's fund-raising must be clearly advertised in advance.

ii. The organization may not initiate any activity, the profits of which will be used for any direct or indirect contributions to a political campaign.

iii. The fund-raising must conform to the SGA Finance Committee guidelines.