Organization Conduct Board

Policies and Procedures

For All Registered Student Organizations

Stanford University

These policies and procedures are subject to change with approval of the Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs/Dean of Students*

*Document revised March 2018 to incorporate updates and name changes that were posted to the Policies and Procedures section of the Organization Conduct Board website, https://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/policies/organization-conduct-board-ocb/policies-and-procedures, to correct typos, to make some clarifications, and to carry name changes through the balance of the policy.
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Policies and Procedures
For All Student Organizations
Effective Winter Quarter 2009

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The Organization Conduct Board (OCB) serves as an advisory committee to the associate vice provost and dean of students. It reviews cases involving alleged violations by Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) of University policies, practices and, in some situations, California and U.S. law. The OCB provides peer and community review of a RSO when conduct problems are reported. The OCB conducts hearings, determines facts, and makes recommendations to the associate vice provost and dean of students with respect to possible administrative actions to be taken.

Philosophy

The Fundamental Standard has set the standard of conduct for individual students at Stanford since 1896 and embodies the values and definition of good University citizenship. By extension, these guiding principles of acceptable behavior and civility are applicable to every RSO. In addition, the University policies that have grown out of the original Fundamental Standard apply not only to individuals, but also to RSO groups and their members in the spirit of collective responsibility.

The OCB process is intended to be educational and administrative in nature. Each panel will identify behavioral problems and issues in the case before it, thereby reinforcing institutional expectations, and will provide advice and guidance to help the RSO self-correct behavioral problems.

Jurisdiction

The OCB is a committee, run by the Office of Community Standards, under the auspices of the associate vice provost and dean of students. It conducts hearings regarding incidents of alleged misconduct by any registered student organization (RSO) (including voluntary student organizations, fraternities and sororities). Each OCB Panel will review the investigative reports and the RSO responses and in the hearing may ask questions of individuals who have knowledge of the alleged misconduct.

While many conduct issues involving a RSO will be forwarded to the OCB, there may be occasions when the matter is referred to another, more appropriate, University entity for resolution, including to the associate vice provost and dean of students. The OCB’s jurisdiction includes both on- and off-campus RSO activities and events.
Formal Process

The goal is to complete a case within a reasonable time frame after a complaint is filed. This time frame does not include the summer term, intercessions, or the End of Quarter Period, and may be extended for reasonable cause. The procedural steps are as follows:

1. The process is initiated by a written complaint, which can be filed by an individual or group, with the belief that a RSO has violated either the letter or spirit of the fundamental standard or applicable laws/regulations.
2. The complaint is submitted (physically or electronically) to the Office of Community Standards (OCS), whether originating from an individual, group, or Stanford office.
3. As soon thereafter as reasonably feasible, the OCS notifies the leadership of the RSO of the nature of the complaint, the name of the person who will conduct the investigation, and an estimated time within which the investigation will be completed.
4. The investigator(s) conducts interviews with and/or requests responses to written questions regarding the issues and allegations raised in the complaint from any individual reasonably believed to have relevant information.
5. The investigator(s) completes review and provides an Investigative Report to the OCS.
6. After receiving the Investigative Report, the OCS determines (1) whether there is sufficient cause and evidence of a violation to warrant a referral of the matter to a formal, regularly-constituted five member OCB Panel [see below] or (2) whether to refer the matter to a more appropriate University office for action. 
   In either case, the OCS shall notify the RSO as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible as to the decided course of action and will provide it with a copy of the Investigative Report.
7. The RSO submits its written response to the OCS within 10 business days or as soon after notification as reasonably feasible.
   If an OCB review is deemed unnecessary or inappropriate, the associate vice provost and dean of students and/or OCS will decide on a course of action after reviewing the Investigative Report, and notify the complainant and RSO of the decision.
8. The OCS sets a review date, time, and place for convening an OCB panel as soon as possible following receipt of the RSO’s response, and notifies all relevant participants that their presence will be required.
9. Panelists review the Investigative Report, question or hear from all witnesses they deem necessary and relevant, and decide by majority vote whether it is more likely than not that the RSO violated University policy. Panel deliberations shall be conducted in closed session.
   In the event that the RSO disputes the investigative findings, the panel will be asked to consider: a) areas of agreement/disagreement in the findings, and b) the “reasonable person standard”.
   In the event that the RSO does not dispute the findings of the case, the panel will be asked to determine whether or not the facts presented constitute a
violation of university policy and practices or group conduct standards. If the Panel determines that a violation has occurred, the Panel will move to the recommendation phase.

10. If panelists conclude a violation occurred, they submit written recommendations to the associate vice provost and dean of students regarding administrative action(s) commensurate with the violation and in accordance with precedent. Recommendations to the associate vice provost and dean of students are advisory in nature, not prescriptive. If applicable, please see our policy and review process for Housed Greek Organizations.

The associate vice provost and dean of students may accept, reject, and/or modify the recommendations in whole or in part. The associate vice provost and dean of students shall notify the RSO in writing of his/her decision as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible.

The RSO shall have the right to petition the Vice Provost for Student Affairs (VPSA) for reconsideration of the administrative actions imposed by the associate vice provost and dean of students, but may not contest the finding of a violation(s). The RSO must submit such a petition as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible. The petition must give reasons why the RSO believes the administrative action are incorrect, and may not be based on dissatisfaction with the University policy.

The VPSA may agree or decline to entertain the petition. In either case, this decision shall be transmitted to the RSO, Complainant, associate vice provost and dean of students, and the OCS within 10 business days or as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible. If the petition is rejected, the matter is closed, subject to #12 below. If the petition is accepted, the VPSA may designate a staff member unassociated with the underlying matter to review the case, and, if necessary, interview witnesses to clarify ambiguities. The OCS shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the petition. The review shall be done as expeditiously as possible, and the VPSA’s decision communicated to the RSO, associate vice provost and dean of students, and the OCS as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible. The matter is then closed, subject to #12 below.

11. Prior to close, subject to #12 below, if OCS staff or other University staff should be made aware of additional information a case may be re-opened for further investigation.

12. The case closes officially when the RSO has completely satisfied the administrative actions imposed against it and submitted documentation to this effect to the associate vice provost and dean of students and OCS.
Examples of Conduct Problems for Registered Student Organizations

Situations that have been and/or should be reported to the OCB include (but are not limited to):

1. Incidents of hazing.
2. Poorly planned and/or poorly executed parties that go beyond their original scope.
3. Serving alcoholic beverages to minors or allowing the consumption of alcohol without providing proper identification of proof of age.
4. Having parties that do not conform to University and Party Planning Guidelines.
5. Damage and/or theft of services and/or property.
6. Forging signatures on Purchase Orders, Check Requests, Journal Transfers, Payroll Requests and other University forms.
7. Deliberately listing a non-student as an Authorized Representative or Financial Officer.
8. Issuing invalid Purchase Orders to vendors.
9. Signing the name of another Stanford student on behalf of the organization without specific prior consent.
10. General violations of University policies, including campus posting and distribution regulations, noise complaints, course disruption, alcohol and/or illegal substance violations, etc.

Administrative actions recommended by the OCB and/or imposed by the associate vice provost and dean of students have included mandated training and orientation activities, loss of event privileges such as parties (with or without alcohol), probation, fines, and loss of University recognition for RSO.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPECIFIC PARTIES TO THE OCB PROCESS

OCS

The OCS serves as the repository of information/documents relevant to the successful completion of actions taken as a result of alleged violations of University policies/practices by registered student organizations. The OCS is the chief administrator of the Organization Conduct Board.

The specific duties of the OCS are:

1. Receive reports of alleged Registered Student Organization misconduct.
2. Meet with the individual, group, or representative of office reporting misconduct.
3. Receive the formal complaint.
4. Assign an individual to conduct a comprehensive review.
5. Notify the leadership of the RSO accused of misconduct.
6. Determine if there is sufficient evidence of misconduct to file a formal charge against the RSO. The OCS may refer a case to another office when appropriate.
7. Inform the accused RSO leadership of charges, the evidence upon which charges are based and the names of potential witnesses at the OCB review.
8. Train members of the OCB panel pool.
9. Serve as facilitator to the OCB Panel.
10. Forward the OCB Panel’s recommendation(s) to the associate vice provost and dean of students.
11. Present to the OCB panel members, if the RSO is found in violation of University policies/practices, the previous three-year history of the RSO as it pertains to its actions as a member of the Stanford community.
12. Ensure that all relevant parties receive a copy of the associate vice provost and dean of students’ letter, including but not limited to: a.) leadership of RSO, b.) complainant, c.) advisor to RSO, and d.) Director, Office of Student Activities and Leadership.

Advisor to RSO (University assigned)

The University-assigned RSO Advisor serves as the primary staff person to work with an RSO charged with violation(s) of University policies/practices. The Advisor will work with the RSO leadership in helping prepare for the OCB review and/or preparing their written response to alleged violation(s).

The specific duties of the Advisor are:

1. Review OCB procedures with the RSO leadership and assist in preparing for a formal review.
2. Assist/advise the RSO leadership in preparing their written response to allegations of alleged violation(s) of University policies/practices.
3. Attend meetings between the associate vice provost and dean of students and RSO leadership.
4. Schedule follow-up meetings with RSO leadership to discuss OCB process in
5. Be available to RSO leadership throughout the OCB process on a scheduled and drop-in basis.
6. Attend OCB review with RSO leadership.
7. Review RSO’s immediate past history (3 years) with current leadership.
8. Monitor the successful completion of all administrative actions imposed, if the RSO was found in violation of University policies/practices.

**OCB Investigator**

The OCB Investigator is the principal fact finder assigned to gather the facts of an alleged violation of University Policies/Practices. The OCB Investigator meets with all knowledgeable parties, gathers the facts, and submits a comprehensive report to the OCS.

The specific duties of the OCB Investigator are:

1. Receive all reports of alleged misconduct.
2. Meet with the individual(s) reporting misconduct.
3. Investigate the complaint and gather information and facts relevant to the case.
4. Establish what happened, who was involved; where and when the incident occurred; circumstances that led to the activity or event, precipitating factors, etc.
5. Submit a comprehensive fact finding report to the associate vice provost and dean of students and OCS, including demeanor of those interviewed, level of cooperation by RSO and context of information gathered.

**RSO Leadership**

The president and at least one additional officer shall serve as the official representative of the organization charged with alleged violation(s) of University Policies/Practices. Other officers may be required to attend by the OCS. The president of the RSO may submit a written request to the OCS, asking for permission for other currently enrolled student members or an advisor to attend the formal OCB Review. If the OCS approves the request it is with the understanding that these additional persons will not be allowed to participate in the discussions or speak on behalf of the RSO.

The specific duties of the RSO Leadership are:

1. Receive the official complaint and all relevant documents from the OCS.
2. Meet with the assigned University Advisor to prepare the RSO’s response.
3. Review and become familiar with the OCB procedures.
4. Prepare a written response to the OCB Investigator’s report.
5. Present an opening statement to the OCB Panel, not to exceed 10 minutes in length.
6. Be present and actively participate at the OCB Review.
7. Submit written questions to the OCB Chair during the questioning of witnesses.
8. Prepare final written report documenting that the RSO has completely satisfied the administrative actions imposed and submit to the associate vice provost and dean of students and OCS.

Complainant

The complainant is the individual or department that has filed a formal complaint, either through a University reporting system or by notification to the OCS. This notification can take place via email or through the filing of a formal complaint utilizing the OCB Complaint Form. Complaints can also take the form of “Stanford vs. __________” in the case that an alleged infraction is serious enough to warrant bypassing the standard complaint system.

The complainant shall have the right to participate in the formal OCB Review and to question witnesses through the process of written submission to the OCB Chairperson, unless otherwise stated by the chair at the beginning of the review.

OCB Panel

The OCB Review provides peer and community review of an RSO when conduct problems are reported. Upon completion of the Review the OCB Panel renders a decision, based on “whether it is more likely than not” that the RSO violated University Policies/Practices. Determining whether an RSO is found in violation of University policies/practices requires a simple majority vote of the five-member panel.

The specific duties of the OCB Panel are:

1. Prepare, in advance, for the official review:
   - Review the official complaint and all accompanying documentation.
   - Developing a series of questions for each of the witnesses that will be testifying.
2. Select a student chair.
3. Interview witnesses and assess their testimony and credibility (All panelists shall be prepared to serve the entire length of the Review (approximately 3-6 hours).
4. Review the facts, and make recommendations to the associate vice provost and dean of students with respect to possible administrative actions to be taken, commensurate with the conduct at issue, together with precedent and that RSO’s behavioral history for the previous three academic years.
5. Prepare a written summary of the panel’s review stating: a) the facts of the case, b) the results of their deliberation and c) recommendations to the associate vice provost and dean of students.
6. Protect the confidential nature of the materials and testimony. All documents will remain in the hearing room and both written and spoken information during the review process is considered confidential.
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES WITHIN OCB PROCESS

Interim Administrative Action

Pending the resolution of a particular case, the associate vice provost and dean of students or OCS may impose an immediate interim suspension of a RSO’s privileges if the allegations in the complaint reasonably imply there had been or continued to be a serious risk of harm to the University community as a whole or to individuals within it.

Examples include: situations where medical care to one or more individuals was necessary due to alcohol or other substance abuse/misuse at the RSO’s event, where there was an alleged sexual assault, where the RSO violated University alcohol and party planning guidelines resulting in the serving of minors, where there was alleged hazing activity, where organizational funds were used for improper purposes, or when the RSO’s leadership decision(s) set into motion particular events related to the incident.

The associate vice provost and dean of students and/or OCS may draw from a range of sanctions, including but not limited to: a ban on alcohol at any and all parties, suspension of all activities, freezing the RSO’s ASSU bank account, banning some or all new member recruitment activities, or disallowing access to University facilities. The timing and duration of any suspension will depend on the seriousness of the circumstances reasonably believed to be true at that time and the RSO’s response(s) to them.

The RSO leadership may meet with the associate vice provost and dean of students and/or OCS after an interim suspension has been imposed. The associate vice provost and dean of students and/or OCS may limit the interim suspension of the activities or events.

The Investigation

An investigator, appointed from University staff by the OCS, is charged with determining what happened: who was involved, where and when the incident occurred, circumstances that led to the activity or event, and precipitating factors. S/he may conduct multiple interviews with any individual reasonably thought to have relevant and necessary information, and in addition, may require individuals reasonably thought to have relevant and necessary information to respond in writing to specific questions. These individuals are expected to cooperate fully and truthfully. The goal shall be to complete the investigation and submit a written report within 15 business days or as reasonably soon thereafter.

If the OCS, in consultation with other university staff, concludes from the Investigative Report that the findings were insufficient to warrant a university review, no formal action will be taken. The Office of Student Activities and Leadership will work with the RSO to address any issues related to the incident.

If the OCS, in consultation with other university staff, concludes that the Report’s findings are sufficient to warrant forwarding to the OCB, the University Advisor will
meet with the RSO’s leadership to prepare them for the OCB process. The RSO shall, within 10 business days or as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible, submit to the OCS either a written response acknowledging acceptance of the substantive findings, or a response disputing one or more of the report’s substantive and relevant findings.

The RSO’s response should include, at a minimum:
- A detailed description of the event or activity at issue
- The planning, if any, that preceded that event or activity
- The names of all those involved in the planning and/or the event or activity itself
- What actions, if any, the RSO took after the incident
- Courses of action it proposes to implement to avoid similar incidents

**Composition of the Organization Conduct Board**

The Organization Conduct Board consists of two candidate pools, ideally segmented as follows:

1.) **Students,**
   a. Ten (10) students that are affiliated/members of a fraternity/sorority in good standing with the University
   b. Ten (10) undergraduates that are non-Greek affiliated
   c. Ten (10) graduate students shall be appointed by the ASSU Nominations Commission

2.) **Staff**
   a. Fifteen (15) University faculty/staff members

Each OCB Panel shall consist of five members, (3 students and 2 staff/faculty members) drawn from the two candidate pools noted above. The OCS shall be a non-voting advisor to each panel, ensuring that only proper facts and criteria are brought to bear in the review and in the panel’s deliberations.

The OCS shall ensure that no OCB Panel member is associated with the particular RSO at issue, and shall provide panel members (and the RSO) with all relevant documentation and a list of witnesses prior to the hearing.

Panelists shall be selected randomly from those available for the date and time of the scheduled hearing. The OCS shall ensure that no substantive conflict of interest exists between the particular RSO and a selected panelist. Panelists cannot sit on any panel where there is an actual or reasonably based perceived conflict of interest.

It is important that once a panelist is notified about being selected to serve on a Panel, s/he understand that they cannot discuss with any member or perspective member of the RSO or others, the activity, event, or incident at issue prior to the OCB review.

**OCB Recommendation(s)**

In all cases, the OCB panel shall forward to the associate vice provost and dean of students written recommendations for administrative actions commensurate with their findings, and explanation of their basis and/or rationale. The recommendations shall
be based on precedent, the seriousness of the violation, the cooperativeness of the RSO members in the investigation, the recent behavioral history of the RSO, and other circumstances as may be relevant.

The associate vice provost and dean of students shall review each OCB panel’s recommendations and shall convey his/her decision(s) and reasons therefore, to all necessary participants within 10 business days, or as soon thereafter as reasonably feasible. The associate vice provost and dean of students can accept, modify or reject any or all recommendations.

Possible administrative actions that may be imposed:

**Dismissal of Case:**
A complaint was filed but the panel found no circumstances connecting the RSO to the incident; or a violation was found by the panel, but extenuating or mitigating circumstances might indicate that action is not necessary.

**Reprimand:**
A statement indicating that an RSO’s actions were inappropriate. Formal and/or public apologies may be requested and kept in the RSO’s file.

**Educational Sanctions:**
Shall include any actions designed to help an organization learn from the incident and to help prevent a similar one in the future. Such actions may include revision of an organization’s constitution, mandated attendance at appropriate University workshops, written plans for future events, new member guidelines, community service, meeting with national leadership, etc.

**Restitution:**
Payment of any damages that occurred during or as a result of the violation, including property damage and physical injury. The RSO may be required to pay this restitution to the University, other persons, groups, or organizations.

**Monetary Fine:**
A fine can be required to be paid within a certain amount of time to be determined by the associate vice provost and dean of students. The RSO may be required to make payment to the University or other persons, groups, or organizations affected by the incident, directly or indirectly.

**Probations:**
May include any of the following, for an amount of time to be specified by the associate vice provost and dean of students:

1. **Alcohol Probation** - A RSO subject to alcohol probation may have very strict guidelines in which it may serve alcohol. These guidelines shall be established by the associate vice provost and dean of students or his/her designee and must be approved prior to the completion of the On-Line Party Registration Form. Any alcohol violation during this probationary period can result in Alcohol Suspension.
2. **Activities Probation** – A RSO may be excluded from participating in some or all of their social or extracurricular events and/or all-University events. Prior approval for desired activity participation must be obtained from the associate vice provost and dean of students or his/her designee at least 4 weeks in advance.

3. **Party Probation** - A RSO may only host or co-sponsor a party with prior approval of the associate vice provost and dean of students or his/her designee at least 4 weeks in advance.

**Suspensions:**
May include any of the following, for an amount of time to be specified by the associate vice provost and dean of students:

1. **Alcohol Suspension** - Alcohol is not permitted in any space the organization inhabits or meets in, either on- or off-campus.

2. **Activities Suspension** - A RSO may not host any activities on- or off-campus other than organization meetings and community service projects.

3. **Party Suspension** - A RSO may not host or co-sponsor any parties during the specified time frame imposed by the associate vice provost and dean of students.

**Individual Actions** – The leadership or members of an organization may, in certain cases, be held responsible for fundamental standard violations, personal injuries or property damages resulting from the violation.

**Community Service:**
Requires the active participation of the RSO as an organization in an established community service project. It may also include the planning and implementation of a new service project that is not part of the organization’s current or previous community service commitment.

All projects must have prior approval from the associate vice provost and dean of students or OCS and have formal documentation of satisfactory completion as stated in the Community Service Confirmation Form. A minimum of 10 hours of such service may be assessed to each member of the RSO.

**Removal of University Recognition:**
This action may be taken in a case the University deems to be extremely serious, or in cases where there have been multiple violations by the RSO over a period of time. Removal of University recognition means the RSO loses all University privileges normally accorded a registered student organization, including but not limited to loss of housing.

*Adopted 1/09*