

Handbook
For BYU-Idaho
Student Academic Societies

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Introduction

BYU-Idaho provides the opportunity for students to form co-curricular organizations for the promotion of professional interests. Student academic societies at BYU-Idaho exist to:

- extend and enhance the learning experience
- improve professional opportunities
- provide a forum for dialogue and mentoring among faculty members, students, and professionals in the discipline
- provide leadership opportunities
- provide networking with students with similar professional or academic interests

Academic Societies are closely associated with programs and/or majors and are tied to an academic department which houses the society and provides a faculty advisor and financial support. They are not primarily established for recreational activities, parties, community service, student well-being or support. While these items may be an incidental part of what a student academic society might do, they should not be the focus. The BYU-Idaho activities program provides student socials, recreational and service opportunities.

Qualifications of Academic Societies

All societies must meet the following conditions to be recognized:

1. **Academic Purpose:** Academic societies provide co-curricular activities that enhance student learning, professional growth, and opportunities for students to better prepare themselves academically and professionally. They are not solely created for social, recreational, service, or well-being activities.
2. **Academic Program Alignment:** The goals and activities of an academic society must be closely aligned with the program outcomes of an academic department. Societies that are not tied to a specific campus academic program must demonstrate alignment to a recognized pre-professional focus that is supported by the university.
3. **Academic Department Support:** Societies function best with strong support from an academic department. This support includes faculty load and funding. Before creating a new society, department chairs should consider if the proposed society's activities can be housed within the structure of an existing society.

Department chairs appoint qualified advisors. When advisor involvement and student impact is high, it may be appropriate for departments to provide load credit (0-1 credit/semester with a maximum of 3 credits/year). We recommend that this load credit not come from professional development leave. In departments where teaching loads are heavy, overload pay is an option. Additionally, the department must support the society financially with at least \$100/semester for activities.

Support and selection of advisors for pre-professional “university” societies will be the

responsibility of the AAVP of Student Success in consultation with deans of closely aligned colleges. University societies are funded by the Academic Leadership Office.

4. **University Recognition:** Academic Societies are supported and governed by the Associate Dean for Student Success in each College. The Associate Dean, along with the AAVP of Student Success determines if a society meets the outlined qualifications. In addition to following university policies (including those in this handbook), societies must:
 - a. **Update society information every semester:** To keep track of current society officers and meeting information, a student officer, the [Society Leadership and Website Update Form](#) must be completed each semester. This is submitted to the Academic Leadership Office.
 - b. **Update bylaws every year:** The society must submit their current bylaws to the Academic Leadership Office once each year. These statutes will provide the necessary information and purpose of each society. The bylaws should include the following information: (1) the official name; (2) academic purposes and goals; (3) student officer positions and duties; (4) elections and voting procedures; (5) financial rules and policies; (6) meetings; (7) membership criteria; and (8) any other governing rules, procedures, and policies that may apply. Societies that are local chapters of a national organization should submit documentation from the national organization that describes the operation of the local unit.
 - c. **Maintain an average attendance of at least ten members** to demonstrate sufficient student participation. Advisors should also monitor attendance to assure the necessary involvement.

Privileges of a Recognized Student Academic Society

A recognized student academic society has the following benefits:

1. An assigned BYU-Idaho faculty advisor
2. Financial support (either through an academic department or the Academic Leadership Office) and the option of charging dues
3. A financial account through the BYU-Idaho Accounting Office (Societies may not set up a private off-campus accounts)
4. Scheduling privileges for university facilities and services through the [Scheduling Office](#)
5. Visibility with general information posted on the [BYU-Idaho Academic Societies Website](#)
6. Guest speakers may address societies at meetings. Guest Speakers must be approved (see [Guest Speaker Approval Request](#) form).
7. Authorization to advertise the society in accordance with the [University Relations policy](#) (Guest speakers, however, may only be advertised within the society)

Advisors

Academic societies must have adequate faculty support. The advisor is usually a full-time BYU-Idaho faculty member. Exceptions for a full-time administrative employee or adjunct (with a contract including this in his/her workload) to serve as the advisor must be approved by the respective college's dean and the supervisor of the employee. The faculty advisor is expected to:

- Have expertise related to the society's focus
- Facilitate networking with professional organizations, employers, & graduate programs
- Understand and train student officers on university policies
- Review all activities with officers and advise as needed
- Regularly attend meetings and activities to monitor and guide students
- Monitor and maintain administrative rights to email, I-learn, and/or social media
- Oversee speaker selection and invitations in accordance with university policy
- Always attend meetings when guest speakers are present (even video conferencing)
- Accompany students with any day or overnight travel sponsored by the society*

*Exceptions allowing supervision and accompaniment by adjunct faculty or full-time employee for overnight travel (that is not the regular advisor) must be authorized by the college's associate dean.

Policies and Procedures

Participation in academic societies is open to all BYU-Idaho students. Non-students are not eligible to join. Dues may be assessed but other pre-requisites should not be required. This open membership policy permits students from freshmen to seniors (or at various levels of expertise) the opportunity to explore and network in various fields and professions.

Additionally, participation in academic societies is voluntary and involvement cannot be required for a course or program. Faculty may give credit for co-curricular activities provided by academic societies, but it should not be a substantial part of a course grade. Faculty must provide alternative options for students who choose not to participate in a society.

Recognized societies are required to abide by the applicable local, state, and federal laws and all applicable institutional policies and procedures, including, and especially, the Honor Code. Violation of laws or institutional policies and procedures, including the Honor Code, will result in suspension and revocation of recognition.

Student academic societies may affiliate with national or regional professional societies. For example, a student academic society of pre-dental students could affiliate with the American Student Dental Association. In many cases, these national or regional professional societies will have a mechanism for the organization and governance of student chapters. Under the parameters set by the association, counsel with your advisor of any necessary changes you have made regarding the bylaws or constitutions already set by the national or regional professional society. These must be compatible with the mission and values of Brigham Young University-Idaho.

Societies should work with the Research & Business Development Center (RBDC) when they would like to develop opportunities for student to “practice their craft” in the community or with related businesses. The RBDC has been recognized by the university as the entity to manage volunteer / work project for students with government, business, and non-profit organizations.

Computer user groups are not typically affiliated directly with an academic department or major and are generally organized around the use of one piece of commercial computer hardware or software. While this is a worthy endeavor, it does not meet the criteria for full society recognition, and it poses some potentially troublesome ties with a commercial entity. The formation of user groups as quasi academic societies must follow the regular procedures and, if approved by University Student Success Council, the group may be granted some, but perhaps not all the privileges of a society. Since the university typically provides labs and software where these user groups can meet, additional funding would not generally be made available. However, requests can be submitted for consideration.

Activities

Society activities should be consistent with Church standards and ensure that the name of BYU- Idaho is not associated with any activity that would be damaging to its reputation.

The following rules are to be observed for each activity:

- Student academic societies need approval for guest speakers (even for video conferencing). Before contacting a speaker, complete the online [Guest Speaker Request](#) application. The application explains the policy and approval process.
- A society faculty advisor should be present at any off-campus activity or function. As required by university policy, overnight student travel requires full-time faculty to supervise travel plans and to accompany the students. Exceptions allowing supervision and accompaniment by a part-time faculty member or university employee must be properly authorized. For more information regarding supervision visit <http://www.byui.edu/financial-services/supervision>
- Societies are authorized to sponsor activities only for their members. Events open to the larger student body should be sponsored by the Activities Program (or other university entities).
- College vehicles are used for travel, if available. If students need to use private transportation, each student must sign and submit an assumption of risk/indemnification agreement form (download from <http://www.byui.edu/Documents/financial-services/ActivityWaiver.pdf>) to their respective faculty advisor prior to travel. These forms should be kept on file by the sponsoring department for three years. All travel policies must be observed (see <http://www.byui.edu/studentpolicies>).
- If approved by the advisor (and the activity involves minimal risk), non-students may occasionally be included in an on-campus academic society activity.

After all activities, make sure that facilities used are clean and tidy, equipment is returned, and

the facility is secured as required. Remember to write a thank-you letter to guest speakers and other volunteers who contributed to the success of your event.

Below are a few campus services available to societies:

- **Scheduling:** Contact the Campus Scheduling Office for use of on-campus facilities at (208) 496-3120.
- **Food Services:** All catered events using the Manwaring Center must order food through BYU-I Food Services at (208) 496-2800.
- **University Relations:** Coordinate with this office for [advertising policy](#), rules, and approvals for posters, etc. Societies may advertise across campus when the form of advertising is maximizing the society's name and minimizing the event, speaker, etc. When the speaker is maximized, it takes on the appearance of a campus-wide event; societies are not authorized to sponsor events open to the general student body.

Event Services: (208) 496-3150 can help with AV equipment. The Scheduling Office will often contact Event Services when an event is scheduled but contacting their office directly to confirm the details is always a good practice.

- **Financial Services**

- **Purchasing Cards:** All purchases need approval by the society's faculty advisor. Department Societies may apply for a purchasing card. Contact Valerie Gutierrez at (208) 496-1901 for assistance. The faculty advisor is responsible for all purchases and reconciliation of the card account.
- **University Financial Accounts:** Individual societies must have a financial account with the university to handle the society's funds. The faculty advisor is the custodian of this account and is responsible for disbursing its funds. Department society accounts are tied to the sponsoring department's accounts but balances, unlike other departmental accounts, will roll over to the next calendar year. Note: *positive or negative* balances will roll over.

University Society accounts are also managed by the faculty advisor, and any funds will likewise roll over to the next calendar year.

Please do not allow these accounts to accrue large balances. These funds are to be used for students in the academic societies that they contributed dues to while they are attending. Large balances, accrued over several years, will be rolled up to a university account.

- **Safety Office:** If there are safety concerns or issues, contact the Safety Office at (208) 496-3000.
- **Travel and Off-campus activities:** See the Travel policy

(<http://www.byui.edu/studentpolicies>) for rules governing off-campus events.

If traveling overnight, the faculty advisor must complete a Spend Authorization in Workday. A complete participant list including chaperones and non-students with their emergency contact information is required at least three days prior to departure. This list can be attached to the Spend Authorization.

Contact Fleet Services at (208) 496-2561 to reserve a campus vehicle. Only individuals with a current BYU-Idaho Driving Permit may drive college-owned vehicles.

Funding

Any academic society may charge dues up to \$25 per semester per student. In addition, a society may also collect additional dues that are required for a regional or national professional society with which they are affiliated.

Societies may not conduct fundraising activities on or off-campus. They are not to solicit money from students or the local community. Also, academic societies may not sponsor any organization, business, etc. or activities not directly related to the society.

Societies can request funding for professional development activities through their sponsoring academic departments. Funding is not guaranteed and depends on the availability of funds within the department. When reviewing requests, department chairs consider the following criteria:

- Academic Alignment –The activity must clearly enhance student learning, professional growth, and career preparation related to the society’s purpose. Funds are not for social, recreational, service, or other “well-being” types of activities.
- Academic Support – Sponsoring departments or programs should value the activity. The Academic Leadership Office will provide funding only after the department and/or college provides significant funding. University Societies do not have sponsoring departments and must demonstrate the value to the AAVP of Student Success.
- Frugality and Value – Activities should demonstrate good stewardship of resources by finding a balance between cost and value. Travel and activity funds should be used wisely.
- Student Investment – Students should pay at least 25% of the cost of the event to demonstrate they value the activity and are willing to financially contribute.
- One-time – Special funding requests are for unusual single events. Regular ongoing society activities should stay within the budget of allocated funds and student dues.
- Not Guaranteed –Previous funding support does not guarantee the same level of support in the future. Funding allocations may vary from year-to-year depending on the number of requests, available funds, etc.
- Reporting – Allocated funds will not be transferred to the academic society until a short report about the activity has been submitted to the Academic Leadership Office.

Proposing a New Society

New academic societies can be proposed by completing an application and submitting it to the Academic Leadership Office in Kimball 210, or by emailing it to academicsocieties@byui.edu. If needed, assistance from the Student Representative Council is available to help complete the application.

The application is reviewed to see if the requirements are being met (see section on Qualifications for Societies). To avoid proliferation, the review also considers if the proposed society's activities can be housed with the structure of an existing society. The following participate in this review:

- The associated department chair
- Academic Leadership Office
- The Academic Societies Student Representative
- The associate dean over Student Success from the related college

