



GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS HANDBOOK



Student Bar Association

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**THE GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS HANDBOOK OF
THE STUDENT BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW**

ARTICLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Senate Groups and Organizations (GANDO) Committee's role is to oversee and assist with the creation and management of student organizations recognized by the Student Bar Association (SBA) at American University's Washington College of Law. GANDO's purpose is to facilitate organizational communication, provide event oversight, and address organizational concerns for all potential SBA recognized groups. The GANDO committee shall publish a list of all recognized organizations at the beginning of each academic calendar year.

Section A. Contacting GANDO

Communications shall be directed to the GANDO Committee's Chairperson to begin the process for recognition by the Association or any Group-related concerns. You can contact the GANDO Committee's Chairperson by emailing sbagando@wcl.american.edu. The Chairperson shall respond to such communications within 48 hours.

All recognized organizations should contact the GANDO committee through their @wcl.american.edu emails.

Section B. GANDO Meetings

The GANDO committee shall meet bi-weekly during the normal course of the academic calendar year. During these meetings the Committee shall discuss pertinent issues under their purview and see any reasonable proposals for group recognition. Meeting times are set at the beginning of each semester based on the availability of the Chairperson and committee members for that semester. All meetings shall be open to the student body to attend, only closing during the voting portion of any meeting.

Section C. Group Types

Subsection 1. Traditional

- a) Traditional Groups are those that hold more than two (2) events in a semester, or are a publication-based organization.
- b) Traditional Groups shall follow the procedures outlined in this handbook except those in Appendix C.

Subsection 2. Ad-Hoc

- a) Ad-Hoc groups are those that have less than two (2) events per semester.
- b) Ad-Hoc groups fall outside of traditionally recognized groups in the manner of organizational structure, membership, goals, etc.
- c) Ad-Hoc groups will follow the policies and procedures outlined in Appendix C.

ARTICLE II. GROUP RECOGNITION

Section A. Procedure

Subsection 1. Generally

- a) The GANDO Committee strives to create organizations that are unique and will contribute to our diverse culture at the Washington College of Law.
- b) To become a recognized organization, a group shall satisfy the requirements under Section B of this Article. *After* satisfying these requirements the group shall contact the GANDO Committee to determine what the next steps shall be based upon the group's prior recognition status.
- c) Student organizations seeking recognition may be represented by any member(s) of the group at a GANDO Committee meeting. These member(s) must be familiar with the organization and answer specific questions about the organizations including, but not limited to, questions related to the executive board, president, treasurer, finances, future events, and fundraising.

Subsection 2. First-Attempt Recognition

- a) Upon an organization gathering the required materials under Art. II(B)(1)(a) the following steps shall occur:
 - a. The organization shall email the GANDO Committee Chairperson to set up a proposal meeting.
 - b. All required documents shall be sent to the GANDO Chairperson at least 48 hours prior to the proposal meeting.
 - c. The proposal meeting shall consist of the following:
 - i. At least 5 minutes for the organization to present their case for recognition.
 - ii. Following the presentation of their case, the committee shall take time to ask any questions they may have of the organization.
 - iii. The committee shall then vote in a closed setting.
 1. Here, closed is defined as the only people in attendance are member of the GANDO Committee.
 2. The vote shall be that of a simple majority to approve the group's recognition proposal.
 - iv. If the committee votes in the affirmative for recognition, the Chairperson shall alert the group within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - d. In the event of affirmative vote, the Chairperson shall draft a resolution to put before the Senate at the upcoming meeting.
 - i. The committee may make affirmation conditional upon the correction of issues found in the recognition documents.
 1. If so, the organization shall have up until 24 hours prior to the deadline for resolution submission, or any time deemed reasonable by the Chairperson so long as it does not exceed the resolution submission deadline.
 - ii. In the event of a vote in the negative, the Chairperson shall alert the organization of the vote results, and include reasoning why the group was denied recognition at a committee level.

- e. The organization shall then present their proposal before the full Senate at the meeting following their successful committee meeting.
 - i. Here, full Senate is defined as the Senate consisting of enough members to reach quorum.
 - ii. The GANDO Committee's vote shall be reported to the Senate.
- f. The Senate shall vote upon whether the group will become an SBA recognized organization.
 - i. If the vote results in the affirmative, the organization shall be recognized as an official SBA organization.

Subsection 4. Non-Recognition Appeal

Upon non-recognition by either the GANDO committee or the Senate, the organization may appeal the decision to the GANDO committee. The organization may appeal by send the GANDO Chairperson a formal request for appeal. For this appeal, the organization must submit all the documents required under Art. II Sec. B Subsection 1(b) and any documents displaying the requested or recommended changes proposed by the GANDO committee or the Senate. The appeal shall follow the procedure of First-Attempt recognition. The GANDO committee and Senate may take the changes made or lack thereof into consideration in their vote on recognition.

Section B. Requirements

Subsection 1

- a) The GANDO Committee strives to create organizations that are unique and will contribute to our diverse culture at the Washington College of Law.
- b) To become recognized by the Association, the following materials must be gathered and prepared:

i) Constitution

(1) An organizational constitution must include a mission statement, a non-discrimination clause, and provisions for current and future leadership of at least three students including President (or equivalent), Vice President (or equivalent), and Treasurer (or equivalent).

(2) An example Constitution may be found in Appendix B.

ii) Statement of Purpose

(1) A Statement of Purpose must include long and short-term goals for your organization. In addition, you must state why your organization is unique and what type of benefits the student body will experience.

iii) Petition

(1) An organization must have Washington College of Law student support. Student leaders must provide a petition that contains four percent of the

current student body (approximately 60 signatures). Petitions must contain current Washington College of Law student names, student ID numbers, and signatures. Petitions are submitted to GANDO.

- (2) This should be scanned and made into a pdf if a physical signature is taken.

iv) Contact Information

- (1) The contact information for the entire executive board and any general group contact email must be provided.

v) Faculty Sponsor

- (1) Organizations must have a Faculty sponsor to become recognized.
- (2) If one cannot be acquired, there must be a letter written explained why one cannot be acquired.

vi) Planned Events & Activities

- (1) Student leaders must provide the GANDO Committee Chairperson with tentative plans of possible events and activities in which Association funds will be used in current and future semesters.
- (2) Funding is obtained through the Finance Committee after recognition by the Student Bar Association Senate.

vii) Fundraising

- (1) The GANDO Committee requires a minimum of one planned fundraising event for each active organizational semester.

viii) Active for One Semester

- (1) The Association requires that new organizations operate one full semester before seeking Association recognition and funding.
- (2) To be considered operational during this period, organizations must:
 - i. Maintain a listserv of members; and
 - ii. Hold a minimum of two general body meetings.

Section C. Exceptions

Subsection 1. Generally

- i) The GANDO committee Chairperson may, upon a 2/3 committee vote, grant an exception to any requirement of Art II(B)(1)(a) except for (i), (iv), and (viii).

ARTICLE III. GROUP OPERATION

Section A. Events

Subsection 1. Generally

The GANDO Committee strives to help groups organize and hold successful events on the WCL campus that will not only benefit that organization but the WCL community as a whole.

Subsection 2. Pre-Event Report

Organizations shall alert the GANDO committee of any intended event at least five (5) days prior to the date the event is to be held. The organization shall submit the document located in Appendix B Sec. B as their alert to the GANDO committee.

Subsection 3. Post-Event Report

Organizations shall provide GANDO with the Post-Event Report found in Appendix B Sec. C within five (5) days following the date of the event. This form outlines the success of the event and shall provide both the GANDO committee, Finance Committee, and future board of the organization with insight as to whether or not the event should be held in the coming years.

Section B. Organizational Structure

The GANDO committee ensures the proper operation of SBA organizations, and as such, each organization is required to have at least the three following positions, or their equivalent, on their governing board: President, Vice-President, and Treasurer.

Subsection 1. Elections

- a) Organizations shall hold elections, or their equivalent, for their board for the following academic year, in the Spring semester by the Friday of the third full week of March.
- b) Organizations shall alert the GANDO committee of the newly elected, or equivalent, board before the last Friday of April.
- c) The policies and procedures of elections, or their equivalent, shall be left up to each organization's leadership.
- d) The GANDO committee shall act as an authoritative arbitrator for internal organization disputes regarding organizational structure if requested by the organization and the issue falls outside of the Judicial branch's jurisdiction.
- e) Penalties for failure to follow election procedures shall be as follows:
 - i. Upon failure to abide by the Art. III Sec. B Subsection 1(a) requirement, the organization shall lose ten percent (10%) of their budget for the following academic year.
 - ii. Upon failure to abide by the Art. III Sec. B Subsection 1(b) requirement, the organization shall lose ten percent (10%) of their budget for the following academic year.

- iii. Failure to report the requirements of Art. III Sec. B Subsection 1(a)-(b) by the last academic calendar day of the Spring Semester shall result in the organization losing 100% of their budget for the following academic year.
 - i. The 100% loss of budget shall result in the loss of SBA recognition.
- f) The GANDO Chairperson may grant an extension for either (a) or (b) of this subsection given reasonable explanation by the organization which may include, but not limited to, organization events, organization involvement, or reasonable precedent.
 - i. Organizations Constitutions shall include or abide by the requirements outlined in this subsection and will not preempt any requirement in this subsection.

Section C. Compliance

Subsection 1. Generally

- a) All organizations are required to comply with all other SBA policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - i) SBA Finance Committee Policies & Procedures
 - ii) SBA Executive Branch Orders
 - iii) SBA Judicial Opinions

Subsection 2 Group Standing

- a) The GANDO Committee strives to play an active role in ensuring that Association-recognized organizations are maximizing their opportunities and functioning in a way that best benefits the entire student body.
- b) Groups shall maintain good standing.
- c) Group standing is based on the successful following of three requirements:
 - a. Pre-Event Reports
 - b. Post-Event Reports
 - c. Election *or* Executive Board Notification

Section D. Penalties

- a) The non-compliance with the three factors of good standing by an organization shall be penalized in the following three-tier approach:
 - a. In the event of failing to abide by one of the three requirements, the organization shall be placed on warning that another failure to abide by the requirements within a one-month period will result in the organization being placed in poor standing.
 - b. In the event of failing to abide by two of the three requirements within a one-month period, the organization shall enter poor standing. The GANDO Chairperson shall report this to the full Senate at the upcoming meeting if the organization has not entered good standing by that time.
 - c. In the event of failing to abide by all three of the requirements within a one-month period, the organization shall lose recognition.
- b) This section shall not preempt the penalties imposed under Art. II Sec. B Subsection 1(e).

Section E. Maintaining Recognition

- a) To maintain recognition, a group must follow the policies and procedures of the GANDO Committee and Senate Finance Committee in regards to board transition, budget submission, and organizational standing.
- b) To maintain recognition, a traditionally-recognized organization must hold at least two (2) general body meetings throughout the academic year, and maintain a listserv of members.

Appendix A. Recommendations

The GANDO committee strives for organizations to be as successful as possible, and as such, the committee makes the following recommendations to organizations and groups:

- It is advised that organizations have at least one of their general body meetings in the evening to give part-time students the ability to participate.
- It is advised that organizations also hold at least one event in the evening or on the weekend to give part-time students the opportunity to participate.
- It is advised that organizations try to collaborate with other organizations on events when possible to not only increase attendance numbers, but also identify and address intersectional issues when possible.
- It is advised that organizations maintain an alumni database.

Appendix B. Organizational Documents

Section A. Constitution

STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION SAMPLE

*Date of Adoption and/or Revision

ARTICLE I – *Name*

The name of this organization shall be the Washington College of Law Underwater Basket Weaving Law Society (UBWLS). The UBWLS is a student organization at the American University Washington College of Law. This organization's purpose shall be to educate and hold events for the students at the Washington College of Law as to the law governing the creation of baskets, while submerged underwater.

ARTICLE II- *Mission Statement*

The mission of this organization is to spread the knowledge of underwater basket weaving law to the greater legal community and influence positive change in the field.

ARTICLE III – *Objectives*

The objectives of the organization shall be:

- 1) To promote interest in underwater basket weaving law
- 2) To provide fellowship among students and faculty
- 3) To represent student needs and wants in regard to the legal intricacies of underwater basket weaving.
- 4) To provide a forum for the presentation of innovative ideas to benefit of the University community.

ARTICLE IV – Membership

- 1) Members and officers must be enrolled students at the Washington College of Law.
- 2) Non-students may act as associate members, but may not vote or hold office.

ARTICLE V – *Officers* (Make specific to your organization. President, Vice President, and Treasurer, or equivalent are required.)

1) Election of Officers

- a) The officers of this organization are president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- b) Officers will be elected by written ballot, with each active member casting a vote. A simple majority of votes will constitute a victory.
- c) Election of officers will take place during the third full week of March.
- d) Officers will assume office for the period of one year.

2) Recall of Officers

- a) Officers are subject to recall for malfeasance in office. Malfeasance shall be defined as:
 1. An inability to perform the requirements of office

2. Willfully disobeying Washington College of Law Rules and Regulations governing student organizations.
 3. Breaching the Student Code of Conduct
 4. Mismanaging club funds
- b) Recall procedures will be initiated at the request of five active members.
- c) A hearing will be conducted at a regular meeting for the presentation of evidence from all concerned parties
- 1) Those requesting a recall of officer(s) shall be given 20 minutes to present their case
 - 2) Those officers being recalled will have five (5) minutes to question their accusers
 - 3) Those officers being recalled will have 20 minutes to rebut the charges presented against them
 - 4) The club will then have five (5) minutes to question those being recalled
- d) A two-thirds majority of those active members voting in a recall at the end of the hearing is necessary to remove any office.

ARTICLE VI – *Voting*

- 1) This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a 2/3-majority vote of those voting, a quorum being present.
- 2) Voting on amendments must be conducted after a minimum notice of 1 week.

ARTICLE VII – Statement of Non-discrimination

This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status. This policy will include, but not limited to recruiting, membership, organization activities, or opportunities to hold office.

ARTICLE VIII – Statement of Compliance with Campus and SBA Regulations

This organization shall comply with all university and campus policies and regulations and local, state, and federal laws.

This organization shall comply with all SBA policies and procedures.

This is merely a sample constitution. Organizations may have a Constitution in any form they please so long as it fulfills the requirements of SBA and its subsidiaries.

Section B. Pre-Event Report

Pre-Event Report Organization Name:

Event: _____

1. What is the purpose and goal for this event?
2. When and where will this event be held?
3. How much is budgeted for this event?
 - a. What will the budgeted money for this event be used to purchase?
4. Roughly how many people have been invited to this event?
 - a. How have you/will advertise for this event?
 - b. Will this event be students only, or will others such as professors and practitioners be invited?
5. What effect will this event have on those who attend and the WCL community as a whole?
6. Has your organization held this event in past years?
 - a. Was the event successful, why or why not?
 - b. If the event has not been successful in the past, what have you changed to make the event successful?
7. Are you collaborating with other student organizations on this event?

Please send this form to the SBA Groups and Organizations Committee Chairperson (sbagando@wcl.american.edu) no later than five (5) days prior to the event.

Section C. Post-Event Report

Post-Event Report Organization Name:

Event: _____

1. How much did your group request in contingency grants?
 - a. What was the actual dollar amount spent?
 - b. Please provide a breakdown of how the contingency grant money was spent:
2. Roughly how many people were in attendance?
 - a. How many attendees were from your organization?
 - b. How many attendees were from outside of your organization?
 - c. Was the number of overall attendees higher or lower than originally projected?
3. Do you feel the event advertising campaign successful, why or why not?
4. What impact did the event have on those who attended and the WCL community as a whole?
5. What went well? What could have gone better?
6. Does your group intend to host or attend this event again next year?
7. What advice would you give to other organizations planning or attending similar events?
8. Did your group maximize its resources by looking for sponsorships, collaborating with other student organizations, etc.?

Please send this completed report to the SBA Finance Committee Chairperson (sbafinance@wcl.american.edu) and the SBA Groups and Organizations Committee Chairperson (sbagando@wcl.american.edu) no later than five (5) days after the event.

Section D. Organization Recognition Checklist

Constitution

- An organizational constitution must include a mission statement, a non-discrimination clause, and provisions for current and future leadership of at least three students.

Statement of Purpose

- A Statement of Purpose must include long and short-term goals for your organization. In addition, you must state why your organization is unique and what type of benefits the student body will experience.

Petition

- An organization must have Washington College of Law student support. Student leaders must provide a petition that contains four percent of the current student body (approximately 60 signatures). Petitions must contain current Washington College of Law student names, student IDs, and signatures. Petitions are submitted to GANDO.

Contact Information

- The contact information for the entire executive board and any general group contact email must be provided.

Faculty Sponsor

- It is strongly recommended that Association-sponsored organizations have a faculty sponsor. If a faculty sponsor is not acquired, student leaders must provide a statement as to why a faculty sponsor was unable to be obtained.

Planned Events & Activities

- Student leaders must provide the GANDO Committee Chairperson with tentative plans of possible events and activities in which Association funds will be used in current and future semesters. Funding is obtained through the Finance Committee after recognition by the Association.

Fundraising

- The GANDO Committee requires a minimum of one planned fundraising event for each active organizational semester.

Active for One Semester

- The Association requires that new organizations operate one full semester before seeking Association recognition and funding. To be considered operational during this period, organizations must: (1) maintain a listserv of members; and (2) hold a minimum of two general body meetings.

Appendix C. Ad-Hoc Group Policies and Procedures

Section A. Recognition Procedure

Subsection 1. Generally

Ad-Hoc organizations shall follow the same recognition procedures outlined in Art. II Sec. A Subsection 2-3.

Nothing in this Appendix shall remove the responsibilities of the organization required by the Finance Committee, SBA Executive Branch, SBA Judicial Branch, Other SBA Organizations, or the WCL Administration.

Subsection 2. Additional Requirements

- a) Ad-Hoc organizations shall be required to submit all documents under Art. II Sec. B Subsection 1(b)(i)-(vii).
- b) Ad-Hoc organizations shall also be required to provide documentation of participating in their purposeful event(s) within 3 of the last 5 years, or alternatively, 6 of the last 10 years.
 - a. These participations need not be in consecutive years within the allotted time.
 - b. If the event is a competition, the organization must include the placement in the competition if known.

Section B. Requirements

Subsection 1. Organizational Structure

- a) Ad-Hoc groups shall have, at the least, the following two student-filled positions to maintain recognition:
 - i) Organization Coordinator (or equivalent)
 - (1) This position serves as the direct contact for SBA committees and entities. This person should be in charge of organizing the events which the group will participate.
 - (2) This holder of this position should be able to answer all questions concerning major details asked by SBA committees and entities.
 - ii) Treasurer (or equivalent)
 - (1) This position serves as the direct contact for the SBA Finance committee. This position should be knowledgeable of all instances of the transfer of funds to and from the organization. This position should keep a comprehensive report of the details of all spending, projected spending, and budgetary concerns that can be referenced at any time.
- b) Ad-Hoc groups shall maintain good standing under the following guidelines:
 - a. Ad-hoc groups shall submit Pre-Event Reports and Post-Event Reports within the required time limit.

- b. Failure to submit either report shall place the group in bad standing. This change in standing shall be reported to the Senate and Chairperson of the Finance Committee.
- c. Failure to submit both reports for one event shall cause loss of recognition for the group.

Subsection 2. Pre-Event Reports

Ad-Hoc groups shall submit a Pre-Event report at least one (1) month prior to the date of the event. The Pre-Event Report should include, but is not limited to:

- a) A description of the event.
- b) The approximate date of the event
- c) A detailed description of the anticipated costs of the event, including but not limited to:
 - a. Travel Costs
 - b. Per diem costs
 - c. Housing Cost
- d) The preparations taken thus far to attend the event.
- e) If this event is a competition-based event, include a list of those participating and why they have been chosen to participate.

Subsection 3. Post-Event Reports

Ad-Hoc groups shall submit a Post-Event Report at most (1) week following the date of the event. This report should be sent to both the GANDO Chairperson (sbagando@wcl.american.edu) and the Finance Committee Chairperson (sbafinance@wcl.american.edu) The Post-Event Report should include, but is not limited to:

- a) A recap of the event
 - a. If the event was a competition, please include ending placement.
- b) A detailed description of the actual cost of the event, including but not limited to:
 - a. Travel Costs
 - b. Per diem costs
 - c. Housing Cost
 - d. Unintended costs
- c) Whether you would deem the event a success, why or why not.
- d) What you would have changed about the event or your preparation for the event.
- e) Whether the event should be attended or held again next year.
- f) What impact did the event have on those who attended and the WCL community as a whole?