



Virtual Student Organization Management Guide

Adapted with permission from UNC Charlotte Student Involvement

Dear student organization leaders,

We are here for you during this time! As the university moves to mainly virtual operations, we want to best support you and your organizations virtually as well. We created this document to serve as a guide with some helpful tips and tools for you to lead your organizations despite the semester now looking so different. This is not an exhaustive list; merely a starting point for you in the coming weeks. As questions arise or if you ever need anything, please do not hesitate to email us at LSI@usm.edu.

-The Office of Leadership and Student Involvement | Division of Student Affairs

****Stay connected with LSI and our office organizations during this time to ensure you are getting up-to-date information on all we are planning.****

Leadership and Student Involvement

Facebook: Southern Miss Office of Leadership and Student Involvement

Twitter: @USM_LSI

Instagram: @USM_LSI

Southern Miss Activities Council

Facebook: Southern Miss Activities Council

Twitter: @usm_smac

Instagram: @usm_smac

Student Government Association

Facebook: Southern Miss SGA

Twitter: @SGA_USM

Instagram: @southernmisssga

Website: southernmisssga.org

Where Do We Even Start?

We recognize that very quickly your organization's remaining spring plans flew out the window! We are all struggling together to maintain some sense of normalcy throughout the rest of the spring. We invite you and the leadership of your organization(s) to get a pulse on what are the most important steps for your groups moving forward. Once you have an idea of what is most pressing, focus on just those for the time being.

Ask:

1. Were you set to host a membership drive this spring?
2. Was your group planning to hold elections for officers? What did that process look like?

3. What other meetings and events did you have to cancel for the remainder of the semester?

Meetings

You might be lost now wondering, “How will I engage my members during this time?” You are encouraged to consider hosting meetings on a semi-regular basis in order to continue to a sense of normalcy for your organization(s) and to best prepare you for the rest of the semester and even into next fall. LSI strongly recommends you consider a virtual option for your meetings.

[Tips for Hosting Effective Virtual Meetings](#)

Adapted from Steven Rogelberg’s “The Surprising Science of Meetings” via UNC Charlotte.

Connecting Virtually

There are a number of platforms you can utilize to host meetings virtually for free. We recommend Microsoft Teams or Skype for business as you can use this platform easily with your USM email address.

For more information from iTech on Microsoft 365 options, [click here](#). Please note, other platforms like Google Chat and Google Hangout are also options you could utilize as well.

Zoom is also a virtual option for meetings. A basic account can be set up for free with some restrictions. Should you or your organization be in a bind and cannot use any other virtual formats listed above, please email us at LSI@usm.edu for a Zoom account option.

Keeping Your Membership Engaged

Just because you are not meeting in person doesn’t mean you cannot keep team morale up! You can absolutely plan virtual icebreakers and teambuilders for your organizations and other engagement opportunities for your members. Here are just a couple ideas:

- Instagram Takeovers- Assign an officer or member a day of the week to take over the organization’s account and re-cap “A day in the life of _____”
- TikTok- Make a fun video and challenge other organizations to do the same.
- General Q & A- Use social media to allow others to learn more about your organization and how to get/stay involved.
- Story Telling- Share pictures and videos letting others know what you did and accomplished this past year. Share stories of your officers, members and advisors!

[Virtual IceBreakers](#)

Events

Know that our office and the entire Division of Student Affairs are fast at work behind the scenes creating virtual options for engagement. Several surveys have been distributed to help us get your feedback on what you would like to see. We know this is not the same as attending events on campus, but we hope you'll find it helps you stay connected to campus while away.

As you know, all campus scheduled events and meetings for the remainder of the spring semester are now cancelled. If you would like to consult with LSI staff on ways to host your events virtually or to talk through what options you have for events postponed into summer or fall, please email us as well at LSI@usm.edu so we can work with you on options.

Don't count out the possibility of hosting virtual events! They don't have to be complicated to take a lot of time to prepare. Be sure to follow our social media channels above as the Southern Miss Activities Council is already at work planning virtual events for the remainder of the semester. If you want to discuss partnership opportunities, email SMAC advisor, April Broome at April.Broome@usm.edu.

If you planned to table to raise money for a philanthropy or for a membership drive, consider ways you could still accomplish that. Create an online application for membership and you can virtually hold selection processes that way. Email us if you would like assistance at LSI@usm.edu.

SGA Student Org Funding for Fall 2020

Your Student Government Association is still accepting funding applications for fall 2020 awards. It would be a wise use of your time to consider what events you might want to host this fall and apply for award funding. The process was updated for this spring and you do not need to attend an interview anymore as part of the selection process. The application [can be found here](#).

*If you received funds for this spring and can no longer use them, email SGA Advisor, Amanda.J.Ladner@usm.edu for more direction.

End of Year Celebrations and Recognition

We know it is an absolute bummer not being able to celebrate your organization's successes in person this spring. We have had to cancel our annual SOAR Awards Ceremony in person recognizing all student groups as well. We are still accepting nominations for those awards we will celebrate virtually. [Click here](#) for the nomination application. The deadline is April 6th at 5pm.

We still encourage you to take time to celebrate, honor and recognize the amazing accomplishments of your groups as a whole and your membership.

Here are some ideas:

- Host a virtual banquet or ceremony. You could live stream this on your social media channels for even more exposure for your group.
- Share accomplishments of the group and individuals through spotlights on your social media pages.
- If you are still able to get recognition items, mail them to your members so they can still receive them as a memento of the year.
- Find creative ways to recap the year and share your organization's accomplishments.
 - [Canva](#) is a free site to create graphics
 - Show your creativity on [TikTok](#) and recap your year through a video
- Have fun! Reflecting on your year's successes is a great way to stay grounded and remind your membership of the happy memories from this year. Don't get too overwhelmed with all of the choices. You could do none of these and still share amongst your members what great memories you had and that would be fine too!

Elections

If your organization was planning to host elections for officers or membership this spring, don't let this situation deter those efforts! There are several ways you can still host online voting and it is actually a secure, more appropriate way to handle elections.

- As a student at Southern Miss, you have access to Qualtrics through iTech. In this system, you can build a ballot, ensure members can only vote once and the site automatically tabulates your results for you. For more information on setting this up, [click here](#).
- Another option would be to use Google to create a form you can send to your members to vote electronically. [Click here](#) for a tutorial.

It will be important that you conduct organization business such as new officers in the spring so your organization can remain in good standing with the Office of Leadership and Student Involvement going into the fall semester.

Officer Transition

If your organization does select new officers each spring for fall, a huge part of your future success is officer transition. Outgoing officers should be thinking of a plan to meet with new officers to ensure a smooth transition. A couple tips include:

- [Visit this page](#) of our website that outlines successful officer transition. It includes an officer transition guide and leadership checklist that will walk you through every step of the process.
- Incoming and outgoing officers can and should meet regularly through whatever platform is most comfortable for you. Even emails sharing documents back and forth is a great step in preparing your new officers for success.
- If you would like to schedule a virtual meeting for officer transition with incoming and outgoing officers this semester, email us at LSI@usm.edu to set that up.

Annual Registration

On April 20th, organizations will be able to complete the Organization Information Form (OIF) to register for the 2020-2021 academic year. [Go to our website](#) on or after April 20th to register. Registering early ensures that you are in the loop on important information we distribute in the summer like participating in involvement fairs and being among the first to sign up to attend the required Student Organization Orientation sessions. If we have old contacts for your group, they will not be in the know and your group's registration for next year could be delayed.

Any group that wishes to be active for the fall of 2020 will have to complete the OIF and attend an orientation session by September 30th, 2020. Otherwise, the group would have to wait until spring to be active. Prepare for next year's success NOW.

Resources

We want to remind you that office staff are still working remotely and are here to support you and your organizations through this time. A couple tips for you:

- [Utilize the LSI website](#) for a wealth of information. All forms will be posted there as well as links to officer transition tools and university organization policies and procedures you can review.
- We are available at any time to schedule a phone call or virtual meeting. The best way to reach out is to email LSI@usm.edu.

Campus Resources

- [Dean of Students Office](#)
- [Moffitt Health Center](#)
- [Provost Office page for COVID-19 updates](#)
- [Student Page for Resources](#)