



**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH**  
**SAC HANDBOOK: 2016-2017**

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## **STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES DEFINED**

Student Advisory Committees (SACs) are student groups established within each academic department to promote communication and interaction among students, faculty, staff, and administrators. SACs are both an academic and social organization within their department. They are designed to do the following:

- Promote academic and social activities
- Encourage collaboration with other student organizations
- Provide service opportunities
- Perform and facilitate the Faculty Retention, Promotion, and Tenure program (RPT)
- Facilitate the course evaluation process
- Build campus community at the University
- Encourage participation in the departmental activities
- Promote academic achievement

SACs were originally created to provide students with more opportunities to provide input at the departmental level. SACs also play a significant role in the RPT process, which affords students the opportunity to have a voice in the retention, promotion and tenure of faculty within their department.

## HOW TO ORGANIZE A SAC

### SAC Structure

- A. A SAC Chair will be chosen or elected from the students in each department, division, or program of the University according to the direction of the SAC Advisor.
- B. It is recommended that each SAC have four to six members on the committee with various leadership positions appointed when needed, such as: Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and so forth.
- C. Members in an academic specific SAC must be majors and candidates seeking a degree in that department.
- D. Each department, division, or program at the University may have up to two SACs, an undergraduate and graduate, as needed and as applicable. Many departments also choose to combine both their undergraduate and graduate SACs in order to make them one entity.
- E. Non-majors are allowed in SACs which are non-major related, i.e. the Bennion Center, Honors, and Leap.

### Setting up a SAC – Election and Appointment of Officers

- A. All elections and appointments for SAC officers will be held as needed and at a time of year that is convenient for the SAC. Officers should be in place by the end of the third full week of fall semester.
  - a. Elections are not required for a SAC, but if the SAC so desires, they may be used as needed.
- B. Each SAC should have a chair, and in addition to the chair, a chair-elect position should be created in each SAC. This officer will serve the duration of the current academic year and as the chair in the following academic year.
  - a. The SAC chair (or a SAC member designated by the chair) will run the elections for the chair-elect.
  - b. If the SAC Chair position should be vacated during the fall semester, the chair-elect should immediately become chair for the remainder for that school year and an election should be held for a new chair-elect.
  - c. If the SAC Chair position should be vacated during the spring or summer semester, the chair-elect should immediately become the chair for the remainder of that academic year.

### Recruiting New SAC Members

A SAC should try to have broad representation in its department. The following lists some ideas that SACs can use to recruit members, but SACs are not limited to this list. The SAC is encouraged to use any ideas to recruit members. Keep in mind that a SAC is more effective when participation is higher from a broad cross section of students in its department.

- Request departmental faculty, staff, advisors, and administration to encourage student participation in the SAC.
- To recruit members, use such activities as handing out SAC materials in advising sessions, announcements in class, and posting information on boards with each department.
- Use the internet and advertise on the department website. Please adhere to the University internet policies.
- Plan activities and service projects that encourage students to get involved.
- Hold open houses in the department. SACs are eligible for \$75 per semester to use toward open houses from ASUU. You must apply for the \$75 during the semester of use.

- Produce a SAC or department newsletter, which can be done via email if the SAC desires, discussing current events in the department and encouraging student participation.
- ASUU will provide funds for general advertising to encourage students to get involved in their respective department SAC through the funding process.

### **SAC Registration**

It is the SACs' responsibility to register their group with ASUU on OrgSync during the fall semester. It is highly recommended that SACs register during the August SAC training. Registering offers a lot of opportunities to SACs, including:

- Giving the SAC official University recognition
- SAC is eligible to receive ASUU funding and University discounts.
- Enabling the college's senator to contact the SAC resulting in extra resources.
- Providing ASUU with the contacts to keep the SAC informed of training sessions, pertinent issues, and activism.
- SAC will be able to recruit members via ASUU's student outreach program.

### **SAC Training**

After the SAC is organized, two training sessions are recommended in order to provide the SAC with the necessary information to function properly.

The first training session will be held at the beginning of the Fall semester with the participation of the Office of the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and will include an overview of duties and expectations, registration of the SAC with ASUU, financial funding guidelines, leadership training, and the RPT process.

## **THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF SACS**

### **Promotion and Organization of Departmental Activities**

One of the primary functions of the Student Advisory Committee is to promote and encourage involvement within their department. SACs should encourage active student participation, develop activities in which students can participate, and assist with organizing and facilitating programs that foster departmental interactions. SACs should also promote both academic and social activities. Here are a few ideas for SACs to incorporate and plan:

- Plan and/or sponsor student/faculty activities for the department, i.e. picnics, lectures, barbeques, etc.
- Contact other departments on campus and arrange a social or academic activity with them.
- Contact the Bennion Community Center at 801-581-4811 and schedule a department-wide service project.
- Hold a book sale or exchange.
- Publish a newsletter outlining current departmental concerns, faculty profiles, and opportunities for student involvement.
- Sponsor demonstrations or lectures of student and/or faculty work and research.
- Organize a seminar for students, including information on careers in the major, career placement, and graduate school.
- Hold panel discussions concerning student issues.
- Set up a freshman-mentoring program or assist with the department orientation program.
- Provide opportunities for students to meet with faculty and discuss graduate school or careers in the department or for those within the major.

These are only a few ideas of ways to get the faculty and students interacting more frequently. Your department may already employ many of these. If that is the case it is your responsibility to provide the student input and advice to increase their effectiveness.

It is strongly encouraged that SACs interact with student organizations in their department as well as other SACs throughout the University.

### **Promotion of Interdepartmental Communication**

Student Advisory Committee members can serve an important role by acting as a liaison between the various groups that make up the community of their department. Members gather pertinent information about their departmental activities and notify their students through newsletters, classroom announcements, e-mail lists, etc.

Each department is unique as to the type of activities it uses to promote and enhance scholarship in its discipline. SAC members should be well informed about these activities in order to communicate the opportunities that will enhance their fellow students' educational experience. SACs can help advertise departmental and discipline-specific activities or sponsor their own.

Equally important, members are responsible for making department administration aware of important issues raised by students. The SAC should appoint students to all departmental and university committees where appropriate, and should promote student participation on all levels of department committees.

### **Course Evaluations**

The SAC works closely with its department in preparing and distributing course evaluations. According to the University Policy and Procedures, the chair of the Student Advisory Committee meets with the chair of the department at the beginning of the year to discuss course evaluations for the year. Course evaluations are conducted at the end of each semester via the Internet; students must complete them prior to receiving their grades. A policy shall be adopted concerning the review of the completed evaluations, one which is mutually agreeable to the department administration and to the SAC.

All departments will use the Standard University Evaluations, and it is the responsibility of the SAC and the department administration to determine the department specific questions that will be added to the evaluation form.

### **Community Outreach**

Students at the University have a unique opportunity to use practical applications of their academic knowledge and provide a service to the community. Each academic discipline can identify certain areas of expertise that would be of benefit to individuals of programs in the community. SACs can help promote service learning opportunities in their discipline. For help, SACs can utilize the Bennion Center to identify outreach opportunities.

### **Retention, Promotion, and Tenure**

Faculty quality is no small way of determining the quality of an institution and the education it provides its students. Evaluation of faculty during the probationary period and post-tenure is an important part of monitoring faculty quality, and student input and advice plays a crucial role in this evaluation. The department SAC is the most common and effective means of providing this evaluation. The evaluation is especially important in the years leading up to the tenure decision. It is commonly in the seventh year when the decision must be made whether to award tenure or end the probationary period with a terminal contract. Tenure is a guarantee of permanent position for faculty with the University, intended to protect academic freedom from political pressures. At the same time, it initiates a long-term contract between a faculty member and the University to work to the mutual benefit of each.

In each department, a retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) advisory committee is formed to make recommendations and vote on the retention, promotion, and tenure of faculty members. Prior to the convening of the department RPT Advisory Committee, the department chair requests the department Student Advisory Committee submit in writing their recommendations on the candidates proposed for tenure, stating as specifically as possible the reasons for each recommendation.

Many approaches may be used when completing the RPT report. The SAC may use any or all of the following methods if it would like, but the SAC is not limited to them.

- Interview students who have had a recent class with the professor.
- Refer to class evaluations.
- Interview the professor.
- Observe some of the professor's classes.
- Look at samples of past syllabi, tests, and assignments.
- Look at a statement of the professor's teaching philosophy and his or her teaching objectives.

The specific date that RPT evaluations are due varies from department to department. Each SAC should check with their department to see when to have it completed. The department chair will forward the department RPT Advisory Committee the recommendations submitted by individual faculty members, the department SAC, and any statements submitted by the candidates for tenure. If the SAC fails to report its recommendations within the time limit designated by the department, such recommendations are deemed waived.

The SAC report becomes part of the permanent file and will be read by all subsequent review levels. The faculty member has access to this file and will be able to review the SAC report. After discussion and vote by the RPT Advisory Committee, the case is then reviewed by the department chair, the College Dean, the Academic Vice President, and finally the President of the University, who makes the final decision to award or deny tenure, retention, or promotion.

The SAC should receive a memo and/or copy of the recommendation from the Dean of the College or the Academic Vice President indicating the outcome. The Student Advisory Committee may appeal the Vice President's recommendation. The Department Chair should inform the SAC of the final decision made by the President of the University.

More information concerning the RPT process may be found in the RPT handbook, at the SAC trainings, and from specialists such as the Academic Vice President, the Department Chair, and the ASUU Academic Affairs board director.

## EXPECTATIONS OF SACS

Each SAC has a responsibility to see that the students in their department are well represented. In providing such a representation, there are a number of expectations that should be recognized. The following are the basic expectations of a SAC.

- **To be a liaison between the students, faculty, and student government.** SACs should make sure that students are aware of the course offerings, educational opportunities, and activities in the department and on campus. The SAC can be a tool in sponsoring events for their department and receiving funding through ASUU. Let the students know that their input is paramount to providing a good line of communication with the faculty and department.
- **Advocate students' issues.** The SAC is the students' representative voice at the department or program level. When students have problems with the members of the faculty or administration, with university policies or procedures, or with academic and social issues, the SAC should help the students marshal problems and issues through the appropriate university bodies to a satisfactory resolution.
- **Sponsor/coordinate activities.** SACs have the ability to put together events or activities that will benefit the students in their department. Funding can be provided through the department, through ASUU with the help of the senator in the particular college, and through fundraising efforts of the SAC itself.
- **College Student Councils.** In making sure that the students are represented, twice a semester meetings with members of the Senate, Assembly, and the respective SACs should be held. These meetings are chaired by the College Senator and will be a way of keeping open relations with the student government and letting them know the needs of the students. Any student is invited to attend, and all students should be encouraged to do so. To find out who your Assembly and Senate representatives are, contact the ASUU Office at 801-581-ASUU (2788) or online at [asuu.utah.edu](http://asuu.utah.edu).
- **THE RPT Process.** The Sac has a vital role in the Retention, Promotion, and Tenure process for the faculty at the University of Utah. It serves as the voice of the students when members of the faculty are up for promotion or tenure. The SAC will be the vehicle in making sure that the voice of the students is heard.
- **Course Evaluations.** Members of the SAC are responsible for administering the reviewing of course evaluations each semester. These evaluations are one of the most important elements of the RPT process. It provides the students with a voice in how their courses are being taught and their needs are being met.

# OBTAINING FUNDING FOR YOU SAC

## Departmental Funding

Departments provide funding for all costs related to processing evaluations, RPT, and SAC elections. Departments will also generally work with SACs to provide funding for student needs, which may include work space, telephone service, meeting rooms, supplies, photocopies, activities, and other needs. For any other costs that a SAC may encounter, such as conference fees, scholarships, or school-wide socials, a SAC should appeal to the department first for sponsorship. A department usually sets aside a sum of money for the purpose of helping SACs, and the money will go unused or be spent for something small and not thought out if no one uses it. Also, by appealing to the department for funds, a SAC doesn't rely solely on one source.

## Funding from Fundraisers

SACs may hold fundraisers to raise money for SAC expenses not funded by their department or by ASUU. The following are some ideas for SAC fundraising:

- Sell food and beverage items.
- Put on a lecture or a movie night where attendees pay for refreshments.
- Provide services or materials that are centered around the field of interest that students are studying. This could include selling departmental merchandise.

## ASUU FUNDING

### The Senate Process

The Senate's primary responsibilities include:

- Creating, coordinating, and evaluating legislation
- Providing funding for the Student Advisory Committees (SACs)
- Evaluating all ASUU appointments and the ASUU budget.
- Evaluating all other resolutions brought before them such as: new academic programs, Student Recreation Center, new majors/minors, new fees, etc.

### Where to begin in order to receive funding from ASUU:

1. Contact the Senator from your college and let them know that you (or a student from your SAC) are interested in drafting a bill to be presented to the Senate. Include information about what you're requesting money for, the expenses, contact information and dates.
  - a. The SAC chair has the option of being the liaison between the student(s) requesting money and your senator or the student(s) can contact the senator directly.
2. Remember that ASUU allocates funding through a reimbursement model after the event. However, their bill may be presented to the student before the event occurs.
3. Remember to keep the original receipts, not just copies of them. If any hotel reservations are made online, confirmations may not be enough, so be sure that a receipt is achieved upon check-out from the hotel. The student must keep his/her boarding pass for any airfare travel as well.

**After contacting your senator:**

1. You will need to fill out a liability form and turn that into ASUU (room 234 Union) by the date of the Senate meeting which your bill will be appearing.
2. Your request will be drafted into a bill by your Senator and submitted to our Legislative Advisor.
3. Your bill will then be placed on the agenda for the Senate to vote upon in that month's meeting.

**After the bill passes:**

1. Wait 21 days to give the ASUU President time to sign the bill
2. Go to ASUU (Room 234 of the Union) with receipts for everything listed on your bill
3. Fill out an expenditure request form which can be found online at [www.asuu.utah.edu](http://www.asuu.utah.edu) or in the ASUU office

ASUU gives money through reimbursement—if you have other questions or inquiries about how to use your funding, contact ASUU (581-2788)

**The following may be included in a bill:**

- Speakers, guest lecturers,
- Registration fees
- Advertising
- Postage
- Decorations, utensils, supplies, etc.
- Airfare and related travel expenses
- Car or transportation rental
- Lodging Expenses

**Financial Guidelines:**

The following requests are in accordance with RedBook.

- Cash may not be given as an award, gift or prize
- A student's tuition or any activity through which a student will receive academic credit
- Faculty salaries
- Building repairs, building operations or building maintenance of a University department
- Academic, editorial, literary or artistic publications including journals, newspapers, periodicals, quarterlies or review (any such proposals should be forwarded to the Publications Council)
- Athletic organizations (any such proposals should be forwarded to the Division of Campus Recreation or the Department of Athletics)
- Fine Arts organizations (any such proposals should be forwarded to the College of Fine Arts)
- Letterhead or business cards listing the names of individuals
- Entertainment expenses incurred while at or traveling to or from conferences, conventions, etc.
- Alcoholic beverages

Please refer to the financial guidelines if you have any questions. The student group financial guidelines are on the ASUU website, [www.asuu.utah.edu](http://www.asuu.utah.edu).

**For your information:**

- Deadline for reimbursements for on-campus activities is the last Friday of May, but we encourage turning in the forms as soon as the event or travel is completed
- Deadline for reimbursements for travel is within 60 days of your return home

Helpful ASUU contact info:

For further Legislative questions contact your ASUU Senator, Rachel Petersen, or the ASUU Legislative Advisor, all whose contact information is in page 2 of this handbook.

You may also contact ASUU's Finance Board Director, Sanga Mohmand at [smohmand@asuu.utah.edu](mailto:smohmand@asuu.utah.edu).