

Bylaws Section II: Activities of Interest Groups.

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Individual Interest Groups (IGs) are registered organizations within UF COM's MCC. Under UF Student Government registration as a University-Sponsored Student Organization of the College of Medicine, IGs and their members act as legal affiliates of UF when participating in MCC sanctioned events. In part of a series of similar documentation, the following Executive Memo serves henceforth in perpetuity as a repository of the policies and procedures relevant to the operation of a MCC approved Interest Group at the University of Florida College of Medicine.

Benefit of MCC Approval

Under compliance with UF COM MCC policies, this currently affords IGs the ability to upon approval of the MCC executive board to: (I) register as a USSO with SGA; (II) hold meetings in HMEB; (III) advertise these meetings on the MCC calendar and MAC emails; (IV) establish faculty advisers at UF COM; (V) display leadership, advisors, and mission statement on the MCC website; (VI) organize special events and volunteer activities; (VII) hold representation at general MCC body meetings, (VIII) receive MCC sponsored funding. UF MCC Interest Group's approved prior to this memo will not need to undergo additional approval processes.

MCC Interest Group Approval

The process for obtaining an interest group begins with the outreach to a UF COM MCC class representative who will provide resources for completing necessary requirements. Primarily these include (I) a proposed mission statement and constitution; (II) a proposed calendar of events spanning a minimum of 1 academic year; (III) a list of 40 signatures provided by UF students. Additionally, any petitions for exceptional election or funding policies must be provided.

Once submitted, the MCC Executive Board will listen to the proposal of an IGs candidacy by the class representatives and vote to approve their establishment. This voting may be completed at routine MCC board meetings, or asynchronously via electronic voting. Upon approval, the new IG leaders will be notified alongside any petitions for procedural exception and a resource packet for operating an Interest Group.

Within one year of approval, certain policies are established to ensure continuity and longevity of a new IG. In summary: (I) IG leaders are retained for a minimum one academic year, and no more than 2 academic years, in order to sustainably accomplish the proposed agenda; (II) for one academic year, IGs will undergo an audit to ensure the proposed agenda is accomplished as approved by the MCC e-board. New IGs found out of compliance at the time of their audit will be placed on probation, at which point they will receive direct support from the MCC e-board to accomplish their proposed mission over the next academic semester (excluding summer). Inability to pass a second audit will result in the dissolution of the Interest Group.

MCC Interest Group Compliance

In order for an MCC approved IG to maintain compliance, it must (I) annually elect at minimum a president and treasurer during the general election or otherwise MCC approved process; (II) leadership must faithfully execute its approved mission statement and constitution; (III) maintain active faculty advisors; (IV) hold at a minimum one IG general body meeting each semester, excluding summer; (V) maintain up-to-date descriptions on the MCC website; (VI) comply with the standard policies of UF USSOs.

Historically, IG's have been prohibited from using class dues for an individual IG event. Likewise MCC sponsorship may not be used for fundraising events[citation 1]. Under no circumstances may an MCC sponsored Interest Group open their own financial accounts, as doing so would violate USSO policies[citation 1].

Amendments to an IGs constitution must be approved by the MCC e-board. Amendments may be submitted voluntarily, or requested by the MCC e-board if during audit an IG is found to have significantly deviated from its mission statement and proposed agenda.

IGs that are found out of compliance will be notified of probationary status, and will be given at minimum one full academic semester excluding summer terms to demonstrate compliance and regain good-standing with the MCC. During this time resources and the E-boards guidance will be available to ensure an IG is supported.

Activity Survey

Three times a year, interest groups are required to poll their members about their experiences with the interest group. This will include sections determining overall member satisfaction, namely with meeting topics, frequency, and a section to report meaningful experiences. These forms will be submitted to the MCC in October, in February, and in May. Activity survey results will provide insight to improve the overall quality of MCC events, and contribute to consideration of IG of the year award.

Lunch Meetings

The ability to hold an MCC sanctioned lunch meeting as an MCC approved interest group, funded or not, requires at minimum 2 weeks notice, as defined either as 14 common or 10 business days. Prior to approval, a room reservation must be made for the event. Approval of the lunch meeting request is obtained using the standard fast track form available on the MCC website.

Guest speaker's invited to MCC IG lunch meetings who are not affiliated with UF must be approved by the MCC's faculty advisor (typically an Associate Dean for Educational Affairs). This process requires a minimum of 30 days. Speakers from outside UF who require any form of reimbursement require approval by the MCC executive board 2 months prior to the event.

Once approved, the IG leadership will be notified and the event will be added to the MCC calendar, as well as included in the weekly MCC newsletter. Within 7 days of the event, IG leadership must submit an Activity Report form to the MCC executive board, which is available on the MCC website.

Lunch meetings can be funded by the MCC directly. This funding comes from the budget of the College of Medicine, and administered through its accounting department. This policy is that each interest group can receive \$3 per person in MCC funding for a lunch meeting. Interest Groups must (I) submit a proposed number in attendance at the time of sign up, (II) confirm this number is accurate 48 hours before the

event, and (III) submit the actual attendance at the meeting. If on multiple occasions these numbers vary significantly, an interest group will be placed on probation.

Catering requests must be submitted at the time of fast track submission with at least 2 weeks notice. Catering funded by this process must be provided by an MCC approved vendor. A list of such vendors is available from UF office of Business Services.

If an IG is within good standing within the MCC and complies with the standard policies of a USSO, they may register directly with the UF office of SAI. This process affords the ability to apply for up to 3 Catering scholarships a year. More details and guidance for this process are available upon request.

Special Events

Planning for special projects or events sanctioned to be under the license of an MCC approved IG that take place outside of designated lunch meeting times must be approved no sooner than 2 months in advance. Such requests may be made directly by contacting the MCC e-board or COM faculty directly. Catering may or may not be available depending on approval of the College of Medicine, as well as the IG's registration status with the UF office of SAI.

Travel Requests

We recognize that individual members of IGs may have the opportunity to present research as a group at various specialty/ mission specific conferences. Travel funding requests for graduate students are directly administered by the Graduate Student Council under current University of Florida Senate statutes. This funding is available to any College of Medicine Student under application. Other travel funding opportunities exist within the UF COM office of Student Affairs directly, as well as through participation with the First Year Florida program.

Sponsorship by Outside Organizations

Because IGs approved by the MCC are legally designated representatives of the university, the University of Florida SGA and office of SAI encourage that the College of Medicine consult with the UF General counsel, an office of the University Vice President [[citation 1](#), [citation 2](#)]. Therefore, it is rare for an IG to establish itself as a local chapter of a larger organization. Examples of those that currently do are SNMA, AMA, and NAMI.

Volunteer Events

Volunteering at events sponsored by the UF College of Medicine through MCC requires certain documentation. This documentation in essence guarantees "Coverage through the university's general liability insurance and workers' compensation plans for members when serving as a university volunteer." Specifically, this applies to individuals "providing a service to the University Unit (IE UF COM), in the capacity of official university business." It does not apply to students simply attending meetings.

Dissolution of an IG

In the unfortunate event that an IG is unable to meet compliance requirements, either in violation of USSO policy, inability to remedy probation, or prolonged vacancy of required IG leadership, an MCC sponsored IG will be dissolved. Under these circumstances, new leadership may propose to start a new IG with similar missions. Approval of such circumstances will be taken under careful consideration by the MCC e-board.

Citations

1. <https://studentinvolvement.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SAI-USSO-Policy-2022.pdf>
2. <https://generalcounsel.ufl.edu/>