Space and Event-Related Policies for Student Organizations

Reserving Space
Student Organizations now have permission to schedule Student Organization meetings/events with the set Covid-19 room capacities and guidelines throughout the fall semester. However, groups are highly encouraged to host virtual meetings/events as space will be difficult to find with social distancing guidelines.

Departmental student organizations are allowed to meet in academic spaces, and social (special interest, honors, sport clubs, religious, and Fraternity/Sorority Life) student organizations must use non-academic spaces. The CSIL office will help to determine the type of student organization and make sure the advisor/department is aware of their organizational type, as needed. Normal scheduling procedures must be followed for any room reservation. Groups should reference the Student Union and Event Coordination websites for these procedures. If departmental organizations are not able to access the “application for use of facility” form, then an email request and approval might be accepted. As always, CSIL approval is required prior to a room confirmation being sent to a student organization. Each room confirmation will include additional details related to Covid-19 capacities and access. Union areas will be in touch about room fees, if applicable, and additional information, as needed.

https://www.mtsu.edu/mtunions/index.php

https://www.mtsu.edu/eventcoordination/studentinfo.php

At this time, any outdoor event that requires scheduling and any larger indoor event may require additional administrative approval. These events should also be submitted through the normal scheduling procedure, and each scheduler will process the request by requesting additional permission, if needed.

Masks and room occupancy limits must be strictly observed, and groups that fail to comply will lose their reservation privileges.

Virtual events/meetings can and should be listed on the University master calendar. All events being offered by student organizations that are in-person and/or virtual, should have an event created in myMT. The Office of Student Organizations & Service will then ensure those events are listed on the master calendar.

https://www.mtsu.edu/calendar/

Tabling
Indoor and outdoor tabling will not be permitted in any facility or green space for any reason during the Fall 2020 semester.
Food Policy
- Bake sales and group dinners as outlined in Policy 661 Food and Beverages, section V. Student Fundraising Activities, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. If food is offered at any event, it must be pre-packaged boxes or bags from a manufacturer for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal.
- Food giveaways are not permitted to the general public. Food will be permitted for members and their guests at events as long as they are pre-packaged and/or pre-prepared food items from a licensed business. Examples include: wrapped biscuit from McDonald’s, hamburger from Wendy’s, etc. The policy still stands that food costs must not exceed $500 per event.

Student Activity Fee Guideline Updates
Student Organizations will not be approved funds to support travel.

Student Organization Guests
Student Organization events and meetings should be for MTSU students only. No outside guests are permitted, with the exception of hosting a guest speaker.
Student Conduct COVID-19 Expectations

Dear MTSU student,

As the 2020-2021 academic year approaches, the MTSU community is facing unprecedented challenges in regards to public health. All faculty, staff, and students share responsibility for making choices and decisions with the best interest of the university community in mind. As such, MTSU students and student organizations are required to abide by MTSU’s expectations regarding specific behaviors associated with management of the pandemic while on AND off campus.

The specific expectations associated with COVID-19 management are outlined in “A Return to Campus Playbook for Students”. Students, who fail to comply with these expectations, either on- or off-campus, may be subject to disciplinary action. The document can be found at https://mtsu.edu/stayoncourse/students/.

Specifically, students, student organization officers, and student organization members should be reminded of the following provisions of the Student Conduct Policy:

1. As outlined in MTSU Policy 540: Student Conduct, students or organizations who engage in behaviors in violation of expectations or policies, including those related to social distancing, face mask requirements, and the management of COVID-19, may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action.

2. Disciplinary action may be taken against a student or student organization for violations of the expectations which occur on University owned, leased, or otherwise controlled property and/or at any off-campus location if the alleged conduct impairs, interferes with, or obstructs any University activity or the mission, processes, and functions of the University.

3. MTSU may also take disciplinary action for any off-campus behavior that affects a substantial University interest, specifically any situation where a student’s conduct may present a danger or threat to the health or safety of others. This includes engaging in individual or group activities or events that do not meet social distancing requirements and that create a substantial risk of COVID-19 transmission to students, faculty, or other members of the University community.

Our common goal is to be able to return to normal pre-COVID university life as soon as possible, and we simply cannot do that without a shared commitment to public health. While we hope that students will choose not to engage in risky behaviors on- or off-campus, we are prepared to address inappropriate behavior through the discipline process with those who do. It is our hope that we can navigate this challenge together to keep everyone in our University community safe and healthy. I encourage you to ask questions and seek clarification for any of the student rules you do not understand. Thank you in advance for doing your part!

Laura Sosh-Lightsy, Assistant Dean, Office of Student Conduct
MTSU Student Organization Leadership Agreement

As a leader or advisor of a Middle Tennessee State University student organization, I understand that the COVID-19 virus is extremely contagious and that our ability to keep our students, faculty, and staff safe will depend, in large part, on our common commitment to observing all social distancing requirements. In my role, I pledge to make every effort to ensure my organization members fully understand MTSU policies and common-sense practices designed to limit the risk of exposure to them and other members of the True Blue community. While it is understood that possible exposure to the virus is always a risk when engaging in activities on or off campus, I pledge to ensure that my organization will operate in compliance with the following practices:

- Wearing face coverings and supporting social distancing requirements in all facilities where my student organization is hosting an event/meeting on and off-campus. This includes not exceeding occupancy limits and following all guidelines connected to the space being used.
- Wearing face coverings or maintaining six feet of distance between members at all outdoor activities.
- Keeping records of attendance at all in-person group events; this will facilitate effective contact tracing should a member test positive after attending an activity.
- Encouraging members to frequently wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Requesting that members stay home when they are sick and to not attend events, meetings, or other activities.
- Requesting that members seek out medical attention if they experience COVID-19 symptoms and do not permit said members to attend any organizational events or meetings until they have provided proof they are symptom free.
- Reporting any known cases of COVID-19 or exposure to the MTSU Student Health Center at [https://www.mtsu.edu/covidreporting](https://www.mtsu.edu/covidreporting)
- Report behavior to the Office of Student Organizations & Service of members who compromise the health and safety of themselves and others resulting for non-compliance with MTSU COVID-19 policies and guidelines.

[Click here to review and sign the Student Organization Leadership Agreement.](https://www.mtsu.edu/covidreporting)
Advice to Student Organizations Leaders and Advisors

As you know, plans are proceeding for opening the MTSU campus for the Fall semester. Many of the University’s health and safety precautions will focus on our need implement a solid social distancing plan throughout campus. As a campus leader, we encourage you to consider the following information when planning events for your organization and the greater campus community this fall.

WHY ARE SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES SO IMPORTANT?

Although scientists continue to learn more about this coronavirus each week, it is clear that transmission of the virus is possible even before symptoms have manifested; that transmission occurs person to person through droplets that are breathed or coughed into the air; and that the longer one is exposed to the droplets, the more likely it is that transmission of the virus will occur. We have also seen that dense residential environments of all kinds, ranging from cruise ships to nursing homes, seem to have higher-than-typical levels of COVID-19 illness.

Our challenge, therefore, is to understand how we can work together as an MTSU community in the attempt to maximize the health and safety of all of our students. We cannot guarantee complete safety. However, both the CDC Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html) and the Tennessee Pledge Access Guidelines for Higher Education (https://www.tn.gov/governor/covid-19/economic-recovery/higher-education-guidelines.html) recommend the observance of social distancing guidelines as key in preventing spread of the virus.

Based on those recommendations from both our federal and state public health experts, you can expect three broad expectations for students and student organizations as we return to on-campus operations this fall.

WE WILL PLAN TO REDUCE DENSITY IN ALL INDOOR SPACES AND FOR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

- To accommodate a reduction in classroom density, most reservable event space will be transitioned for academic use. Programming/Event space in the James Union Building (i.e. the Tennessee Room), the Keathley University Center (i.e. theater, conference rooms), the Student Union (i.e. ballroom, parliamentary room, conference rooms), Tucker Theatre, and Wright Music Hall will have very limited availability for events. First priority for scheduling these spaces will be for University events open to the campus.
- Seating arrangements for meetings or events should be designed to permit at least six feet of distance between participants.
• Plan for virtual or on-line events as an alternative to in-person events, when possible. ZOOM meetings are a great alternative in place of regular organization meetings.
• On-campus housing has reduced occupancy to ensure that every resident has a private bedroom. If you offer off-campus housing to your members, you will want to review the CDC Guidelines for group housing best practices.
• A cloth face covering must be worn in the classroom, when inside any building, and outside, if you are not able to maintain at least six feet of distance from others.

STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF WILL BE EXPECTED TO PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING; WEAR FACE COVERINGS INDOORS, AND OBSERVE SAFE FOOD PRACTICES.

• Everyone should practice proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
  ▪ Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  ▪ If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  ▪ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
• Bake sales and group dinners as outlined in Policy 661 Food and Beverages, section V. Student Fundraising Activities, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. If food is offered at any event, it must be pre-packaged boxes or bags from a manufacturer for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal.
• Keep personal items (i.e. cell phones, computers, ear buds, etc.) and personal and work spaces clean. Use disinfectant wipes to wipe down desks, equipment, and other shared objects and surfaces before use.

STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF ARE EXPECTED TO MONITOR THEIR HEALTH AND ADDRESS SYMPTOMS PROMPTLY.

• Avoid sharing electronic devices, books, pens, and other learning aids.
• Stay home or in your living quarters if you are sick or have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19.
• If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19, please report that information to Student Health Services using the following link: https://www.mtsu.edu/covidreporting so we can protect the community.

STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF WILL BE EXPECTED TO PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING; WEAR FACE COVERINGS INDOORS, AND OBSERVE SAFE FOOD PRACTICES.

The True Blue Pledge honors honesty, reason, and the ability of our students to be givers. We urge you, as a campus leader, and your organizations to live up to the True Blue spirit and set the standard for our community in the upcoming year. We believe that as a leader on campus, your adherence to these policies and modeling them for your peers will help us to keep our campus open
and students safe. We need to look out for one another and protect the most vulnerable amongst us. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.