

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy HR-09
Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

SUBJECT: Policy Statement and Procedure for Establishing and Maintaining Employee Resource Groups (ERG) at Sam Houston State University (SHSU)

PURPOSE: To establish a process which allows groups of SHSU employees to organize a support network around a common experience or interest.

POLICY: SHSU encourages formation and ongoing engagement of ERGs to facilitate network and promote awareness, communication, respect and collaboration at the University. The University must approve each ERG. University ERGs give employees the opportunity to identify and share common experiences and interests. Employees wishing to establish an ERG must show how the proposed group will benefit the institution and employees alike.

CONTENTS: 1. Background
2. University Requirements
3. Maintenance of ERGs
4. Dissolution of ERGs

1. Background

A key part of the strategy at Sam Houston State University (SHSU) is lifelong learning. ERGs help the University achieve this objective by providing employees with respectful, collaborative and educational networks within the University environment. ERGs will:

- a. Create an open forum for staff who share common interests and concerns to meet and support one another.
- b. Provide employees with networking and mentoring opportunities for their members.
- c. Provide information to University leadership regarding employee and community issues, needs and policies.
- d. Support the professional development of group members through such efforts as mentoring and roundtable discussions.
- e. Provide group members with social activities that foster community building and positive experiences.
- f. Assist in University outreach and recruitment efforts.

2. University Requirements

SHSU ERGs must be voluntary and open to all current employees. SHSU ERGs must comply with all Federal, State, and Local anti-discrimination and labor laws, Texas State University System

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A Member of The Texas State University System

Rules and Regulations, and SHSU policies. Submit the [ERG Form](#) to the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution for consideration with the following information:

- a. Executive Sponsor – Eligible Executive Sponsors are University President, Provost, College Dean, Vice President or Associate Vice President. Executive Sponsors are expected to:
 - 1) act as an advocate for the ERG;
 - 2) help secure or raise funds for the planned activities for each academic year;
 - 3) share the ERG's activities with University leadership and vice versa;
 - 4) support and mentor ERG leaders and members;
 - 5) guide the ERG's development by focusing and aligning efforts with institutional goals and objectives.
- b. Time Period - must be at least one academic year or budget cycle.
- c. Mission Statement – Each proposed ERG must have a documented mission statement.
- d. Purpose/Key Service Areas – Each proposed ERG must include information that demonstrates how the purpose of the group aligns with the mission, vision and values, or the strategic goals of the University.
- e. ERG Goals
 - 1) should be specific, measurable, and achievable within 12-18 months (e.g., meeting schedule, networking and outreach opportunities; events);
 - 2) should be reviewed and revised annually at the beginning of each academic year; and
 - 3) specify methods used to evaluate the success and/or effectiveness of the group.
- f. ERG Leaders – The ERG must consist of at least two current employees willing to serve as ERG leaders for a period of one academic year or more. ERG Leaders will:
 - 1) communicate ERG's achievement and help ensure individual accountability;
 - 2) help ensure all voices are heard;
 - 3) allow one conversation at a time;
 - 4) respect unique/different points of view;
 - 5) remove obstacles that may limit the success of the ERG's efforts; and
 - 6) ensure all organizational advertising and event promotion includes a statement that "membership and participation in this ERG are open to all."
- g. Membership- ERGs and proposed ERGs must:
 - 1) **be open to all employees interested in the group's mission and goals;** ERGs may not require as a condition of participation or give preference to members based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or nationality.
 - 2) promote awareness, respect, openness, and understanding;
 - 3) be voluntary;
 - 4) have a minimum of 10 current employees; and
 - 5) have a well-defined recruitment and leadership plan which describes:

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A Member of The Texas State University System

- ii the process to join;
 - iii the number of planned meetings per semester;
 - iii member roles and responsibilities;
 - iv the decision-making process;
 - v plan for communications and advertising ERG sponsored activities and events; and
 - vi how ERG leaders will be selected in subsequent years, including timing and notification of the selection.
- h. Budget – ERG budgets should be submitted to the Director of Title IX and Discrimination Resolution at the beginning of each academic year and must include:
- 1) specific planned costs of materials, programs and activities; and
 - 2) how any monies collected will be used within the organization.

3. Documentation

Each ERG must keep, for a minimum of one year, agendas and meeting minutes and agree to transfer documentation within 30 days of a change in leadership.

4. Maintenance of ERGs

Each established ERG will be reviewed annually, at the beginning of the academic year, and is subject to the approval of the Executive Sponsor.

5. Dissolution of ERGs

ERGs are subject to the approval of the Executive Sponsor and may be discontinued at any time by the members, sponsors, or University administration for reasons including, but not limited to, lack of funds, poor participation, or ineffectiveness in meeting institutional objectives.

Reviewed by: Rhonda Beassie, Associate VP for People & Procurement Operations 11/21/2023