

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

Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy E-10
Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

SUBJECT: Policy Statement and Procedure for Establishment and Maintenance of an Employee Resource Group (ERG) at Sam Houston State University

PURPOSE: To establish a standard process which allows groups of Sam Houston State University employees to organize a support network around a common identity or interest.

POLICY: Sam Houston State University will allow for the formation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) by current employees to network and promote awareness, respect and inclusion at the University. The University approves each ERG. University ERGs give employees the opportunity to identify and share common identities and interests. Employees wishing to establish an ERG must show how the proposed group will benefit the Institution and employees alike.

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1. Background

A key part of the strategy at Sam Houston State University (SHSU) is lifelong learning. The Sam Houston State Strategic Plan Model states, "Foster a lifelong learning environment in support of a diverse faculty and staff who are excellent scholars, educators and professionals." ERGs can help the University achieve this strategic objective by providing employees with inclusive, 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 Rules and Regulations, and SHSU policies.

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Submission of the [ERG Form](#) to Human Resources is required for consideration. This form requests 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 information about 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, and measurable, and achievable within 12-18 months;
 - (2) should be reviewed and revised annually at the beginning of each academic year; and
 - (3) The ERG members must specify what methods will be 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; and
 - (5) remove obstacles that may limit the success of the ERG’s efforts.
- g. Membership
 - (1) Must:
 - i. be open to all employees interested in the group’s mission and goals;
 - ii. promote diversity, openness, understanding and inclusiveness;
 - iii. be voluntary;
 - iv. ERGs must have a minimum of 10 current employees; and
 - v. Proposed ERGs must have a well-defined recruitment plan for members.

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- (2) ERGs must have a recruitment plan which describes the following:
- i. the process to join;
 - ii. 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 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: David M. Hammonds, Associate VP for Human Resources & Risk Management-2/9/2018
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