

Amendment to the Student Union Room Reservation Policy for Registered Student Organizations

Background

The Office of Student Involvement (OSI) currently registers almost 400 student organizations. Many of these Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) have expressed a concern regarding the ease of finding space on campus, including within the Student Union, to hold meetings and events.

There are several factors that play in to the challenge that many RSOs are facing as it relates to securing space in the Student Union. The most significant challenge is that of scheduling meetings (as opposed to events).

- The most requested time of day for Student Union facilities is after 5pm, Sunday through Thursday.
- Many RSOs hold several standing meeting reservations (e.g., executive board, general, and committee) each.
- In order to ensure that the RSO has ample time to cover its agenda, many RSOs overestimate the time needed for meetings. When they consistently leave earlier than the scheduled end time, they are in essence blocking that room from being utilized by another student organization.
- In order to ensure that the organization's space request is filled, some organizations book their meetings one year in advance (as allowed per current Student Union policy). This typically means that a former officer scheduled meetings for the current board, not necessarily knowing when the new board is able to meet. If a former board member makes reservations for the current board and the current board does not realize it, the current board is held responsible for the 'no show' fees.
- Valuable room usage time is decreased when the Student Union has to change equipment set ups between meetings.
- Upon registration, new organizations have an even larger challenge booking space because existing organizations have already secured that space.

Policy

In an effort to relieve some of the "congestion" of the Student Union, the Knights of the RoundTable and Student Government Association enacted the following. It applies only to RSO requests for space after 5pm, Sunday through Wednesday, from the first day of school each semester through the last day of final exams within that semester. Additionally, it would include only recurring (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly) meetings and practices, not one time events, which may still be reserved one year in advance (as per current Student Union policy). It also only applies to second floor rooms (i.e., Sand Key, Cedar Key, Key West, Garden Key, Egmont Key, and Pensacola).

- Organizations must be registered with the Office of Student Involvement prior to making a request and throughout their reservation schedule.
- There will be seven spaces available: Key West AB, Key West C, Key West D, Garden Key AB, Egmont Key, Cedar Key, and Pensacola.

- RSOs will only be allotted up to 1.5 hours for meetings. Scheduling blocks are as follows: 5:00pm-6:30pm; 6:45pm-8:15pm; 8:30pm-10:00pm; 10:15pm-11:45pm.
- An RSO may only have one standing reservation per week (i.e., organizations cannot reserve both their weekly Executive Board AND general meetings in the same week; however, it could stagger them to be every other week). This would include organizations that have weekly dances and practices.
- The Student Union will begin to take meeting reservations for the upcoming semester no sooner than seven days prior to the first day of school for that semester (or the next work day after this time). For example, if the spring semester begins January 7, 2008, RSOs will be able to make reservations on or after January 2 (the next work day after December 31).
- Unless a special request is made at least 5 business days prior to a specific meeting, the Student Union will provide only four skirted tables and the number of chairs equivalent to the maximum occupancy of the specific room. Special requests, depending on their complexity, may not be valid for each of the organization's meetings. A standard A/V setup of LCD projector, laptop, and screen will be available upon request on a first come, first serve basis.
- Within the 15 minute turn around time between meeting blocks, the Student Union will remove trash from each room, but will not organize the tables and chairs.
- Student organizations may move tables and chairs to their desired set up within their assigned room.
- Catering requests must be submitted as per current Student Union policy.
- Sand Key will be held for newly registered (within the current semester) and forming student organizations only, from 8:30pm-10:00pm and 10:15pm-11:45pm on Mondays. If, three weeks prior to a given date, this room has not been requested by a newly registered or forming organization, it will be released for other organization use. New and forming organizations are not limited to using this space.
- If all seven spaces are booked for a given request, the organization can contact Event Services no earlier than three weeks prior to the desired meeting/practice date. If the space is available, Event Services will then allow organizations to meet in spaces within Cape Florida and/or Pegasus Ballroom.

While this policy will admittedly work to the detriment of a few organizations that are used to being able to book an unlimited amount of space, overall it will allow more organizations to secure space in the Student Union, thus allowing the Student Union to serve more students. In fact, more than twice as many meeting reservations may be made under this new policy. As the Office of Student Involvement registers approximately 60 new organizations per year, the challenge that organizations will face in finding space on campus will only become more significant. In addition, this change would encourage organizations to register with OSI earlier in the semester, placing the organization's information on the OSI website. This benefits students who are looking for ways to get involved on campus. This policy will go into effect in Spring 2008 for the Fall 2008 semester, as approved by the Campus Life Facilities and Services Advisory Board in the Fall 2007 semester.