

Societies Resource Manual

Revision History:

Date	Name	Summary of Changes
2020-05-28	Michael Beauchemin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major overhaul and rewrite
2023-06-15	Mike Cimetta	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update Staff and Governance Structures• Removed all outdated resource links

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Introduction

Student Societies are a bridge between both faculty and students, and the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and students.

Societies undertake advocacy for their constituents, representing and leading their constituency by connecting to WUSA through the Committee of Presidents, and generally have a much more direct route and interaction with the average student.

Societies serve and empower students by providing them with opportunities to develop as leaders within their communities, host social events, and create a framework that supports academic and personal success at the University of Waterloo.

Societies are WUSA's direct engagement arms and run many more faculty-specific events termly than WUSA centrally runs; it is thus vital to ensure they are supported each term through their transition, exercise of duties, and anything else that comes up.

Societies are also responsible student governments that are often charged with oversight of sub-societies or program clubs.

The WUSA President is a great resource for Society concerns when questions about student advocacy arise and support is needed; while WUSA's other departments help with the more operational support navigating through UW's processes and assistance accessing resources.

Important Contacts - WUSA

- Rebecca Choonilall, Societies Assistant – socasst@wusa.ca – Event Forms and Event Booking & Logistics
- [Vacant – New Role], Societies Relations Officer – Other Operational/ General Support
- Gurpreet Saini, Societies Accountant – g6saini@wusa.ca – finance questions and VP Finance transitions
- Rory Norris, WUSA President – pres@wusa.ca; All matters related to student advocacy issues requiring more support

- Stacey Sage, Communications & Media Relations Manager – s3sage@wusa.ca – Press releases, media and reporters, interviews and related training
- Alexander Kelley, Marketing Manager – alexander.kelley@wusa.ca – Market Research, marketing guidance and marketing resources. Team of graphic designers who can help.
- Suzanne Burdett, WUSA Executive Director – suzanne.burdett@wusa.ca – Societies Memorandum of Understanding, legal and HR Advice

Important Contacts – University of Waterloo

- Miscellaneous item bookings, Central Stores, x42207 – cstrbook@uwaterloo.ca – [Check out their catalogue](#); Can bring items to the booked space as well as set up larger items like risers.
- Various staff in relevant Dean's Offices – Usually, the faculty or school's student engagement officers will be your main support for faculty-specific needs.

Quick Link Resources

[The Societies MoU](#)

[WUSA Volunteer Awards](#)! Society experience is valuable and equivalent to or a stronger commitment than WUSA core or Services experience.

[All Societies Assembly](#) – Annual event held in the Winter term allowing incoming and outgoing executives from the Societies and WUSA to gather with Society volunteers to discuss emerging and ongoing advocacy items and potential for collaboration.

Forms

[Societies Event Form](#) - This form is required for all official events

[Risk Waiver Form](#)

[Food Vendor Form](#) - Required by the Region of Waterloo in certain circumstances where you may be selling or giving away food (not relevant

[Crave Streaming Access Form](#) - Use this if you want to play a movie or tv show at your event. Many other resources for streaming have been [assembled by IST here](#).

Memorandum of Understanding (Societies Agreement)

The Societies Agreement (available in full, online, at <https://wusa.ca/about/library/#agreements>) establishes rules and regulations under which the Societies and WUSA can jointly operate. The Societies' authority and rights come from WUSA's status as an independently incorporated body that is recognized by the University of Waterloo. It is one of only two student groups officially recognized by the University for the purposes of fee assessment and remittance of fees, as well as for student representation. It is important to note that the Student Unions of Renison, St. Jerome's, and Conrad Grebel are not Societies as governed under this agreement because of the nature of the relationship of SJ, Renison, and Grebel with the University of Waterloo (as Affiliated and Federated Institutions with separate Senates and Boards of Governors).

The Societies operate within a unique area underneath WUSA to ensure a better representation of students at the faculty, college, and school levels. In recognition of this, WUSA has historically delegated a lot of authority and leans on the Societies for representation on University and Faculty bodies requiring the student voice. Below will detail the Societies agreement a little more broadly. Please see appendix A for a list of recognized Societies and a sub-list of known subsidiaries (Sub-Societies) (this list is important as only known Societies and sub-Societies are allowed to host events under the rules of this agreement, otherwise they must be a club and operate under separate rules).

Committee of Presidents

The committee meets once monthly to discuss the goings-on of the different Society leaders and to share tips and tricks, particularly for challenges faced by any Society. The Societies MoU lays out powers and responsibilities of the committee and is also tasked with passing relevant updates to the agreement, making sure there is approval among all society representatives. This is an important body that allows for a direct connection between all student body presidents and has facilitated communication and action in certain situations, especially during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

Society Finances

General

WUSA (and by extent the Societies) is a tax-exempt not-for-profit corporation and expected to adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) as well as any other legal and governance best practice requirements that may be identified from time to time. As part of their operations, Societies may maintain an amount of money in “reserves”, which is to stay in their accounts. Money that is unused (a surplus) at the end of a term’s budget, broadly, rolls over into ‘retained earnings’ and can be used to cover a deficit in a future term, unless it’s being saved for a specific purpose, such as sponsorship or a capital expense (chairs, couches, computers, etc.).

Student Fees

Societies can charge student fees to maintain their operations, but all approvals for student fees onto the University Fee Schedule must come through either the Graduate Student Association or WUSA. The VP Finance & Administration for the University reaches out to WUSA towards the end of the winter term to submit a list of fees to be approved at the the June Board of Governors meeting. Any Societies’ fees that need to be changed will need to be given to the WUSA President, and Campus Life Director before March 15th, along with the official documentation proving adoption of the fee change in accordance with the Societies’ governing documents.

Budget Packages

At the beginning of every term, Society VPs Finance are required to submit a budget package in order to receive funding for the term. Historically, societies would need to wait until budgets were approved by both the Society’s approval mechanism and the WUSA President to receive any funding. However, in the latest iteration of the Societies Agreement, those terms have been updated to allow Societies to access 40% of their funds within 15 days of the term starting, so you can more easily and quickly start helping students and holding events.

Audits

Every Society that WUSA oversees is subject to be part of an annual audit as a part of WUSA's annually required audit. This includes an inventory count at the end of the Fiscal Year (April 30) and an audit engagement to follow. The audit engagement is not visible to most Societies as their finances are managed by WUSA, but every year, WUSA's Board of Directors may choose Societies for an individual audit at a higher resolution (this has historically been called an 'in-depth' audit). This higher resolution just means that the auditors are pulling and examining more files to give a clearer picture for that department's financial position at year-end.

Collapse

The Societies Agreement mentions briefly that all Societies should have a clause in their constitution detailing what a collapse looks like for them, but without one, WUSA can refer to a definition determined by Board. This isn't because there is a need for Societies to recognize and be prepared for something should it happen. Is a collapse when a society expends all available funds and is solidly in the red? Is it when students vote to abolish the Society? There are also terms for reconstitution, the making of a new Society, but it is a hope that we will not commonly need to use this section. This collapse clause also details what would happen to fees in the case of a collapse.

Withholding of Fees

When there are infractions of the Societies Agreement or the law, the President can decide to withhold fees in a certain amount from Societies. For a first offence, there is generally a warning, delivered to Societies and detailing next steps to avoid the infraction occurring again. For subsequent offences, the President can withhold up to 30% and up to 100% of a Society's funding until some defined terms are met. These infractions are detailed below but can include holding an event without submitting an event form, a Society Executive undertaking illegal activity, or not submitting an appropriate budget package.

Society Events and Services

Societies may hold events mostly as they decide, and Societies provide valuable services to students in their faculties. While generally allowing them a lot of freedom, WUSA does sometimes have to deny or stop events or services. This is half of the purpose of the [event form](#), and the other half is to ensure that we have insurance coverage of Societies' events and have taken steps to mitigate liability.

Liability and Events

Societies' events and services can sometimes pose risk, though it's not always apparent. In any situation where students are brought together, there's a responsibility that comes with that to make sure people are safe, which we call liability. Identifying and mitigating liability is not easy, so we rely on the event forms to be accurate and complete, and we rely on trained WUSA staff to identify these risks and to work with our insurance providers to make sure events are covered. For example, even an event like bringing therapy dogs into your lounge has a degree of risk and we must ask the company bringing the dogs in to show 'proof of liability insurance in an amount greater than \$2 million'. If you don't get this, we can't allow you to hold the event.

If something goes very wrong at the event and there was an event form submitted and approved, don't worry – you'll be covered under our insurance for the incident if any sort of lawsuit resulting from it.

To make sure that we have enough time to review the event form and approve it, we do ask that you submit the event form at least two weeks in advance. Some Societies know their events for the whole term at the beginning of the term, so the beginning of term or right before the term starts is a great time to fill out the event forms for all of the events.

It is important to note that your sub-Societies are all bound by the same expectations as those above. Sub-Societies are often confused about whether to fill out the Societies Event Form or the Clubs Event Form. Whether you call your sub-societies societies, associations, or clubs, they should all be filling out the Societies Event Form, so make sure

that they are aware of this and that the list in Appendix A is updated to match your existing sub-Society list.

Responsibilities

Societies gain several benefits from their association with WUSA, but there are certain requirements that are required to maintain this. Beyond the Societies Audits and the submission of budget packages, mentioned above, Societies need to follow UWaterloo's and WUSA's policies and procedures (and the law, of course!). WUSA also has some responsibilities with respect to the Societies. In recognition of the Societies place as localized advocates, WUSA, when speaking about any constituency must first make every effort to contact the relevant constituency Society.

Society Powers

Societies receive all real authority from their relationship with WUSA and many Societies benefit from inferred authority from their faculty's administration staff. The Societies Agreement outlines three specific powers given to Societies. These are the employment of full-time staff and part-time staff and the power to enter contracts that bind only their Society.

External Responsibility

This section of the Societies Agreement speaks to Societies right to represent their constituents and to be part of advocacy bodies external to WUSA (like professional student associations and provincial and federal student-run lobby groups).

Agreement, Review, and Awareness

The Societies Agreement also has some terms for its review and awareness. You'll want to inform your successors about the Agreement as soon as you can in transition so that they can read it and come to understand their responsibilities as execs and leaders in the Society. The Agreement should be reviewed at least once every three years, and it's the responsibility of the Presidents to raise any items that they see as needing change.

Because the latest version of the Agreement was signed and entered force May 1, 2020, that means the Presidents in the Spring/Fall of 2023 will want to start reviewing the Agreement to be able to make that deadline.

Termination and Breach

This Agreement is able to be terminated by the Board of Directors, but only if the Committee of Presidents votes unanimously in favour of terminating the agreement. Everyone must be in favour since everyone originally agreed to the Agreement and because the Agreement establishes the framework for the operation of Societies that allows a lot of freedom that they wouldn't necessarily otherwise have.

There are times when WUSA might be in breach of the Agreement. In this case, you do have some recourse from the Society side, able to go first to the WUSA Executive Director then to the WUSA President who also acts as the Chair of the Board.

As previously mentioned, if a Society is in breach of the Agreement, the President will be in contact.

Events

Events Rules

To help you plan out your events better and avoid the time setback of having to re-plan or alternatively plan something because of a set of rules that you don't remember or weren't told, often close to the event date itself. Listed below are many rules that you will need, listed in no particular order. In the future, this list will be a standalone procedure, but as we work on that, we wanted to make sure that you had this available to you.

- **UW Rules:** You must be familiar with and follow the University of Waterloo's rules about events. This means no events for which the sole purpose is the consumption of alcohol, and WUSA recommends taking the next logical step and not holding any events for which the sole purpose is the consumption of cannabis.
- **Grad balls** do not have a sole focus on alcohol, rather that it is a celebration of university life at the end of students' careers, so we allow it, provided you follow other rules

- **Transportation:** If you need to transport people to an event, you are not permitted to drive personal vehicles as part of the Society (people can still “meet at the event venue”), and are encouraged instead to take advantage of public transportation, rent a bus, or take taxis (taxis are preferred over Uber/Lyft)
 - Regardless of transport, if everyone is going somewhere as a group (such as on a bus) you must get Risk Waiver Forms signed by all people travelling in this way and keep these on hand.
- **Risk Waiver Forms** will often need to be signed by participants if there is a degree of risk involved with the event (like rock climbing, theme park, or similar). Consistency is key and you must consistently collect and record waivers
- **Gambling (Raffles):** If you are planning on running a raffle or any similar event where people have the option to engaged in a game of chance and may purchase more chances at winning, you must get a gambling license for that. For this reason, WUSA typically frowns on raffles like this, and instead encourages ‘door prizes’, ‘silent auctions’, or other where each participant has an even chance of winning something or they can see exactly how much they would need to pay for a prize.
- **Alcohol:** Societies are privileged above clubs in being allowed to serve alcohol at events. To do so on campus, you must comply with Food Services’ Bar Operations rules and regulations, who must be serving the alcohol. If hosting the event off campus, you will need to make sure that your event does not run past 9:00 PM (official end-time of the event, if people choose to hang around at a bar or move to another location, that is no longer your event and no longer needs to be covered under our liability insurance), and that you review the event beforehand with the President for approval of the event.
- **Additional Liability Insurance:** If you are holding an event like “puppies in lounge” where therapy dogs are coming onto campus for your students or you are going to hold a dinner event at a banquet hall, you need to make sure that the company you’re choosing has additional liability insurance in an amount not less than \$2 million, and up to \$5 million is preferred. There are many situations where you might need liability insurance, so filling out the event form early will make sure that you have as much time as needed to secure the necessary paperwork. Some venues will also ask you for proof of insurance, so you will need to reach out to the Director of Campus Life, Dave McDougall, for that information.
- **Donations:** If your event is collecting money for donating to a charity, you must donate to a Registered Canadian Charity for tax purposes – if it’s not on [this list](#), then you cannot donate money to it from your Society accounts. This can be difficult when there is a humanitarian crisis or something and people want to donate, but the charities on the ground are not RCCs. In cases like this, it’s often possible to find a RCC that is processing donations for the foreign charity.
- **Serving Food:** If you are serving food at your event and it is a closed event (open only to club/Society members or a subset thereof), you will often not need to complete a food vendor form. If the event is open to the public and advertised as such (e.g. you hang a big banner across the DWE overpass saying “Free Food”) then you must complete the [Food Vendor Form](#) unless you’re working with prepackaged or catered food.

- This list is incomplete. More content may be added at any time. The best way to make sure that your event goes smoothly is to submit your event form with plenty of time to allow for WUSA to review and get back to you with any changes that may be necessary.

Event Support Items

WUSA has a lot of experience and resources for running events and sometimes Societies may want to tap into that. If you need a little advice or help with the planning or execution of an event, you should contact the President and have a discussion to see if there's capacity staff-side to help you, or if you even need to go that far. WUSA can often make suggestions for alternative delivery of events if you run into roadblocks with your original plan, so it doesn't hurt to drop a line. Additionally, we provide the following offerings for Societies running events:

- Cash Boxes: talk to Societies Accountant
- Event posting or ticket-selling on WUSA's Events page: submit a request.wusa.ca to WUSA's Website Specialist

Web and Email

All Societies are listed on WUSA's website, so make sure that at the beginning of term you check your Society's information and links to make sure they still work and are correct. If not, let the President know as soon as possible.

If your Society is looking to host its own website off of the University's servers, or if you're looking for help setting up and maintaining a website or Society email addresses, WUSA IT can help. Talk to the President before going to request.feds.ca to fill out an IT request so that they can track and complete it.

Voting

Societies and Sub-Societies have free access to vote.wusa.ca, our premier voting platform. We can run multiple elections with multiple races concurrently, and with whatever style of voting is required by your constitution (first past the post, single transferable vote, and other ranked voting methods as well). Just go to request.wusa.ca, and WUSA will do

our best to accommodate your request.

Society Spaces

Joint Health and Safety Inspections

As part of Societies responsibilities for having management control of their own spaces, they must comply with Health and Safety obligations, including an annual walkthrough of all Society-operated rooms to check that these obligations are being met. Here are some tips to make sure that you're able to keep on top of things during the year so that you're not caught unawares at inspection time:

- WUSA's Health and Safety Coordinator is the SLC Operations Manager sits on the University's JHSC, so if you have questions about processes or otherwise, you should reach out to the VPOF or the President for following up.
- Make sure that paths to exits are kept clear of furniture and debris. This is especially important if the room only has one entrance or exit
- Monitor ceiling tiles and wall hangings to make sure that they are in good shape, not flaking or broken, or at risk of falling onto people.
- If you own or operate barbecues, hot cooktops, or the like, make sure you have a safe operating procedure attached to or near these for easy reference for volunteers or others borrowing the equipment
- Any blades on equipment should be properly guarded (think paper cutters)
- Make sure that floors in storage areas are kept clear, and be careful about stacking things too high – when working in these areas, practice safe lifting
- Do not maintain unsafe chemicals in your areas, and when you have any chemicals (for cleaning or other purposes), make sure you maintain all of the safety data sheets in a convenient and accessible location
- This is not an exhaustive list, and will likely see expansions over iterations of this manual, if not a separately defined procedure or safe operation guidelines

Advertising and Media WUSA Poster Boards

WUSA operates a weekly poster run that puts up posters on boards around campus and delivers posters to dons for posting on residence floors. Spring term delivery is bi-weekly.

Societies and sub-societies can book space on the poster run by contacting the WUSA Front Desk. Space is limited!

Student Life Centre (SLC)

Societies and Sub-Societies can submit up to 3 posters to the Turnkey Desk for posting in the SLC. The Turnkey Staff will post these posters after stamping them.

Clubs Booth and Tables

Prior to the beginning of term, the President should reach out and ask if any Society or Sub-Society wants booth space at the Societies and Clubs Day. This space fills up quickly and is a great way to get in front of interested students.

To book space in the SLC at other times, indicate that you would like a booth in “Vendor’s Alley” on the Society Event Form.

WUSA Website

As previously mentioned, all Societies are listed on the WUSA Website (Governance > Student Bodies > Student Societies). To avoid cluttering the WUSA Website, Societies should list the Sub-Societies they support on their own websites.

Daily Bulletin

It is possible to put notable achievements and news into the Daily Bulletin, a daily release news item from the University’s Communications folks that has been going on for the past FOREVER. If you want something featured in the daily bulletin, check out [this page](#), and if you think it still belongs, email the editor at bulletin@uwaterloo.ca. the current editor is Brandon Sweet, Associate Director, Internal Communications.

Imprint, Iron Warrior, and Math News

If you want an ad or item featured in one of the various newspapers around campus, you should reach out to them directly.

Imprint: editor@uwimprint.ca (for articles and general inquiries), ads@uwimprint.ca (for advertising events or services)

Iron Warrior: iwarrior@uwaterloo.ca; [Advertising details](#)

WATERLOO UNDERGRADUATE



Math News: mathnews@gmail.com

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Societies and known Sub-Societies

Society	Known Sub-Societies and affiliate groups
Applied Health Sciences Undergraduate Members (AHSUM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Arts Student Union (ASU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and Finance Student Association (AFSA) (charges own fee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ACE – Accounting Consulting Experience ○ AFOW – Accounting and Finance Orientation Week ○ hEDGE ○ UWAC – University of Waterloo Accounting Conference • Anthropology Society • Arts and Business • Bachelor of Social Work • Classics and Medieval Studies Society • Digital Arts and Communication Student Society (DACSS) • Drama • Economics • English Society • Fine Arts • French Club • German Society • Global Business • History Society • Human Resources • Human Sciences Society (HSS)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Society • Music Society • Peace and Conflict • Philosophy • Political Science • Psychology Society • Religious Studies • Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies Society • Sociology • Speech Communication • Womens Studies Society
Global Business and Digital Arts Society (GBDASoc)	Technically also falls under the Arts Student Union, but is a campus representative for Stratford.
Environment Student Society (ESS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEBS – Waterloo Environment and Business Society • WAGS – Waterloo Association of Geography Students • ERSSA – Environment, Resources, and Sustainability Student Association • PSA – Planning Student Association • SAID – Student Association of International Development • KISS – Knowledge Integration Student Society
Mathematics Society (MathSoc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actuarial Science • Bioinformatics Clubs • Pure Math Club • Teaching Students Association • Computer Science Club • Math/Business Double Degree Club • Financial Analysis and Risk Management Student Association • Math Finance Student Society

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stats Club • Software Engineering Society • Computing and Finance Student Association • Data Science Club • Math Grad Committee • Women in Computer Science • Women in Math • Conferences and Contests (external) – like Quantify, Starcon, or Bayesian Competition – requires MathSoc approval prior to anything happening on our end.
Waterloo Engineering Society (EngSoc)	<p>The Waterloo Engineering Society is comprised of the EngSoc A and EngSoc B, which are in place because of the unique cohort system in Engineering. While on term, each of A or B is the point of contact, but they have helpfully made joint mailboxes to avoid confusion about who to reach out to. They currently jointly oversee three affiliate groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron Warrior (Student Newspaper) • Waterloo EngiQueers (also affiliated with EngiQueers Canada) • With Respect to Time (Engineering Jazz Band) <p>The Engineering Societies do not currently oversee their program Societies, which exist in a bit of a gray space until such time as WUSA and the Societies exert themselves in that area. The existing groups, which are not currently allowed to host events except as allowed by the Faculty or the Engineering Society (this is an area for growth), are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESS – Chemical Engineering Student Society • ECESoc – Electrical and Computer Engineering Society • CEAGES – Civil, Environmental, Architectural, and Geological Engineering Society • NESS – Nanotechnology Engineering Student Society
Science Society (SciSoc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSA – Biochemistry Student Association • BUGS – Biology Undergraduate Student Society • Chemistry Club

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physics Undergraduate Society • SBSA – Science and Business Student Society • WATRox – Earth Sciences • MNS – Materials and Nanoscience Society
Waterloo Architecture Student Association (WASA)	Similar to GBDASoc, exists under the Engineering Society and represents Cambridge Campus.
Society of Pharmacy Students (SOPhS)	<p>Exists under the Science Society and represents Kitchener Campus and a unique constituency of professional students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Action Now Club • Counselling Club • Drug Information Club • Journal Club • OPA Club • Pharmacy Investment Club • RXPRN Club
University of Waterloo Optometry Students' Society (UWOSS)	Similar to SOPhS, exists under the Science Society and represents a unique constituency of professional students.