



NATIONAL STUDENT UNIT OFFICER GUIDEBOOK

This document was developed to serve as a guide for new national student unit officers to assist them in understanding their role and the duties of the office.

The formal duties and responsibilities of the National Student Unit, and its officers, is outlined in the AAFCS Policies and Procedures manual which can be found on the AAFCS.org website on the ‘About AAFCS’ page.

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National Student Unit

The role of the Student Unit is to provide for and to promote the professional development of post-secondary students of family and consumer sciences or related subjects who are individual members of the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences.

Each AAFCS Student member is a member of the student unit.

“Student” is defined as any individual seeking a degree in a postsecondary program through the pursuit of FCS-related coursework. Part-time or full-time students are eligible.

National Student Unit Officers

The role of the National Student Unit Officer is to lead the student unit, coordinate educational and community building events for AAFCS student members, serve as the liaison for AAFCS student members, and work with AAFCS to develop programming to benefit student members.



Student Unit Officer Elections

Each year, the Student Unit installs new national officers to serve for the upcoming year. Candidates are applying for non-specific officer positions to the Student Unit Leadership Team. Once elected, the elected officers will meet as a group to self-determine their roles within the Student Unit Leadership Team.

Electors

Each AAFCS student member, in good standing, is entitled to vote for the candidates.

General Guidelines For Officers

To support the growth and development of Student Units, National Student Unit Officers, and chapter-level officers, are advised to:

- Connect with Student Unit members
 - Send greetings and information concerning meetings to members and potential members.
 - Plan meetings, workshops, and projects for the year.
 - Encourage members to attend and participate in local, affiliate, and national meetings.
- Grow the membership
 - Conduct membership drives.
 - Develop articles for publication. (350-word articles may be submitted to AAFCS via membership@aafcs.org for inclusion in the *AAFCSMatters* newsletter.)
- Oversee the management of the Student Unit.
 - Develop annual action plans.
 - Create committees and/or task groups as needed to support annual action plans. And make committee or special task force appointments.
 - Support the selection and election of national, state, and affiliate officers.
 - Keep adequate records of activities.
 - Submit annual reports to AAFCS.
 - Stay informed on National activities and review official publications.
- Coordinate plans/programs with the AAFCS state affiliate. Communicate activities with affiliate or local professionals.

Community Service Project

Each year, the National Student Unit completes one Community Service Project at the AAFCS Annual Conference and one annual Service Project. Each project should incorporate participation

by AAFCS members and can also include local communities, nonprofit organizations, and other groups.

Examples of Service Projects:

Food & Nutrition

- Healthy Meal Kits for Families
 - o Students design low-cost, nutritious meal kits with recipes, nutrition facts, and budgeting tips.
- Cooking Skills Workshops
 - o Teach teens, seniors, or community members basic cooking, knife safety, and meal planning. (This can include recorded webinars posted online for the community)
- Food Waste Reduction Campaign
 - o Partner with local grocery stores to create “use-it-up” guides and host demonstrations.

Human Development & Family Studies

- Parenting Resource Baskets
 - o Create baskets with developmental toys, books, and guides for new parents. (Develop guides on creating resource baskets)
- Intergenerational Storytelling Project
 - o Students interview FCS Professions and create digital stories or videos to inform fellow students on opportunities within FCS.
- Child Safety Awareness Week
 - o Host events on car seat safety, home safety, and child education strategies.

Personal Finance & Consumer Education

- Financial Literacy Workshops
 - o Teach budgeting, credit basics, and avoiding scams to teens or community groups. (Develop a series of booklets or online resources.)
- “Adopt-a-Senior” Tech & Finance Support
 - o Help older adults set up online banking safely, navigate online tools, and understand consumer protections.
- Cost-of-Living Resource Guide
 - o Students research local housing, transportation, and food costs to create a community guide.

Textiles, Apparel & Design

- Sewing for Service
 - o Make blankets, pillowcases, hats, or tote bags for hospitals, shelters, or foster care agencies. (Collect crocheted/knitted items or similar)
- Clothing Repair Clinics
 - o Teach basic mending to reduce textile waste and support sustainable fashion. (Develop a series of booklets or online resources.)
- Prom Dress & Suit Closet

- Collect, clean, and organize formalwear for students who need it.

Housing & Interior Design

- Room Makeover for Families in Need
 - Redesign a child's bedroom or a family space using donated items and student design plans.
- Shelter Organization Project
 - Help local shelters create functional, comforting spaces with storage solutions and décor.
- Home Safety Assessments
 - Provide checklists and demonstrations on fire safety, fall prevention, and emergency planning.

Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Arts

- Community Dinner Fundraiser
 - Students plan, prepare, and serve a themed dinner to raise funds for a local cause.
- Cultural Food Festival
 - Celebrate community diversity while teaching culinary skills and global food traditions.
- Hospitality Kits for Shelters
 - Assemble kits with toiletries, snacks, and handwritten notes.

Wellness & Life Skills

- Stress-Relief Workshops
 - Teach mindfulness, time management, and healthy coping strategies.
- "Life 101" Bootcamp
 - Offer sessions on laundry, cleaning, cooking basics, and communication skills.
- Community Walking Club
 - Promote physical activity and social connection.

Student Unit State Chapters

Students may establish formal student unit chapters at their home institutions, informal student unit chapters, or virtual student units.

Resources to support your formation of a student unit chapter can be [found here](#).

All student units, regardless of formation type, may register their chapter with AAFCS.

To register a Student Unit Chapter with AAFCS, at minimum, the following is needed:

1. One student unit advisor. An advisor is a:
 - a. An AAFCS professional or emeritus member, in good standing.
 - b. Someone who offers guidance to the student unit on issues of structure, Robert's Rules of Order, fundraising, and program development.
2. Two or more AAFCS student members.



To register your student unit chapter, [click here](#).

Key Benefits of Student Unit Chapters:

- **Networking and Mentorship:** Connect directly with professionals, and faculty for career advice and potential employment.
- **Professional Development:** Gain insights into career paths, attend workshops, and participate in panel discussions, technical report preparation, and seminars.
- **Hands-on Experience & Projects:** Participate in industry-specific activities like site tours, competitions, and research projects.
- **Leadership & Soft Skills:** Develop leadership, communication, and organizational skills by managing chapter events and activities.
- **Resources and Access:** Access journals, industry publications, and specialized software.
- **Career Advantage:** Build a stronger resume through involvement, showing potential employers that members are active and motivated.
- **Community and Support:** Build relationships with peers who share similar interests, promoting a collaborative learning environment.

Benefits to registering a chapter with AAFCS:

- Recognition on the AAFCS website.
- Invitations to attend student unit chapter collaboration meetings.
- Access to unique opportunities and resources to help you build your chapter.
- Creation of a chapter forum in the AAFCS Online Forums, upon request. Forums include a shared library, events page, discussion board, and more.