



INFORMS STUDENT CHAPTERS HANDBOOK

Updated 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1) Introduction**
- 2) Organizing A Student Chapter**
 - Starting a new INFORMS Student Chapter
 - Revitalizing an existing INFORMS Student Chapter
- 3) Student Membership Benefits**
- 4) Student Chapter Operations**
 - Responsibilities of the Student Chapter
 - Faculty Advisor Roles and Responsibilities
 - Student Chapter Officer Requirements
- 5) Student Chapter Governance**
 - Responsibilities of the Subdivisions Council and the INFORMS Board of Directors
- 6) Promoting Student Chapters**
 - Student Chapter Marketing Tools
- 7) Awards and Prizes**
- 8) Chapter Support**
 - Financial Support
 - Website (IOL) and Connect Website
 - Speakers Program
 - Mentor Match
 - Staff Resources
 - Publications and Meetings
 - INFORMS Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Student chapters are an important component of a large national (and increasingly, international) association like INFORMS. Student groups make it possible to maintain a close, regular association with other students in the same department or university. Networking, professional dialogue, and defining operations research and the management sciences for INFORMS student members and the broader academic community are all activities that take place intensely within student chapters. Within these chapters' students can meet frequently and forge intellectual connections with faculty and professionals that lead to publications, job opportunities, consulting relationships, internships, and personal friendships.

As the national organization has grown, student chapters have become increasingly important to INFORMS and its membership. Obviously, having a larger number of members mean that more students are preparing to enter the field, and that there is a greater need for formal and informal communication networks. This handbook provides information to help INFORMS student members organize, govern, and sustain the operation of student chapter organizations.

ORGANIZING A STUDENT CHAPTER

If a student or faculty advisor is interested in starting a new INFORMS Student Chapter at their university, a [New Chapter Application](#) can be completed online. Instructions and templates for starting a new INFORMS Student Chapter are available online at <https://www.informs.org/IOL-Home/Communities/Subdivision-Leadership-Resource-Center/Starting-or-Revitalizing-a-Student-Chapter> .

Establishing a New Student Chapter

The requirements set by INFORMS for student chapter formation are as follows:

1. A faculty advisor who is a member of INFORMS and recognized to provide secure intellectual leadership.
2. A slate of officers (interim or full term) and the provision of their names, email addresses and INFORMS Member ID.
3. A petition signed by 10 or more interested INFORMS members in good standing. The letter of petition should be signed by the faculty advisor and the petitioning officers.
4. A set of Chapter Bylaws adopted by the interested members to be approved by the Chapters/Fora Committee of the Subdivisions Council of INFORMS.

Once the new chapter application has been verified and approved by the Membership & Communities Department, your team may move forward with completing the above requirements. Once the documents are in place, submit them to the Membership & Communities Department and we will forward them on to the Chapters/Fora Committee, which is the body that oversees INFORMS chapters. The committee will

review and vote electronically on new petitions over a period of several weeks. Sometimes they request a change to the bylaws before they vote. Once they have voted, the documents are sent on to the Subdivisions Council, which is one step higher than the committee. They too review and vote on the petition. The entire process may take about 10-12 weeks after the point when you submit the bylaws, slate of officers, and petition with signatures.

There are also responsibilities accompanying the privileges of being an INFORMS student chapter. This manual describes those privileges and responsibilities defined by the INFORMS Bylaws and by the Policies and Procedures of the INFORMS Board.

Reactivating an Existing Student Chapter

Sometimes chartered student chapters fall into inactivity. Provided the Subdivisions Council and the Board of Directors have not deactivated the chapter, revitalizing it is a fairly simple process organizationally.

If a student or faculty advisor is interested in starting a new INFORMS Student Chapter at their university, a [Reactivation Chapter Application](#) can be completed online. Instructions and templates for revitalizing an existing INFORMS Student Chapter are available online at <https://www.informs.org/IOL-Home/Communities/Subdivision-Leadership-Resource-Center/Starting-or-Revitalizing-a-Student-Chapter> .

The requirements set by INFORMS for student chapter reactivation are as follows:

1. A faculty advisor who is a member of INFORMS and recognized to provide secure intellectual leadership.
2. A reactivation petition signed by 10 or more interested INFORMS members in good standing. The letter of petition should be signed by the faculty advisor and the petitioning officers.
3. A slate of officers (interim or full term) and the provision of their names, email addresses, and INFORMS Member ID.

Once the reactivation chapter application has been verified and approved by the Membership & Communities Department, your team may move forward with completing the above requirements. Once the documents are in place, submit them to the Membership & Communities Department for review. This process should take 2-3 weeks. Once approved for reactivation, we will send the faculty advisor and student chapter officers onboarding material.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

All faculty advisors and student chapter officers must be members of INFORMS. Members of the student chapter are not required, but are encouraged, to be members of INFORMS. Students can join online at www.informs.org/join

INFORMS Student Member Benefits:

- **Access Information** via leading academic journals, Resoundingly Human podcast, member magazine *OR/MS Today*, & industry magazine *Analytics*
- **Build Your Network** at meetings & conferences, on INFORMS Connect, and through communities & student chapters
- **Find a Mentor** by networking at conferences, through a community membership, or by enrolling in Mentor Match
- **Be Recognized** by applying for student awards, participating in competitions, or taking on a leadership role in student chapters
- **Prepare for Your Career** with the INFORMS Career Center; set yourself apart with aCAP certification & continuing education courses

STUDENT CHAPTER OPERATIONS

Responsibilities of the Student Chapter

Student chapters are responsible for maintaining a level and quality of activity that will properly serve the INFORMS membership at their host institution. They are also responsible for reporting changes in officers as they occur.

A student chapter must hold at least one business meeting a year. Many student chapters find it possible to hold meetings every academic term or every month. Student chapters are also asked to furnish the national office with a roster of all chapter members, including those who are not members of the national organization of INFORMS.

Each student chapter must be recertified each year, as an indication that the chapter was active during the past year and that its activities were in conformance with national and student chapter bylaws and in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of INFORMS. Failure to meet the criteria will result in the chapter's loss of its charter. The Student Chapter Activity Report must be submitted to the national office annually and shall be filed no later than May 31st. When this report is submitted by a student chapter in good standing, the chapter receives a check in the amount of \$150.00 to help support student chapter activities. INFORMS strongly urges that student chapter funds be spent within the year they are earned so that substantial balances are not carried from year to year.

Faculty Advisor Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Faculty Advisor must be an INFORMS member in good standing who is affiliated as a faculty member with the host institution. By its nature, membership in student chapters is subject to continual turnover. Therefore consistent, caring leadership from the Faculty Advisor is essential to maintaining a student chapter.
2. To review the student chapter bylaws and become familiar with the structure of the local organization.

3. To attend as many meetings as possible, while letting the students be in charge.
4. To review all documents created by the student chapter, including the website and agendas, to ensure that they uphold the ideals of INFORMS.
5. To meet periodically with the officers to offer support and guidance.
6. To be on the lookout for opportunities to advance the interests of the student chapter.
7. Continually identify and recruit potential officers. Student chapter officers develop leadership skills and are instrumental in recruiting new students to the field and to the university.
8. Ensure that the Student Chapter Activity Report is submitted to the INFORMS office by May 31st of each year. Upon submission of this report, eligible student chapters receive a stipend of \$150.00 from INFORMS.
9. Submit a Faculty Advisor summary report to be included in the annual activity report no later than May 31.
10. Make INFORMS part of the culture.

Responsibilities of Student Chapter Officers

1. Have a student chapter faculty advisor who is an active member of INFORMS.
2. All INFORMS Student Chapter officers must be active members of INFORMS.
3. All student chapters are required to maintain their financial accounts through their university bursar's office.
4. Have at least 10 members at all times. All student chapter members are strongly encouraged to [join INFORMS](#).
5. Review and maintain the student chapter bylaws; each officer should note their specific responsibilities. Note: bylaws can be updated at any time (amendments must be approved by the Chapters/Fora Committee and the Subdivisions Council. If bylaws are missing, obtain a copy from the [INFORMS Membership & Communities Department](#).)
6. Update the [INFORMS Student Chapter Information form](#) by September 31st. This includes the student chapter calendar which consists of a one-page summary of the planned activities for the reporting year. We do recognize that the student chapter information form and chapter calendar may change (please update throughout the year.) Preparation of a chapter calendar by the officers assures a good start to the year's activities.
7. Keep the INFORMS university website up to date. ([Listing of INFORMS Student Chapter websites](#)) Below are the required fields.
 - About
 - Membership
 - Bylaws
 - Officers
 - Events
 - Social Media

8. Use of INFORMS logo and name. Student Chapter officers may contact the [INFORMS Membership & Communities Department](#), to request their logo.
9. Onboarding for the next officers – review the events of the past years with your predecessor, who should hand over the file of INFORMS newsletters, correspondence, annual activity report, and pending business. Terms of officers should be arranged so that newly elected officers have sufficient time to plan activities for the coming academic year. Ask for a general outline of how the student chapter affairs were conducted.
10. Submit an Annual Student Chapter Activity Report by May 31st. Chapters who do not submit a report will be placed on “INACTIVE” status and removed from <https://www.informs.org/Communities/INFORMS-Student-Chapters>
11. Assign a member of the chapter Executive Board to attend the Community Officers Appreciation Luncheon at the Annual Meeting of INFORMS.
12. Summaries of business conducted in Executive Board meetings should be available to the student chapter membership through the chapter newsletter, brief reports at general meetings, or by other means. Business requiring membership approval (per the bylaws) can often be efficiently conducted by mail or e-mail. Care should be taken in crafting the bylaws to balance Executive Board powers with membership rights.
13. Student chapter officers (the Executive Board) are responsible to their membership and to the national organization of INFORMS for the prudent management of their chapter. They are charged with ensuring that the student chapter operate in accordance with its bylaws and in accordance with the bylaws and written policies and procedures of INFORMS, available on *INFORMS Online* <https://www.informs.org/About-INFORMS/Governance>.

STUDENT CHAPTER GOVERNANCE

Responsibilities of the Subdivisions Council and the INFORMS Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of INFORMS establishes policies and maintains oversight through the Subdivisions Council, which has established the Chapters/Fora Committee with responsibility to monitor the establishment, governance, operation, and disestablishment of geographic subdivisions, including those uniting student members at colleges and universities. The Student Chapter Representative to the Subdivisions Council also represents student chapters on the Chapters/Fora Committee, where custom also includes at least one student member.

The Chapters/Fora Committee has the following responsibilities to student chapters:

1. Encourage student chapters and guide their development.
 - 1.1 Recognize outstanding student chapters and chapter volunteers.
 - 1.2 Manage the Moving Spirit and Judith Liebman Awards.

2. Assist members in the formation of new student chapters and the reactivation of dormant chapters.
3. Monitor the health and performance of student chapters. This includes taking action when subdivisions appear to be inactive or have other management difficulties.
4. Annually, recertify active student chapters. This includes the solicitation and compilation of annual student chapter activity reports from all INFORMS chapters. A summary of these reports must be provided to the Subdivisions Council annually.
5. Make recommendations to the Subdivisions Council regarding the establishment, governance, operation, and disestablishment of student chapters.
6. Facilitate student chapters in the creation of budgets and procedures.
7. Provide advice to student chapters pertaining to their activities whenever needed.
8. Inform the Subdivisions Council of student chapter activities, and report on their wellbeing.
9. Maintain model bylaws for student chapters.
10. Maintain the Student Chapter Officers' Handbook.
11. Consider any student chapter business that is brought before it.

PROMOTING STUDENT CHAPTERS

Student Chapter Marketing Tools

Well-planned publicity can determine the initial success or failure of your organizational campaigns and can affect the health of the student chapter throughout its life. Not only is publicity a useful communication tool among members, it is also an essential way for chapters to provide information about OR/MS to the university community at large.

INFORMS Student Chapters have three basic goals in their public relations:

- Publicizing chapter events
- Recruiting chapter members
- Branding the profession

The [INFORMS Branding Guidelines](#) & [INFORMS Student Chapter Communication Kit](#) can be found online.

INFORMS Marketing Department is always available to help. Contact the [INFORMS Marketing Administrative Assistant](#) .

AWARDS AND PRIZES

The [Student Chapter Annual Awards](#) is to recognize achievements of INFORMS student chapters.

The [Moving Spirit Award](#) has been established to recognize outstanding student chapter faculty advisors who have been "moving spirits" in their chapters.

The [Judith Liebman Award](#) has been established to recognize outstanding student volunteers who have been "moving spirits" in their universities, their student chapters, and the Institute.

The [George B. Dantzig Dissertation Award](#) is given for the best dissertation in any area of operations research and the management sciences that is innovative and relevant to practice. This award has been established to encourage academic research that combines theory and practice and stimulates greater interaction between doctoral students (and their advisors) and the world of practice.

The [George Nicholson Student Paper Competition](#) is held each year to identify and honor outstanding papers in the field of operations research and the management sciences written by a student.

INFORMS [Doing Good with Good OR](#) sponsors a competition to encourage student research and practice that has societal impact. The "Doing Good with Good OR Student Competition" will feature the most exciting work performed by students in partnership with public and private organizations that yields tangible and beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, and organizations. Such work will be infused with OR/MS methods and could appeal to multiple disciplinary and application-area interests.

The [INFORMS O.R. Analytics Student Team Competition](#) provides real-world workplace experience for undergraduate and master's level students. Student teams are given the same business problem, data sets, and access to software to solve a challenging problem using an OR/analytics approach. A panel of industry and academic experts judge written submissions based on teams' use of the full analytics process, from framing the problem to methodology selection, data use, model building and innovation.

The [Undergraduate Operations Research Prize](#) competition is held each year to honor a student or group of students who conducted a significant applied project in operations research or management science, and/or original and important theoretical or applied research in operations research or management science, while enrolled as an undergraduate student.

[The Seth Bonder Foundation Registration Grant](#) - For years, the Seth Bonder Foundation has sponsored the Annual Student Award Ceremony Reception held at the INFORMS Annual Meeting. This year with the Annual Meeting moving to a virtual platform, Mrs. Merrill Bonder established a fund to pay tribute to the hard work of students who may be first-time Annual Meeting attendees, who self-identify as an under-represented minority in STEM, or any student in need of funding to attend the Annual Meeting. The

grant includes up to \$145.00 for registration to the Virtual 2020 INFORMS Annual Meeting. Students from smaller universities and/or Historical Black Colleges & Universities are encouraged to apply.

STUDENT CHAPTER SUPPORT

Financial Support

As part of INFORMS, subdivisions are entitled to tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Consequently, all chapters' financial activity must be reported to the IRS under the INFORMS tax report and filed by the INFORMS Accounting Office. All student chapters are required to maintain their financial accounts through their university bursar's office.

Student chapters are required to submit a non-financial report, the Student Chapters Activity Report, to the Membership & Communities Department of INFORMS by May 31st. Student chapters in good standing receive \$150.00 unrestricted seed money for submitting this report.

Upon submission of the Student Chapter Activity Report, student chapters receive unrestricted funds of \$150.00 to support their ordinary activities. The funds are mailed in August.

Website and INFORMS Connect

Our INFORMS website is <https://www.informs.org/>. From the main menu, navigate to the COMMUNITIES page, which links to more information on societies, sections, fora, geographical chapters, and student chapters. All INFORMS Student Chapter information and resources can be found [here](#).

INFORMS also maintains an online community called [INFORMS Connect](#). A listing of all INFORMS student chapter listings can be found online. As part of the student chapter officer requirements your INFORMS chapter website must be up to date.

Speaker's Program

The INFORMS Speakers Program provides access to expert speakers in operations research, analytics, and the management sciences. The Program is targeted towards INFORMS Student Chapters and Regional Chapters who wish to invite a speaker on a particular topic of interest. INFORMS provides substantial financial support to help defray the costs associated with hosting a speaker. The amount of financial support is decided on a case by case basis. Request a speaker today for your upcoming event.

Mentor Match

The INFORMS Mentor Match Program is a benefit just for members. This online tool helps you find and connect with others and gives you a suggested program to follow with your mentor.

Staff Resources

INFORMS maintains a professional staff of approximately 50 people in Catonsville, Maryland. The Membership & Communities Department is the contact point for student chapter inquiries, and its staff members are dedicated to developing and strengthening chapters, providing administrative support, and helping to plan events. Staff works closely with other departments to address student chapter needs.

Publications

In addition to its prestigious journals, INFORMS produces two member magazines and a student magazine.

OR/MS Today is published bimonthly and contains articles and news of general interest to INFORMS members. Its editor welcomes news and photographs from student chapters. Directions for submitting material to *OR/MS Today* can be found at <http://www.informs.org/ORMS-Today>.

Analytics Magazine is published bimonthly online and includes news and features articles on the power of analytics in organization decision making.

OR/MS Tomorrow is the INFORMS student magazine online at <https://www.informs.org/Publications/OR-MS-Tomorrow>. It features articles written by students, paper competitions, brainteasers, conference updates, useful web links, and publicizes student chapter activities. By participating in the Editorial Board of *OR/MS Tomorrow*, students may gain practical experience in evaluating research and in understanding the steps to publication.

Social Media

Students can stay up to date with INFORMS promotions and events by following us on:

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)