

# **INFORMS STUDENT CHAPTERS HANDBOOK**

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## **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.

## **SECTION I: ORGANIZING A STUDENT CHAPTER**

### **Establishing a New Student Chapter**

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

1. A slate of officers (interim or full term) and the provision of their names and addresses on a letter of petition. The letter of petition should be signed by the faculty advisor and the petitioning officers.
2. A faculty advisor who is a member of INFORMS and recognized to provide secure intellectual leadership.
3. A petition signed by 10 or more interested INFORMS members in good standing.
4. A set of student chapter bylaws adopted by the interested members and approved by the Chapters/Fora Committee of the Subdivisions Council of the Board of Directors of INFORMS.
5. For any student chapter being established in a country where there is a national society that is a member of the International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS), the petition to INFORMS should include a letter of support from the local IFORS society, along with a statement by the faculty advisor as to why an INFORMS chapter is beneficial to that university.
6. Approval of the application by the Subdivisions Council of INFORMS.
7. In the case of international student chapters, approval by the INFORMS Board of Directors.

The Chapters/Fora Committee stands ready to help you establish a new student chapter of INFORMS and will guide you through the process. INFORMS also maintains a full-time, professional staff that is dedicated to supporting your efforts. The first step in organizing a new chapter is often to contact the Director of Subdivision Services at (800) 446-3676 or <mailto:subdivision.services@informs.org>.

Potential chapter members can be identified through the INFORMS national office. The national office will provide you with an electronic list of names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers, defined by the college or university from which your chapter draws members. The *INFORMS Online* Membership Directory, updated biweekly, is another tool to help locate colleagues in your area, and also lists telephone numbers and electronic mail addresses. Once a faculty advisor is in place and ten (10) members of INFORMS in good standing have made a commitment to establish a new chapter, officers can be selected and bylaws written and developed.

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. No new petition needs to be filed and the new group can adopt the existing bylaws without renewed approval from the Subdivisions Council of INFORMS. (Changes to the bylaws whenever made must be reviewed and approved by the Council.) A member of INFORMS who has agreed to serve as faculty advisor must lead the effort and advise the national office of the reactivation. INFORMS recommends that a reactivated student chapter have a minimum of 10 INFORMS members but does not require this unless the student chapter bylaws so stipulate; also, the local chapter members may be, but are not required to be, members of the national organization provided the officers are members of INFORMS. As with all subdivisions, student chapter officers must be members of national INFORMS.

## **SECTION II: STUDENT CHAPTER GOVERNANCE**

### 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. The Student Chapter Activity Report (See Appendix C), available on INFORMS Online, must be submitted to the national office within 31 days of the end of each calendar year so that this recertification can proceed. When this report is submitted, the student chapter receives a check in the amount of \$150.00 to help support current 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.

All new student chapters are required to maintain their financial accounts through the INFORMS Business Office unless their university offers such a service through the bursar's office. If maintaining a financial account with the Student Activities' Office is required by the university, INFORMS defers to the university.

### Responsibilities of Officers

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* <http://www.informs.org/>. Student chapter officers should review this checklist periodically:

#### **Officers' Checklist**

1. Review the student chapter bylaws; each officer should note his or her specific responsibilities. If bylaws are missing, obtain a copy from the INFORMS national office.
2. Review the events of the past year with your predecessor, who should hand over the file of INFORMS newsletters, correspondence, and pending business. Ask for a general outline of how the student chapter affairs were conducted.
3. Immediately after the election of new student chapter officers, see that the Secretary notifies the INFORMS national office of the name, mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number of each officer. Also, check to be sure that the national office is on the chapter mailing list.
4. Review this Student Chapter Officers' Handbook for ideas to help make your term in office a success. Extra copies may be downloaded from the website *INFORMS Online* <http://www.informs.org/>.
5. Set up a plan for the year's events. Advance preparation plays a major role in the success of chapter programs:
  - a. Schedule Executive Board meetings for the entire year.
  - b. Schedule chapter meetings for the entire year.
  - c. Plan speakers well in advance.

- d. Plan for the next election meeting well in advance of the appointed date.
  - e. Check meeting dates against conferences, religious and secular holidays, academic calendars, and local events so that conflicts are minimized.
  - f. Assign a member of the chapter Executive Board to attend the Chapter/Fora Officers Breakfast and the Student Chapter Officers Meeting following, at the annual meeting of INFORMS.
6. Feel free to contact Gino Lim at [ginolim@uh.edu](mailto:ginolim@uh.edu) or Wilkistar Otieno at [wilkistar@gmail.com](mailto:wilkistar@gmail.com), the Student Chapters Representatives to the INFORMS Subdivisions Council and to the Chapters/Fora Committee, if you have any questions. Inquiries are welcome. Likewise, the Subdivisions Services Department of the national office is always available to you.

### 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 well being.
- 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.

## **SECTION III: STUDENT CHAPTER OPERATIONS**

### **Administration and Promotion**

Student chapters are able to exercise a great deal of leeway in the organizational structure they design and the manner in which they administer their affairs. Student chapter officers must be members of the national organization. Officer titles and functions, the length of their terms, and the frequency and type of meetings held, however, are all decisions that are made at the local level when a chapter is established. These can be changed at any time through a modification of the student chapter bylaws.

With the exception of election meetings, many student chapters find it possible to conduct most business in Executive Board meetings and devote general meetings to professional or academic programs. 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.

Election meetings are normally held once a year at the time specified in the student chapter bylaws and are open to the entire chapter membership. Officers are elected, and various annual business reports are given. Terms of officers should be arranged so that newly elected officers have sufficient time to plan activities for the coming year.

Communication among members and among the members and the faculty advisor is an important responsibility of the Executive Board, and style is often unique to the chapter and its members. INFORMS offers a website to each student chapter and provides assistance in design and maintenance. Most student chapters find e-mail to be the most convenient and effective way to contact one another. When e-mail is used for chapter business, care should be taken for summaries of votes and other business records to be entered into the minutes or official chapter record in correct form. Printed material is, of course, still an appropriate means of communication.

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. Some detailed guidance for chapter public relations is provided in Appendix D.

### **Financial Management and Reporting**

The INFORMS national office collects dues for chapters (provided the chapter's Executive Committee has decided to assess them) and pays all bills from a chapter account maintained by the national office. 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. For this reason, the Board of Directors has prohibited the establishment of any new bank accounts for local chapters. Student chapters are, of course, free to utilize banking services provided by their universities.

Student chapters are required to submit a non-financial report, the Student Chapters Activity Report, to the Subdivisions Services Department of INFORMS at the end of January each year. Student chapters receive \$150.00 unrestricted seed money for submitting this report.

## Meetings and Events

Because student chapters have a great deal of freedom in scheduling meetings, both in frequency and in the kind of meetings that are held, the following section may stimulate some ideas among the Executive Board.

### Program Meetings

The general format of program meetings is as follows: a welcoming statement, introduction of the speaker, the speech, a question and answer period, and a closing statement. In terms of content, it is possible to vary program meetings almost endlessly. Here are some suggestions that have served INFORMS student chapters well.

### "Show and Tell" Meetings

These are meetings where members of the chapter are the featured speakers and where they describe what they are doing in their own work. These are often the most popular and professionally rewarding meetings of a student chapter, providing a forum for the speaker to advance his ideas and to receive peer comment and criticism. It is also possible to arrange these as roundtable meetings for discussion of a particular technical area or field of application.

### Meetings with Well-Known Guest Speakers

Many host universities are home to widely known OR/MS people, and there is generally no problem in obtaining speakers of this caliber. Every so often, a student chapter will want to feature a speaker who is outside its geographical area. Universities have seminar programs, as do some large corporations, which feature prominent OR/MS people from other areas. It will often be possible to persuade such speakers to speak at a student chapter meeting, either on the same day or before or after their other engagement. In this way, speaker expenses and honoraria can be avoided or at least shared. Additionally, it may be possible to feature senior speakers who are traveling in the area for business purposes.

One of the best resources for identifying and securing speakers is the INFORMS Speakers Program. Program Committee Chairs are urged to review the program on *INFORMS Online* <http://www.informs.org/Connect-with-People/Speakers-Program> and to contact the INFORMS Public Relations Office to request a speaker.



#### Joint Meetings

Some student chapters have sponsored joint meetings with student chapters of other societies, such as IEEE, SIAM, ACM, IIE, ASA, etc., that have been very successful. Sometimes joint meetings can be arranged with local geographical chapters, with obvious mutual benefits.

#### Tours for Student Chapter Members

Several chapters have sponsored very successful tours of plants and work sites.

#### Social Events

Many chapters hold occasional social events such as an "end-of-the-year" banquet or a picnic that friends and families of members can attend. They are generally very successful. Additionally, less formal social mixers may be held at various establishments to encourage networking opportunities.

#### Local Events

Student chapters should be alert for opportunities to take part as an organization in events that are sponsored by local groups. Engineers Week or career fairs are examples.

### **SECTION IV: STUDENT CHAPTER SUPPORT**

#### Financial Support

Upon submission of the Student Chapter Activity Report, student chapters receive unrestricted funds to support their ordinary activities. As of January 1, 2005 the amount is \$150.00. Student chapters may also apply to the Vice President of Chapters/Fora for money to support special initiatives. The kinds of initiatives that have received special initiative funding in the past include joint meetings of student chapters for symposia, competitions and similar activities; special workshops; and regional student meetings on OR/MS topics.

#### INFORMS Online and List Serves

INFORMS maintains an extensive website, *INFORMS Online (IOL)*. There is a section of *IOL* called Subdivisions, where student chapters may maintain their own web pages and review other chapters' programs, meetings schedules, and membership customs. The Student Chapter Officers' Handbook may be downloaded from this area, as well as the most current version of the Student Chapter Activity Report, application material for the Moving Spirit and Judith Liebman Awards, and other forms useful to officers. Within other sections of *IOL* student chapter officers may find contact information (usually e-mail links) for members of the Student Chapters Subcommittee, the Subdivisions Council, and the Board of Directors of INFORMS. The constitution and bylaws of the national organization, as well as all written policies and procedures, are available at all times in their most recent, approved form on *IOL*.

INFORMS also maintains a list serve for student chapter officers where they may post information useful to other chapters or pose questions: <mailto:student-officers@list.informs.org>. Often symposia are reported on the list serve, including attendance, successful program strategies, and suggestions for improvement. Ideas may be exchanged for strengthening chapters, or INFORMS volunteers or staff may post news of special interest to student chapters and their leaders. A separate list serve is available as well to student advisors: <mailto:student-advisors@list.informs.org>.

## Staff Resources

INFORMS maintains a professional staff of approximately 50 people in Catonsville, Maryland. Some of the expertise available to student chapters through the national office includes membership development and meetings support. The Subdivisions Services Department is the contact point for student chapter inquiries, and its staff members are dedicated to providing support to develop and strengthen chapters. Here you may obtain current mailing lists, secure prompt resolution of an administrative issue, or receive experienced direction in dealing with a student chapter issue. Subdivision Services personnel work closely with both the Member Services Department and the Meetings Department to ensure that records are correct and that student chapters may secure experienced assistance in planning symposia and other special events. The highly skilled Publications Services Department is also available to answer questions and advise student chapters, should the need arise.

## Publications and Meetings

In addition to its prestigious journals, INFORMS produces two publications for distribution to all members and an online publication especially for students. *OR/MS Today* is a magazine published bimonthly that contains articles and news of general interest to the entire membership of the organization, and 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>.

For more frequent release of information, the Marketing Department of INFORMS e-mails a newsletter, E-NEWS, to all members twice each month. Here chapters often announce meetings or events of interest to an audience wider than their chapter membership. Submissions to E-NEWS are made through the Subdivisions Services Department at <mailto:subdivision.services@informs.org>.

An increasingly important voice for INFORMS student interests has become *OR/MS Tomorrow*, the INFORMS student magazine online at <http://www.informs.org/Pubs/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 obtain useful and practical experience in evaluating research and in understanding the steps to publication.

National meetings are events where chapter members and leaders can meet and interact with those in other chapters to develop new ideas and strategies. Staff members and volunteers are available at national meetings to discuss student chapter issues, and staff members are often available to visit student chapters at their home locations throughout the year.

### Awards and Prizes

Student chapters are encouraged to develop local awards tied to the particular mission of the host institution. For many years INFORMS has underwritten the Moving Spirit Award, given each year to INFORMS members to recognize outstanding chapter volunteers who have been “moving spirits” in their chapters. This award is appropriate for an outstanding faculty advisor. In January, 2004 the Subdivisions Council established the Judith Liebman Award to student members of INFORMS who have provided outstanding service to their student chapters. The Moving Spirit and Judith Liebman Awards are presented by the Vice President for Chapters/Fora at the national meeting, and an account of the award, citation(s), recipient(s), and qualifying service is published in *OR/MS Today* and *IOL*. A complete description of the awards, nomination procedures, and selection criteria is available on *IOL* in the Subdivisions and Awards areas.

## SECTION V: FACULTY ADVISOR

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 rapid and continual turnover. Therefore consistent, caring leadership from the Faculty Advisor is essential to maintaining the chapter.

### Responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor

1. To review the student chapter bylaws and to become familiar with the structure of the local organization.
2. To attend as many meetings as possible, while letting the students be in charge.
3. To review all documents created by the student chapter, including the website and agendas, to ensure that they uphold the ideals of INFORMS.
4. To meet periodically with the officers to offer support and guidance.
5. To be on the lookout for opportunities to advance the interests of the student chapter.

### Suggestions to the Faculty Advisor

1. At the beginning of the academic year:
  - a. Advertise by e-mails directly to students in your department or major, as well as to those in other departments or majors with an interest in OR/MS. E-mails to other faculty members requesting that they encourage membership are useful, too.
  - b. Post flyers to all conspicuous appropriate locations advertising the first event.
2. 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.
3. Cosponsor events with other organizations whenever possible.
4. Ensure that the students have a web page and keep it current.
5. Ensure that the Student Chapter Activity Report is submitted to the national office of INFORMS by January 31 of each year. Upon submission of this report each student chapter receives a stipend of \$150.00 from INFORMS.
6. Be flexible with respect to the profile of the student members. PhD students may have an interest in paper competitions, while MS and MBA students may be interested in business world opportunities. Undergraduates seek information and advice about going on for further education. Whatever the student members need and do, be flexible and encouraging.
7. Place announcements in local department newsletters, college newsletters, college magazines, university papers, etc., of your events prior to their happening. Likewise, display pictures and event records.
8. Make INFORMS part of the culture.

## APPENDIX A: Sample Petition for Student Chapter Charter

We, the undersigned members in good standing of INFORMS, intend to establish the \_\_\_\_\_ Student Chapter. We petition the Chapters/Fora Subcommittee, the Subdivisions Council, and the Board of Directors of INFORMS to recognize our student chapter.

NAME (printed)

SIGNATURE

INFORMS member no.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## **APPENDIX B: Sample Student Chapter Bylaws**

### **Bylaws for the \_\_\_\_\_ Student Chapter of the**

#### **Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences**

**ARTICLE I – NAME.** The name of this organization shall be the \_\_\_\_\_ Student Chapter, hereinafter the Chapter, of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS).

### **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

1. Encourage interest in the field of operations research (OR) and the management sciences (MS).
2. Provide a means of communication among people having interest in OR/MS.
3. Provide an informal means of exchange about OR/MS educational programs and opportunities.
4. Provide an informal means of sharing information about the methods and techniques of OR/MS.
5. Present a forum of speakers who address OR/MS topics.

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

1. Any persons interested in operations research and the management sciences may become a chapter member by completing a membership application and submitting it with the proper chapter dues. Membership in the national INFORMS organization (the Institute) is not required.
2. The regular membership shall be open to undergraduate and graduate students at \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Honorary memberships shall be decided by a two-thirds approval vote of the regular members in attendance at any meeting.
4. With the exception that elected officers must be members of INFORMS, all members have equal rights, duties and privileges. Annual chapter dues are normally payable at the beginning of each calendar year.
5. Membership and participation shall be free from discrimination on any basis.

6. At all times, the membership of the Chapter must include at least ten members of the Institute.

## **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS**

1. The following Chapter officers comprise the Executive Board of the Chapter and their duties are
  - **President:** presides at meetings, represents chapter in external affairs, and provides direction to the activities of the chapter and its officers.
  - **Vice President/President-Elect:** assumes duties of the absent president; administers cultural and social activities. In the second year, this officer automatically becomes president.
  - **Secretary:** administers correspondence and amendments to bylaws (Section VIII), announces meetings, and maintains contact with the Institute. Files annual report to the Institute that describes chapter activities.
  - **Treasurer:** is responsible for financial matters, to include receipt of all financial reports from the Institute and conveyance of financial information to the chapter membership. Approves all expenditures and monitors receipts or conveys receipts to the Institute in a fiscally sound manner.

The elected officers collectively decide appointments to special positions, e.g., Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, Business Outreach Coordinator, and Historian. All elected officers must be members of both the chapter and INFORMS.

2. **Terms of Office.** Vice President/President-Elect is a two year commitment, with the first year served as Vice President and the second year as President. Secretary and Treasurer each have one year terms respectively.
3. **Nominations and Elections.** Nominations and elections occur during the [month] general meeting. Nominations will be made from the floor, and only members of the Institute in “good standing” can nominate or be nominated. Only chapter members in good standing may vote in officer elections. A special election will be held whenever an elected position becomes prematurely vacant. Such elections will be conducted as normal. There is no election for President, because this is an automatically promoted position, derived from Vice President/President-Elect.
4. **Voting.** Elections shall be held by secret ballot and are determined by majority vote. Ties shall be resolved by means of a fair random process.
5. **Removal from Office.** An officer may be removed when it is in the Chapter’s “best interest” – a necessarily subjective condition that must first be unanimously

recognized by all other elected officers. The affected officer will be allowed a defense free from interference. The other officers will weigh the merits of the case in a way that they find suitable and will render a majority decision.

## **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS.**

1. General meetings are meetings where all Chapter members are invited. General meetings shall be held as planned officers or designated Committees. Meeting time, place and agenda shall be set by the officers or designated Committees and are announced at least [time period] in advance.
2. The election meeting shall be a general meeting held in [month] of every year.
3. Executive Board meetings are meetings where only the Executive Board members are invited. Executive Board meetings shall be held as planned by the President, but only upon notice to all members of the Executive Board.
4. A quorum for business meetings shall consist of the presence of five (5) chapter members, or 10% in good standing, whichever is larger, including at least two (2) of the officers. A quorum is not needed for professional meetings where no chapter business is conducted.
5. Robert's Rules of Order shall guide all meetings, in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VI – RESPONSIBILITIES TO INFORMS**

1. The Chapter and its officers, under charter from INFORMS, are accountable to the Institute for all operations and procedures. The INFORMS Board may suspend or revoke the Chapter's charter for inappropriate operations or procedures. In the event of dissolution, the Institute shall decide how to dispose of the Chapter's assets.
2. The Chapter shall file an activity report annually with the INFORMS Business Office describing Chapter activities during the past January 1 through December 31. This report is necessary for re-certification of the Chapter. It shall be filed no later than January 31.

**ARTICLE VII – DUES.** Chapter dues will be assessed on all members at the time they join or renew. The Chapter officers collectively set the dues schedule.

## **ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS AND PROCEDURE**

1. The Secretary in an official Chapter meeting will present amendments to these bylaws. The Secretary, no later than [number] calendar days before the next meeting, shall submit in writing the proposed amendment to all Chapter members.



The vote will occur at the next general meeting, and the amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the members present provided that number constitutes a quorum as defined below. The amendment will then be sent to the INFORMS liaison who will present it to the INFORMS Subdivisions Council. The amendment becomes effective when approved by this Council.

2. A quorum necessary for conducting Chapter business at a general meeting is defined as 5 members or 10% of the Chapter membership, whichever is larger.
3. The President shall make rulings on any point of procedure not included in these bylaws.

## **APPENDIX C: Student Chapter Activity Report**

The Student Chapter Activity Report can be found here:

<http://www.informs.org/Participate-In-a-Community/Community-Resources/Subdivision-Leadership-Resource-Center/Subdivision-Leadership-Resources-Chapters-Student-Chapters>

## **APPENDIX D: Strategy for Promoting Student Chapters**

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

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

You can use a range of communications to achieve these goals, including flyers, direct mail, e-mail, your website, press releases, and paid advertisement. However, you may find that at the local level, the very best means of public relations is plain conversation with the people you are trying to persuade, either face-to-face or by phone.

INFORMS is always available to help. Contact the INFORMS Public Relations Department through the [INFORMS News Room](#) for assistance at any time.

### **Publicizing Chapter Events**

Much of your promotion of the student chapter will be built around your events and persuading people to attend them.

Begin, of course, with a good program and a good speaker. How, you may ask, do you select a good speaker? There are no sure ways – inevitably, some programs will be successes and others will be disappointments, but you can do a lot to choose a speaker for your chapter:

- Brainstorm with your officers and programming committee to develop a good list of possible speakers.
- Consult the online [INFORMS Speakers Program](#) for speakers in your area and national speakers in the specialties that interest your members.
- Solicit feedback from lots of potentially interested people to find out what kind of programs and speakers they want.
- Remember that many people join societies to advance their careers; offer them programs to find jobs, preserve their OR departments, and gain promotions.
- And: plan to serve food, at least light refreshments. It's amazing how much food enhances the reception of a speaker and program.

In your publicity, design solid messages about the upcoming program that include an engaging program title, an interesting description of the topic with a pithy speaker biography, and the basic information people will need to attend: who will be speaking, where, when, directions, parking, admission price, as well as contact information by phone, e-mail, and regular mail.

Stay within your budget, of course. And remember that you will spend different amounts of money, volunteer time, and resources based on the importance of the individual programs.

### Publicity Through Direct Mail

Direct mail – both campus mail and e-mail – is the most basic method of alerting people to chapter programs and events.

Begin by compiling lists of potentially interested students, both in the form of mailing labels and e-mail addresses, from engineering schools and business schools that provide courses in operations research, management science, and related disciplines, such as math, statistics, the physical and engineering sciences, economics, and computer science.

Once you have your snail and electronic mailing lists in place, make sure to tailor the message to the medium. If you are sending an e-mail, keep the message shorter than the print version so readers don't have to scroll. If you can provide online registration, make sure to include the link or e-mail address for responses.

### More Publicity Methods

Depending on the importance of an individual event and the volunteers at your disposal, you can use additional methods to publicize upcoming events.

Design a flyer on your computer. Personally hang flyers if you have the time – that way you know the job is getting done. You can also mail copies for posting at university and office bulletin boards. Post flyers on campus near engineering schools, business schools, math departments, and other areas where your target audience may spot them. If you're mailing copies to a practice member, send extra copies for distribution among colleagues. If your chapter publishes a regular newsletter, make sure to list the next program, as well as whatever upcoming events are scheduled so that your readers can plan ahead and save the date.

To ensure the quality of your events, ask those who attend to complete a program evaluation at the conclusion. In the evaluation form you prepare, ask respondents to list the event, the quality of the speaker on a scale of one to five, and the suitability of the topic on a scale of one to five. Ask them to suggest future programs. Provide a space for open-ended comments. And use the form for an additional purpose: Ask the respondents if they want to join a chapter committee – or join the chapter. Leave room at the end of the survey for those who are providing their names and contact information.

### **Public Relations for Chapter Recruitment**

Recruiting new members is the key to starting a new chapter and keeping an established chapter vital. The INFORMS office has printed materials that you can share with prospective members. To obtain materials and touch base with the INFORMS Marketing Department, send an e-mail to <mailto:members@informs.org> or call the INFORMS office at (800) 446-3676.

Those interested in joining the INFORMS national organization can also point their browsers to: <http://www.informs.org/Membership/Join-INFORMS-and-or-INFORMS-Communities>. National membership and student membership work hand-in-hand; those applying for national membership can apply as well for membership in your chapter.

As you begin your recruitment campaign, remember that people join organizations for many reasons: to socialize with people in their field, attend presentations, learn new methods, and find employment after graduation. Remember: Personal contact or talking directly to another person is still the most powerful persuader, even in our era of high tech.

If you're contemplating formation of a new student chapter, you will want to begin by identifying a core group of volunteers who will commit to regular meetings and committee work.

### **Branding the Profession**

Operations research has contributed billions of dollars to small and large businesses. It has helped win victories in military actions from World War II through the Gulf War. It has equitably distributed human organ donations to the desperately ill and helped prevent AIDS.

Then why haven't our classmates – and our family members – ever heard of operations research? Because we need to communicate our message about the benefits of OR.

Communicating that message isn't just a point of pride in our work; it has important professional implications as well. By explaining our work to our employers, we convince them to consult us before making major decisions, to hire us, to give us raises, and to retain endangered OR departments.

The INFORMS Public Relations Office has an active PR and branding campaign to achieve these purposes. Find out more, and contact the PR Department, by pointing your browser to the [INFORMS News Room](#). Recent issues of *OR/MS Today* have followed the "Marketing the Profession" campaign and can also bring you up to date on slogans and ideas.

When seeking ways to approach the media, keep these thoughts in mind:

- Try to spot stories that would interest a broader public. If OR is part of a new business trend in your area, don't be afraid to call the business reporter at your newspaper or business paper and tell them about it.
- When your programs feature presentations tied to topics in the news, invite local reporters to attend.
- If a member of your chapter has used OR to help people in your community, let the world know.
- If you feel passionately about a subject and can bring your OR expertise to bear, submit an editorial to your local newspaper and mention OR in your title and the op/ed piece.
- If you've heard a human interest story about a member's use of OR to triumph over adversity, bring it to the attention of the media.

Remember, the INFORMS Public Relations Department is available to provide assistance. To speak with the INFORMS PR Director, call (800) 446-3676.