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Responsible University Office: Procurement and Distribution Services
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Case Western Reserve University

Organization and Club Membership Policy

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose
2. Justification
3. Institutional and Individual Memberships
4. Restrictions
5. Approval Authorization
6. Airline Clubs
7. Social Clubs

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

1. Purpose

The University will consider membership in organizations that promote the advancement of the University's education and research missions; enhance the professional standing of its faculty and administrative personnel; and further the University's relationship with its community partners. This encompasses membership in the following types of organizations:

- Organizations of universities and colleges, including accrediting bodies;
- Organizations of professional schools and colleges, including accredioting bodies;
- Organizations of institutional service agencies and administrative officers;
- Scholarly or technical societies; and
- Social Clubs (e.g. business, athletic, luncheon, or sporting clubs).

2. Justification

Membership in an organization where fees are paid by the University must be used primarily for relevant business purposes (e.g. activities that meaningfully contribute to the University's primary missions of teaching, research, scholarship, or public service). A major consideration in deciding whether to secure a membership shall be the cost of membership in relation to the benefits the University expects to derive from membership.

3. Institutional and Individual Memberships

Institutional, rather than individual, memberships shall be obtained when possible, as to allow multiple individuals to participate. Individual memberships shall be purchased only if specific circumstances warrant an exception; the decision to grant an exception shall be based on an evaluation of the benefits to the University. More than one institutional membership in any organization may be purchased only in extenuating circumstances, such as an institutional membership that limits institutional users to a figure well below the number of university representatives who would benefit from membership opportunities.

4. Restrictions

University funds may not be used for payment of fees or dues to organizations that support legally impermissible or unreasonable discriminatory membership policies or practices. University funds also may not be used to support an organization's political action committee or to support any organization whose primary activities include attempting to influence legislation or participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

5. Approval Authorization

Deans, vice presidents, chairpersons, and department heads have the authority to determine which organizations are suitable for University membership, to approve requests for membership in organizations other than social clubs for their unit or individuals within their unit, and to designate which employees may participate. Note that the above individuals may not approve their own memberships. Deans, vice presidents, chairpersons, and department heads are also responsible for evaluating each new request and requests for renewal to ensure that University funds are not being used to join organizations that are redundant in function and membership, and to prevent renewal in memberships that are no longer worthwhile. Approval for purchase of more than one institutional membership requires approval of a supervisor at the dean or vice president level.

In general, memberships in business, technical, and professional organizations may not be charged to federal awards. Visit the Sponsored Projects Accounting website at https://case.edu/research/awards-agreements/pre-and-post-award-services for further guidance.

6. Airline Clubs

The University will not reimburse or pay for individual memberships in airline clubs.

7. Social Clubs

The president must approve, in writing, all requests for membership in social clubs. Such memberships shall be approved only if it is determined that the primary use of the membership is to conduct official University business and that the organization does not engage in discriminatory practices. A copy of the written approval will be provided to the employee and the Senior Vice President for Finance/Chief Financial Officer. The document must specify the time period for which membership is approved.

Social club memberships shall not be paid with federal funds and must be charged to account 599220 to ensure that the membership is excluded from the University's federal facilities and administrative cost recovery rate proposal. Requests for membership payment or reimbursement must be accompanied by a copy of the president's written approval.

To substantiate official University business use of a social club, the employee must maintain adequate records showing the total number of days of business and non-business use. In addition, the employee must substantiate his or her club entertainment expenses in accordance with the University's meal and entertainment policy.

In accordance with IRS reporting requirements, an employee's non-business use of a social club must be reported as compensation. This will be determined as follows:

- An employee who has been granted membership in a social club will be required to report his/her/their official University business use and non-business use to Human Resources annually. The University has designated a special accounting period of November 1 to October 31 for this reporting.
- In consultation with the Controller's Office, the value of the employee's non-business use will be calculated based on the information provided. The portion of the dues allocable to non-business use shall be treated as additional compensation to the employee and included in the employee's income, subject to withholding for income and applicable employment taxes.