



Hello and welcome to the Tier III and Trustee Student Organization Online Training. My name is Krista O'Brien, and I am the Director of Trustee Organization Support in the Department of Student Activities on the Storrs Campus. This is the first module in online training, and is required of ALL Tier III leaders. I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather at UConn, (even virtually) is the territory of the Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Nipmuc, and Lenape Peoples, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We thank them for their strength and resilience in protecting this land, and aspire to uphold our responsibilities according to their example. If you need captions or would like to read through the script for accessibility purposes, please either turn on the closed captions, or pause this video and download the scripts from the trusteestudentorgsupport.uconn.edu website. You must watch this entire video and then successfully pass the corresponding quiz in HuskyCT.

Agenda

- 01 Trustee Student Organization Support
- 02 Introduction of Tier III Student Organizations
- 03 Four Pillars of Stewardship
- 04 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- 05 Transparency

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In this module, we will introduce the Trustee Student Organization and Support team, define Trustee and Tier III student organizations, address and provide examples of stewardship and transparency and how they relate to your organization.

Trustee Student Organization Support (TSOS)

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Given that Trustee Student Organizations are responsible for a large constituency and resources, these organizations are supported by a team of professional staff members – the Trustee Student Organization Support team within the Department of Student Activities at Storrs, which is often referred to as TSOS. If you are a regional campus student leader, your advisor is a staff member from Student Activities on your campus. Our main priorities are to advise the individuals tasked with running these Trustee Organizations to ensure both the welfare of the group and the student body as well as help you understand the regulatory systems and policies you are responsible for following when leading the Organization.

TSOS Mission

The mission of Trustee Student Organization Support is to provide training, support, and resources for Trustee Student organizations, their leaders and campus stakeholders in order to assure effective stewardship of resources and to enhance the UConn student Experience.

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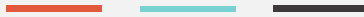
Bruce Parkhurst

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The TSOS Team is primarily responsible for advising student groups around decision-making, group process and conflict, and answering questions related to university policy and procedure as well as to support you with budget construction, the student fee advisory committee process, and processing your purchases and bookkeeping. They also serve as general financial policy compliance and regulatory review for the organizations. For Storrs Organizations, a member of the advising team will be your organization's primary advisor and a person you can go to when you run into any questions or just need to talk through things happening within your organization. For the regional organizations, the TSOS Staff work with your campus' student activities staff and organizational advisors. The Advising team works to ensure you are aware of all policies that may impact your initiatives, connects you to various administrators on campus that may be helpful in achieving your goals and is responsible for trainings (like this one).

Tier III Student Organizations



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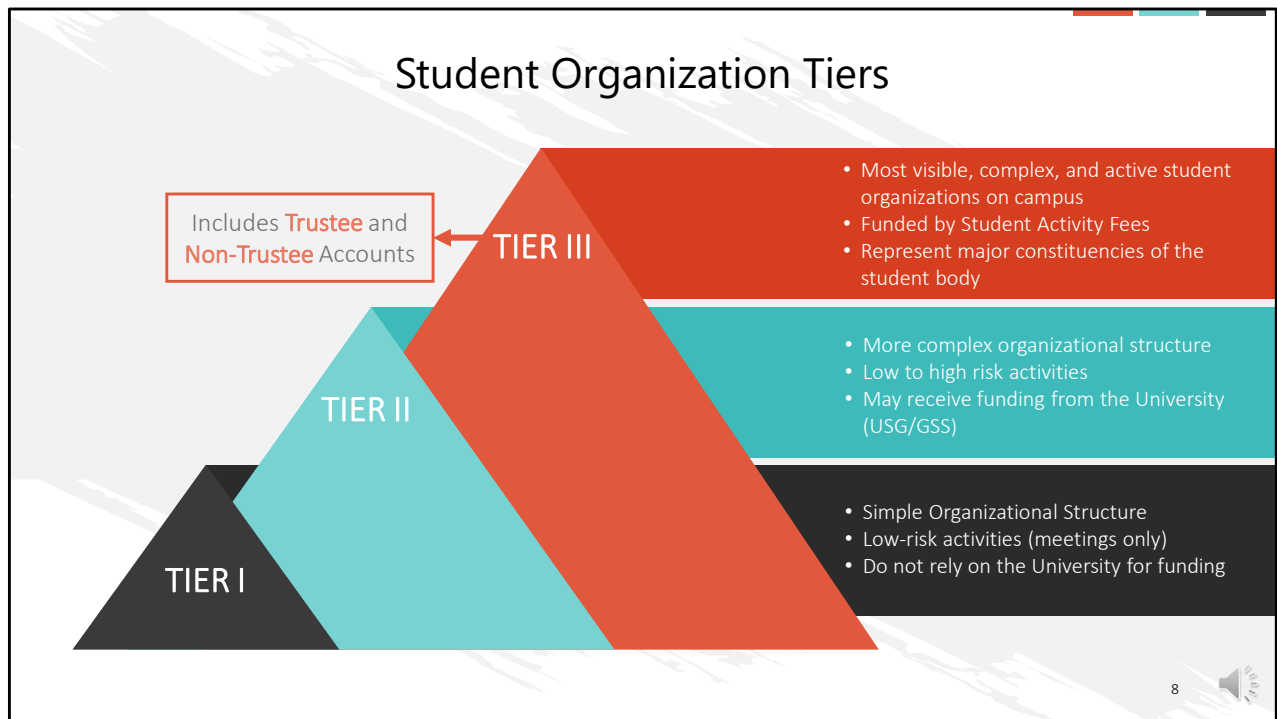


Next, let's discuss Tier III and Trustee Organizations.

UConn Tier III Organizations






Tier III organizations were established by the University and are managed on a daily basis by students with oversight from the University. The Storrs campus organizations include The Daily Campus, Graduate Student Senate, Nutmeg Publishing, SUBOG, UCTV, the Undergraduate Student Government, Uconn Praxis (formerly UConnPIRG), and WHUS Radio. Other Tier III organizations include the regional campuses' Student Governments like Hartford USG, Stamford SGA, Waterbury ASG and Avery Point ASG, the School of Social Work Graduate Student Organization and the Law School Student Bar Association.




The tiered system of student organizations was created by the Department of Student Activities in 2007 to establish distinctions between different types of student organizations based on their variety of purposes and different levels of risks and financial responsibilities. The “Tier III” designation describes organizations supported by student fees with high visibility on campus, high accountability to a large constituency of students, moderate to high risk activities, regular interaction with University staff, and reliance on the University for financial compliance and support, facilities and event planning.

“Tier III organizations” include Trustee Accounts and non-Trustee Accounts. Trustee Accounts were established by the University with approval from the State of Connecticut. All Trustee Organizations are Tier III but not all Tier III Organizations are Trustees.

Trustee Accounts

-  Accounts operated in any state educational institution
-  Benefits the employees or students of the institution
-  Revenue derived from student activity fees



Specifically, Sec. 4-52 of the State Comptroller Manual which defines a Trustee account "as any account operated in any state educational institution...for the benefit of the employees or students of such institution or agency... the revenue of which is derived from the operation of...student activity fees...or any other legal source compatible with the good government of such institution or agency"

Under state law, such funds must be used for the exclusive benefit of the students. (23 Op. Atty. Gen, 345; April 10, 1944) These funds have been entrusted to you.

This means that Trustee Accounts, and Tier III organizations, are stewards of students' funds, and should be engaging in ways, both programmatic and financial, that reflect that philosophy.

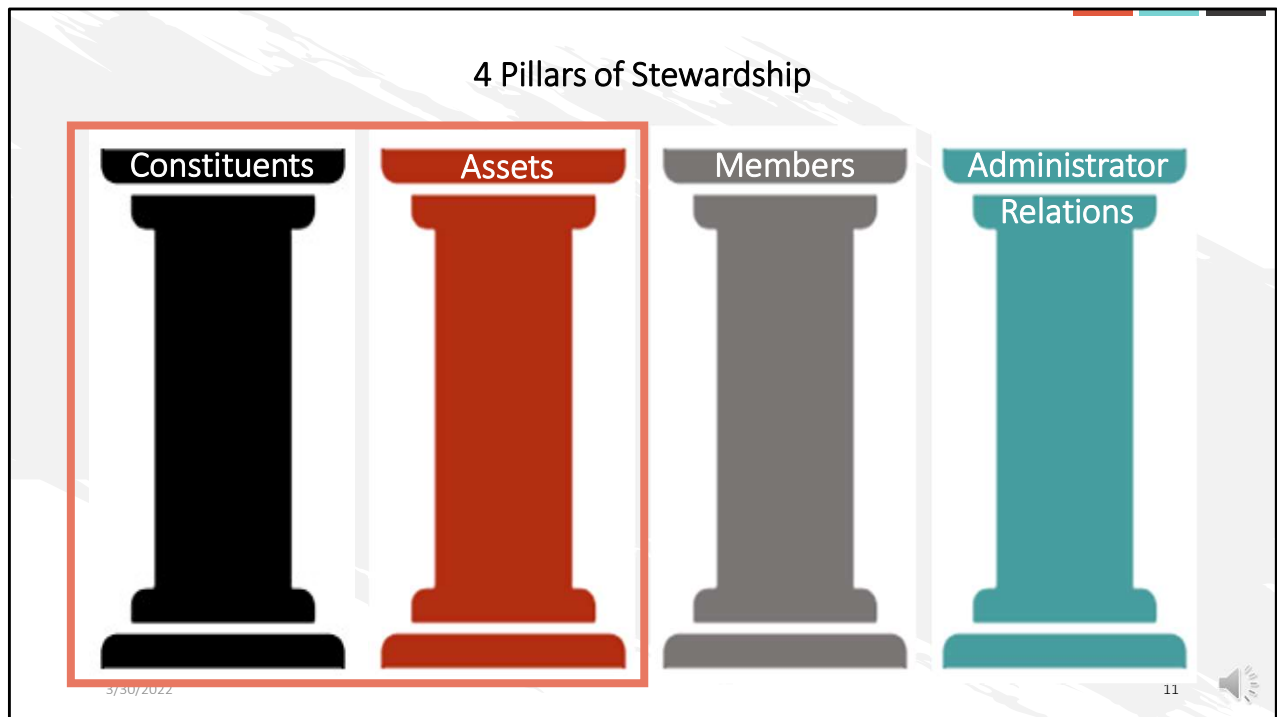
Tier III organizations have much responsibility and thus have requirements for student leader training, organization registration, and financial management. Some of these topics are covered in future online trainings, and information about all can be found in the Tier III Policy Guide available on our website.

4 Pillars of Stewardship

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As we have mentioned previously, Tier III Organizations are stewards to the UConn student body. But what does being a steward entail? Stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. Stewardship is a principle in the area of resource management grounded in the idea that 'stewards' have been provided with resources that they are responsible for managing in a way that demonstrates care and consideration for the resources themselves and the providers of those resources. In this case, your organization has been given various types of resources that you must manage responsibly. The way that Trustee Student Organization Support applies stewardship, as a philosophy of managing and leading your organization, is by emphasizing the four pillars of stewardship that your organization should embody to serve the UConn student body effectively.



So what are the four pillars of Stewardship?

Click – The first pillar is constituents. Your organization should show a strong commitment and awareness to your constituents – those from the uconn student body that pay a fee to your organization. To do this, your organization should seek input from constituents, use information gathered in your decision-making processes, and effectively communicate with your constituents about decisions made. Demonstrating stewardship to your constituency means engaging, interacting, and showing care in the best interest of the student body.

Click – The next pillar of stewardship is assets. Stewarding assets is maximizing available assets like funds, space, inventory&equipment, staff (where applicable) by effectively using resources that reflect your organization’s mission and purpose. Your organization should be committed to using resources innovatively and in a transparent manner while adhering to all financial policies and procedures.

Click – The third pillar of stewardship is your organization’s members. Stewardship of members goes beyond initial recruitment. Your organization should be providing adequate support, training, and professional development to your members as well as creating a positive, accessible inclusive and welcoming environment that empowers them. And, when necessary, your organization uses active supervision and conflict resolution tactics.

Click – The final pillar of stewardship is administrator relations. For many of your organizations, collaboration and communication with administrators will be key to serving your constituencies and supporting the mission and purpose of your organization. This

pillar involves building reciprocal and respectful relationships with both staff, including your advisors, AND administrators that allows all stakeholders to collaborate and achieve a high level of success.

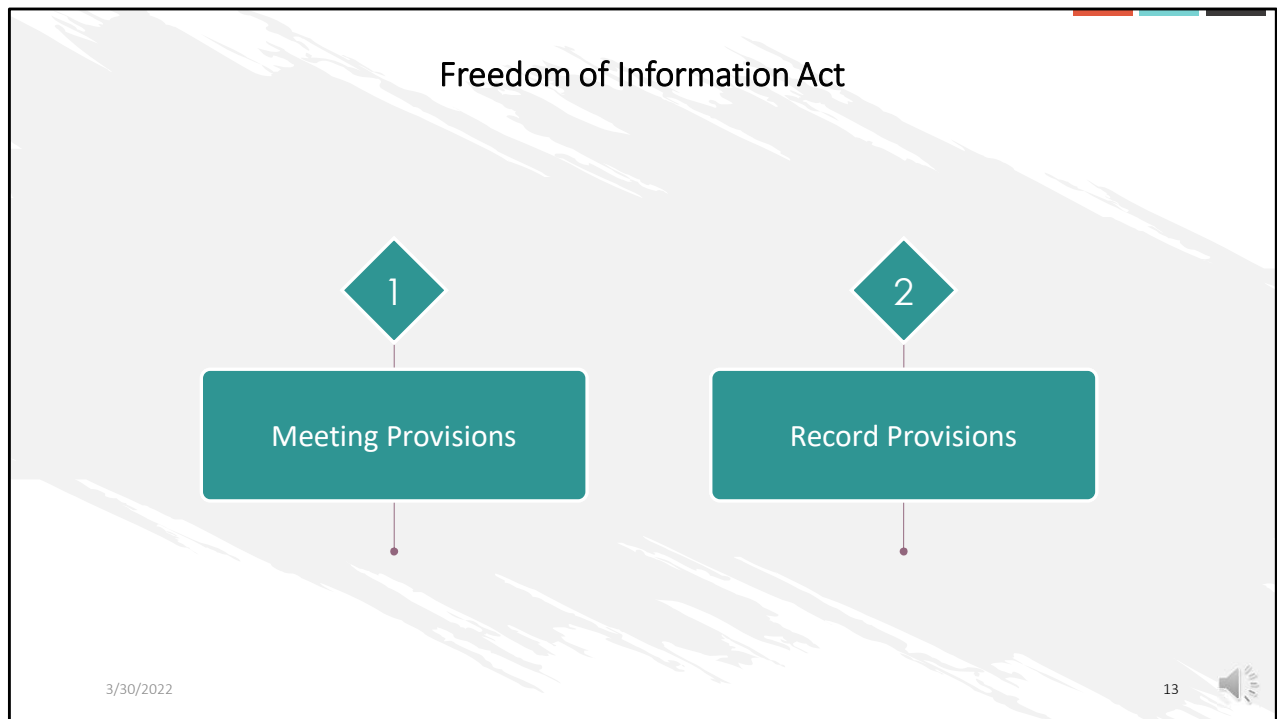
Click – The remainder of this module will focus on the constituents and asset pillars of stewardship; future online and in person training will focus on other pillars.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

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As we briefly discussed in the previous slides, a part of stewardship when it comes to your constituents and assets is transparency and communication about decision-making. Not only is this an expectation, but it is also required by law under the Freedom of Information Act, otherwise referred to as “FOIA”. as your organizations are treated as functional equivalents to public agencies either by State law and or by the Department of Student Activities. So, what does this mean for your organization in practice?



Connecticut FOIA encompasses two parts relevant to Tier III organizations:

The first is the meeting provisions which means

- The Public has right to know when your Organization is going to have a meeting and what will be discussed at that meeting
- The Public has a right to attend, as well as video tape, audio record, or photograph that meeting
- The Public has a right to access the minutes which should be a complete and accurate record of what happened at that meeting

The second is the Records provisions which means

- The Public has a right to access the records that are maintained by your Organization. This includes the right to review or get a copy of these record.

Let's talk more in depth about these provisions

FOIA: Public Meetings vs. Executive Session

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In thinking about the first element of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, the public (including but not limited to the uconn student body) has the right to know when your organization's meetings are happening and the content that will be discussed. You can share this information to the public via meeting agendas made available to the public 24 hours in advance. In general, meetings must be in a physical location on campus or at a virtual link through Webex, the University sponsored meeting software, advertised and open to the public, where all present can hear all the proceedings. In certain cases, however, your organization might enter an Executive Session where the public is not present. Let's take a moment to talk about what public meetings and executive sessions are, by definition, and also clarify when it may be appropriate for your organization to enter Exec Session.

FOIA: Public Meetings

Definition of a Public Meeting

- Any hearing/meeting;
- Any assembly of a quorum of the group; or
- Any communication by or to a quorum of the Organization, whether in person or electronically

Exclusions

- chance or social gatherings;
- collective bargaining strategy and negotiations;
- caucuses; or
- communications limited to notice of meetings or agendas

ALL meetings, except where executive session is permitted, MUST be open to the public.

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What is a Public Meeting? Any hearing or meeting of your organization or Other formal proceedings of a group. Any convening or assembly of a quorum of the group (typically 51% of the members of that committee/board, etc) or Any communication by or to a quorum of the group, whether in person or by means of electronic equipment (like email or group chats) to discuss or act upon a matter (meaning a vote or official decision).

What isn't a Public Meeting? Any chance or social gatherings; or collective bargaining strategy and negotiations; or Caucuses; or communications limited to notice of meetings or agendas

CLICK - ALL meetings, except where executive session is permitted, MUST be advertised and open to the public. This means that for the large majority of your organization's meetings whether that be the executive board meeting, committee or department meeting, anytime that official business is being discussed, the meeting **MUST be open to the public.**

FOIA: Executive Session

What is an Executive Session?

- Only **voting members** attend, unless persons are **invited**
- To convene in Executive Session, you must vote, by at least 2/3 of those present and the purpose of the Executive Session **MUST BE STATED**

Discussions that permit Executive Session:

- Personnel
- Litigation
- Security Matters
- Purchase of Real Estate
- To discuss the contents of records that are exempt from disclosure

If you're unsure prior to entering Exec Session, ask your advisor

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But in some cases, your organization *might* need to enter an Executive Session. Exec sessions are closed meetings or parts of meetings when only voting members of your organization attend unless others have been specifically invited to either witness, testify or provide an opinion. In order to enter an Executive Session, the purpose of the session must be stated, minuted, and 2/3 of the members present and voting must vote affirmatively to convene an executive session. Remember that your advisor isn't automatically included in Exec Sessions, so if you want us there, you have to invite us in the motion.

There are limited circumstances that permit your organization to enter into an executive session. These include:

- To discuss the appointment, performance, evaluations, health, & dismissals of a leader or employee (the employee must be notified prior and can require the meeting be public);
- To discuss strategy & negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation;
- To discuss security matters;
- To discuss real estate acquisition by a political subdivision (if openness is likely to increase the price); and
- To discuss the contents of records that are exempt from disclosure (for example, content that may be protected by the Family Education rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)).

Entering an Executive Session that is unpermitted is a violation of FOIA.

So, If you are ever unsure whether it the topic that you would like to discuss permits an Executive Session, be sure to reach out to your advisor to double check.

FOIA: Records and Transparency

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The second element of FOIA is that the public has a right to access the records that are maintained by your Organization. This includes the right to review or get a copy of the record. This means that your organization is required to keep records (including agendas, minutes, budgets, and financial records). More specific information about these records can be found in the Tier III Policy Guide. Extending beyond just keeping records, it is the expectation that your organization is transparent with your constituency.

Key Elements of a
Transparent Trustee
Organization

REGULAR MEETINGS

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The first key element of transparency is holding regular meetings.



REGULAR MEETINGS

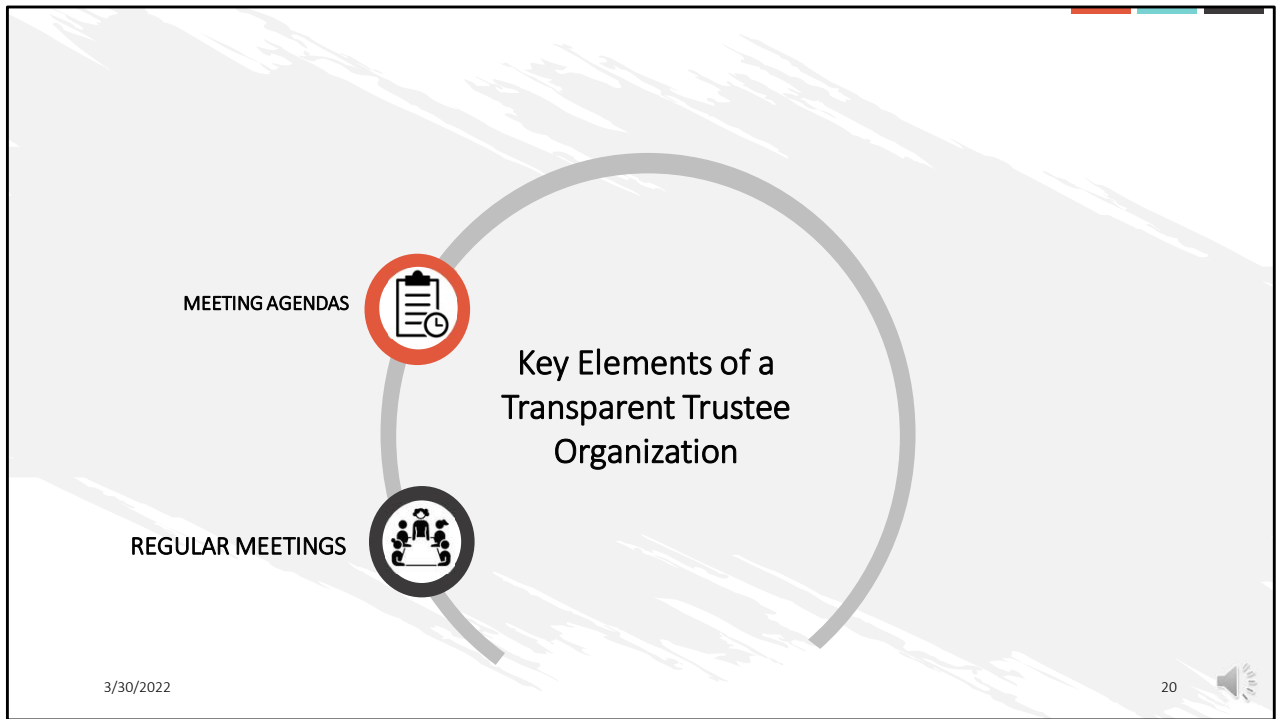
- **ONLY** time when:
 - Decisions can be made
 - Official business can be transacted
- All Meetings (including emergency meetings)
 - Must have quorum
 - Cannot be conducted electronically
- Meetings are **ALWAYS** open to Constituents
 - Consider public comment

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Again, going back to public meetings that we discussed before, meetings with quorum are the only time when official decisions can be made and business conducted. While it may be tempting to have a vote via email or groupchat among your Executive Board, official meetings cannot take place electronically (which is different than virtually on Webex). This is because your official meetings must be open to constituents and an electronic meeting does not give constituents a chance to understand the decisions being made or to comment prior to voting.

Regular and open meetings allow your organization the opportunity to be transparent with constituents and allow the opportunity for those voices to be heard. You should consider but are not required to provide the public the opportunity to speak during meetings. Many groups choose to have a public comment section of the meeting.



The second key element of a transparent organization is meeting agendas



MEETING AGENDAS

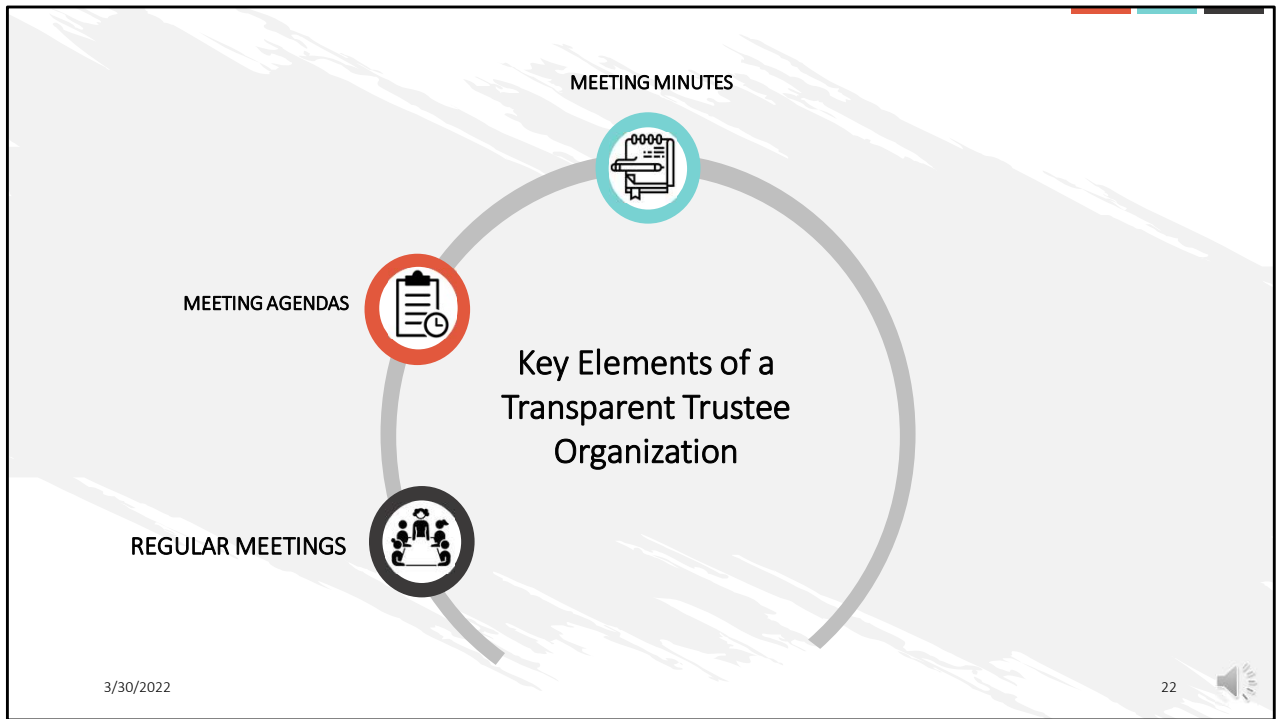
- Allow for constituents to be informed
- **MUST** be published at least 24 hours in advance
- **SHOULD** be published at least one calendar week in advance when voting on important items
- Maintain previous agendas in Organization Files
- Most agendas include the following sections:
 - Minutes of the previous meeting
 - Executive Committee Member Reports
 - Background Information for Discussion Items & Proposed Motions

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Like regular meetings, meeting agendas allow constituents to be informed about decisions that are being made and business that will be discussed. To give constituents an adequate amount of time to understand the items that will be addressed in the next meeting, meeting agendas must be posted at least 24 hours prior to the next meeting. However, for votes that are likely to garner a greater deal of interest such as updating your constitution or bylaws, operating budget votes, etc – we suggest the agenda should be advertised at least one full calendar week prior to when the vote will be taken. In addition, your organization must maintain previous agendas in your organization's files.

Most meeting agendas include minutes from the previous meeting, executive committee member reports, and background information for discussion items and proposed motions to be voted on. The trustee org support website includes a sample agenda and your Organization files likely include lots of examples as well.



The 3rd key element is meeting minutes



MEETING MINUTES

- Required for meetings where official decisions are made
 - Consider using for all meetings
- After meetings, minutes MUST be:
 - Published within 7 days on organization website
 - Provided to TSOS
 - Retained by the Organization
 - Approved at a subsequent meeting

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Meeting minutes are **required** for all meetings where official decisions are being made. In the case of your organizations, this will likely be all executive board meetings and any other meetings where a vote takes place. While it is not required for your organizations to take minutes in meetings that do not involve official decisions, it is suggested that you take meeting minutes regardless as a way of keeping track of things that have already been discussed so that you are able to efficiently complete tasks.

After a meeting where official decisions have been made, these meeting minutes must be published within 7 days on your organization's website, provided to TSOS for their records, retained by your organization for future reference if needed, and approved at the next meeting.



MEETING MINUTES – CONTENT TO BE INCLUDED

- Voting Members
 - Quorum Number
 - Notation of members present, absent, those that arrive late, and those that leave early
- Non-Voting Members
- Guests Present (members of the public)
- Matters discussed
- Actions Taken
- Regular Reports
- Voting on a motion
 - Legislative intent
 - Dissent
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Vote Outcome (ex: 10-2-0)

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Meeting minutes should include the following information: when it comes to Voting Members: The Number representing quorum and any Notation of members present, absent, those that arrive late, and those that leave early, this helps folx understand the vote counts.

Who is present and a Non-Voting Member? Are there any Guests or members of the public Present? What matters are being discussed and if any actions have been taken since the last meeting, reports of exec members or updates, and if votes are taken Minutes should be taken in enough detail to provide legislative intent and dissent as well as to document conflicts of interest. It's important to ensure that if you're voting on the expense of funds, the minutes clearly document the business justification for that vote as well as an 'up to limit' or a maximum amount of money the Org feels comfortable spending on that 'thing' (service, event, item, etc). Votes can be documented efficiently but must be clear in how each attending member voted. TSOS will review minutes when approving the expense of your Organization's dollars . The TSOS website has example minutes and staff are able to assist you in determining the appropriate way of wording motions and documenting meetings accurately.



MEETING MINUTES – DOCUMENT TITLE FORMAT

Include the following:

- Organization
- Subcommittee, if applicable
- Meeting type, if applicable
- Date of Meeting (YYYYDDMM)
- Fiscal Year Notation & Number
- Number of the meeting

EXAMPLE: USG Exec Meeting 20181122 Meeting Minutes #19-06

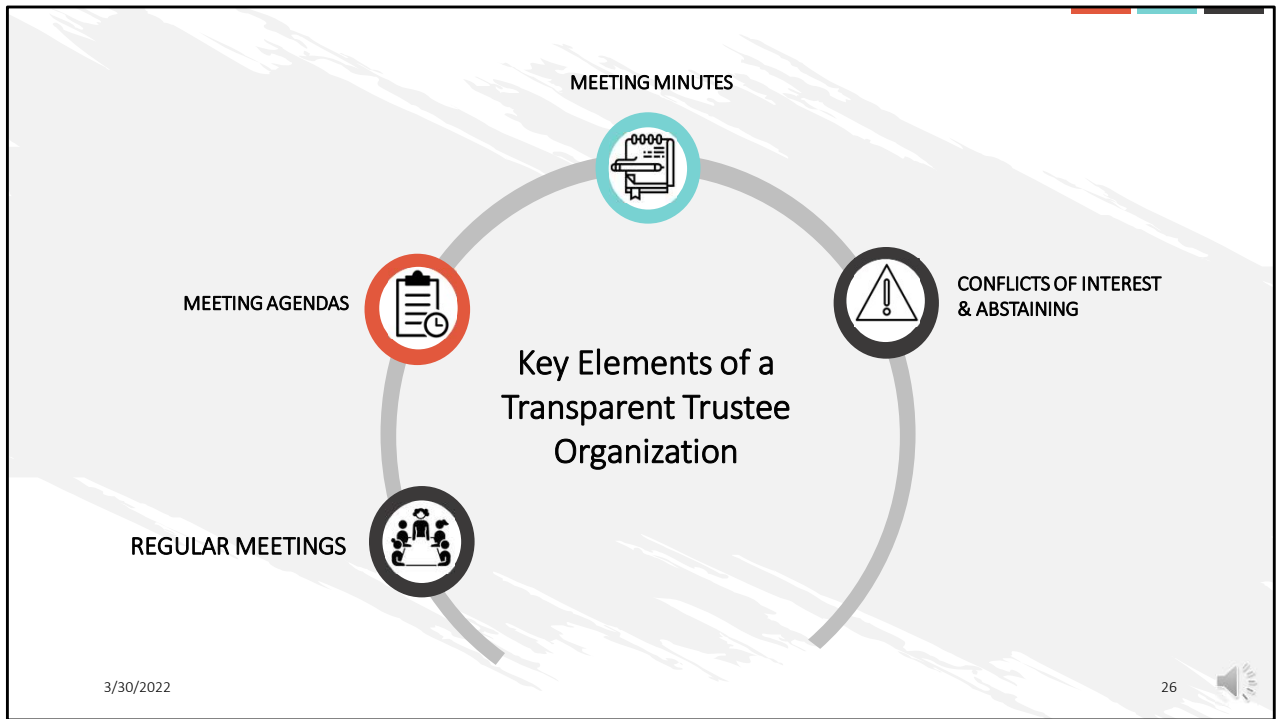
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TSOS expects a specific document title format when submitting meeting minutes.

- **Click** – Organization
- **Click** – Subcommittee, if applicable
- **Click** – Meeting type, if applicable
- **Click** – Date of Meeting (YYYYDDMM)
- **Click** – Fiscal Year Notation & Number
- **Click** – Number of the meeting

Click – This is an example of what a document title should look like before submitting to TSOS



The next key element to transparency is understanding conflicts of interest and what it means to abstain from a vote.



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- A clash between personal or self-serving interests and professional duties or responsibilities
- Always disclose potential conflicts of interests
- Recuse yourself and leave room until conclusion of vote
- Abstention is not valid for conflicts of interests
 - Why? State of Connecticut Code of Ethics

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Conflicts of interest occur when we might benefit personally from a decision or responsibilities that we have as part of our official or professional roles especially when it relates to financial gain. An example of a conflict of interest might be when a student government is voting on whether or not to fund a Tier II organization's event and a member on the committee voting is also a member of that Tier II organization.

If you think you might personally or financially benefit from a decision that is being made in your official role in your organization, you should always disclose the conflict of interest and leave the room until the matter has been discussed and voted on. This recusal is not meant to limit a member's ability to speak freely on a vote or topic, so if that member with a conflict of interest feels they want to speak, they are able to do so prior to leaving the room, and before official deliberation and voting.

Sometimes members might think abstaining from a vote is valid when the member has a conflict of interest. The reason why many think it is okay to abstain is because they follow Robert's Rules. However, it is the State of Connecticut Code of Ethics that requires officials to recuse and leave the room instead of abstain. If you have a conflict of interest, you should take NO action in the vote. Abstaining, while not voting in favor of either side, is still considered an action. It is in your best interest to disclose the conflict of interest and leave the room, even if you're not 100% sure that the situation qualifies as a conflict of interest.

Again, if you are not sure whether your situation qualifies as a conflict of interest, it is recommended that you check in with a member of the TSOS team.



REASONS TO ABSTAIN

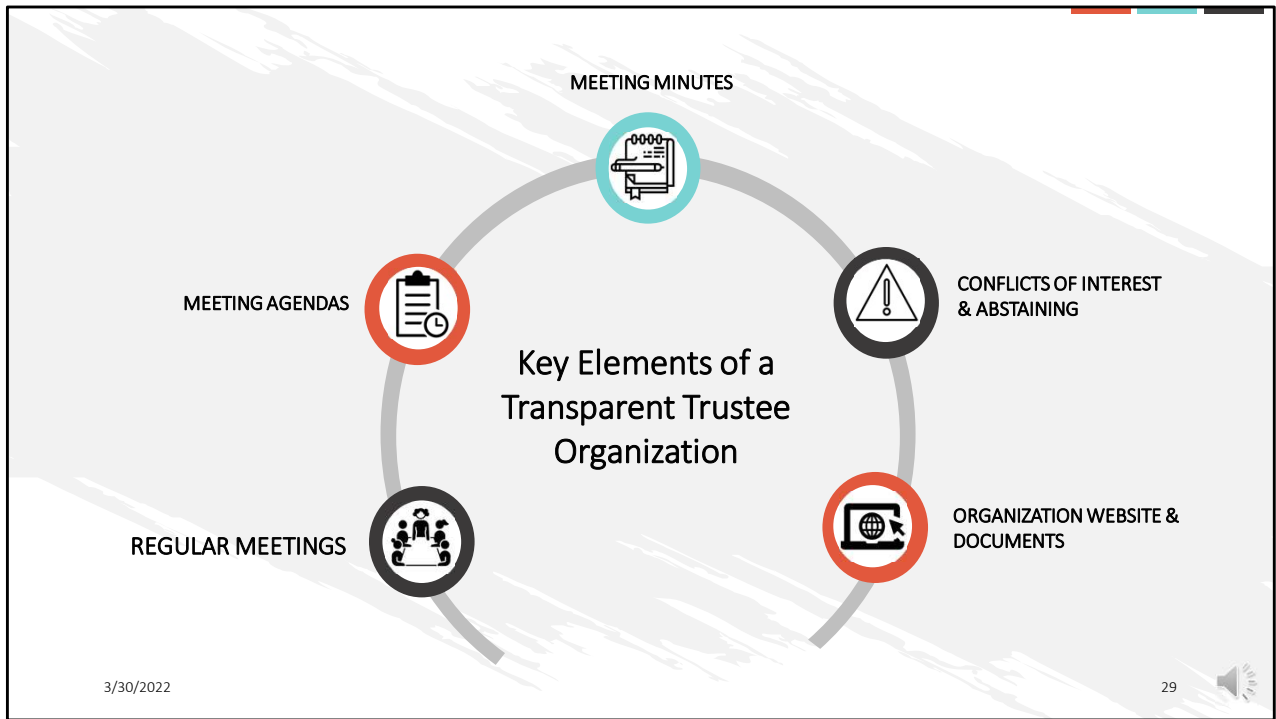
1. Organization Protocol and/or Policy
2. Lack of Information
3. Minor Opposition
4. True Indifference

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As we just discussed, a conflict of interest is not a reason to abstain. Some reasons that you may choose to abstain on a vote include:

- If your organization's protocol/policy requires the person in your position to abstain from the vote. For example, in many organizations the President is required to abstain from all votes per the constitution and or by-laws (typically unless in case of a tied vote)
- Another reason you might abstain is if you have a lack of information to make a decision. The discussion portion of a motion is where you should be asking questions to get this information, but if you missed a meeting where the information was discussed more in depth and you didn't have time to catch yourself up, or your questions aren't answered and you don't feel comfortable taking one side or the other due to a lack of information, this might be a situation where you consider abstaining from the vote. Another example would be if you missed the previous meeting, you should abstain from approving the minutes because you wouldn't have knowledge of their accuracy. Voting members often abstain from voting when approving minutes for meetings they did not attend.
- If you oppose the motion in question, but it is clear that the majority is in support, and you don't feel strongly enough to vote in the negative.
- If you are truly indifferent and do not want to go on record as taking an official side on the matter



The final key element to transparency is your organization's website



Organization Website

Websites should include the following information:

- Purpose/Mission Statement
- Governing Documents
- Officers with Contact Information
- Board Members with Contact Information
- Accurate Meeting Information
 - Agendas and Minutes
- Approved Budget Information
- Information on How to Get Involved

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Your website is a place where your constituents are able to find information about your organization and enough information to have a general understanding of the way things work. At a minimum, the elements listed here must be included on your organization's website. Your Org's Purpose/Mission Statement, any Governing Documents like the Constitution, By-Laws, Code of Conduct, a list of Officers with Contact Information. Note that TSOS advises you to use generic/position specific emails so that regardless of transition, people, vendors, administration, etc, will always be able to get in contact with the person in that role. For example, the treasurer of your organization's email might be treasurer@uconn.edu. Please note that emails created and received by an officer of a Tier III organization may be subject to a FOIA request, which is why we advise you to only use your generic organization email for Tier III business. List of Board Members with Contact Information if applicable, Accurate Meeting Information including agendas and minutes, Approved operating Budget Information and Information on How to Get Involved.

REMEMBER!

- Organizations can ONLY act in a meeting
- Actions MUST be documented in the meeting minutes
- If not, that action NEVER happened and will not be recognized!

MEETING AG...
REGULAR MEETINGS
TS OF INTEREST...
ANIZATION WEBSITE

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Transparency is key to Trust. These five elements are important to keep in mind as you prepare to serve the student body.

Click – Remember!

Click – Organizations can only act in a meeting

Click – And those actions must be documented in the meeting minutes

Click – If actions do not occur in a meeting or if those actions are not documented, that action will not be considered to have happened and will not be recognized by TSOS or other university entities.



THANK YOU!

Thank you for participating in this module! Remember that TSOS and your respective advisors are here to support you- we don't have decision making authority in your Organizations but we want you to successfully meet your goals, vision, and mission as a Tier III Organization. A logistic note- to receive credit for this video training, remember that you need to also complete the corresponding quiz in Husky CT which only becomes available after watching each module.