



Guidelines for Single Sex Organizations

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at the university unless such programs and activities are specifically exempt from the law. The university is required to be in compliance with the provisions of Title IX. Therefore, compliance with Title IX is a condition to be a registered student organization at the university. Since passage of this law and the publication of the implementing regulations, the U. S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has evolved a rather clear set of criteria for determining when single sex organizations are exempt from the provisions of Title IX. The criteria are as follows:

- the organization must have tax-exempt status under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code;
- members must be limited to students, staff or faculty at George Mason University;
- the organization must be a "social fraternity" as defined by the Department of Education.

The Department of Education defines a "social fraternity" as a group that can answer "no" to all the following questions:

- Is the organization's membership limited to persons pursuing or having interest in a particular field of study, profession or academic discipline?
- Is the membership limited to individuals who have a high level of achievement in scholarship or any other endeavor?
- Are the members permitted to hold membership in other fraternities or sororities at the university?

If a group answers "yes" to any of the questions, it is not a "social fraternity" and is not exempt from the requirements of Title IX. Therefore, the organization must accept members of both sexes. Questions regarding this policy can be directed to staff in the Office of Student Involvement.