



Sri Sarada College of Education, Autonomous , Salem-16

Structure Of Student Council

What is a Student Council?

A Student Council is a representative structure through which students in the college can become involved in the activities of the college, working in partnership with principal, staff and students for the benefit of the college and its students.

Why have a Student Council?

The Student Council is an increasingly common feature in many colleges and have worked to the benefit of the institution. Students have a valuable contribution to make to the betterment of their college and their involvement in the operation of the college is itself a valuable part of the education process for the students. A Student Council provides an opportunity for students to engage in a structured partnership with teachers, students, and principal in the operation of their college. Student Councils can improve academic standards and reduce dropout rates in colleges. Student Councils can create a sense of ownership of the college and its activities among the student population.

The establishment of a Student Council gives students an opportunity to acquire the sort of communication, planning and organisational skills which will be of benefit to them in their future lives. It enables students to take responsibility for projects, and to demonstrate that they can manage and bring such projects to successful conclusion. Moreover, the contribution made by a Student Council to the development of college policy in a number of areas can have significant benefits for students and the college. Student Council will thrive only if students themselves are committed to the concept and to making it work.

The role of the Student Council

A Student Council will set its own objectives. Some general objectives could include:

- To enhance communication between students, principal and staff
- To promote an environment conducive to educational and personal development
- To promote friendship and respect among pupils
- To support the management and staff in the development of the college
- To represent the views of the students on matters of general concern to them

A Student Council will identify activities that it would like to be involved in organising, although the final decision on the activities of a Student Council should be agreed with college rules.

The Student Council and the Principal

The role of the principal is of central importance in the establishment and operation of a Student Council. In assisting the Management in the development of college policy, and inworking with teachers and toimplement it at day-to-day level, the principal is centrally placed in all aspects of the college's operations.

In the initial stages, the principal, together with the other teachers, will assist in the development of a Student Council in several ways, for example, by discussing with students the role of a Student Council and the role of individual representatives on the Council and by advising on an appropriate constitution or statement of objectives. As the Council develops and begins to expand its role, the Principal will assist in guiding the Council's development, so as to allow for a constructive and purposeful Council.

More generally, the principal can promote a college culture which recognises the potentially valuable input that students can make, through a Student Council, into the development of the college.

The Student Council and Teachers

Developing a spirit of partnership and co-operation between a Student Council and teachers has benefits for both. The Student Council can play an important role in recognising and supporting the work of teachers. Similarly the interest and support of teachers will be of great value to aStudent Council, particularly during the early stages of its development.

It is generally desirable for a member of the teaching staff to attend meetings of the Council. The support and guidance offered by a teacher will be very useful to a Council when planning its activities, and providing for a teacher to attend Council meetings will help to build a co-operative and good working relationship between students and staff of the college.

Key functions of Student Council:

There is a wide range of activities of benefit to the college community which a Student Council may wish to undertake, some of which are outlined below:

Promoting good communications within the college

Improving communication within the college community is a shared responsibility and a Student Council can contribute to this process. Making presentations at staff meetings to keep staff informed of activities, keeping a Student Council

noticeboard or organising a regular newsletter are just some ways the Council can communicate with the students and staff.

The functions and activities of a Student Council should support the aims and objectives of the Council and promote the development of the college and the welfare of its students. In planning and undertaking activities during the course of the college year, the Council should:

- Work closely with the management, teachers and students,
- Consult regularly with students in the college, and
- Involve as many students as possible in the activities of the Council.

Supporting the educational development and progress of students

The Student Council can contribute to the learning environment for students in the college by, for example, setting up study groups for students in exam classes or homework clubs, or organising lunch time activities such as language clubs.

Assisting with induction and/or mentoring for new first year students

Starting college life is a challenging new experience for 1st Year students. During the mentoring programme senior students help new students to find their feet and can help their integration into the college community.

Contributing to the development of college policy

The Student Council can actively contribute to the development of college policy in a wide range of areas such as bullying, uniform requirements, behaviour code and extra-curricular activities. The Council could form sub-committees to consider individual policy issues.

Assisting in college sporting and cultural activities

Student Councils can assist in organising and developing sports and cultural activities within the college, including, for example, sports days and drama or musical events.

Guidelines for establishment and dissolution of Student Councils

The college after consultation with teachers draw up rules for the establishment of a Student Council, having regard to the following basic principles:

- The Student Council shall promote the interests of the college and the involvement of students in the activities of the college in co-operation with the college and teachers
- The Council should, as far as is practicable, be representative of the student community

Establishing a Student Council

The college should provide them, in a timely manner, with a copy of the rules it has drawn up in accordance with these guidelines.

Nominations

The Principal should set a date for the selection of representative(s) to the Student Council and its formation.

First Meeting

The Principal or a designated member of staff should convene the first meeting of each newly formed Council. The first meeting of a newly formed Council should take place early in the academic year.