



How to Start an Extra-Curricular College Ballroom Dance Club

Thank you for volunteering to help start an extra-Curricular Ballroom Dance Club at your college. The basic steps involved in starting a club are:

Recruit Other Students

Recruit several other students to assist you by serving as coordinators of the project and by taking phone calls from other students and helping promote the project. Share this Information Package with them.

Obtain a copy of your college's rules regarding extra-curricular clubs and follow those rules.

You and your assistants should function as the initial Steering Committee to organize the club.

Announce Steering Committee

Draft a news article announcing formation of the steering committee to organize the club and submit that article to the Editor of your college newspaper with a request that it be published as a public service announcement to all students.

- ❑ Include in the article the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of your committee and ask that interested students contact one of you.
- ❑ When students call the coordinators should record their names, phone numbers and E-mail addresses. They should explain the project to the callers and tell them they will soon receive a notice of the time and place of a meeting to organize the club.

Prepare & Post Flyers

- ❑ Prepare Flyers announcing the project and its purpose.

- ❑ Post the Flyers on campus bulletin boards, including those in all student dormitories, as well as on the bulletin boards of all fraternities and sororities.
- ❑ Send to each extra-curricular club at the college an e-mail message announcing the meeting and ask that their members be advised that they are invited to participate in the club. Emphasize that beginner dancers are welcome and that you will help them get started.

Organize A Meeting

- ❑ Organize a meeting of the students who called or sent messages expressing interest in joining the ballroom dance club.
- ❑ Send E-mail notices of the time and place of the meeting to those who expressed interest in the club. Urge them to bring their friends to the meeting.
- ❑ Publish in the college newspaper a notice of the meeting and post Flyers on campus bulletin boards as listed above.

First Meeting

At the first meeting you should explain the purpose of the club and how it will operate. See examples of Club Constitutions in the Information Package.

Sign up those who are willing to become members of the club and USA Dance. Give out extra enrollment forms for the students to use in recruiting their friends. Students can join USA Dance online at www.usadance.org. Credit cards are accepted.

Form an Organizing Committee of students to work on forming the club. This Committee should act as Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of candidates

for student officers of the club. We would encourage all officers to be members of USA Dance. Ask the Organizing Committee to use the example constitutions to draft a proposed constitution for a Ballroom Dance Club at your college and to have it ready for consideration at the next meeting when the club will be organized. The constitution should provide for the club to function as both a recreational club for social ballroom dancing and as a sports club for DanceSport. This is vital since it may enable the club to qualify for both recreational club and sports club subsidies by the college.

Faculty Advisor

Most colleges require that each club have a Faculty Advisor. This individual should be recruited by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee also should arrange for the next meeting, issue notices to students who attended the first meeting and publish a notice of the meeting in the college newspaper. A suggested goal is to have this second meeting within three weeks after the first meeting.

Your Second Meeting

Many of the students at the second meeting will not have been at the first meeting. So it will be necessary to repeat the initial briefing on how the club will operate.

The goal at the second meeting should be to have an election, form the club and obtain approval of the Constitution. Once the club is formed the officers will take charge but you should follow up with them to

- ❑ Ensure that they file the necessary papers with college officials,
- ❑ Take steps to establish a bank account in accordance with the college rules for extra-curricular clubs and
- ❑ Register the club with the College Network USA Dance – CollegeNetwork-Dir@usadance.org. USA Dance is the National Governing Body for ballroom dancing and DanceSport. This assures your club will be in the communications loop for dance news. The College Network focuses on promoting and supporting programs in colleges and universities.

Hire A Ballroom Dance Instructor

One of the first actions by the club will be to hire a ballroom dance instructor. The pay of the teacher should not be more than the local USA Dance Chapter pays for group classes at chapter dances. The local Chapter should be able to provide information on local professional instructors who may be available for hire to teach at the college and on normal instructor charges for a group lesson. The local telephone directory Yellow Pages under “Ballroom Dancing” also may include information on local instructors and dance studios.

If you encounter difficulty in finding a local professional instructor please contact USA Dance for additional guidance at CollegeNetwork-Dir@usadance.org.

Marketing Plan

Another essential action will be for the club officers to fully implement a Marketing Plan that includes the “Characteristics of a Successful Marketing Plan.” That document is in the Information Package. Application of those characteristics will be essential if you are to have a large vibrant club with back-to-back lessons for hundreds of students

Social vs Competitive

Typically, a college extra-curricular ballroom dance club’s program should include both recreational (social) dancing and DanceSport (the competitive form of ballroom dancing recognized as a sport by the International Olympic Committee). Initial classes should focus on social dancing, but soon some students will want to form a DanceSport Team and commence participating in competitions against other colleges and in Regional and National Championships organized by USA Dance. The National Collegiate DanceSport Championship is held annually and a great event to attend as a competitor or as a spectator.

Dance Classes

The club should commence a schedule of weekly classes for those who enroll.

- ❑ If there is a local USA Dance Chapter, contact them to determine if they have resources to help pay for the first two lessons so they can be offered free to the students and thus attract more members to the club.

- ❑ Get students to buy and pay for a block of at least three one-hour lessons. The teacher also may be willing to donate one or two free lessons to help get the club operating.
- ❑ Keep the charge for lessons as low as practical while ensuring that sufficient funds are collected to cover payments to the teacher and other club expenses.
- ❑ Encourage all club members to join USA Dance.

USA DANCE, INC Web Site

For information that will help your new club get started on the right foot please go to the USA Dance web site www.usadance.org. Explore the Youth - College pages and be sure to visit the "forms & resources" section for additional guidance on how to form a club, marketing, a sample of a club constitution and more.

A WORD OF CAUTION

In all of your contacts with students and college staff be sure to emphasize that your goal is to form an extra-curricular club. Do not initially raise the subject of financial support by the college or obtaining accredited status for dance classes. In most cases after a certain point the college will commence providing some financial and other support to the club activities and may consider adding ballroom dance to its curricula but now is not the time to raise those issues. Your present focus should be to organize the extra-curricular club.

After the extra-curricular club is organized and functioning well, it will be appropriate to develop plans and strategies to encourage the addition of ballroom dance to the curriculum of the Physical Education and Performing Arts Departments. A related long-term goal will be to seek recognition of DanceSport as a Varsity Sport in the Sports Department of your college.



Lessons



Competition



Competition