

Founder Region
Soroptimist International of the Americas



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams

“S” Club & Sigma Society Guidelines

“Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.”

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I. Introduction

Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. Serving as mentors to women and girls through the sponsorship of a Sigma or “S” Club is one way to achieve the Soroptimist mission.

As mentors, Soroptimists provide support, advice and friendship to women and girls, while encouraging them to develop to their fullest potential. Soroptimists have the additional opportunity to instill within mentees a passion for helping other women and girls live their dreams of a better life.

All women and girls need positive female role models—especially role models who are successful professional women. As such, Soroptimists have the ability to serve as individual role models, and to also provide a model of what can be accomplished when a network of professional women work together to make the world a better place for all women and girls.

In 1966, SIA established Sigma and “S” clubs, providing Soroptimists the opportunity to mentor college and high school age women and girls and to instill within them a desire for volunteerism. Both high school girls and college women face unique gender bias, discrimination and challenges as they grow up and enter the working world. Mentoring girls and women through the sponsorship of a Sigma or “S” Club, enables Soroptimists to impart invaluable support and guidance, while providing growth and leadership opportunities.

Since the establishment of the sponsored organizations, their administration has changed over time. They exist now as a project of the sponsoring Soroptimist club. It is no longer necessary to report the sponsorship to SIA headquarters or pay a sponsorship fee. In support of all region “S” Clubs, all Founder Region Soroptimist Clubs pay \$10 annual dues whether or not they sponsor an “S” Club.

The Soroptimist mission to provide women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment should serve as the driving force of all sponsored club activities.

II. Forming a “S” Club

Sigma Societies are formed for college women and “S” clubs are for high school age girls. Sponsoring a Sigma or “S” Club gives Soroptimists the opportunity to mentor college women or high school girls. (Please note that in March 2009 the Soroptimist Board of Directors amended the federation procedures so that Soroptimist clubs no longer need to notify SIA headquarters or submit sponsorship fees or statements when forming a Sigma or “S” Club.)

In order for a Soroptimist club to successfully sponsor a Sigma or “S” Club, the following is necessary:

- enthusiastic support of the sponsoring Soroptimist club
- approval of school authorities
- a group of women or girls interested in forming a Sigma or “S” Club
- a dedicated Soroptimist committee (two or three members) with time and energy to devote to the project
- an interested faculty advisor who is available to support and guide the women or girls.

Once a club decides to sponsor a “S” Club, create a committee of members who are interested in working with college women or high school girls and are willing to give their time to lead the formation of the sponsored club. Consider members who work in the field of education, scouting or other youth- oriented professions.

Design materials that explain how and why the club would like to form the sponsored club. For example, guidelines for how the Sigma or “S” Club will operate; how Soroptimists will attract Sigma or “S” Club members; what amount of funds will be allocated to support the Sigma or “S” Club; and what types of volunteer projects will be undertaken.

Contact the school administration. Be enthusiastic and explain the opportunities such a club will bring to the school, the women or girls and the community. Explain that the club is for students of all abilities and talents and that the Soroptimist sponsorship is a way assist them in their volunteer efforts to help other women and girls in their school and community.

Request an opportunity to speak with a small group of women or girls who are interested in volunteering to support the Soroptimist mission and who might be interested in forming a club. Have a school representative present. Some schools will require that the club have a faculty advisor. Explain the meaning and reasoning behind the Soroptimist mission and sponsorship. Girls will be proud to be sponsored by Soroptimists, who are leaders in the community.

When there is a definite indication that prospective members feel strongly about forming a club, the sponsoring Soroptimist club and faculty representative can collectively seek membership through school notices, bulletin boards and social networking sites.

Enlist this group of students to organize a few introductory meetings. Schedule them at different times and in different locations, and advertise them in a variety of places—including the school newspaper and radio station. At the meetings, introduce Soroptimist and the goal of the club. It may be beneficial to talk about ideas for the Sigma or “S” Club’s first volunteer project in order to attract more members.

Arrange a charter event that is convenient for all parties (club members, school representatives, faculty advisors, sponsoring Soroptimist club members and the region

governor). Funds for the event should come from the sponsoring Soroptimist club. A charter ceremony example is included in the Appendix of this document.

Help guide the new group with both practical advice and moral support. Express interest in all activities and, when necessary, provide financial assistance. Suggest possible projects and contacts within the community. Ongoing support of Sigma and “S” Club members is necessary for success.

III. Managing a “S” Club

To ensure the ongoing success of the Sigma or “S” Club, charter members should design bylaws that will govern the club. See page 8 for sample bylaws. Soroptimist members should work with the charter members to design workable bylaws. Some of the items that should be included are:

- The mission of the club.
- Laws governing membership.
- A description of officers and their duties. Officers may include president, president elect, secretary and treasurer.
- Nominating and election procedures.
- A description of any needed committees such as a program committee or a budget committee.
- Dues, if any.
- Information and instructions on how to amend the bylaws.
- Statement regarding the relationship with sponsoring Soroptimist club.

Well-run business meetings are necessary to create the proper environment for Sigma or “S” Club members to provide volunteer support to other women and girls. Take time to instruct Sigma or “S” Club members on how to set a meeting agenda and stick to it so those in attendance stay engaged. Suggest this sample meeting agenda.

Sample Meeting Agenda

Call to order (President)
Roll call
Minutes from last meeting (Secretary)
Treasurer’s report (Treasurer)
Committee reports
Unfinished business
New business
Adjourn

IV. Role of the Sponsoring Soroptimist Club and Faculty Advisor

Chartering a Sigma or “S” Club does not terminate the responsibility of the sponsoring Soroptimist club. Continued success is contingent upon maintaining a connection and friendship between the sponsoring Soroptimist club and the Sigma or “S” Club. Ways to establish and maintain this relationship include

- Have the club president and other members (in rotation) attend a Soroptimist meeting every month. Provide girls with Soroptimist materials. Visit the Soroptimist Store on the SIA website to purchase Soroptimist items.
- Include club members in Soroptimist program and fundraising events.
- Donate supplies (a gavel, computer, etc.) to the sponsored club.
- Suggest worthwhile projects for the club. Guide members in the development of projects.
- Whenever possible, rotate the Soroptimist members of the Sigma or “S” Club committee (and other interested club members) at scheduled Sigma or “S” Club meetings.
- Appoint a Soroptimist member to serve as liaison between the Soroptimist club and the faculty advisor.

The faculty advisor can be as involved as necessary according to school protocol and her own interest. The advisor should:

- Be present at all club meetings.
- Act as liaison between the club and school administration.
- Be responsible for the club’s adherence to school policies and procedures.
- Promote ongoing recruitment of new members.

V. Sigma and “S” Club Project Ideas

The mission of “S” Clubs should be to conduct volunteer projects that improve the lives of women and girls. The Soroptimist club should help the Sigma or “S” Club identify volunteer projects their members are interested in and help them plan and execute the projects. The Soroptimist club may also want to include Sigma or “S” Club members in Soroptimist projects. The following are some projects ideas:

- A Dream It, Be It, Career Support for Girls project, co-sponsored by a local Soroptimist club. The “S” Club could organize speakers from many different professions to come into school to discuss different careers available for women. Soroptimist club members could serve as speakers. Dream It, Be It Curriculum activities can include dance and acting classes, health issues affecting girls, and self-defense.
- Sponsor a lecture on women’s history to celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8.

- Conduct a teen dating violence awareness-raising project.
- Conduct an anti-trafficking/slavery project.
- Sponsor university forums for girls. Provide information about selecting a university, completing the application and writing a personal essay.
- Establish or participate in a mentoring program for younger girls. Once a week eat lunch with them, read, work on homework, or just get to know them.
- Participate in Earth Day by bringing in environmental speakers to school to discuss how exposure to dioxin links to many types of medical problems for women, including risk of ovarian and breast cancer.
- Establish a food and clothing drive for a domestic violence shelter.
- Donate toys and books to a local domestic violence shelter.
- Work with underprivileged and migrant girls in tutoring programs.
- Participate in women’s health awareness workshops, seminars, and fairs.
- Develop leadership skills that build self-confidence, responsibility, teamwork, and decision-making.

To help the Sigma or “S” Club determine the impact and success of their projects, one of the most crucial factors to consider is the intended outcome. It is important to understand outcomes-based project evaluation before setting goals and objectives, and before designing a project.

Outcomes-based project evaluation is the assessment of how well a project is meeting its goals. It is the regular, systematic tracking of the extent to which project participants experience benefits or changes to their lives as a result of the project. This type of evaluation:

- enables clubs to verify accomplishment of their goals.
- ensures that the correct activities are being conducted to bring about the impact needed by project beneficiaries.
- measures the benefit or change to beneficiaries as a result of the project.
- enables clubs to state the impact of its projects;
- enables clubs to make well-informed decisions about continuing, ending or revising a project.

Clubs that conduct outcomes-based evaluation are able to speak more specifically about the impact of their work in the community to improve the lives of women and girls.

Outcomes-based evaluations do not need to be complex or lengthy. The scope of the evaluation should match the complexity of the project.

VI. Conclusion

Whether sponsoring a Sigma or “S” Club, Soroptimists have the opportunity to mentor women and girls, and provide them with the encouragement and support they need to realize their fullest potential as women—while also helping to improve the lives of other women and girls in

their communities and throughout the world. As Sigma or “S” Club members, women and girls have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and qualities while gaining valuable experience as a community volunteer, all with the support of Soroptimists who are genuinely invested in their success.

“S” Clubs, together with their sponsored Soroptimist clubs, have the potential to double their efforts—not only to achieve the Soroptimist mission to provide women and girls with access to education, but to support the SIA vision where women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

Appendix A Sample Bylaws

The sponsoring Soroptimist club should revise and adopt these bylaws to reflect the character of the Sigma, or “S” club and take into consideration any school requirements.

Article I—Name

Section 1—The name of this club shall be the “S” Club of _____.

Article II—Objectives

Section 1—The objectives of this club shall be:

- a. to provide women and girls with the access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment,
- b. to cooperate with school authorities in creating a school environment with high standards and ideals;
- c. to prepare members to assume leadership in the business and professional world.

Article III—Membership

Section 1—Membership in this club shall be for students interested in community volunteerism, providing education and training opportunities for women and girls, and who show leadership in extracurricular activities in school.

Section 2—Membership should be divided as evenly as possible among ages.

Article IV—Officers

Section 1—The officers shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

Section 2—The officers shall assume office following their election and shall hold office for one year, or until their successors take office.

Section 3—Duties of the officers:

- a. The president shall preside at all meetings of the club; represent the club in student activities when necessary; appoint all committees; and be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.
- b. The vice president shall perform the duties of the president in her absence.
- c. The recording secretary shall keep the minutes of all club and board meetings; maintain a roll of membership and attendance; be a custodian of the permanent records of the club; conduct all official correspondence; prepare a calendar of events and notices of meetings for the school bulletin; and prepare a monthly report for the Soroptimist club.
- d. The treasurer shall collect all dues and keep an account of all receipts and expenditures; deposit funds in accordance with the procedure recommended by the school; submit a monthly financial report to the club; and be a member of the Budget Committee.
- e. A report shall be made by each officer at the end of the term of office on activities pertaining to the office.

Article V—Nomination and Election of Officers and Advisor(s)

Section 1—A Nominating Committee of three members will be appointed by the president.

Section 2—The Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more nominees for each office.

Section 3—The report of the Nominating Committee shall be read at the April meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

Section 4—Election shall take place between April 1 and May 15, and shall be by ballot. A majority shall elect.

Section 5—The faculty advisor(s) shall be appointed/approved by the school administrator. There shall be no limit to the term of office.

Section 6—In case of vacancy in the office of president, the vice president shall become president. In case of vacancy in any other office, the Nominating Committee shall report at the next meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor and the club shall elect an officer to fill the vacancy.

Article VI—Meetings

Section 1—There shall be two meetings each month during the school year to be held on the ____ of each month. Option: One can be a business meeting and the other a program meeting.

Section 2—The time and place of the meeting shall be determined by the members with the approval of the school administrator and the faculty advisor(s).

Section 3—At least one Soroptimist advisor and/or one faculty advisor shall be present at every regular meeting.

Section 4—A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members.

Article VII—Committees

Section 1—The Membership Committee shall be responsible for putting into operation the plan for getting new members.

Section 2—The Program Committee shall plan and be responsible for each program meeting.

Section 3—The Volunteer Committee shall investigate volunteer projects and, with the approval of the Soroptimist and faculty advisors, present them to the members. The committee shall supervise and direct the completion of the projects chosen by the club.

Section 4—The Public Awareness Committee shall publicize all activities sponsored by the club and shall send semiannual notices of club activities to the sponsoring Soroptimist club.

Section 5—The Budget Committee, consisting of the outgoing president, the outgoing treasurer and the faculty advisor, shall submit a budget for membership approval at the business meeting in May.

Section 6—The Fundraising Committee shall suggest methods of raising money for service and operational expenses. It shall promote all projects approved by the club, with the consent of the Soroptimist and faculty advisor and school administration.

Article VIII—Dues

Section 1—The dues shall be _____ per year.

Section 2—If the club disbands, any remaining funds in the treasury shall revert to the Board of Education of the _____ School.

Article IX—Parliamentary Authority

Section 1—The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedures not specifically covered by this constitution.

Article X—Amendments

Section 1—These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote by the sponsored club followed by a two-thirds vote by the sponsoring Soroptimist club.

Section 2—Proposals for amendments may be submitted by this club through the local sponsoring Soroptimist club.

Appendix B Sample Sponsored Club Advisor Job Description

- Facilitate interaction and communication between the sponsored club and the sponsoring Soroptimist club.
 - Be available to advise the sponsored club president on all aspects of Soroptimist and foster leadership opportunities.
 - Be available to give meaningful input to assure a smooth-running club.
 - Train and educate sponsored club officers and members in running meetings, planning programs and organizing service projects.
 - Train sponsored club officers in the duties of their offices, club bylaws, club structure, parliamentary procedure and Soroptimist activities.
 - Train sponsored club members in community volunteerism, how to assess needs of the community and tailor volunteer projects accordingly.
 - Attend sponsored club meetings or arrange for another Soroptimist to attend.
 - Encourage joint activities and volunteer projects with Soroptimist members.
 - Report regularly to the Soroptimist club about the sponsored club activities. Provide information for both clubs' newsletters.
 - Encourage the Soroptimist club to provide financial support to the sponsored club as necessary.
 - Assist with recruitment of sponsored club members, and encourage both sponsored club members and Soroptimist club members to recruit new members.
 - Be a positive Soroptimist role model for sponsored club members.
 - Foster a positive environment in which to make friends, to help people and to have fun doing it.
 - Encourage sponsored club members to join the Soroptimist club when appropriate.
- Eligibility Requirements:
- Must be a Soroptimist member in good standing.
 - Must have the ability to relate to women or girls in a manner that will facilitate their growth and development as successful, self-empowered individuals who value volunteerism and the Soroptimist mission.
 - Must make the time commitment to attend sponsored club meetings and activities.
 - Must be a positive role model for women or girls.
- Reporting Requirements: As determined by the Soroptimist club. Term of Assignment: In accordance with club appointments. Finances: As determined by the Soroptimist club. Funding is recommended for the following: attendance by at least one sponsored club member (usually the club president) at region fall meetings, spring conferences and workshops.

Appendix C Sample Charter and Installation Ceremony

President: *Welcome and introductions!*

“S” Club Chair: *President, all requirements for the organization and chartering of the “S” Club of XXXX High School, sponsored by Soroptimist International of XXXXX has been approved, their advisor chosen and their officers elected. It is my distinct privilege to introduce the charter members, who will be escorted by their Soroptimist sponsors, when their names are called.*

(Sample, each member is escorted by a Soroptimist member)

_____ escorted by Director _____

_____ escorted by Vice President _____

_____ escorted by _____

Etc.

(Sponsors return to their seats when all students are in their places)

Soroptimist President: *We are happy today to present our Soroptimist Vice President, who has agreed to bestow the charter, which will be accepted by the “S” Club President.*

Vice President: *Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. Soroptimists are interested in our youth who are service-minded and assisting them to develop good Citizenship and Leadership through the “S” Club.*

Each “S” Club is sponsored by the local Soroptimist club to whom you turn, along with your advisor, for help and advice.

In the name of Soroptimist International of the Americas and of the Soroptimist Club of XXXXX, I am proud to present you the official Charter of the "S" Club of XXXXX High School.

President "S" Club: *(Step forward and takes the charter)*

Soroptimist President: *Your name comes from the first letter of the words Service and Soroptimist, the service club that sponsors you. We are very proud of your club; it's Aims and Ideals.*

As with our service club, "Attendance is the price of membership." You will profit the club to the extent that you are willing to give of your efforts in its behalf.

Although Soroptimist and "S" Club are primarily Service Clubs, there is also a social and friendly side. You must make your own place in the club just as you do in school.

We, the members of Soroptimist International of XXXXX are proud today to induct you into membership in the "S" Club of XXXXXXX High School.

Remember that as an "S" Club member, you proclaim to the world that you pledge yourself to the ideals of Service, Friendship and Leadership.

If you, as charter members, pledge yourself to your school and your community, pledge yourself to be friendly and promise to take responsibility and initiative in carrying out your duties, please say, "I will."

We know you will continue to grow in ability and enjoyment as you serve others.

We know you have already been considering your activities, and your officers are ready to express their acceptance of their responsibilities, which they have assumed.

I would like to ask the Board of Directors of Soroptimist Int'l of XXXXXXX to install our Charter officers.

District Director: *Your choice of officers is very important, both to the club and to you as members. They are actually the trademark by which the community judges the integrity, stability and progressiveness of your organization.*

This is why it is important that officers be carefully selected. Along with the responsibility and hard work required to be a good a good officer, there will come honor and respect from your associates for a job well done.

Club Treasurer: *“S” Club Treasurer-*

It requires special talent to keep a set of books in orderly fashion. You shall collect all dues and keep an account of all receipts and expenditures. You shall deposit funds and make withdrawals according to the procedure recommended by your high school, and you shall make a written report to the board and to the club on a monthly basis.

Will you promise to do so?

Then I declare you duly installed as treasurer of the “S” Club of XXXX High School.

Director: *“S” Club Membership-*

You are the public relations officer for the club. You will handle all recruitment and retention on members. You shall maintain a roll of membership and attendance and sit as chair of the membership committee. You will be the face to the community for encouraging others to join and support “S” Club.

Will you carry out these duties to the best of your ability?

Then I declare you duly installed as membership chair of the “S” Club of XXXXX High School.

Club Secretary: *Secretary-*

The secretary is an unofficial historian of the club. It will be your minutes that members will refer to in coming years for knowledge of past actions. Therefore, the accuracy of your minutes is a must. This will require you to be in attendance at all board meetings.

You must also answer correspondence in a prompt manner, with courtesy and cooperation.

Will you undertake this mission?

Then I declare you duly installed as the secretary of the “S” Club of XXXXX High School.

Vice president: *Vice President-*

As Vice President, you are the understudy for the President. Since you can never be certain when you will be called upon to fill in for the president, it will be necessary for you to attend each board meeting and business meeting, as well as to keep informed about committee activities, service projects and current plans.

Do you accept this important responsibility?

Then I declare you duly installed as Vice President of the "S" Club of XXXX High School.

President: *President-*

Your duties could fill a book. Of course, you will preside at all board and business meetings, appoint all committees and represent the club in student activities when necessary. But you will also have other important responsibilities. Your club elected you president because they wanted a leader-positive leadership without dictatorship. Give your members encouragement and inspiration.

You are a leader of a group, so practice sound communication skills. Talk things over. Involve all members in some form of club activity so they feel responsible and as if they really belong. Last, but not least, make a point of complimenting club members when they do a good job.

Do you accept the responsibilities included in this high office?

Then I declare you duly installed as president of the "S" Club of XXXXX High school.

District Director: *Our congratulations and good wishes go with all of you.*

"S" Club President: *Leadership can be achieved only through effort. Members try at all times to be fair, thorough and dependable, to put first things first, and to give the best in all they do.*

"S" Club Vice President: *Service is our constant aim. We strive to be of service to our school, to its students and to our community.*

“S” Club Secretary: *We are pledged to good citizenship, which means respect and honor for the rules of our school and the laws of the land.*

“S” Club Treasurer: *We promise loyalty to our school, our community, and our country.*

“S” Club Membership Chair: *We will pledge to share “S” Club and Soroptimist ideals and goals with others, to expand the reach of our club.*

“S” Club Chair: *As a symbol of your membership, wear this “S” Club pin, which bears on its face the words: Leadership, Service, and friendship. You have by your statements indicated your full awareness of the meaning of these terms. Wear your pins with pride and your membership with honor. (Give pins to girls)*

Club President: *We welcome you to membership, you may be seated.*

No charter Installation is complete without gifts and we have some to present. Please welcome the Founder Region Governor for Soroptimist International of the Americas-

Soroptimist International of XXXXX would like to “S” Club President XXXX with a scrapbook to keep “S” Club memories in.

“S” Club Chair: *No party is complete without cake; please join us in back once we are adjourned to share the beautiful cake.*

Club President: *Thank you for all coming to share this special evening*

Please join me for the Soroptimist pledge, followed by the “S” Club pledge, which is printed on the back of your program.

Close