



C. Blake McDowell School of Law

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Moving Forward: One Chapter at a Time

Creation of a New Student Organization: A Students Guides

Desire

When I was looking into law schools, being involved in the student JRCLS was one of the few elements that was weighted more than others were. Having been involved in other professional organizations prior to law school I knew that there was a value in being associated with people and networks that come through a professional organization. I was accepted at several law schools, some of which already had a JRCLS student chapter, and one that did not have a JRCLS student chapter. In the end, the choice of school was based on cost (tuition), quality of education, cost of living, elementary school systems (since I was bringing school age children), and near the bottom of the list came JRCLS. Based on these criteria, the final choice ended up being the school that did not have a JRCLS student chapter.

At a school visit, I made a point of asking about creating a new student organization. The administration outlined a couple simple steps that would help create a new student

organization. The dean spent some time talking with my wife and I about the law school and he was excited at the prospect of having a JRCLS student chapter, because in his words, "I love Mormons. They are bright, dependable, and focused. I wish we had more Mormons at the University..." He saw the creation of a JRCLS as one more factor that would draw a larger LDS student base to the school.

Once school started, I met again with a couple of the administrators to indicate my desires to form a JRCLS student chapter. It was clear that the process was not going to be simple, and would require considerable effort in the approval processes and applications. My heart and mind were willing, but as a 1L, time was lacking.

In order to make the process as streamlined as possible, I had to be "hyper-organized." Knowing the required application deadlines, and committee approval dates, was critical.

Minimum Requirements and Paperwork

Two separate processes take place in the

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Editor Note:

As the weather warms up and we move forward with preparation for finals, I wanted to take a moment to thank the readership of the *JRCLS Student Newsletter*. Next month will be the final edition for the school year. Some chapters have already done this, but I want to encourage you to use the newsletter to 1) showcase your individual chapters (particularly if you have made it in the newsletter this year), 2) recruit new students, and 3) garner support from your individual schools. It has been a pleasure to oversee the newsletter this year and see the greatness that is occurring across the world with each student member. I believe in our ability to solidify our own religious convictions, grow professionally and serve others for the good of mankind. Thank you for your individual and collective inspiration of goodness.

-Travis L. Johnson
Franklin Pierce 2010

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creation of a new JRCLS student chapter. The first process is to get the chapter approved and recognized through the University. In some situations, this may be difficult since the University may be reluctant to form a student organization that has a code of ethics as one of the criteria for the student officers (see the pending [Supreme Court hearing on Christian Legal Society v. Martinez](#)). The second process is to get the chapter approved and recognized through JRCLS international. Many of these processes can be completed simultaneously; however, there are some that should be done before others. This section will provide some details concerning both processes.

University Application

Our law school, like many, runs independently from the rest of the University, however, they still are required to satisfy many of the University requirements, especially when it comes to student organizations. Since the law school does not regularly create new student organizations, this was a learning process for both the administration and me. I was able to obtain all of the required paperwork through the University web pages. I also spoke directly to the University office that is in charge of student organizations (often through the student government), and this put me in a position to know the ins and outs of the process and help the law school administration understand the process as well. Many Universities have a minimum requirement of students that are interested in a new student organization before the University will grant acceptance of the organization. All of the minimum requirements and required paperwork should be obtained through the University. Doing the preliminary footwork early put us in a better position to marshal the applications through the process.

Most Universities will require the student organization to have a constitution. A sample template constitution/bylaws can be found at

http://students.jrcls.org/documents/Model_Bylaws.doc. The University also had specific suggestions and requirements that they wanted to see in our constitution/bylaws. Several modifications were required to satisfy the University requirements imposed on our new student organization.

The initial draft of the constitution/bylaws required approval/review by the law school alumni and student affairs committee (usually composed of several faculty and a couple alumni). This committee only meets once a month (if we are lucky). Therefore, it was imperative to get the documents pulled together and submitted in a timely manner so that we were not waiting on the University. The committee

“Successful attorneys prepare for every conference call, every meeting, and every presentation – regardless of the audience.”

was very helpful and provided thorough review and editing requesting modification to certain terms and elements of the constitution/bylaws. In all, the review process took two months to complete. After the committee reviewed and approved the new

student organization then the recommendation of the committee to approve our student organization was added to the agenda of the next faculty meeting so that the faculty could vote on the approval. This was another full month away. Needless to say, it felt like we spent a lot of time waiting for things to happen, but I had plenty of other things to be doing my first semester of law school (like reading cases about contract law). The faculty voted and approved the organization. Once the faculty approved the student organization, we were given a provisional status and were able to meet on campus and use the Universities facilities. With provisional status, we held our first meeting, voted on officers, and discussed the desires of the students with respect to meeting topics and frequency. The final step to becoming completely recognized through the University was to apply through the general University office in charge of student organizations. This was simple, but open enrollment of new student organi-

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zations was only available at the beginning of each semester. So again, we had to wait.

The general University application process required the following information in the application: an approved constitution, a faculty advisor, a list of students that will be members (6 to 10 minimum), and a list of student officers. There are definitely benefits associated with becoming recognized officially as a student organization through the University. We receive money each academic year to be used for the benefit of the student organization. We are included in the law school newsletters, and can use the University facilities.

This process will vary by law school, so do your research, and be very organized in order to keep the ball rolling.

JRCLS Application

The application process through JRCLS was much simpler, and more streamlined. There are many resources available at <http://students.jrcls.org/> and <http://www.jrcls.org/>. The application process consisted of submitting an application form, chapter constitution/bylaws, and a letter from the University acknowledging our official recognition to the student chapter committee at jrcls.students@gmail.com. This was painless and easily achievable with the information collected during the University application process.

There are many other aspects of the JRCLS approval process that should be mentioned here. The first of these is that every student member can go to the <http://students.jrcls.org/> website and apply for membership through the “apply now” link in the login box. This will add each student to the online database. These student will also appear as student members of the student chapter once the student chapter is officially recognized by JRCLS. Students also have the ability to upload a current resume for browsing and searching by attorney

members. The online functionality also includes emailing and calendaring to notify the registered students. If used properly, this tool can be very effective.

Second, staying in contact with your sponsoring attorney chapter is critical. This is something that is necessary for the JRCLS application process, but is also helpful during the University approval process. If you can show the University that there is a strong network of individuals that will help maintain the organization, the University will be more willing to approve the student organization. Be familiar with the way in which a student chapter interacts under the umbrella of the sponsoring attorney chapter. More information on this relationship can be found at

<http://www.jrcls.org/leaders/resources/guide/chapter3.php>.

Third, the local attorney chapter is also responsible for providing an attorney advisor that will help in the organization and management of the newly formed student chapter. In order to find a sponsoring attorney chapter, go to <http://www.jrcls.org/chapters/chapterslist.php> and find the city and state closest to the law schools geographic location. The attorney chapter president will be able to provide more information about the sponsoring process and provide information on possible attorney advisors. The attorney advisor should be appointed by the sponsoring attorney chapter, however, you might want to make sure you are compatible with the proposed attorney advisor before he is appointed to the position. The attorney advisor should also sit as a board member on the sponsoring attorney chapter board. This is one of the many ways that the sponsoring attorney chapter stays in contact with the student chapter. This policy may vary from region to region and it is probably best handled on a chapter by chapter basis. Most likely, the attorney ad-

www.jrcls.org/chapters/chapterslist.php and find the city and state closest to the law schools geographic location. The attorney chapter president will be able to provide more information about the sponsoring process and provide information on possible attorney advisors. The attorney advisor should be appointed by the sponsoring attorney chapter, however, you might want to make sure you are compatible with the proposed attorney advisor before he is appointed to the position. The attorney advisor should also sit as a board member on the sponsoring attorney chapter board. This is one of the many ways that the sponsoring attorney chapter stays in contact with the student chapter. This policy may vary from region to region and it is probably best handled on a chapter by chapter basis. Most likely, the attorney ad-

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Clark Quote:

You have the highest of human trusts committed to your care. Providence has showered on this favored land blessings without number, and has chosen you as the guardians of freedom, to preserve it for the benefit of the human race.

- J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

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advisor will need some help getting up to speed as well. Information for the attorney advisor can be found at <http://www.jrcls.org/leaders/roleofattorneyadvisor.pdf> and <http://www.jrcls.org/leaders/JRCLS%20Checklist%20for%20Attorney%20Advisors.pdf>.

Finally, as mentioned before, there are many resources available at the <http://students.jrcls.org/> website. One of these resources that is very useful is http://students.jrcls.org/chapter_resources.php. This pro-

vides a link to JRCLS letterhead, JRCLS logo, leadership transition, and graduating student members paperwork. One other great resource is <http://www.jrcls.org/leaders/resources/guide/chapter8.php>.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the processes discussed in this article.

Andrew Maas – andrewjmaas@gmail.com.

Spiritual Growth:

“Even though you may be learned in the ways of the world, do not forget the power of God.”

Russel M. Nelson
LDS Apostle
April 23, 2009

Religious Freedom Writing Competition

Open to All JRCLS Student Members

- Purpose:** The purpose of the writing competition is to promote quality research and writing by the student members of the Society on the important topic of religious freedom. The competition is being sponsored by the DC Chapter of the Society and the International Center for Law and Religion Studies.
- Awards:** **First Place**-- \$1,500 cash award plus a \$500 travel reimbursement to attend the award dinner in Washington DC in the fall at which award winners will be recognized.
Second Place-- \$1,000 cash award.
Third Place-- \$500 cash award.
Honorable Mentions— Additional meritorious papers may be recognized.
- One or more of the award winning papers will be published online and possibly in print.
- Submission:** All papers must be submitted by no later than August 1, 2010 by e-mail to papers@jrclsdc.org. You will receive e-mail confirmation of submission. If you do not, please contact Jen at 703-753-4543.
- Form:** A scholarly paper of at least 2000 words, but not more than 3000 words, typed, thoroughly cited and presented in a publishable format on the topic of religious liberty.
- Selection:** Awards will be announced the first week of September.
- Questions:** Questions concerning the writing competition may be directed to papers@jrclsdc.org.