



Creating an on-campus group for students with food allergies, celiac disease or other dietary restrictions can have a lot of great benefits.

- **Support:** Having food allergies or celiac disease can feel isolating. It can be difficult to find safe places to eat or participate fully in events that involve food. Getting to know other students facing similar issues can be a great source of support and enable students to spark new friendships.
- **Mentorship:** Coming onto campus as a new student with food allergies or celiac disease can feel overwhelming. A student group can give incoming students a way to meet upperclassmen who have learned how to manage their dietary restrictions with confidence and can recommend on-campus and off-campus dining options.
- **Education:** Group members can collaborate with college and university staff to improve food allergy education and meet student needs on campus.
- **Advocacy:** Want to see changes made on your campus? A group of students advocating together can be a powerful way to get things done.

Creating a student organization:

- Research your university's guidelines for becoming an officially recognized student club. Usually this information can be found through your university's website on the page for student organizations. Being a university-recognized group often comes with benefits, such as funding for your group's events.
- Many universities require student groups to have a university staff member as an adviser. It's a good idea to start with people who support the needs of students with food allergies or celiac disease on your campus. If you don't have an adviser in mind, here are some people to consider seeking out:
 - Dining services staff (e.g. a registered dietitian)
 - Academic staff who teach nutritional or cooking courses
 - Health services staff
 - Disability services staff
 - Resident life staff
- Some universities will require you to draft a constitution to be officially recognized. See Appendix A for a sample constitution.

Growing a student organization:

- Be inclusive. Students with food allergies and celiac disease may be an obvious target for membership, but students with an interest in nutrition, a desire to advocate for others, or other conditions like diabetes and food intolerances may also be interested in your group.
- Share your group's information with dining services, health services, disability services and resident life. These departments may be able to share information about your group with other students.
- Use social media to your advantage. Market your group and events on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Host casual, fun events. Student group events can go beyond regular meetings. Get together for fun events like movie nights, bowling, dinner together, a dorm hall "block party," painting nights, etc.
- Post flyers on campus advertising your group and events.
- Pitch a story about your new group to your campus newspaper. Student newspapers may write an article about your group to help get the word out.
- List your student group in [FARE's Student Group Network](#).

Educating and advocating as a group:

- One of the most impactful things you can do is share your experiences. Share your stories with those in a position to make changes.
- Partner with departments like dining services and resident life to offer input on making dining and residence halls safer and more inclusive.
- Check to see if there is a student dining committee. These committees often serve as advisors and represent the student voice to dining services. If there is one, try to connect with them. You might even be able to get a representative on the committee.
- If your school has a nutritional or cooking program, look for ways to partner with them for education and outreach. You might be able to reach a whole new audience of future chefs and registered dietitians.
- Encourage your university to use FARE's Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Higher Education to review and improve their food allergy program through dining services, resident life/housing, and disability services. This free guide can be downloaded at www.foodallergy.org/collegeprogram
- Interested in advocacy outside of your university? Check out www.foodallergy.org/advocacy for information about how to get involved with local legislative efforts.
- Visit www.foodallergy.org for additional education tools and resources.

APPENDIX A

Brandeis Food Allergy and Digestive Disorders Association¹

I. Purpose

The purpose of Food Allergy and Digestive Disorders Association is to provide a group for students with food allergies and restrictions to discuss issues on campus, suggest new ideas and discuss the University's compliance with accommodating students with food allergies, restrictions and sensitivities. The club also provides guidance for students coping with food allergies, restrictions and sensitivities in a college setting, living on their own for the first time, and how to deal with various social situations. This club will follow guidelines and extend the purpose of the Food Allergy Research & Education College Food Allergy Program to students on campus. The club is also ideal for students learning about different allergies and understanding how to better accommodate friends with allergies.

II. Membership

Active members attend at least half of the meetings each semester. Inactive members attend less than half of the meetings per semester. Only active members may vote in elections. However, both active and inactive members are allowed to attend meetings and events.

III. Officers

There will be five officer positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and outreach manager.

The president's responsibilities include organizing meetings and facilitating elections.

The vice president's responsibilities include taking on the role of president in the president's absence.

The secretary's responsibilities include taking minutes and meetings and sending out notifications and updates to club members through the listserv.

The treasurer's responsibilities include handling expenses and funding, in the event that the club holds any events that require funding.

The outreach manager's responsibilities include facilitating education on allergies, restrictions and sensitivities throughout campus. Outreach manager will help to promote events and use social media.

Should an officer fail to complete his or her duties, a club vote to remove the officer may be held. This vote may be held only when three executive board members out of five vote to hold this vote.

IV. Election of Officers

Elections will be held once per year in March for the following academic year. Elections will be held for the positions of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Semesterly elections may occur when an officer goes abroad.

¹ Used with permission of Brandeis Food Allergy and Digestive Disorders Association

Candidates must receive a plurality of the vote in order to win.

In the event of a tie, one special election will be held two weeks after the initial election. In the event of a tie in the special election, the established executive board—not the newly elected board members—will decide who will fill the position.

The position outreach manager will be filled by October of each year for that academic year. Interested members must submit applications, and the executive board will select who will fill this position based on the submitted applications.

For an officer to resign, he or she must submit a formal letter of resignation. This letter will be sent to all club members in the listserv. A special election to fill the position will be held two weeks later.

When an officer is removed, no formal letter need be submitted. However, a special election must be held two weeks later.

V. Meetings

Meetings will be held regularly twice per month. However, the executive board may decide to skip a meeting, or to change the time of a meeting.

VI. Constitution amendments

Any active club member may suggest a constitutional amendment to the executive board. Three out of five executive board members must vote that the amendment can go up for a club vote. In the club vote, the amendment must be approved by two-thirds of members in order to be adopted.

VII. Statement of non-exclusivity

Food Allergy and Sensitivity Awareness and Support is open to all members of the Brandeis community. Food Allergy and Sensitivity Awareness and Support does not discriminate against members on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, gender identity and expression, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, disability, political affiliation, ideology, veteran status, or any other category protected by the law.

VIII. Request to be recognized