

STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

The following is a checklist for creating your student organization constitution. This checklist will help open the dialogue with your group in deciding the framework and substance of your organization.

I. ORGANIZATION NAME

_____ 1. Name of the organization and any abbreviated name or acronym if it intends to use one.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

_____ 1. **Mission statement that is clear, precise, and definitive** (generally 60 words or less). Anyone who reads the mission should understand what the organization is about and why it is in existence.

_____ 2. **Philosophy, goals, and/or purpose for which the organization has been created.**

For Example: "The purpose(s) of this organization shall be:

- What is the purpose for establishing the organization?
- What is the intended impact of the organization on the University community?
- What services will be provided and for whom?

_____ 3. **Following sentence in its own paragraph: "All activities and functions of the organization must be legal under University, local, state, and federal laws."**

III. MEMBERSHIP

_____ 1. **Student membership statement**

- Who is eligible? (undergrads, graduate, staff, faculty, community members, alumni, etc.)
- Criteria or qualification for membership: (i.e. attendance, dues that need to be paid)?
- Are there various categories of membership such as active, associate, inactive, alumni, honorary, auxiliary, etc.?
- What are the privileges, duties and/or responsibilities of each type of membership?

_____ 2. **When recruitment takes place and when membership is open.**

_____ 3. **Withdrawal or Removal of Members**

- What are the grounds for removal of a member (i.e. under what circumstance would/could this occur)?
- What is the process for removal of a member of the organization? (Votes required?)
- Who has a right to request removal or withdrawal of a member?
- Does an appeal process exist, what are the policies and procedures?
- Process by which membership would be reinstated, if possible.

_____ 4. **Non-discrimination statement for the organization's commitment to abide by the CMU Statement of Assurance (<http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/SoA.html>) MUST be included.**

_____ 5. **Statement on voting rights for members** (student and affiliate members): For Example: "Only student members who are active and in good standing are eligible to vote. Affiliate members may not vote."

_____ 6. **Non-hazing statement:** "Hazing will not be used as a condition of membership in this organization."

IV. OFFICERS

_____ 1. **Description of Officers**

- How many officers are there in the organization?
- Who is eligible for office (necessary experience, class level requirements)?
- Statement on whether an officer can hold more than one position concurrently. If allowed, explain circumstances.
- List the officers' titles.
- Will there be any type of executive committee including officers?
- List the duties and responsibilities of each officer.
- Statement on voting rights of officers. For example: president only votes in the event of a tie.

_____ 2. **Terms of Office**

- Specify time frame (i.e. quarter, academic year, etc.)
- When do officers assume their positions?

V. SELECTION OF OFFICERS / ELECTIONS

_____ 1. **Officer selection must take place at least once per academic year.**

_____ 2. **Nomination procedure if utilizing elections, unless your organization has an application and/or interview process.**

- How are nominations made?
- Are there self-nominations?

_____ 3. **Election/selection process**

- Describe the election process. For example: "Officers of this organization shall be elected by a majority vote (51%) of the regular student membership of the organization.
- when, where?
- order of elections, order of speeches,
- how the votes are to be cast, counted (secret ballot, hands, etc.)
 - What number or percentage of members or quorum is necessary for elections to be valid? (i.e. 2/3's, etc.)
 - Who is eligible to vote?
- What is the process for notifying others or posting information regarding organization elections?
 - Are letters, flyers, or posters used on campus?
 - Are verbal announcements made at meetings?
 - How long is the notification and posting period?

_____ 4. **Statement on absentee ballots or proxy ballots for nominations AND elections.**

_____ 6. **Statement on the run-off process.**

_____ 7. **Statement that addresses the issue of a tie.**

_____ 8. **When newly selected officers shall take office.**

VI. OFFICER VACANCIES

_____ 1. **Whether officers can be re-elected** (if so, explain).

_____ 2. **Procedure for Removal of Officers**

- Who can initiate the removal of an officer?
- What is the specific procedure to be followed for removal?
- What type of vote is required for removal?

_____ 3. **Procedure for Filling Vacated Offices**

- Are special elections held?
- Is ascending order used?
- Are appointments made, or are interviews coordinated?

_____ 4. **Appeal Policy**

- Is there such a policy in your organization?
- Is there a set time period to carry out an appeal?
- What are the steps involved with an appeal?

VI. MEETINGS

_____ 1. **Types of meetings** (e.g. Officer and Membership meetings). Including _____ when/how often they occur, _____ who attends, and _____ who can vote in each. Explain the three items listed below for EACH type of meeting.

_____ 2. **Quorum requirements** to officially conduct and approve business of the organization (at least a majority of members/officers).

_____ 3. **How and by whom meetings can be called** and what kind of notice is required.

_____ 4. **What procedures will be used to conduct meetings** (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order).

VII. COMMITTEES (if applicable)

- _____ 1. **Discuss any standing and special committees** (formation, selection, powers, membership, chairperson selection, and duties).
- _____ 2. **Discuss the roles and responsibilities of committee chairpersons.**

VIII. ADVISOR

- _____ 1. **Nomination and selection process** for advisors
- _____ 2. **Role, responsibility, duties, and authority of advisor** (what are their voting rights?)
- _____ 3. **Length of term of advisor** (can be for an unspecified amount of time).
- _____ 4. **Process by which an advisor is removed.**
- _____ 5. **Replacement statement:** Example: "In the event that an advisor is removed or resigns, a new advisor shall be elected within "x" number of school days."

IX. FINANCES (Include this section, even if not charging dues)

- _____ 1. **Any membership dues, including amount and frequency of payments.**
- _____ 2. **Exemption from paying dues**, if applicable.
- _____ 3. **Include a policy on refunds**, if applicable.
- _____ 4. **Budget approval process.**
 - authorized signatures required for every financial transaction? Which members have authority to spend organization's money
- _____ 5. **Limitation on how funds may be spent.** Example: "Organizational funds may be spent on items such as office supplies, events/activities, publicity, travel expenses, and conference fees, but will not be used for anything illegal under University, local, state, and federal laws."
- _____ 6. **Procedure from outgoing to incoming officers?**

X. RATIFICATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- _____ 1. **Necessary approval needed for approval of the constitution.**
- _____ 2. **State when the constitution will take effect.**

XI. AMENDMENTS

- _____ 1. **Proposing Amendments**
 - What is the procedure for proposing amendments (i.e. in writing, verbally, etc.)
 - Who can propose amendments?
 - What is the timeline for reading and voting?
- _____ 2. **Provisions**
 - When can an amendment be proposed?
 - Is there any notice required in advance for amending the constitution and/or by-laws?
 - How many members must be present for adoption of the amendment?
 - Who can vote on the amendment?**
 - How many votes are required for passage?**
 - When do new amendments take effect?**
 - Describe the process for amending the constitution.** For example: "This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the entire voting student membership".

XII. HISTORY

- _____ 1. **Must include the date of creation.**
- _____ 2. **Must include all dates of revision.**