



Guidelines for Writing a Constitution

Article I Name

State the name of the organization—for example, "The name of this organization shall be (insert name of organization here)."

Article II Purpose & Goals

Provide a general statement about the purpose and goals of the organization, as well as the type and scope of the organization's activities. This is also an appropriate place to mention the organization's affiliation with other groups, if any (for example, if the group is a chapter of a national organization).

Article III Membership

Provide a general statement about membership eligibility, standards, and requirements. For example, "Membership shall be open to all students at Texas A&M University." The membership selection process, types of membership, and procedures for disciplining and/or removing members should also be outlined here if not already appearing in the bylaws.

NOTE: Recognized student organizations at Snow College are required to be non-discriminatory in membership unless otherwise permitted by applicable federal law. As such, you should review your constitution to ensure that it does not contain discriminatory language or provisions.

Article IV Officers

In sections under this article; list the titles of offices to be established, qualifications for each office, the method, time, and process of selection, and the term of office. The duties, powers, and responsibilities of each officer as well as procedures for removal from office and filling vacancies should also be outlined here if not already appearing in the bylaws.

At a minimum, each student organization is expected to designate one officer as the chief student leader (usually titled "president") and one officer authorized to deal with the organization's finances (usually titled "treasurer"). The titles of these positions may vary according to the needs of the organization, but the two separate job functions must be provided for in this article.

NOTE: All recognized student organizations at Snow College must include the following statement (or its equivalent) in their constitution: "The officers of this organization must meet the following requirements:

(a) Have a minimum grade point ratio (GPR) as stated below and meet that minimum GPR in the semester immediately prior to the election/appointment, the semester of election/appointment and semesters during the term of office.

For undergraduate students, the minimum GPR is 2.00. In order for this provision to be met, at least 12 hours (full-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration.

(b) Be in good standing with the university and enrolled: at least full-time (12 or more credit hours) during the term of office.

c) Be ineligible to hold an office should the student fail to maintain the requirements as prescribed in (a) and (b)."

The wording of the above statement may be made specific to the student organization, but no student organization may enact eligibility requirements for officers less stringent than those appearing above. Student organizations may enact requirements more stringent than those provided by the university.

This article is also the appropriate place to outline the selection process, qualifications, responsibilities, and the term of office for the organization's official university advisor(s).

Article V. Finances

Provide a general statement about the manner in which the finances of the organization should be handled. This is particular to fees that may or may not be charged for club membership. How and for what these fees are to be used an also be indicated in the By-laws.

NOTE: All recognized student organizations at Snow College must include the following statement (or its equivalent) in their constitution:

"All monies belonging to this organization shall be deposited and disbursed through the Snow College account established for this organization. All funds must be deposited within 24 hours after collection. The advisor to this organization must approve and sign each expenditure before payment."

Article VI. Amendments & Ratification

This article should explain how constitutional amendments may be made, as well as the procedure for adopting this constitution and any future amendments. At a minimum, your constitution must be voted on and approved by the general membership of your organization. This article should also include a statement requiring prompt submission of an

updated constitution and bylaws to the Department of Student Activities should the document be amended following recognition.

To be valid, the constitution must be signed by at least the organization's chief student officer and primary advisor, and approved by the Director of Student Activities. You will want to provide a space for these individuals to sign and date the document.

What are Bylaws?

Bylaws are secondary principles that govern the internal affairs of an organization. Bylaws are essentially an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps the organization must follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

Why should I have Bylaws?

Student organizations are not required to have bylaws, but may find them helpful to the organization's operations. The constitution covers the fundamental principles but does not provide specific procedures for operating your organization. Bylaws should set forth in detail the procedures your group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. They provide further definition to the provisions contained in the constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change.

What should I include in my Bylaws?

Bylaws must not contradict provisions in the constitution. They generally contain, as needed, more specific information on the topics outlined below. If your organization has chosen not to develop bylaws, this information may be included in the appropriate sections of your constitution.

The following are some standard articles that commonly appear in organization bylaws:

- **Membership**-Sections under this article should discuss and detail the various aspects of membership that may be applicable: membership selection process, types of membership, and procedures for disciplining and/or removing members.
- **Officers**-Sections under this article should discuss the officer selection process, duties, powers, and responsibilities of each officer, and procedures for removal from office and filling vacant officer positions.
- **Committees**-Sections under this article should discuss and detail standing and special committees (formation, selection, powers, and duties) and the executive committee (membership, powers, and duties), along with the roles and responsibilities of committee chairs.
- **Meetings**-Sections under this article should discuss types of meetings, how and when they are to occur, requirements for notice, attendance, and quorum (number of

members needed present to transact business), meeting format, and parliamentary rules of order (usually Robert's Rules of Order).

- Financial Procedures-Sections under this article should discuss and detail (if applicable) dues, initiation fees, and fines, collection procedures, and other financial procedures (budgets, expenditures, etc.).
- Amendment Procedures-Sections under this article should discuss the procedure for amending the bylaws (means of proposals, notice required, voting requirements). Other specific policies and procedures unique to your organization that may be necessary for its operation.

How can I use my Constitution & Bylaws?

Remember the reasons for having a constitution and bylaws. They articulate the purpose of your organization and spell out the procedures to be followed for its orderly functioning. Constitutions usually require a 2/3 vote of the membership for adoption. Bylaws only require a simple majority for passage. Once you have developed your constitution and bylaws, review them often. The needs of your group will change over time and it is important that the constitution and bylaws are kept up to date to reflect the current state of affairs.

Make sure every new member of the organization has a copy of your governing documents. This will help to unify your members by informing them about the opportunities that exist for participation and the procedures they should follow to be an active, contributing member. A thorough study of the constitution and bylaws should be a part of officer training and transition. You should also provide your advisor(s) with a copy of your constitution and bylaws.

Where can I get help writing my Constitution & Bylaws?

In addition to this document, the Department of Student Activities has several Constitutions available for you to use as a reference (some with By-laws and some without By-laws). Additional help is available by contacting the Sigma Gamma Senator or any member of the Student Senate.