

# Sample Constitution and By-Laws

A constitution and by-laws are written to guide an organization in its operations and activities. These documents should be clearly worded, intentionally structured, and kept up-to-date to meet the needs of the student organization.

The constitution:

- Establishes the broad structure and fundamental principles of an organization
- Should be straightforward and comprehensive
- Should be difficult to amend

The by-laws:

- Outline the rules of procedures for an organization
- Should be consistent with the constitution
- Tend to be easier to amend than the constitution

The following sample constitution and by-laws are provided as a **guideline** to assist you in writing or revising your organization's constitution. There are many ways to structure an organization, so feel free to write your constitution and by-laws to meet the needs of your organization. However, asterisked (\*) sections below must be included in your constitution and by-laws to be considered a Registered Student Organization (RSO). For further assistance, contact the Department of Campus Life at 740-593-4025 or campus.life@ohio.edu.

## Sample Constitution -----

### Constitution of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of your group)

#### Article I: Name

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be... (Provide actual name which will be used for all official business), hereafter referred to as...

#### Article II: Purpose

Section 1: The purpose of this organization shall be... (State the purpose, aims, and function of the organization)

#### Article III: Affiliations

Section 1: This organization is affiliated with... (Indicate if your group has an affiliation with an Ohio University department and/or any other campus, local, state, national, or international organization and explain the relationship. Organizations with inter/national affiliations must submit their inter/national constitution or statement of purpose. If your organization has no affiliation, this section may be omitted.)

#### Article IV: Membership

\*Section 1: The majority of the membership of this organization shall consist of enrolled Ohio

University students. (A statement like this is required for your constitution. If your organization allows non-Ohio University student members, you should indicate the guidelines for those members in this section as well.)

\*Section 2: This organization... (All registered student organizations must include in their constitution a non-discriminatory policy statement that is consistent with Ohio University's non-discriminatory policy statement. An example would be: "This organization and its members shall not discriminate against any individuals for reasons of race, national origin, color, religion, gender, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, and/or ability status.")

Section 3: Membership in this group shall be open to all who are interested and... (List the criteria for membership to your organization, if you have any)

### **Article V: Officers**

Section 1: The officers of the organization shall consist of... (State all officer titles and duties – examples below)

- A. President – The President shall...
- B. Vice President – The Vice President shall...
- C. Secretary - The Secretary shall...
- D. Treasurer - The Treasurer shall...
- E. Etc.

Section 2: The qualifications for each office... (State the qualifications, if any, for the offices)

Section 3: The term of each office shall be... (Example: one year from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30. Make sure elections are held before the term expires.)

Section 4: Should an officer's position become vacant during his/her term, the following will take place...

### **Article VI: Advisor**

\*Section 1: Our organization advisor must be a member of the faculty, administration, or staff of Ohio University. (See guidelines in the RSO Advisor Agreement ) <hyperlink to RSO Advisor Agreement>

Section 2: The duties and responsibilities of the advisor shall be... (See guidelines in the RSO Advisor Agreement) <hyperlink to RSO Advisor Agreement>

Section 3: Should the position of advisor become vacant during the year...

### **Article VII: Meetings**

Section 1: Regular meetings of the organization shall be held... (Consider how often you would like to meet, who calls the meeting, etc.)

Section 2: Special meetings of the organization shall be held... (Consider who has authority to call these meetings, how much notice is required, etc.)

## **Article VIII: Amendments**

Section 1: This constitution shall be amended by a vote of (2/3, 3/4, etc.) majority of the membership at any regular or special meeting. (Note: The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently)

Section 2: Provision for advance notice of amendment shall be... (Explain how eligible voting members will be informed of the proposed amendment such as posting, notification by email, announcement at two consecutive meetings, etc.)

Date Ratified (Insert date the constitution is initially ratified)

Date Revised (Insert date the constitution is revised)

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### **Sample By-Laws -----**

**By-Laws of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of your group)**

#### **Article I: Membership**

Section 1: The procedure for selection of membership...

Section 2: Dues for this organization shall be... (Indicate amount, if any, and how often they are paid)

Section 3: Membership responsibilities shall include...

Section 4: Membership shall be terminated by...

#### **Article II: Selection of Officers**

Section 1 The selection of officers shall be done by... (Clearly state election rules and voting procedures, eligibility for each office, and when the elections take place during the academic year)

Section 2: The provisions for removal of an officer include...

#### **Article III: Selection of Advisor**

Section 1 The selection of the advisor shall be done by...

Section 2: The provisions for removal of an advisor include...

#### **Article IV: Committees**

Section 1: All permanent committees shall be formed by... (Clearly list each committee and the function and specific duties of each)

Section 2: All ad-hoc committees shall be formed by... (Clearly list each committee and the function and specific duties of each)

### **Article V: Rules of Order**

Section 1: This organization shall be governed by... (Specify source of parliamentary procedure for your organization. Most groups use "Robert's Rules of Order" in cases when it is applicable and consistent with the organization's constitution and by-laws.)

### **Article VI: Amendment**

Section 1: These by-laws may be amended by a vote of ... (Should be similar to constitution, but tend to be easier to amend. Example: simple majority vote, 2/3 vote, etc.)

Date Ratified (Insert date the by-laws are initially ratified)

Date Revised (Insert date the by-laws are revised)

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