Student Organization Constitution Template

ORGANIZATION NAME CONSTITUTION

The constitution of an organization includes the fundamental principles which determine the rights and responsibilities of its officers and members.

Preamble
The preamble defines the guiding principles for the organization. The sections listed below provide a template that can be used to define these principles.

Article I – Name
Example: The name of this organization shall be the constitution template.

Article II – Purpose
This section **must include** a statement of purpose for the organization. If a future officer were to read this statement, he or she would understand the goals and intent of the organization

*Example: The purpose of this organization shall be to provide and promote good examples of constitutional development for student organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University.*

Article III – Membership
This section **must include** an equal opportunity/non-discrimination statement and a statement that the organization is open to all VCU students. It should also include information on the types of membership offered and any qualifications for voting in the organization.

*Example: This organization complies with all State and Federal laws and Hamilton College policies on non-discrimination. This organization supports and encourages respect for political, religious, ethnic, racial, physical, generational, sexual and affectional, and intellectual differences because such respect promotes free and open inquiry, independent thought, and mutual understanding.*

*Thoughts: Will membership be offered to non-students? Can these people vote?*

Article IV – Hazing
This section **must include** a statement that the organization does not engage in any form of hazing.

*Example: This organization complies with all State and Federal laws and Virginia Commonwealth University policies on hazing. This organization recognizes hazing to be any action taken or situation created to inflict...*
physical or mental discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule upon an individual or group. Further, the members of this organization understand that any individual or group found responsible for hazing will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in probation, suspension, or revocation of registration privileges.

Article V – Officers
This section should include the title and qualifications of each officer of the organization, the procedure(s) for electing officers and filling vacancies, and the length of term for each office.

Thoughts: Who are the officers of the organization (must include at least an Organization Contact and a Financial Contact)? Who is eligible to hold an office? How long is the position held? When are elections? What is the procedure for filling vacant offices?

Article VI – Executive Board
This section may be used, if needed, to define the collective authority of the officers of the organization.

Example: The Executive Board of this organization shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and Adviser.
Thoughts: What is chain of command? Who holds what power?

Article VII – Advisor
This section should describe the relationship between the advisor and the organization, and indicate whether or not the advisor has voting privileges within the organization. Define the selection of an adviser and qualifications.

Article VIII – Meetings
This section should explain when and under what circumstances meetings are held.

Thoughts: Regularity of meetings, special meeting procedure, voting rules under special circumstances, what defines quorum?

Article IX – Committees
This section may include the descriptions and responsibilities of any existing committees within the organization.

Example: finances, publicity, social, rules and voting

Article X – Sanctioning, Impeachment, and Removal
The organization should have some mechanism for the sanctioning, impeachment, and removal of members, officers, and advisers for gross neglect of duty and/or other just cause.
Article XI – Rules of Procedure
The type of procedure for conducting the business of the organization and maintaining active registration status at the VCU should be specified. Robert’s Rules of Order are the suggested rules of procedure, but an organization may choose an alternative that better serves their needs. What takes precedence, rules of procedure or constitution?

The constitution must include a compliance statement:
In order to maintain active status, this organization will comply with all VCU policies and procedures, including financial regulations, which pertain to student organizations.

Article XII – Amendments
A procedure for amending the Constitution should be clearly outlined.

Thoughts: Who can propose an amendment? What is the voting procedure and percent of or number of votes to win?
Bylaws

The bylaws are the detailed procedures and working guidelines of the organization which govern the day-to-day operations of the organization and accompany the constitution.

Article I – Duties of Officers
This section should clearly outline the duties and responsibilities of each officer.

Article II – Duties of Advisor
This section should clearly outline the duties and responsibilities of the advisor if the organization has one. Although VCU doesn’t require advisors, we encourage all organizations to have one. If the organization is affiliated with a national organization, it most likely will require the local chapter to have an advisor.

Article III – Elections
This section should explain specific election procedures for the organization which may include information on eligibility, deadlines and dates, and rules for handling election procedure violations.

Article IV – Finances
This section should state the guidelines for appropriating organization funds, collecting dues or fees, and conducting fundraising activities within the financial regulations of the VCU. Who is authorized to submit financial requests to SGA Appropriations or other funding commission?

Article V – Activities
This section should specify any activities which are regularly conducted to fulfill the purpose of the organization.

Adapted from the Hamilton College Sample Constitution, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY 2005