

Preparing a Constitution and Bylaws

A working constitution is important for your student organization because it describes the purpose and goals of the group and provides a basis for structure and continuity within the organization.

The constitution should state how the group is organized, including:

1. The name and purpose of the group
2. Qualifications of the members
3. Officers and procedures for their election
4. Duties of each officer
5. Meetings of the organization (generalities only; leave specific for bylaws)
6. How to make amendments to the constitution and its bylaws

The constitution must be typed.

The petition, advisor agreement, current membership list, and a working copy of the constitution must be on file in the Office of Student Leadership and Activities. The original should be on file with your organization.

(Sample constitution)

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY _____

ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

Section 1 The name of this club shall be the _____

(Include the full name of the organization and any abbreviations that also symbolize the group's name.)

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Create a mission statement and/or philosophy for your organization. Think about the purpose of your organization and why it was formed at Saint Joseph's University. Include the goals/objectives of the club and any affiliations the organization maintains with regional, national or professional associations (if applicable).

(List specific goals/objectives for the club as Section 1, Section 2 etc.)

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Membership must be open to all who meet prescribed criteria for eligibility without respect to race, creed or national origin. Membership to student organization may not be granted to any person who is not a bona fide member of the University community.

ARTICLE IV GOVERNANCE

Section 1 List the titles of the officers who will lead the organization. (i.e. President, Vice-President, etc)

Section 2 Do the officers of the organization form an executive committee/board? If so, describe the name of the advising board, and the officers who participate.

Section 3. What procedures are followed if an office is vacated?

ARTICLE V POWERS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The powers, duties, and responsibilities of the governing structure shall be defined as follows: (adapt as needed)

Section 1 President

- Serve as the chief administrative officer
- Preside over meetings of the organization
- Appoint members and chairpersons of all committees
- Serve on all committees as an ex officio member
- Call special meetings of the membership
- Initiate programs and projects he/she deems necessary
- Represent the best interest of the organization in all interactions with affiliated organizations, University administration and community

Section 2 Vice President

- Preside over the meetings of the organization in the absence of the President
- Carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to him/her by the President
- Define all duties and responsibilities to chairpersons and provide any assistance to the chairpersons in fulfillment of their duties

Section 3 Secretary

- Assist the President with official correspondence of the organization
- Maintain and distribute the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the organization
- Keep a revised copy of the constitution and bylaws available for members at all times and distribute to the membership

- Prepare a roster each semester to include the address and telephone number of each member

Section 4 Treasurer

- Be responsible for the collection and accounting of all fees and other monies belonging to the organization
- Represent the organization at budget meetings held by USS
- Submit all funding requests in a timely fashion

ARTICLE VI ELECTIONS

All elections and nominations to the governing structure of _____ shall be subject to the following criteria which ensures a fair and an equitable process.

Section 1. Candidacy and Nominations (List each office separately)

- What are the qualifications for candidacy?
- When are elections held?
- What is the election process?

Section 2. Voters

- What are the voting qualifications?

Section 3 Votes Needed

- How is a winner determined in the election?

ARTICLE VII FORMATION OF BYLAWS

(The bylaws of the constitution are the specific rules of the organization: bylaws are of such importance that they cannot be changed in any way without previous notice.

Bylaws should be detailed and should explain for the members, their responsibilities, limitations, and expectations of the organization. Bylaws can include dues, meeting time and location, election procedures, attendance, etc.)

Section 1 The (name of organization) shall create a set of bylaws which become a part of this Constitution upon approval demonstrated by a _____ vote of the membership. Deletions or additions can be made to the bylaws by a _____ vote of the membership of the organization.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Amendments to the Constitution can be made by a _____ vote of the membership of the _____.

ARTICLE IX RATIFICATION

Section 1 This constitution shall be fully ratified after being approved by a _____ vote by the membership of the _____.

Note: Some organizations will add an advisor section that may be placed between Articles VI and VIII if this section is so desired.