

con*sti*tu*tion,

- n. 1. the system of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, corporation, or the like, is governed.
2. the document embodying these principles.

Article I: Name and Purpose

Questions to ask if you're considering changing your name:

- Is the name of the organization easily recognizable?
- Does it, in any way, promote the ideals, functions and or goals of the organizations?
- Is our name based in tradition or outside influences? (ie: Greek letter organizations, nationally recognized organizations, traditional or long-standing organizations)

Questions to ask when considering your purpose statement:

- What prompted the founding of this organization?
- What activities, actions and/or beliefs do we most represent/ stand for? Why?
- What do we promote and why?
- What do we address and why?
- What do we offer to students and the community and why?

Article II: Membership

Questions to consider when determining membership:

- What makes your group different from other organizations? Does this effect membership requirements?
- Are there/ should their be different levels of membership?
- What does a member gain by being a member?
- How do you expect members to contribute to the organization?

Article III: Officers and Duties

Questions to ask when considering the make-up of the governing body:

- How many officers/ positions do we really need?
- What are your general expectations as far as duties of each officer/ position holder?

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- What titles suit our organization? (Does President really apply to a club sport?)
- Will I have enough members to fill all positions?

Questions to consider when determining qualifications:

- How important is it that an organizational leader have a relationship with the school? Should you require leaders to be students?
- How important is academic achievement to the purpose of this organization? Should there be an academic requirement?
- How important is it that an organizational leader understand the purpose and mission of this organization? Is it ok for a new member to serve in a governing position? If not, what is an appropriate length of time for someone to have been a member?
- What is the hierarchy of our governing body? Should there be one? The higher up you go* should the requirements be more demanding?

Questions to consider when determining duties of the governing body:

- Should you list basic duties of the entire governing body as a whole prior to delineating specific responsibilities?
- What are functions you expect your governing body to address? Who in the governing body do you expect to oversee those functions?

Examples:

serving as official spokesperson	chairing governing body meetings
chairing general membership meetings	appointing members to positions
serving as liaison to other organizations	preparing agendas for meetings
tiebreaker	advertising
record keeping	historian
handle correspondence	maintain membership records
ensuring adherence to the constitution and bylaws	
coordinate activities of committees and members	
maintain budget, disperse funds as necessary	
reporting on current activities to the general membership	
keeping/ distributing minutes of meetings	
determining time and place for meetings	

Questions to consider when determining advisor duties:

- Should the advisor be considered a member of the governing body?
- Should the advisor have the same rights and privileges as other members (ie: voting)
- How often should an advisor participate in meetings, events and other activities of the organization? What is reasonable?
- What does OSAO&L require of an advisor? Should that be included in the list of duties?

Article IV: Elections (Selection of governing body members)

Questions to consider when framing your election process:

- How long will the governing body term be? Will that apply to all positions equally?
- When should elections be held?
- Should possible leaders be nominated? Should they be allowed to self-nominate?
- How far in advance of elections should nominations be called for?
- What kind of campaigning will be allowed, if any?
- Who is eligible to vote?
- When do newly elected leaders assume their new responsibilities?

Article V: Provision for Removal and Replacement of Officers

Questions to consider when determining removal/ replacement of governing body members:

- What is considered strong enough grounds for removal?

Abuse of power
Insufficient time for/attention to duties
Violation of policies
Dereliction of duties
Conduct unbecoming

- Who may bring charges against an officer?
- By what process should charges be presented? To whom?
- Who makes the decision to remove an officer? What does that decision require?
- Does the officer have an opportunity to respond to charges against him/her?
When and to whom?
- Who assumes the responsibilities and duties of an officer who has been removed?
Is that the same for all positions within the governing body?

Article VI: Meetings

Questions to consider when determining meeting requirements:

- How often should the entire organization meet?
- How often should the governing body meet?
- Is it important that the time and location of meetings be convenient?

Article VII: Amendments and Revisions

Questions to consider when contemplating amendment, revision, rewrite:

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- Will the change make sense to the organization?
- Does the change support the underlying principles of the organization?
- Does it simplify or complicate procedure?
- Who is allowed to suggest changes? To whom are changes suggested?
- How long should parties considering the change have to deliberate prior to deciding to accept or reject changes?

Sample Constitution

One of the primary responsibilities of a petitioning organization is the formulation of a constitution. A sample constitution is provided below, but creativity is encouraged in the writing of each individual constitution. Use the sample provided only as a guideline when creating your own constitution.

CONSTITUTION
of the
(NAME OF CLUB/ORGANIZATION)
at
Salisbury University

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

Section I: The name of the organization shall be (name of organization) at Salisbury University and shall hereafter be referred to as (name of organization).

Section II: The purpose of the (name of organization) shall be:

(Here you will want to list the purpose as to why the organization exists using key words and phrases).

- A. To promote*
- B. To deal with*
- C. To offer*

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section I: Membership is open to all full-time undergraduate students at SU.

- A. A student is considered a member if he/she has attended (whatever number of meetings you choose) # meetings.
- B. A student is considered a voting member if he/she has attended a (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%, or whatever percentage the organization believes is fair) of all meetings.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS AND DUTIES

Section I: The Executive Board of the (name of organization) shall consist of the following elected officers:

(Here you will want to list your officers and their respective titles. Please note that these are all suggestions-your organization may come up with different leadership titles).

- A. The President (or Chair, Manager, Team Leader, etc.)

- B. The Vice-President (or Vice-Chair, etc.)
- C. The Treasurer (or VP of Finance, etc.)
- D. The Secretary (or VP of Correspondence, etc.)
- E. The Parliamentarian (this position can or does not have to be part of the executive board - again, it is whatever the organization decides)

Section II: Qualifications of Officers

- A. The elected officers shall be enrolled as full-time undergraduate student of S.U. and have attended (50%, 75%, 100%, etc.) of all meetings.

Section III: Duties of Officers

(Again, these are just suggestions or guidelines, we highly encourage that you customize your constitution to fit the needs of your organization and not just copy what is below. These are suggestions to get you thinking).

- A. The President's duties shall be:
 - 1. Serve as an official spokesperson of the (name of organization);
 - 2. Chair all the meetings of the General Membership and the Executive Board;
 - 3. Make appointments designated necessary and useful in the by-laws;
 - 4. Make a report on all current organization activities at all General Membership meetings;
 - 5. Make an address on the state of the (name of organization) at the end of his/her term;
 - 6. Determine the time and place of all Executive Board meetings; Prepare the agenda for all Executive Board meetings;
 - 7. Be an ex-officio member of all the General Membership committees; Notify the Vice-President in the case of an inability to perform any of the above duties;
 - 8. To vote only in the case of a tie.

- B. The Vice-President's duties shall be:
 - 1. Assume the duties and responsibilities of the President when he/she is unable to do so;
 - 2. Be an ex-officio member of all the General Membership committees;
 - 3. Serve as liaison between the Club and all other affiliated and associated organizations;
 - 4. Coordinate and guide all the committees of the General Membership;
 - 5. Aid the President in the fulfillment of his/her duties and responsibilities;
 - 6. Encourage participation and membership.

- C. The Treasurer's duties shall be:

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1. Assume the duties and responsibilities of the President when the Vice-President is unable to do so;
2. Disburse all Organization funds necessary with the approval of the Executive Board;
3. Keep accurate, up-to-date, records of all the financial affairs of the Organization;
4. Present and interpret financial reports at all General Membership meetings;
5. To aid the semester membership drive and fund raising activities.

D. The Secretary's duties shall be:

1. To record and keep up-to-date minutes of each meeting;
2. To distribute copies of the minutes to all club members at each meeting;
3. To handle all correspondence of the Organization;
4. To maintain attendance records of all members.

E. The Parliamentarian's duties shall be:

1. To ensure that the Organization is following proper procedure of the (name of organization) constitution;
2. Review and suggest revisions to the constitution and by-laws prior to the 2nd to last general meeting of ht academic year.

Section IV: Advisor

It is highly suggested that the organization have more than one advisor. Advisors must be a faculty/staff member at SU. Exceptions to this must be approved by both the Office of Student Activities, Organizations & Leadership and the Student Government Association).

- A. The Advisor shall act as a non-voting member of the Executive Board.
- B. The Advisor shall attend at least one meeting per month, but is encouraged to attend all meetings.
- C. The Advisor shall attend all Organizational functions that require faculty/staff supervision.

ARTICLE IV: ELECTIONS

Section I: Nominations for the officer positions will be taken the eleventh (11th) and the twelfth (12th) weeks of the fall and spring semesters.

(We recommend that your executive board be elected for terns beginning in January and ending in December.)

Section II: Election will take place the twelfth (12th) week of the (fall/spring) semester. A quorum (50% plus one (1) of the voting membership) must be present to hold a valid election.

Section III: A member is eligible to vote in elections if he/she has attended (50%, 75%) of all general meetings.

Section IV: Newly elected officers shall take office at the last scheduled meeting of the (fall/spring) semester.

ARTICLE V: PROVISION FOR REMOVAL / REPLACEMENT OF OFFICERS

Section I: The grounds for removal of an officer shall be:

- A. Abuse of power;
- B. Insufficient time for his/her position;
- C. Violation of absentee policy;
- D. Dereliction of duties;
- E. Conduct unbecoming an executive board officer

Section II: Procedure for removal

- A. Any Organization member may bring charges against an officer;
- B. These charges must be presented in a written form to the entire Executive Board for review. If the Executive Board determines that there are enough grounds, the charges will be brought before the General Membership.
- C. The General Membership will review the charges and vote on the removal of the officer. Removal from the office requires a two-thirds vote of the (name of organization) body.
- D. Before the removal procedure is carried out, the officer must be notified (written or verbally) and must be given the option to be present during the procedure.

Section III: Variances

- A. Should the Presidency (or whatever name of this position) fall vacant, the Vice-President shall immediately assume the office. Should any of the other offices fall vacant, nominations and selections for the vacated office(s) will be held at that next regularly scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

Section I: The day and time of the regular meetings should be convenient so that all executive board members are in attendance and the majority of the membership and advisor may attend.

- A. Regular meetings will be held once a week during the academic year;
- B. The officers shall determine the time and frequency of the Executive Board meetings.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

Section I: Procedures for amendments are as follows:

- A. The Parliamentarian or any member may propose an amendment to the constitution;
- B. This amendment should be reviewed (in written form) by the General Membership at two consecutive meetings;
- C. The amendment will be voted on at the second meeting;
- D. Passage shall be two-thirds majority of the voting members;
- E. If passed, the Parliamentarian shall make proper revisions in the written constitution and/or by-laws;
- F. The Student Government Association must approve all amendments and revisions.