

CREATING A CONSTITUTION



Sun Devil Suggestions

A constitution is one of the most important organizational documents. It outlines the basic rules governing the organization, allows for continuity and addresses situations that may arise within an organization, such as member conduct. A constitution should not be static – it should be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it fits the current needs of the student organization.

The language should be clear and concise, leaving little to interpretation. The length can vary from one page to several pages, depending on the complexity of the organization. In general, more detailed information that deal with the day-to-day operations (such as meeting times) can be included in By-Laws.

Several important components should be included in your constitution:

- **Name/Purpose** – state the official name of the student organization and the purpose/goals
- **Officers** – list the titles and responsibilities of each officer, including qualifications to become an officer and the removal process for officers that do not fulfill the responsibilities
- **Members** – list the qualifications, requirements, rights and all other conditions for membership, and also the removal process for members
- **Elections** – state the method and frequency of elections, who is eligible to vote and all other conditions that must be met before members become candidates for office
- **Advisors** – state the general duties and responsibilities of the faculty/staff advisor
- **Amendments** – include any requirements for the form or manner in which the amendment is written, any limitations for the presentation or ratification of an amendment, and what margin of votes an amendment shall be required to receive for passage
- **Bylaws (separate from Constitution)** – Bylaws are intended to deal with the day-to-day rules governing the organization (meetings, standing committees, etc.). These may change more often in order to accommodate new conditions or circumstances. Bylaws should be reviewed and updated annually.

Resources

Be sure to attend the Student Organization Information Sessions. These helpful sessions provide specific information about your rights and responsibilities as a registered ASU student organization.

To learn more about starting a new student organization, you can also check out the *Student Organization Resource Guide and Policy Manual*.

And check out these other *Best Practices* that will help you when starting a new organization:

- *Creating a Vision/Mission*
- *Recruiting Members*
- *Finding Faculty Advisors*
- *Icebreakers*
- *Parliamentary Procedure*

And remember...

Work with your advisor in drafting your constitution, and be sure to provide your advisor with any updates that can be kept in a permanent file. You can download a copy of a “Sample Constitution and By-Laws” at www.asu.edu/clubs under “Forms and Resources.”