

# STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The following is a checklist for creating your student organization constitution. This checklist will help your group decide the framework and substance of your organization.

## I. ORGANIZATION NAME

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Name of the organization and any abbreviated name or acronym if it intends to use one.

## II. MISSION AND GOALS

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mission statement that is clear, precise, and definitive (generally 60 words or less). Anyone who reads the mission should understand what the organization is about and why it is in existence.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Philosophy, goals, and/or purpose for which the organization has been created.

For Example: "The purpose(s) of this organization shall be:

- What is the purpose for establishing the organization?
- What is the intended impact of the organization on the University community?
- What services will be provided and for whom?

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Following sentence in its own paragraph: "All activities and functions of the organization must be legal under University, local, state, and federal laws. The most recent version of *The Word* and *The Student Organization Handbook & Resource Guide* will supersede all requirements set forth during the creation and revision of this constitution."

## III. MEMBERSHIP

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Student membership statement

- Who is eligible? (undergrads, graduate, staff, faculty, community members, alumni, etc.)
- Criteria or qualification for membership: (i.e. minimal QPA requirements, dues that need to be paid)?
- Are there various categories of membership such as active, associate, inactive, alumni, honorary, auxiliary, etc.?
- What are the privileges, duties and/or responsibilities of each type of membership?

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. When recruitment takes place and when membership is open.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Withdrawal or Removal of Members

- What are the grounds for removal of a member (i.e. under what circumstance would/could this occur)?
- What is the process for removal of a member of the organization? (Votes required?)
- Who has a right to request removal or withdrawal of a member?
- Does an appeal process exist, what are the policies and procedures?
- Process by which membership would be reinstated, if possible.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Non-discrimination statement -the organization's commitment to abide by the CMU Statement of Assurance (<http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/SoA.html>)

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Statement on voting rights for members (student and affiliate members): For Example: "Only student members who are active and in good standing are eligible to vote. Affiliate members may not vote."

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Non-hazing statement: "Hazing will not be used as a condition of membership in this organization."

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Organizations may create more stringent, legal membership qualifications/ requirements than those listed above. This may include attendance, dues, and QPA, among others. This section is not required, and is enforced by the organization.

#### IV. OFFICERS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Description of Officers
  - How many officers are there in the organization?
  - Who is eligible for office (necessary experience, class level requirements)?
  - Statement on whether an officer can hold more than one position concurrently. If allowed, explain circumstances.
  - List the officers' titles.
  - Will there be any type of executive committee including officers?
  - List the duties and responsibilities of each officer.
  - Statement on voting rights of officers. For example: president only votes in the event of a tie.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Terms of Office
  - Specify time frame (i.e. quarter, academic year, etc.)
  - When do officers assume their positions?

#### V. SELECTION OF OFFICERS / ELECTIONS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Officer selection must take place at least once per academic year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Nomination procedure if utilizing elections, unless your organization has an application and/or interview process.
  - How are nominations made?
  - Are there self-nominations?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Election/selection process
  - Describe the election process. For example: "Officers of this organization shall be elected by a majority vote (51%) of the regular student membership of the organization.
    - when, where?
    - order of elections, order of speeches,
    - how the votes are to be cast, counted (secret ballot, hands, etc.)
      - o What number or percentage of members or quorum is necessary for elections to be valid? (i.e. 2/3's, etc.)
      - o Who is eligible to vote?
  - What is the process for notifying others or posting information regarding organization elections?
    - o Are letters, flyers, or posters used on campus?
    - o Are verbal announcements made at meetings?
    - o How long is the notification and posting period?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Statement on absentee ballots or proxy ballots for nominations AND elections.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Statement on the run-off process.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Statement that addresses the issue of a tie.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. When newly selected officers shall take office.

#### VI. OFFICER VACANCIES

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Whether officers can be re-elected (if so, explain).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Procedure for Removal of Officers
  - Who can initiate the removal of an officer?
  - What is the specific procedure to be followed for removal?
  - What type of vote is required for removal?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Procedure for Filling Vacated Offices
  - Are special elections held?
  - Is ascending order used?
  - Are appointments made, or are interviews coordinated?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Appeal Policy
  - Is there such a policy in your organization?
  - Is there a set time period to carry out an appeal?
  - What are the steps involved with an appeal?

## VI. MEETINGS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Types of meetings (e.g. Officer and Membership meetings). Including \_\_\_\_\_ when/how often they occur, \_\_\_\_\_ who attends, and \_\_\_\_\_ who can vote in each. Explain the three items listed below for EACH type of meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Quorum requirements to officially conduct and approve business of the organization (at least a majority of members/officers).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. How and by whom meetings can be called and what kind of notice is required.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What procedures will be used to conduct meetings (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order).

## VII. COMMITTEES (if applicable)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Discuss any standing and special committees (formation, selection, powers, membership, chairperson selection, and duties).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Discuss the roles and responsibilities of committee chairpersons.

## VIII. ADVISOR

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Nomination and selection process for advisors
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Role, responsibility, duties, and authority of advisor (what are their voting rights?)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Length of term of advisor (can be for an unspecified amount of time).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Process by which an advisor is removed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Replacement statement: Example: "In the event that an advisor is removed or resigns, a new advisor shall be elected within "x" number of school days."

## IX. FINANCES (Include this section, even if not charging dues)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Any membership dues, including amount and frequency of payments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Exemption from paying dues, if applicable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Include a policy on refunds, if applicable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Budget approval process.
  - Are there authorized signatures required for every financial transaction? (recommend as it protects the organization and the individual).
  - Which members have authority to spend organization's money
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Limitation on how funds may be spent. Example: "Organizational funds may be spent on items such as office supplies, events/activities, publicity, travel expenses, and conference fees, but will not be used for anything illegal under University, local, state, and federal laws."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Procedure from outgoing to incoming officers?

## X. RATIFICATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Necessary approval needed for approval of the constitution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. State when the constitution will take effect.

## XI. AMENDMENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Proposing Amendments
  - What is the procedure for proposing amendments (i.e. in writing, verbally, etc.)
  - Who can propose amendments?
  - What is the timeline for reading and voting?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Provisions
  - When can an amendment be proposed?
  - Is there any notice required in advance for amending the constitution and/or by-laws?
  - How many members must be present for adoption of the amendment?
  - Who can vote on the amendment?
  - How many votes are required for passage?
  - When do new amendments take effect?
  - Describe the process for amending the constitution. For example: "This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the entire voting student membership".

## XII. HISTORY

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Must include the date of creation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Must include all dates of revision.