



Student Club Constitution and Bylaws “Quick Reference” Guide

Overview

A **constitution** is comprised of the fundamental laws and principles that prescribe the nature, function, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a basic structure upon which an organization operates. **Bylaws** are secondary laws, which rule or govern the internal affairs of an organization. Bylaws are an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps for an organization to follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

Purpose

This quick reference sheet includes those areas of a constitution and bylaws that **MUST** be included as a part of the SSU student organization charter process to meet the minimum standards set forth in Executive Order 969/1006 by the California State University system and Sonoma State University. For more detailed instructions about creating a constitution, please visit <http://www.sonoma.edu/campuslife/clubs/charter.html> and click on the “How to create/update a constitution so that it is in compliance with Executive Order 969” link.

All constitutions MUST cover the following areas and all sections in “quotes, italicized, and underlined” MUST appear verbatim in all student organizations’ constitutions. The wording provided for other sections are guidelines and suggestions.

Article I - Name of Organization

- ✓ The name of the organization will be used in a variety of University and Student Involvement and Service publications. It is recommended that the name be stated in the document exactly how the organization prefers to be addressed. **If an organization chooses to use the University name, it must be written as follows: “{Name of Organization} AT Sonoma State University.”**

Article II - Purpose of Organization

- ✓ 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?

Article III - Membership of Organization

- ✓ “Membership in the organization shall be open to all those regularly enrolled Sonoma State University students who are interested in membership. There shall be no other requirements for admission to regular membership. Each regular member has equal rights and privileges.”
- ✓ “This organization shall have associated members who are non-Sonoma State University students. Associated members shall have all membership privileges except for the right to vote or hold office. By California State University policy, no more than 20 percent of the membership shall be individuals who are not CSU students (e.g., faculty, staff, community members, students at other colleges, etc.)”
- ✓ “Eligibility for membership or appointed or elected student officer positions shall not be limited on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability. The organization shall have no rules or policies that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability.”
- ✓ “Faculty, staff, and alumni of SSU, as well as non-students may be considered for non-voting membership in this organization. Only currently enrolled or continuing students of SSU may be voting members.”

Article IV - Elections

- ✓ “Only currently enrolled or continuing students in good standing at Sonoma State University may serve as Officers of this organization. The Officers shall be: President and Treasurer.” What other officers make up the organization?

At least a president and treasurer need to be included in the constitution.

- ✓ 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. Elections shall take place once a year and they will be held at the next to the last meeting of the spring semester of each year.”

Article V - Officers

- ✓ “Organization presidents and treasurers must be enrolled at SSU and earn a minimum of 6 semester units for undergraduate students or 3 semester units for graduate/credential students per term while holding office and must maintain a minimum cumulative 2.0 grade point average. In addition, the president and treasurer may not have earned 150 units or 125% of the total units needed for graduation, whichever is higher.”

Article VI- Discipline of Members

- ✓ “All complaints alleging violations of the Student Conduct Code, Title 5, section 41301, et seq., shall be investigated pursuant to Executive Order 1073 and/or 1074 (in cases involving allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on protected status). Investigations and other proceedings under Executive Orders 1073 and 1074 shall be conducted by campus administration, not student organizations, and this organization shall refer any complaints alleging subject matters covered by Executive Orders 1073 and 1074 to the campus Vice President for Student Affairs or other designee for investigation and resolution.”

Article VII - Committees

- ✓ *If your organization has committees:*
State the names, purposes, and responsibilities of the various standing committees. These might include executive board, publicity committee, fundraising committee, etc. How are members selected for each committee – by choice or by appointment?

Article VIII - Meetings

- ✓ Describe meeting schedules. For example, “Regular meetings shall be held at least once a week during the academic year, excluding semester breaks and final exam weeks. Meetings shall be held on campus unless a majority of the regular members votes to change the location. Emergency meetings may be called by the President as needed.”

Article IX - Finance/Fiscal Responsibility

- ✓ Dues/Membership Fees?
- ✓ Fundraising?
- ✓ Budget Expenditures?

Article X - Advisors

- ✓ Describe the process for selecting an advisor and explain the term of office for each advisor.
Note: At least one advisor must be an SSU employee and may not be an auxiliary (Sonoma Student Union Corporation/ Associated Students, Inc.) employee. Student organizations may have an advisory board composed of community members or alumni however at least one advisor must be a faculty or staff member of SSU.

Article XI - Amendment

- ✓ Describe the process for amending the constitution. For example, “This constitution and bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the entire voting student membership.”
- ✓ “The amended constitution/bylaws must be approved by and kept in file with the Student Involvement
This document is intended to serve as a model you may follow to insure you are meeting the minimum requirement of the CSU. Student organizations may structure and govern themselves in any way deemed appropriate, so long as it does not violate any policies and requirements applicable to student organizations (SSU, CSU, state, federal).