

Creating a Constitution

CSO GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FORMING A CONSTITUTION

All student organizations wishing to register with the Department of Campus Life are required to submit a constitution and/or by-laws. The constitution serves as the governing document for the organization. In the absence of a constitution, a set of operational guidelines will be required that state the organization's purpose, membership requirements, the University of Georgia's Non-Discrimination Policy, and election/removal procedures for officers. This information is kept on file in the Student Activities and Organizations Offices, 153 Tate Student Center, and is available to students upon request.

It is recommended that each officer of your organization have an up-to date copy of the constitution and by-laws. Additionally, all members of the organization should be familiar with the document. This information will help to ensure that all members are aware of how the organizations functions.

If you need any additional information or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Center for Student Organizations, 153 Tate Student Center, or call 542-6396.

CONSTITUTION STRUCTURE

***DENOTES REQUIRED SECTIONS OF CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We the members of (name of organization), and subscribing to the regulations and policies of the University of Georgia, establish this Constitution to govern the matters within our organization.

ARTICLE I: Name***

- a. **The name of this organization or association is:** *please provide the full, official name of the organization, as well as any acronyms the organizations may use.*
- b. This is the appropriate place to list any national or local affiliations.

ARTICLE II: Purpose/Mission***

Enter a comprehensive, yet concise statement of purpose. This statement may have several ideas or objectives. Be as precise as possible, as this statement outlines the overarching objectives of your organization.

- a. The purpose/mission of _____ shall be _____.

ARTICLE III: Membership

This article should include a sufficient number of sections to cover all information and requirements about membership including, but not limited to: **types** (active, associate, honorary, and others), **qualifications** (grade point average, areas of interest, etc.), **election or selection**, and **method of application**.

Included in an appropriate Article or Articles shall be information as follows:

- a. Membership shall be limited to regularly enrolled University of Georgia students, faculty, and/or staff members.
- b. Any dues or payment necessary to be a member of the organization (when dues are collected: yearly, semesterly, etc.)

ARTICLE IV: Non-Discrimination***

- a. **Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all students without regard to age, ethnicity, gender, disability, color, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. However Religious student organizations will not be denied registration solely because they limit membership or leadership positions to students who share the same religious beliefs.**
- b. Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all students as stated in the University of Georgia Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. However, religious student organizations will not be denied registration solely because they limit membership or leadership positions to students who share the same religious beliefs. Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments Act of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or handicap in most educational programs and activities within the University.

ARTICLE V: Officers (qualifications; terms; election and removal)***

This section should contain the officer positions (at least 2: Chief Officer and Treasurer) and the duration of terms. All officers must be enrolled in at least *6* credit hours at the University of Georgia and should be in good academic standing. Additionally, provisions should be made for election, removal, and vacancy of office (typically

accomplished through voting).

Note: *Names should never appear in the constitution, only the positions.*

- a. The officers of this organization shall consist of: (state the number of officers, their titles, and their general duties and responsibilities. Officers must be UGA students).
- b. Qualifications for office, if any (GPA, previous experience, etc.).
- c. Terms of office (state the period of time that an office will be held).
- d. Term limits (state the number of terms that an individual may be allowed to hold a particular office)
- e. Election (state the method and frequency of electing officers, as well as vote required to take office)
- f. Provisions for removal (state how an officer is removed, how the process is initiated, voting requirements, and what steps for an appeal).
- g. Provisions for officer vacancies

ARTICLE VI: Meetings***

This article should state the provisions for setting up a regular meeting time, any provisions to be made for calling a special meeting, and stipulations for quorum; the officer position which has the authority to call meetings should also be stated here.

Note: *Locations and/or specific dates should not be listed here as they are typically subject to change.*

- a. Meetings shall be held (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.; specify person responsible for notifying members of upcoming meetings and method of notification).
- b. Stipulations for quorum (a quorum shall consist of (x) voting members or a percentage of voting members present at any meeting)
 - a. A quorum is defined as the number or percentage of total membership to be present at a meeting in order to conduct the business of the organization (elections, amendments, fiscal decisions, etc.)

ARTICLE VII: Amendments***

Amending the constitution should not be too simple a process for the sake of the stability of the organization. All amendments must be decided on carefully; it is recommended that all amendments are subject for final approval by the general membership of the organization.

- a. The constitution may be amended by a vote of (**be specific**—majority, 2/3, etc. be sure to include any requirements for the form/manner in which the amendment is written, process for presenting and/or ratifying an amendment, and what margin of votes an amendment shall be required to receive for passage).

ARTICLE VIII: Advisors

While advisors are not a requirement to be a student organization at UGA, those organizations that do have advisors should set guidelines as to the role of the advisor in the student organization. Additionally, some organizations will have specialized advisors/coaches; regulations regarding the recruitment, selection, and dismissal of these individuals should be highlighted in your constitution.

- a. There shall be (1, 2, etc.) faculty/staff/community member advisor who shall be the members ex-officio with no voting privileges
- b. Method of selection of advisors
- c. Duties and responsibilities of advisor (include expectations for involvement)
- d. Method of removing advisors

BY-LAWS:

Bylaws are not a necessary requirement for your constitution; however, they do provide the opportunity to be more specific regarding constitutional requirements. Typically bylaws are intended to establish rules or procedures necessary to carry out the constitution. It is important to note that your bylaws must not change, amend, or conflict with your constitution.

1. More detailed material concerning members, rights, duties expulsion, and resignation procedure.
2. Provisions for honorary members/associate members, if the group so desires.
3. Provisions for membership fee, dues and assessments, if there are to by any, should be set down in detail.
4. Detailed description of the officer positions, if desired.
5. Duties, authority, and responsibility of the Executive Committee.
6. Name of the standing committees, if any, and the method of selection of committee chair:
 - a. The duties of the committee(s) should also be stated.
 - b. Provisions for creation of new committees
7. A provision for some accepted rules of order for parliamentary procedure (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order).
8. A method to amend the by-laws, typically a majority vote (***Required should you choose to have bylaws).