

OUTLINE FOR CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

An organization's constitution and by-laws outline the basic purpose of the organization and set the parameters that govern the action and activities of the group. It is recommended practice to combine these two instruments into a single document. This outline provides group members with direction and, if followed, saves time and promotes the development of sound work.

The document must:

1. Define the primary characteristics of the organization;
2. Prescribe how the organization functions;
3. Include all the rules that the group considers so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice to all members and the vote of a specified majority (such as two-thirds) and cannot be suspended.

The *Official Recognition of Student Organizations Non-Discrimination Policy* (May 23, 2005) states, "The University's commitment to equal opportunity for each member of its student body is unshakable. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, veteran status, or sexual orientation. To be eligible for official recognition from the University -- and the privileges that accompany official recognition -- a student co-curricular organization must abide by the following: Membership and participation in the organization must be open to all students without regard to age, race, color, national origin, disability, religious status or historic religious affiliation, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Membership and participation in the organization must also be open without regard to gender, unless exempt under Title IX. Student organizations that select their members on the basis of commitment to a set of beliefs (e.g., religious or political beliefs) may limit membership and participation in the organization to students who, upon individual inquiry, affirm that they support the organization's goals and agree with its beliefs, so long as no student is excluded from membership or participation on the basis of his or her age, race, color, national origin, disability, religious status or historic religious affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, or, unless exempt under Title IX, gender. See <http://www.unc.edu/campus/policies/studentorgnondiscrim.html>.

It is a good idea for each member to have a copy of the constitution and by-laws. This allows them to familiarize themselves with the workings of the organization and can encourage full participation in the group.

CONSTITUTION GUIDE FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The format below has been developed to be used as a guide to the development of a Constitution for your organization. It is not necessary to follow this form exactly, but it is important to include all areas that apply and to delete those sections that do not apply (e.g. Article VI)..

CONSTITUTION OF _____
(Name of Organization)

ADOPTED _____
(Signature of President and Date)

ARTICLE I - Name

- State the official name of the Organization (*please note*: you can use "(The) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill..." "UNC-CH..." or "UNC-Chapel Hill..." or "Carolina..." **BUT NOT** "UNC..." so long as University sponsorship or endorsement is not implied or stated).

ARTICLE II - Affiliations

- Section 1. State any affiliations with local, state, regional, or national organizations.
Section 2. State any adherence of any rules by a governing body.

ARTICLE III - Purpose and Objectives

State the reason for the formation of the organization and the organization's objectives.

ARTICLE IV – Membership and Participation

- Section 1. State which qualifications are required for all levels of membership.
Section 2. State what rights and privileges are accorded each level of membership

ARTICLE V - Advisor

State procedures for the qualifications and selection of an organization Advisor and the function and duties of said person.

ARTICLE VI - Coach/Manager (*please note*: applies for most sports clubs)

State procedures for the qualifications and selection of a Coach/Manager and the function(s) and duties of said person(s).

ARTICLE VII - Meetings

- Section 1. State how many meetings of the membership are to be held during the school year and when they are to be held.
- Section 2. State procedures for calling regular and/or special meetings.
- Section 3. State what the quorum is (percentage of members needed to conduct business).

ARTICLE VIII - Executive Board

- Section 1. State what officers will make up the organization and what each officer's duties will be.
- Section 2. State procedures for handling vacancies within the Executive Board.

ARTICLE IX - Elections

- Section 1. State which officers will be selected by the membership, how long the terms of these officers will last, and how many times a person may hold the same office.
- Section 2. State the nominating procedures and when they will take place.
- Section 3. State how the nominees will present their qualifications and how and when elections will be held.
- Section 4. State procedures necessary in case a runoff is necessary.

ARTICLE X - Committees/Division

State what standing and/or ad-hoc committees or what divisions will exist in the organization and the function and composition of each.

ARTICLE XI - Funds

State procedures for allocation of organization funds (revenue and expense).

ARTICLE XII - Ratification

State how the Constitution will be approved by the membership.

ARTICLE XIII - Amendments

State how an amendment will be presented, to whom it will be presented, and how it will be ratified.

ARTICLE XIV - By-laws

State procedures for the inclusion of any rules or regulations specific to the organization.

ARTICLE XV - Parliamentary Procedures

State any parliamentary rules of order which are used.

If you still need assistance, you may review Constitutions on file; e-mail activities_organizations@unc.edu

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By Office of Leadership Development, Division of Student Affairs, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 11/91

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