

Constitution and By-Laws Guidelines for Student Organizations

The constitution and by-laws guide an organization in its operations and activities and, accordingly, are intended primarily for the organization's benefit and use. The constitution contains the fundamental principles and structure of the organization, and the by-laws outline the basic rules of procedure by which a group's membership governs their organization.

The constitution and by-laws should be carefully formulated, clearly worded, and kept up-to-date so that the needs of the organization can be met. Furthermore, our office recommends that each member of an organization have a copy of the constitution and by-laws.

The following outline is provided to assist in the preparation of a constitution and, if needed, by-laws. Use this guide to prepare the constitution for your new student organization. A copy of the constitution is required in the Office of Student Activities to approve your organization. If there are any problems or concerns with your constitutions, a member of the Office of Student Activities staff will contact you.

WRITING YOUR CONSTITUTION

Writing your club's constitution is a great way to refine and lay out the nature of your club and its activities. This document is meant to assist you in developing that consolidated document. As always, ASCMC and DOS are more than happy to answer any questions or assist at any point in the process.

For Each section of the constitution, a brief description of contents and an example are provided. By no means is this the only way to create a constitution—use whatever format is best to communicate your mission, goals, activities, and structure.

Name: This section includes simply the name of your organization.

➤ **Ex: Article I. Name**

- The name of this organization shall be Common Sense Action (CSA).

Purpose and Functions: This section is one of the most important, as it details the mission and activities of your club..

➤ **Ex: Article II. Mission**

- Common Sense Action is a grassroots organization that expands opportunity for Millennials by bringing our generation to the policymaking table and building a

movement of Millennial voters committed to advancing generational fairness, investing in Millennial mobility, and repairing politics.

Membership: This section discusses the target audience of your club and any steps a student must take to obtain membership. **All clubs and organizations must be open to all undergraduate students.** Note that to be recognized as a SMC-only club, a roster may not contain more than 20% on-SMC students. If your club requires an invitation, audition, or application, include those requirements here. We recommend allowing students to join as General Members without any application or interview to start. This helps to generate interest in your group. You can then channel that interest into executive board positions that require applications, etc.

➤ **Ex: Article III. Membership**

- We are looking for students who are interested in working with public policy and who share our values of generational equality and bipartisanship. At our core, we are a group dedicated to making a positive impact on the community around us, and similarly committed students who are willing to work towards our common goal will always be accepted.

Nondiscrimination Clause: In order to be chartered, your constitution must include a statement saying that your club will not discriminate.

➤ **Ex: Article IV. Nondiscrimination Clause**

- [Club Name] or its members may not discriminate against someone on the basis of the person's legally-protected status (e.g. including: race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, religion (including religious dress and appearance), gender, sex (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), sexual orientation, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic that may be specified in laws and regulations, as well as the perception that a person has any of those characteristics).

Officers/Leadership: This section discusses different leadership positions and their responsibilities. It also includes information about length of terms and election processes.

➤ **Ex: Article V. Officers**

- **President**
 - Responsible for preparing and running meetings.

- Serves as liaison to CSA main chapter.
- **VP of Programming**
 - Responsible for planning all organization events and workshops.
- **VP of Finance**
 - Responsible for overseeing club finances.
- **VP of Communications**
 - Responsible for CSA press release.

Meetings: This section includes information about meeting frequency, content, and determination.

➤ **Ex: Article VI. Meetings**

- Meetings to discuss current club initiatives will occur every two weeks on a day and time decided by executive board.

Amendments: This section contains instructions regarding how to amend the constitution. Exact requirements are at your discretion.

➤ **Ex: Article VII. Amendments**

- Amendments may be proposed at the end of each meeting, with voting on the proposal occurring during the next meeting. All registered members may vote, and in order for an amendment to be implemented, $\frac{2}{3}$ of all executive officers and 50% of all other members present must affirm it.

Ratification: This section contains instructions for ratification. Exact requirements are at your discretion.

➤ **Ex: Article VIII. Ratification**

- In order for this constitution to be ratified, $\frac{2}{3}$ of all executive officers must must vote to do so.