



# New & Forming Organizations Constitution Template

South Dakota State University

This template should be used by forming student organizations to construct a constitution to guide the operation of the organization. All of these items need to be addressed in the organization's constitution. The provisions in italics must be copied as-is into the constitution. The bullets are points to consider; be sure to address them when writing the body of the constitution. A member of the Office of Student Activities staff will be happy to assist the group in the composition of the constitution.

## Article I – Name

Section 1. State the official name of the group, and any abbreviated name or acronym by which the group may be known.

## Article II – Purpose

Section 1. State the purpose or aim of the group. This statement should be broad enough to allow freedom of action, but specific enough to show the uniqueness of the organization.

Section 2. *It is the responsibility of (name of organization) to uphold the Student Code and the educational mission of South Dakota State University.*

## Article III – Membership

Section 1. *The (name of organization) must accept new members without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.*

Section 2. *Membership is open to all enrolled students, and SDSU students must comprise 50 percent plus one of the total voting membership.*

Section 3. List the types of members within the organization and what defines these types of members.

- Are there various categories of membership such as Active, Inactive, Alumni, Honorary, Auxiliary, etc.?
- Discuss what defines each particular category of membership.
- Be sure to address which types of members are allowed to vote, hold office, and required to pay dues.

Section 4. Describe the process for expulsion of a member, to include the following provisions:

- A. grounds for expulsion of the member;
- B. who makes the motion for expulsion and to whom is the motion made;
- C. *the offending member/officer will have a chance to address the membership in defense of the charges* (feel free to build in your own fact-finding and hearing process that suits your organization);

- D. delineate the time frame allowed for this process (e.g., vote must be made within two weeks of motion being made); and
- E. who votes and vote required for expulsion (2/3 is strongly recommended).

#### **Article IV – Officers**

Section 1. List the titles of the organization's officers and their duties.

- Some officer titles include President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, Publicity Coordinator, Website Designer, etc.

Section 2. Describe how officers are selected and the vote needed to select.

- Are officers appointed or elected?

Section 3. Delineate the length of term for the officers.

- Will an officer serve just one semester or an entire academic year?

Section 4. List any qualifications one must have to become an officer of the organization.

- Does your organization expect its officers to meet certain requirements for: GPA, amount of credits, years of experience, etc.?

Section 5. Describe the process for dealing with officer vacancies.

- Will there be a special election? Will another officer cover the duties until next election? Will somebody have the authority to appoint a member to cover the duties until the next election?

#### **Article V – Advisor**

Section 1. *The (name of organization) will have an advisor registered with the Office of Student Activities.*

Section 2. Describe the method by which an advisor is selected.

- Will your advisor be a volunteer, voted upon, or appointed by the department?
- If voted upon, what is the vote needed to elect the advisor?

Section 3. Delineate the length of term for the advisor.

- Will the advisor serve just one semester or an entire academic year? Is there a provision for reappointment?

Section 4. List the duties the organization expects the advisor to fulfill.

- Things to keep in mind: meeting attendance, fiscal management, historian, record keeping, etc.

Section 5. *In the event of the need to consider removing an advisor, the organization will consult with the Office of Student Activities regarding possible options.*

Section 6. In the event advisor needs to be removed, describe the process for removal of advisor to include motions made by and to whom, and vote needed.

## **Article VI – Finances**

Section 1. *The ultimate responsibility for financial obligations of the (name of organization) rests with the membership.*

Section 2. Describe the type of account(s) the organization will utilize to deposit and expend its funds.

- Types of accounts include on-campus and off-campus; may also indicate that the organization does not intend to generate funds.

Section 3. *If (name of organization) shall become and remain inactive for a period of 18 consecutive months, all funds in accounts belonging to (name of organization) shall be transferred to Activity Index 379350 – Special Programs, Student Activities.*

Section 4. Identify two officers responsible for signing off on all expenditures.

- This is often the President and Treasurer; may have an exception for expenditures under a certain dollar amount.

Section 5. Statement of dues, to include:

- A. how dues are established;
- B. time frame for establishing dues;
- C. who pays dues and to whom;
- D. deadline for paying dues; and
- E. implication for not paying dues.

## **Article VII – Quorum**

Section 1. Determine the fraction/percentage of members required to be present in order to vote on motions.

- This is often a simple majority, one-half, fifty percent plus one, etc.

## **Article VIII – Method to Amend the Constitution**

Section 1. It is recommended that 2/3 vote be required to amend a constitution.

- Do the members need to be present to vote?
- By whom and to whom do amendments get submitted and what time frame is allowed for notification prior to vote?

## **Article IX – Statement of National/Local Affiliation**

Section 1. Statement of affiliation with national and/or local organization.

- Organization must attach a copy of the most current national/local constitution.

Section 2. *In the event of a conflict between the (name of national/local affiliation) Constitution and Bylaws and SDSU Policies and Procedures, SDSU Policies and Procedures shall supersede.*

## **Article X – Parliamentary Authority**

Section 1. Statement of Parliamentary Authority used for organization business (Roberts Rules, etc.).

Updated 4/07 ark