Creating a Constitution

OSLS and SGA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATION'S CONSTITUTION

All student organizations chartered by the Student Government Association will be required to submit a constitution and/or by-laws annually when they re-register, beginning January 2010, even if the Constitution has not changed in order to ensure that the organization has a copy for regular referral. The constitution serves as the governing document for the organization. This information is kept on file in the SGA Offices, 515E Dobbs University 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 your organization does not currently have a copy of its constitution and bylaws available, please contact the SGA Attorney General at sgaattorneygeneral@learnlink.emory.edu to obtain the most recent copy SGA has on file.

If you need any additional information or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Leadership & Service, 340E DUC at 404.727.6169 or the SGA Business Office, 515E DUC at 404.727.6179.

CONSTITUTION STRUCTURE

***DENOTES REQUIRED SECTIONS OF CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We the members of NAME OF ORGANIZATION subscribe to the regulations and policies of Emory University, the Emory University Student Government Association, and the NAME OF DIVISION, do hereby 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. Must state that membership is open to all members of the Emory University community. It may limit the number of members or contain other provisions relating to members.

This article MUST include the Emory University Non-Discrimination Clause: NAME OF ORGANIZATION is dedicated to the Emory University equal opportunity policy, which provides that applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran's status, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law. (Few exceptions MAY be granted to certain groups (i.e. religious, men/women, etc…) at the discretion of the SGA Attorney General)

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

a. Membership shall be limited to regularly enrolled Emory University 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: Officers***
This section should contain the officer positions, qualifications, duties, the duration of terms, election, and removal. This list must contain an officer who is responsible for the organization’s activities (i.e. President) and an officer who is responsible for the financial obligations and accountability of the organization (Treasurer). All officers must be enrolled in credit hours at Emory University. 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 Emory University 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 V: Executive Committee
This Article may provide for a governing Board of Directors, or Executive Committee, and the method for establishing the committee. This board can consist of the officers. If no board is desired, then omit this article.

ARTICLE VI: Meetings***
This article should state the provisions for setting up a regular meeting time and frequency of meetings, 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).

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).