Organization Constitutions

MODEL CONSTITUTION or BYLAWS

This model is intended to assist you and your organization in writing or revising our governing document. There are many, many ways to structure an organization and you are free to tailor yours to the needs of your group. **However, the items in bold print are required by the policy governing University recognition.** Otherwise, this model serves as a good starting point for your constitution. For further assistance with a constitution, please see a staff member in the Student Association’s Office.

CONSTITUTION (or BYLAWS) OF…

Date

Article I – Name
The name of this organization shall be ______________, hereinafter referred to as ______________.

(Include in this section any national or regional affiliations).

Article II – Purpose
The purpose of this organization shall be…

(Include a clear and concise statement of the purpose and goals of the group.)

Article III – Membership
A. Qualifications of Members

1. (Include in this section the criteria for membership and how membership is decided, if any. This might include GPA, class level, major, etc. The criteria may not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, gender, marital status, color, veteran status, or disability. Social organizations may be exempt from gender discrimination requirements, see the Student Association’s Office for further information.)

2. Voting privileges shall be granted only to regularly enrolled, Northern Illinois University, students.

(Include any other requirements you wish such as meeting attendance, participation in activities, paying dues, etc. You may wish to include eligible non-students as associate members, who may attend meetings, make motions, and participate in discussions and activities.)

3. The responsibilities of all members shall include…

(Include here all the requirements for maintaining membership.)
B. Assessments and Dues

(Include here any and all dues or fees charged to members, associate members, new members, etc. Instead of setting the dues level, you may wish to stipulate how the assessment is established by the membership.)

C. Membership may be terminated…

Article IV – Officers and Committees

A. Criteria

1. All officers must be regularly enrolled students in good standing at Northern Illinois University.

(Other qualifications for holding office may include length of membership, class standing, etc.)

B. Election and Removal

(Include when and by whom the officers are elected, e.g., “Officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the members present at the first meeting of the spring semester.” Be sure to specify how many members need to be present to constitute a quorum. Additionally, you must specify the procedure for removal of officers which is usually a 2/3 majority vote of the total voting membership. Finally, you need to specify how offices are filled if there is a vacancy, e.g., by appointment or special election.)

C. Duties and Responsibilities

(Include the title of each office and a brief delineation of duties.) For example:

1. The Chair (President) shall preside at all meetings of the club, represent the club to the University and others, and shall convene the executive committee at least monthly when school is in session.

2. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in his/her absence and serve as a member of all sub-committees…

3. The Secretary/Treasurer shall keep all records of official business and financial transactions...

D. Committees

(Include all standing (ongoing) committees as well as provisions for the appointment of special projects, ad hoc committees, etc.) For example:

1. The executive committee shall be comprised of the elected officers of the organization and shall meet to finalize agenda items, prepare informational reports, and collaborate on the business of the organization.
2. The program committee shall…

3. The _________ committee shall…

4. The President may appoint others to committees as needs arise.

**Article V – Meetings**
(Include the frequency of meetings, how the membership is notified, how special meetings are called, and how committee meetings are scheduled.)

**Article VI – Decision Making Process**
(You must include a delineation of the process for decision making. This must include how many members must be present to conduct business (quorum), the number of votes within the quorum to make decisions, how decisions about the expenditure of funds are made (if different), and any exceptions to this rule.) For example:
A. The process for general decision making (including the expenditure of funds) shall be a simple majority of a quorum unless otherwise specified in this constitution. A quorum shall constitute a minimum of 40% of the membership in attendance at a scheduled meeting.
B. The executive committee may, with a majority vote, authorize expenditures of up to $______ for routine operational expenses.

**Article VII – Advisor**
A. Faculty or staff advisor shall be selected and removed by… (You must include a method for selecting and removing your faculty/staff advisor. It may be a vote of the membership, the executive committee, or any other method you choose. Check with Student Involvement & Leadership Development to make sure your advisor isn’t specifically tied to a professional position on campus)

**Article VIII – Amendment Process**
This constitution may be amended by a _____ (usually 2/3) vote of the total membership…
(Include how amendments are introduced to the membership.)

**Article IX – Disbursal of Assets**
(You must make a provision for the disbursal of assets should the club cease to exist. This process must allow for such disbursal by offices or officials outside the organization and designate a benefactor.) For example:
A. Should the club disband, the executive board shall disburse the assets to _________. Should no officers be available, the Director of the Student activities Office (or an appropriate university official) shall be authorized to make the disbursal.