

Composition of Governing Documents

The constitution guides 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 govern their organization.

The constitution 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.

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 by the Clubs & Organizations Office to approve your organization. If there are any problems or concerns with your constitution, a member of the Clubs & Orgs staff will contact you.

The constitution should be simple yet comprehensive and difficult to amend, leaving any specific procedural rules to be included in the by-laws. When amending the constitution, as with the by-laws, previous notice of any proposed changes are usually required to be given to the membership and should not be changed in the same meeting in which proposed.

- *Language printed in italics below is explanatory and should be deleted before finalizing the document.*
- *Everything else, in plain print is suggested language you can include for your organization or adapt as you see fit.*
- *Bolded items must be included/addressed where applicable.*

PREAMBLE

We, the members of [New Student Club], to fully realize our purpose, do hereby adopt and establish this constitution as the guiding instrument of our Club.

Article 1. Name, Purpose, and Non-Discrimination Policy

Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) are not allowed to have 'Oregon State University', 'Beavers', or 'OSU' in their club name, except as a location. For example:

- (a) *Acceptable: Candy Club at Oregon State University (or Oregon State or OSU)*
- (b) *Unacceptable: Oregon State University Candy Club, Oregon State Candy Club, OSU Candy Club, Beaver Candy Club.*

If the organization is affiliated with a national or international organization, details of the affiliation should be adequately described.

Section 1. The Name of this Club shall be [New Club Name] herein referred to as [RSO].

Section 2. The purpose of [RSO] shall be [INSERT HERE].

Section 3. Statement of Non-Discrimination.

Membership shall not be denied to any student on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin (including ancestry and ethnicity), citizenship, marital or family status, pregnancy or related conditions, disability, genetic information, protected veteran status/service in the uniformed service, or any other status protected by law or OSU policy.

Article 2. Membership

Voting membership should be defined as limited to currently enrolled OSU students. Others such as faculty, alumni, professionals, etc. are encouraged to become members but as non-voting associates or honorary members.

Section 1. Types of Members

- a) Active Member: Currently enrolled Oregon State University students who are currently active with the organization
- b) Associate Member: OSU faculty staff or community members who are currently active with the organization. These members are not eligible to vote or hold leadership positions.
- c) Describe any additional member types [HERE].

Section 2. Eligibility for Membership

Describe the actions/criteria/stipulations required by someone to become a general member. Add a subsection detailing this information for each member type.

- a) A person may become a general member by [INSERT HERE].
- b) A person may become an associate member by [INSERT HERE].
- c) Include any additional criteria for membership [HERE].

Section 3. Member Requirements

Describe any requirements to maintain one's membership in the organization (required meeting attendance, participation expectations, etc.). Add subsection detailing this for each member type.

- a) To remain a general member, one must [INSERT HERE].

Section 4. Member Accountability and Dismissal

- a) If a member conducts themselves in such a manner deemed detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization they can be disciplined, including dismissal from the organization.
- b) To be considered for removal from office, a written request stating the reasons for dismissal and signed by at least three (3) active members of the club must be submitted to the officer team where the member is to be given verbal and written notice of concerns.
- c) If conduct warrants consideration for dismissal from the organization, the accused shall be given opportunity to either resign from the organization or request a formal hearing.
 - i) If requested, a formal hearing must be scheduled within 2 weeks. A member of the officer team shall serve as a non-voting mediator, and all active members must be notified at least 48 hours in advance.
 - ii) Written and verbal notice of concerns shall be shared with the membership, and the accused provided opportunity to present reasoning to the full membership on why they should be able to continue in the organization. The membership shall, upon hearing the accused's reasoning, cast a vote to determine if that member should be dismissed from club.
 - iii) A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all active members present is required to dismiss the member from the club.
 - iv) Quorum for formal hearings shall be all officers plus at least 25% of active members.
- d) If dismissal is not under consideration, the accused shall be provided opportunity to address the concerns with the officer team and disciplinary action may be taken with a unanimous vote of the officer team.

Article 3. Officers

Organization leaders represent the organization and general membership and are typically elected or appointed from the ranks of the organization's voting membership. The titles of organization leaders, the general duties of each leadership position, the length of terms, specification as to which leaders are elected or appointed and by whom, and which leaders are optional should be clearly specified. Organizations should have the necessary leaders to conduct their activities and must have a minimum of two officers.

Section 1. Officer Titles and Responsibilities

- a) Required officers of the organization include:
 - i)
 - ii)
- b) Optional Officer Positions include:
 - i)
 - ii)

Section 2. Officer Duties

- a) [Officer Role 1]
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
- b) [Officer Role 2]
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)

- c) [ETC.]
 - i)

Section 3. Nominations and Elections

- a) Officer elections shall be held by [INSERT ELECTION TIME HERE]. (ex. Week 5 of Spring Term)
- b) Nominations for officer positions shall occur during the general meeting immediately preceding the scheduled election.
 - i) Outline your nomination process here (process options described at <https://beav.es/59z>).
- c) Describe the method of voting (process options described at <https://beav.es/59K>).

Section 4. Eligibility

The governing documents should state any eligibility requirements a general member must meet to be eligible for each office.

- a) All general members in good standing shall be eligible for nomination for any officer position.

Section 5. Term of Office

Pay attention to your election and transition timeline. Keep in mind officers who may be graduating or leaving (consider Section 3).

Indicate whether a person can hold the same office only a certain number of consecutive terms.

- a) Officers shall be elected to serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms of office shall start at the beginning of the first meeting immediately following the election or at the conclusion of Spring term, whichever is earlier.

Section 6. Officer Accountability and Removal from Office

- a) Any elected officer whose dereliction of duty adversely affects the operations of the Club shall be subject to disciplinary action, including removal from office.
- b) Upon written and verbal notification of concerns and the opportunity to address the concerns, disciplinary action may be taken with a unanimous vote of the remaining officer team except for removal from office.
- c) To be considered for removal from office, a written request stating the reasons for dismissal and signed by at least three (3) active members of the Club must be submitted to the officer at a regularly scheduled meeting, where the officer is to be given verbal and written notice of concerns.
 - i) The officer shall be given opportunity to either resign from their role or request a formal hearing. At the officer's request, a formal hearing must be scheduled within 2 weeks.
 - ii) In case of a formal hearing, a member of the officer team shall serve as a non-voting mediator and all active members must be notified at least 48 hours in advance.
 - iii) Written and verbal notice of concerns shall once again be shared with the membership with the officer provided opportunity to present reasoning to the full membership on why they should be able to continue in their role. The membership shall, upon hearing the officer's reasoning, cast a vote to determine if that officer should be removed from office.
 - iv) A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all active members present is required to remove the officer from office.
 - v) Quorum for formal hearings shall be all remaining officers plus at least 25% of active members.
- d) If an officer resigns or is removed from office, a new vote to fill the vacated position should be held at the next official meeting of the club.

Article 4. Advisor/s

This article lists all advisor role/s with the organization, the duties of the advisor/s, how the advisors are determined. RSOs are not required to have an advisor and this section is not required if the club is not utilizing an advisor. Sponsored Student Organizations are required to have an advisor and that person must be part of the department sponsoring the club and a full-time member of the University faculty or Administrative staff.

Section 1. Duties

- a)
- b)
- c)

Section 2. Nominations and Elections

- a)

Section 3. Term of Office

- a)

Article 5. Meetings

Required meetings and their number are specified here.

Section 1. General Meetings

- a) The organization shall meet at least _____ times per term during Fall, Winter and Spring terms. Meetings shall not occur on university holidays or during finals weeks.
- b) Meetings are not required during summer term, but the organization may meet at the discretion of the officer team.
- c) Meeting schedule for the term shall be determined by the officer team and announced at least 1 week in advance of the meeting.

Section 2. Officer Meetings

- a) The Officers shall meet at least _____ times per term during Fall, Winter and Spring terms. Meetings shall not occur on university holidays or during finals weeks.
- b) Meetings are not required during summer term, but the officer team may meet as needed at the discretion of the President.

Section 3. Special Meetings

- a) At the discretion of the officer team, additional meeting may be called as needed to move forward the business of the club. Members must be provided at least 48 hours notice of any special meeting.

Section 4. Quorum

*This section sets the quorum for the meetings. Quorum means the **minimum number of members who must be present to do business** (vote).*

- a) Action on any business, old or new, requires a quorum of [describe minimal participation required here] of the active membership of the Club.

Article 6. Parliamentary Authority

Section 1.

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the constitution, bylaws and special rules of order the organization may adopt.

While Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the most commonly used, if the organization has [other forms of parliamentary authority](#) they is welcome to use this.

Article 7. Amending the Constitution and Bylaws

This article provides a means for making changes in the constitution and bylaws.

Section 1.

An amendment to this constitution shall be introduced by any voting member and submitted to the Secretary in writing at a regular business meeting.

Section 2.

The membership shall be notified about the proposed amendment at least one week prior to a vote on the proposed amendment.

Section 3.

A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all active members present is required to amend the constitution.

Section 4.

Quorum shall be all officers plus at least 25% of active members.

Section 5.

Amendments should be made and constitution updated within 2 weeks of an affirmative vote. Amendments should be sent to the Student Organizations & Activities Office for final approval.