

WRITING A CONSTITUTION

A constitution can lend stability to your organization by clearly defining the principles by which you operate. It provides a common framework within which members of your organization have agreed to work. The following sections may be included in your organization's constitution. **At a minimum, your constitution must state the organization's requirements for membership including fees, the qualifications for individuals becoming authorized representatives, the method of selecting, replacing and removing these representatives, and the method for changing the constitution.** If your organization is affiliated with an international, national, regional, or local non-University organization, the following statement is required: **The rules, regulations and policies of the University of California and the Santa Cruz campus shall supersede the rules, regulations, policies and/or bylaws of any affiliated international, national, regional or local organization.** All constitutions and amendments must be in agreement with university regulations and policies. File a copy of your original constitution with Student Organization and Advising Resources (SOAR) as part of your application packet. File amendments with SOAR within one week of adoption. See *Rule Book* for university regulations regarding constitutions.)

If you need any assistance writing your constitution, ask your SOAR adviser for help or for a fill-in-the-blanks constitution.

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

- ◆ **NAME - The Name of this organization shall be....** The name of the university can only be used as a geographical designation: Alphabet Club at UCSC (vs. UCSC Alphabet Club).
- ◆ **PURPOSE - The purpose of this organization shall be to....**
- ◆ **MEMBERSHIP - State any criteria for membership, i.e., payment of dues, field of study, scholarship.** Membership must be limited to currently registered UCSC students. Selection and acceptance of the members of your organization must be in accordance with the university's policies of non-discrimination. (See Section 60.102(e), Section 20, and Appendix E of the *Rule Book*.)
 - A. **All UCSC students interested in the purpose of this organization shall be eligible for membership.**
 - B. **Non-students are welcome to participate in activities, but they may not be members, hold office or vote on organizational issues or in elections.**
 - C. **Voting privileges shall be granted only to members who have attended at least two meetings during the current academic year.**
 - D. **Responsibilities of all members shall include:**
 - 1. **Participation in at least one fundraiser per quarter;**
 - 2. **Adherence to the organization's policies and practices.**
 - E. **Membership shall be rescinded by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled meeting. The issue of rescinding membership, and the reasons, shall be introduced at previous regularly scheduled meeting. The member in question will be notified by mail at last known home address and will be allowed to reply to accusations at the meeting at which the vote is taken.**

- ◆ **OFFICERS** - If you have Officers, their duties should be listed. Criteria for and method of selection, removal, and replacement should be stated. **At a minimum, this must include how authorized representatives are selected, removed, and replaced.**
 - A. **The authorized representatives who sign the Application for Registration of a Student Organization and take responsibility for the organization shall be the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.**
 - B. **Duties and Responsibilities** - There shall be five officers who comprise the executive committee:
 1. **President** - presides at all meetings, represents the organization, and convenes the executive committee at least monthly when school is in session.
 2. **Vice President** - assumes the duties of the President when s/he is absent, and serves as special projects chair...
 3. **Secretary** - keeps minutes of all regular and executive committee meetings, and notifies members of meetings...
 4. **Treasurer** - collects dues, keeps a record of all income and expenses, makes a report of account balance at each meeting, expends funds at the direction of the membership.
 5. **Special projects chair** - ...
 - C. **Requirements for Officers**
 1. **Must be currently registered student at UCSC;**
 2. **Must have been a member for at least one quarter.**
 - D. **Election and Removal**
 1. **Officers shall be elected by ...choose one of the following: simple majority vote, consensus, or secret ballot vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled meeting...and shall serve for...choose one of the following: calendar year or the following academic year.**
 2. **Officers may be removed for cause by two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization. The issue of removal and the reasons, shall be introduced at the previous regularly scheduled meeting. The officer in question will be notified by mail at last known home address and will be allowed to reply to accusations at the meeting at which the vote is taken.**
 3. **Officers shall be replaced by election as described above.**
- ◆ **FINANCIAL RECORDS** - Any regular fundraising activities (such as dues, t-shirt sales, dances) should be described along with the purpose for which funds are raised. Describe the budgeting and record keeping processes for your organization.
- ◆ **BYLAWS** - Generally, a constitution establishes the broad spectrum and format of an organization. Bylaws spell out the processes and procedures used to attain the goals of the organization. If your organization has more detailed or complex procedures you can simplify portions of your constitution and create bylaws to specify the details.
- ◆ **AMENDMENTS** - Amendments to the Constitution shall be approved by ...simple, or two-thirds majority vote, or consensus of members present a regularly scheduled meeting or the total membership.