

Sample Constitution and By-Laws

A constitution and by-laws are written to guide an organization in its operations and activities. All student organizations are required to have a constitution on file in the Office of Student Involvement..

Typical components of a student organization constitution:

- Official group name
 - State full name, then provide Acronym
- The group's recognition source
 - I.E. National Organization, Campus Department
- The group's mission or purpose statement
- The group's requirements for membership
 - Define voting rights
- The roles and responsibilities of group officers
- The requirements for voting on group issues
 - Typical rule – 2/3 majority of individuals with voting rights
- The structure and timing for officer elections
- The requirements for amending the constitution
- A list of amendment dates and other important certifications or milestones for the group

By-laws:

- Outline the rules of procedures for an organization
- Should be consistent with the constitution
- Tend to be easier to amend than the constitution

The following sample constitution and by-laws are provided as a **guideline** to assist you in writing or revising your organization's constitution. There are many ways to structure an organization, so feel free to write your constitution and by-laws to meet the needs of your organization.

Constitutions should be reviewed yearly in order to maintain effectiveness. An updated copy needs to be provided to Campus Activities during organization registration each Spring OR immediately after an update has occurred.

Tips for holding a constitution review meeting:

- Bring all stakeholders together, including organization advisor
- Start by creating a mission statement that describes the purpose of the group, along with a list of activities that will accomplish the purpose.
- Define the composition your membership and the requirements for admission into the group
- Write officer descriptions in third person using position titles instead of pronouns, i.e., "The President will."
- Keep the document in an editable digital format (.doc), a permanent digital format (.pdf), and in print

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For assistance in reviewing your constitution, contact Eugene Burton – Director of Student Involvement and the Rollins Campus Center
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Constitution of _____ (Name of your group)

Article I: Name

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be... (Provide actual name which will be used for all official business), hereafter referred to as...

Article II: Purpose

Section 1: The purpose of this organization shall be... (*Clearly* state the purpose, aims, and function of the organization)

Article III: Affiliations

Section 1: This organization is affiliated with... (Indicate if your group has an affiliation with a college department and/or any other campus, local, state, national, or international organization and explain the relationship. Organizations with inter/national affiliations must submit their inter/national constitution or statement of purpose. If your organization has no affiliation, this section may be omitted.)

Article IV: Membership

Section 1: The membership of this organization shall consist of enrolled Young Harris College students. (A statement like this is required for your constitution.)

Section 2: This organization... (All registered student organizations must include in their constitution a non-discriminatory policy statement that is consistent with Young Harris College non-discriminatory policy statement (See YHC Guide to Student Life). An example would be: "This organization and its members shall not discriminate against any individuals for reasons of race, national origin, color, religion, gender, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, and/or ability status.")

Section 3: Membership in this group shall be open to all who are interested and... (List the criteria for membership to your organization, if you have any)

Article V: Officers

Section 1: The officers of the organization shall consist of... (State all officer titles and duties – examples below)

- A. President – The President shall...
- B. Vice President – The Vice President shall...
- C. Secretary - The Secretary shall...
- D. Treasurer - The Treasurer shall...
- E. Etc.

Section 2: The qualifications for each office... (State the qualifications, if any, for the officers)

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Section 3: The term of each office shall be... (Example: one year from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30. Make sure elections are held before the term expires.)

Section 4: Should an officer's position become vacant during his/her term, the following will take place...

Article VI: Advisor

*Section 1: Our organization advisor must be a member of the faculty, administration, or staff of Young Harris College. (See guidelines in the YHC Guide to Student Life)

Section 2: The duties and responsibilities of the advisor shall be... (See attached Advisor Agreement form)

Section 3: Should the position of advisor become vacant during the year...

Article VII: Meetings

Section 1: Regular meetings of the organization shall be held... (Consider how often you would like to meet, who calls the meeting, etc.)

Section 2: Special meetings of the organization shall be held... (Consider who has authority to call these meetings, how much notice is required, etc.)

Article VIII: Hazing Policy

Section 1: Hazing of any kind is strictly prohibited by Young Harris College. (Organization Name) supports and abides by the Young Harris College Hazing Policy & Definition listed below:

“Any activity or situation, intentionally or unintentionally created, with or without consent, whether on or off the organization's premises, which endangers the mental or physical health of participants; which provides physical discomfort; which subjects the individual to embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule; which creates excessive fatigue, physical, or psychological shocks to the individual; which requires participation by the individual in quests, treasure/scavenger hunts, stunts, morally degrading or humiliating games and activities, road trips or any other such activities; which requires late or early work sessions or any activity which is not consistent with the academic achievement, laws, rituals, and/or policies of the organization or the regulations and policies of the College or applicable state law.”

Article IX : Amendments

Section 1: This constitution shall be amended by a vote of (2/3, 3/4, etc.) majority of the membership at any regular or special meeting. (Note: The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently)

Section 2: Provision for advance notice of amendment shall be... (Explain how eligible voting members will be informed of the proposed amendment such as posting, notification by email, announcement at two consecutive meetings, etc.)

Date Ratified (Insert date the constitution is initially ratified)

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Date Revised (Insert date the constitution is revised)

Sample By-Laws -----

By-Laws of _____ (Name of your group)

Article I: Membership

Section 1: Procedure for selection of membership...

Section 2: Dues for this organization shall be... (Indicate amount, if any, and how often they are paid)

Section 3: Membership responsibilities shall include...
(Define Voting Rights and expectations (i.e. grades, attendance, etc) of members here)
***Members of Club Sports & Equestrian Club are required to fill out an extended liability waiver for the institution. Notification of this must be included in these constitutions.**

Section 4: Membership shall be terminated by...

Article II: Selection of Officers

Section 1 The selection of officers shall be done by... (Clearly state election rules and voting procedures, eligibility for each office, and when the elections take place during the academic year)

Section 2: The provisions for removal of an officer include...

Article III: Selection of Advisor

Section 1 The selection of the advisor shall be done by...

Section 2: The provisions for removal of an advisor include...

Article V: Rules of Order

Section 1: This organization shall be governed by... (Specify source of parliamentary procedure for your organization. Most groups use "Robert's Rules of Order" in cases when it is applicable and consistent with the organization's constitution and by-laws.)

Article VI: Amendment

Section 1: These by-laws may be amended by a vote of ... (Should be similar to constitution, but tend to be easier to amend. Example: simple majority vote, 2/3 vote, etc.)

Date Ratified (Insert date the by-laws are initially ratified)

Date Revised (Insert date the by-laws are revised)

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