

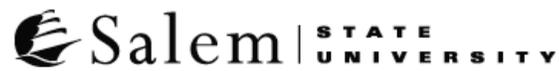
A CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

WORKBOOK FOR

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT

ORGANIZATIONS AT

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY



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INTRODUCTION

This workbook is designed for the purpose of helping prospective groups, organizations, and clubs develop a constitution and bylaws for their recognition by the University and the Student Government Association. The constitution and bylaws are important regulations, which govern the organization of a group and provide guidelines for meetings. These basic documents are also important because they state the rights and responsibilities of the members, officers and committees, which comprise an organization. The outline here was designed by the Rules Committee of the Student Government Association and the Student Involvement and Activities Office to address those basic elements of organizational structure, which the University feels are essential. It is recognized, however, that different groups may have variations in their need for certain positions, titles, and procedures. When completed, this workbook will provide a “working draft” which should be discussed by organization members and approved by the group.

Questions or concerns about the development of a constitution and bylaws should be directed to the Student Involvement and Activities Office.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

There is often confusion over the definitions of the terms “constitution” and “bylaws”. However, there are important differences between the two that should be recognized. The *constitution* contains the fundamental principles of an organization and determines the responsibilities and rights of its officers and members. The *bylaws* deal with the detailed procedures and working guidelines of the organization and determine the routine operations of the organization. Both the constitution and bylaws are divided into parts, called *articles*. As necessary, the articles can then further be divided into *sections* and *subsections*.

NOTE: IF the new group or club is going to be a local chapter of a larger organization, special rules may apply. The larger organization will most likely have its own constitution and may require special provisions of its local chapters.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The first article of any group's constitution states what the name of that group shall be. The name should not be identical with that of an organization that already exists, and should reflect the essence of the organization.

EXAMPLE: The name of this organization shall be _____.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The second article of the constitution must state, as clearly as possible, the purpose of the organization.

EXAMPLE: The purpose of the (name of organization or group) shall be to _____

_____.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

This article should clearly state the eligibility for membership (which should also contain an equal opportunity statement which provides access to membership regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, or disability), types of membership offered and qualifications for voting in the organization. Membership must be open to all full-time day students, but requirements, such as paying dues or meeting certain grade point average standards may be included for voting members.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. All registered undergraduate day university students shall be eligible for membership in the (name of group). Membership shall be open to any student regardless of race, color, religion, gender, creed, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, genetic information, marital status, and veteran status sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or disability.

SECTION 2. Voting members shall be designated as those persons who have attended _____ meetings in an academic semester.

SECTION 3. Honorary (non-voting) memberships may be given to _____.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

This article should include the titles and special qualifications for all the officers of the organization. The method for electing officers, filling vacancies, and the length of term for each officer should also be specified. The duties of the officers will be part of the bylaws.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. The officers of the organization shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and a Treasurer.

SECTION 2. All undergraduate full-time day students, whether or not they have previously been voting members of the organization, shall be eligible to hold office provided they are in good academic standing at the time of election.

SECTION 3. The term of office for the officers shall be from _____ of the regular academic year to the _____ of the following year.

SECTION 4. The officers shall be elected by a majority at the annual elections held on _____.

SECTION 5. Vacancies of offices shall be (appointed, elected) by _____.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

This article should explain when and under what circumstances meetings of the organization are held. This article will vary widely depending on the size of the group, its purpose, and interest level.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. The regular meetings of the voting membership shall be held every/at least _____ (week, month, etc.)

SECTION 2. Special meetings of the organization may be called by the President, or upon the requests of _____ members of the organization.

SECTION 3. A quorum for the conduct of official business shall be defined as _____ of the voting membership.

ARTICLE VI – RULES OF PROCEDURE

The type of procedure for conducting the business of the organization and maintaining active recognition status at the university should be specified. Robert's Rules of Order is recommended, but organizations may choose an alternative method of conducting their meetings if it better suits their needs.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. Robert's Rules of Order (revised) shall be the parliamentary authority of this organization. Should Robert's Rules of Order conflict with this Constitution, this Constitution takes priority.

SECTION 2. In order to maintain active status, the organization agrees to abide by those rules and procedures, including financial regulations of Salem State University and the Student Government Association, which pertain to all student groups and organizations.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS

A procedure for amending the constitution must be placed in every constitution. The procedure should be clearly outlined and as specific as possible.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by either the officers or voting members of this organization.

SECTION 2. Consent by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members shall be necessary to approve amendments to this Constitution.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

This section should specifically outline the duties of each officer of the organization. These are general duties for basic positions; depending on the nature of a particular organization the duties and officers may be different.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. The duties of the President shall be to:

- a. Preside over all regular membership meetings.
- b. Call for special meetings when necessary
- c. Sign all financial documents of the organization
- d. Serve as the organizational representative.

SECTION 2. The duties of the Vice-President shall be to:

- a. Succeed the President should he or she for any reason be unable to carry out the Presidential duties.
- b. Assist the President in administering the business of the organization.

SECTION 3. The duties of the Secretary shall be to:

- a. Take brief minutes of each meeting and take care of any major correspondence concerning the organization as a whole.

SECTION 4. The duties of the Treasurer shall be to:

- Keep a record of all financial and historical documents and submit all financial records to the Student Government Association and/or the Financial Affairs Office as required.
- b. Sign all financial documents.
 - c. Turn in all financial records for re-issue to the new Treasurer when required or appropriate.

ARTICLE II – DUTIES OF ADVISOR

This article should clearly describe the role of the advisor in the organization. It should also indicate whether the advisor has voting privileges in the organization.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. A faculty advisor shall be appointed by _____ of the voting members.

SECTION 2. The duties of the advisor shall be to:

- a) Attend the regular meetings of the organization
- b) Sign documents on behalf of the organization as appropriate, including room clearance forms, recognition forms, contracts, etc.

- c) Act as a consultant for the organization and any projects and special committees in the organization.
- d) Act as a liaison between the University and the organization, representing the interests of each.

SECTION 3. The advisor shall (shall not) have voting privileges in the organization.

ARTICLE III – COMMITTEES

Although no organization is required to have a standing committee structure, this section would provide the opportunity to state the duties, powers, and a membership of any existing committees. At the very least it should provide for an ad-hoc committee that can be formed to consider questions of impeachment, sanctioning, and removal.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. Ad-hoc committees.

- a. Shall be formed by the President, as deemed necessary, to investigate matters of immediate concern.
- b. The Chairperson and members of the ad-hoc committee will be appointed by the President, to be approved by a majority of the voting members of the organization.

ARTICLE IV – IMPEACHMENT

Every organization must have some mechanism for the impeachment, sanctioning and removal of officers, members and advisors. These rules should never be used, however, without extremely good cause. Sanctions such as censure or reprimand may be imposed for minor violations, in accordance with this article.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. Officers and/or members may be impeached on the basis of not fulfilling the purposes and policies of the organization as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws or for violation of university and/or financial procedures.

SECTION 2. Any member of the organization may initiate impeachment proceedings

by giving written notice to the President. If it is the President who is being impeached, notice should be given to the Vice-President.

- SECTION 3. Upon formal notification, it is the responsibility of the President (or Vice-President) to convene an ad-hoc committee of inquiry to consider the filed allegations.
- SECTION 4. Any individual who is impeached shall be given full notice of the allegations against him/her and shall have an opportunity to respond to them.
- SECTION 5. The ad-hoc committee of inquiry will investigate the allegations, determine the validity of the charges, and make recommendations regarding sanctioning to the full body for its consideration.
- SECTION 6. Recommendations for sanctioning made by the ad-hoc committee of inquiry must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting, in order to be implemented.
- SECTION 7. Possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, reprimand, censure, and/or removal.
- SECTION 8. An individual may appeal his/her sanction by submitting an appeal request to the advisor of the organization within ten (10) calendar days of his/her notification of the sanction. If it is the advisor who has been sanctioned, appeals should be directed to the President.
- SECTION 9. An appeal may be requested only on the basis of one of the following two claims:
- a. That there was procedural error in the conduct of the impeachment proceedings.
 - b. That there is significant new evidence which was previously not available.
- SECTION 10. The advisor shall determine whether there are grounds for appeal and may choose to affirm the sanction or remand the case for a rehearing by a new ad-hoc committee of inquiry.
- SECTION 11. If an appeal hearing is granted based upon one of the conditions in Section 9, it will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Sections 5-7, and with new evidence

submitted or procedural error removed.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

Specific election procedures for the organization should include information on dates, eligibility, and rules for handling election procedure violations.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. Elections shall be held during the first/last _____ weeks of the _____ semester of each academic year.

SECTION 2. Candidates for offices shall be eligible provided they have met the requirements for that office as stated in Article III of the Constitution.

SECTION 3. Violations of election procedures shall be heard by _____.

ARTICLE VI – FINANCES

This article should state the guidelines for use of dues (if there are any), income, and other funds.

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. All finances shall be handled in accordance with the established fiscal procedures in effect for the Student Government Association and the University as outlined in the Groups and Clubs Manual.

SECTION 2. In the event of loss of recognition, any funds remaining in the organization's account will revert back to the Student Government Association.

ARTICLE VII – INITIATION

This article should state that the organization complies with Massachusetts's laws, which prohibit the practice of "hazing".

EXAMPLE:

SECTION 1. The (name of group or organization) does not engage in any initiation procedures which would be considered illegal under applicable state and federal law.

SECTION 2. Each year, every member, will be provided with a copy of Massachusetts

General Laws Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19, as amended, and will be required to sign an acknowledgement of such receipt.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Because the Constitution and Bylaws are two separate documents, each must have an article, which provided procedures for amendment. This article can follow the same basic pattern as Article VII of the Constitution.

APPLICATION OF INTENT TO ESTABLISH A UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION

Name of Organization: _____

Purpose of Organization: _____

Name of Members (list five):

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____

I have read and understand the **Policy Statement on University Recognition of Student Organizations and Interest Groups** and I agree to abide by the policies and regulations of Salem State University governing student organizations.

Signature of Organization Leader

Date

Signature of Advisor

Date

-----**Student Involvement and Activities Office Use Only**-----

Interim Recognition Status Granted From _____ **To** _____ .

Approved: _____
Student Involvement Designee Date

Official Recognition Status Granted As Of _____ .

Approved: _____
Student Involvement Designee Date

- cc: Student Organization Leader
- Advisor
- Director of Student Involvement and Activities
- Student Government Association

APPLICATION OF INTENT TO ESTABLISH AN INTEREST GROUP

Name of Organization: _____

Purpose of Organization: _____

Name of Members (list at least one):

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____

I have read and understand the **Policy Statement on University Recognition of Student Organizations and Interest Groups** and I agree to abide by the policies and regulations of Salem State University governing student organizations.

Signature of Organization Leader

Date

Signature of Advisor

Date

-----**Student Involvement Office Use Only**-----

Interim Recognition Status Granted From _____ **To** _____ .

Approved: _____
Student Involvement Designee

Date

Official Recognition Status Granted As Of _____ .

Approved: _____
Student Involvement Designee

Date

cc: Student Organization Leader
Advisor
Director of Student Involvement and Activities
Student Government Association