

# Sample Constitution and By-laws

\*The Constitution & By-laws are required for Level I organizations.

A constitution and by-laws are written to guide an organization in its operations and activities. These documents should be clearly worded, intentionally structured, and kept up-to-date to meet the needs of the student organization.

The constitution:

- Establishes the broad structure and fundamental principles of an organization
- Should be straightforward and comprehensive
- Should be difficult to amend

The 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. However, asterisked (\*) sections below must be included in your constitution and by-laws to be considered a Registered Student Organization. For further assistance, contact [SGA@ColumbiaState.edu](mailto:SGA@ColumbiaState.edu).

**Advisors:** Please keep an electronic, editable copy of your club's constitution and by-laws, and pass them on as necessary. You may also keep the most up-to-date record on file electronically with the SGA.

*If using this template, please delete the blue, italicized text prior to submission.*

## SAMPLE CONSTITUTION:

Constitution of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of your group)\*

### Article I: Name

\*Section 1: The name of this organization shall be \_\_\_\_\_, hereafter referred to as \_\_\_\_\_.

### Article II: Purpose

\*Section 1: The purpose of this organization shall be... *(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 Columbia State department and/or any other campus, local, state, national, or*

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*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: Membership of this organization shall consist of enrolled Columbia State students.
- \*Section 2: *(All registered student organizations must include in their constitution a non-discriminatory policy statement that is consistent with Columbia State's non-discriminatory policy statement.)* The membership of this organization will not be discriminatory on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by Columbia State Community College.
- Section 3: Membership in this group shall be open to all who are interested and... *(List the criteria for membership, if any)*

#### **Article V: Officers**

- Section 1: The officers of the organization shall consist of the following: *(Here, please list any and all official officers and their duties. Suggested officers are a President, Vice President, and a Secretary and/or Treasurer [or a combination of both]).*
- A. President – The President shall...
  - B. Vice President – The Vice President shall assist the president and shall...
  - C. Secretary - The Secretary shall be the record keeper for the group and shall...
  - D. Treasurer *(and so on)*
- Section 2: The qualifications for each office are as follows;
- A. President – *(Here you will re-list the officers and the requirements for each office. Will they need to be full-time? Have completed a certain amount of hours? And etc.)*
  - B. Vice President
  - C. Secretary
- Section 3: The term of each office shall be... *(Example: one year from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, or from the first day of Summer Semester to the last day of classes the following spring. 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: *(Here, specify what will happen if, for example, the President steps down from his/her office. Maybe the Vice President will take their place. Then consider what will happen if you are without a Vice President, a Secretary, and so on.)*
- A. President –
  - B. Vice President –
  - C. Secretary –

## **Article VI: 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.)*  
*EXAMPLE: Special meetings of the organization shall be held when called by an officer and there must be at least one (1) week notice.*

## **Article VII: 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.)*
- EXAMPLE ONLY:*
- A. The amendment must be publicly recognized at a meeting.*
  - B. Following that meeting one (1) email must be sent including;*
    - a. Explanation of the amendment*
    - b. What is required to pass the amendment*
    - c. Time and date of discussion meeting*
    - d. Time and date the vote will take place*
  - C. At least one more meeting should be held to discuss the amendment*
  - D. At the end of a discussion meeting, if there is a one hundred percent (100%) vote the amendment may be made. Otherwise the meeting of the vote should be announced and be the same date discussed in the email.*

## **Article VIII: Statement of Non-Hazing**

- \*Section 1: This organization will not conspire to engage in hazing, or commit any act that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending the institution. *(Please include exactly as it appears here.)*

## **Article IX: Statement of Compliance with Campus Regulations**

- \*Section 1: This organization shall comply with all campus policies and regulations as well as local, state, and federal laws. *(Please include exactly as it appears here.)*

## **Article X: Dissolution**

- \*Section 1: This organization may dissolve either by two-thirds quorum vote for dissolution OR if a Student Organization fails to complete the college-required recognition process for two consecutive semesters. In the event of dissolution, all financial assets become property of the Student Government Association and shall be added to allocations designated for

recognized student organizations. All additional assets become property of the Office of Student Enrollment, Engagement, and Services. *(This statement will specify what will occur if a club/organization dissolves. Please consult and advisor or other college staff when adapting the text in this section.)*

Date Ratified (Insert date the constitution is initially ratified)

Date Revised (Insert date the constitution is revised)

Date Revised (Insert date the constitution is revised)

Date Revised (Insert date the constitution is revised)

## **SAMPLE BY-LAWS**

**By-laws of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of your group)**

### **Article I: Membership**

Section 1: The procedure for selection of membership... *(If no procedure, you may just state that any Columbia State Student can be a member of \_\_\_\_\_.)*

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

Section 3: Membership responsibilities shall include... *(Maybe state if there is a GPA requirement, attendance policy, service requirement, etc.)*

Section 4: Membership shall be terminated by... *(Example: Vote of the officers, decision of the advisor, etc.)*

### **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)*

#### **EXAMPLE:**

##### **A. Procedure;**

- a. Taking a ballot vote at one (1) meeting.*
- b. Each member gets one (1) vote for each office.*
- c. A committee of three members must count the votes and a faculty advisor must approve the results. At least one officer must be on the committee.*
- d. If a member is going to miss the meeting, their vote can be submitted to an officer or advisor prior to the election.*
- e. Campaigning is allowed up to one week before the election day.*

##### **B. Eligibility;**

- a. To be president a member must be a full time student that has completed at least 12 hours of classes.*

- b. *To be vice-president a member must be a full time student of CSCC.*
- c. *To be secretary a member must be a full time student of CSCC.*
- C. *Dates;*
  - a. *Elections will take place at the last regular meeting before graduation.*
  - b. *Special elections may be held at other times if circumstances call for one.*

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

*EXAMPLE:*

- A. *The complaint against an officer should be brought up at a meeting. The officer should be given the chance to refute the accusations.*
- B. *A vote of at least two thirds (2/3) should be achieved to remove an officer.*

### **Article III: 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 IV: 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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