

CONSTITUTION FORMAT
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT OFFICE
UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION, ROOM 306 - 278-2741

The Constitution of an organization contains the fundamental principles which govern its operation and establishes the specific rules of guidance by which the group is to function. All but the most informal groups should have their basic structure and methods of operation in writing.

Why Have A Constitution?

By definition, an organization is a “body of persons organized for some specific purpose, as a club, union or society.” The process of writing a constitution will clarify your purpose, delineate your basic structure and provide the cornerstone for building an effective group. It will allow members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is all about and how it functions. It will provide structure to aid future leaders of your organization in insuring that the group continues on a sound course. If you keep in mind the value of having a written document that clearly describes the framework of your organization, the drafting of the Constitution will be a much easier and more rewarding experience.

What Should Be Included in a Constitution?

The following is an outline of the standard information to be included in your Constitution to be consistent with University guidelines. Your constitution must be in the same format as provided. Each article must be included, as well as all sections in **bold type**. (Article III, Section 2 does not need to be included if your organization is not affiliated with an off-campus organization). Other sections are included to provide some examples of sound organizational practices. You may include these other sections as well as any additional sections you may desire. Remember, the constitution you write is for your organization. It is important that you think through what you want to write so that it reflects your organization’s purpose and needs as well as including University requirements. The prime objective is to draft a document that covers these topics in a clear and concise manner. If you have questions, you should consult with your University Advisor or the staff in the Student Involvement Office.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

[Name of Organization] at California State University, Fresno

ARTICLE I: **NAME**

Section 1 **The name of this organization shall be** the (name of organization) at California State University, Fresno.

(Optional: Include chapter designation, if part of a national organization, including the national organization's founding date)

ARTICLE II **PURPOSE**

Section 1 **The purpose of this organization is** to provide students with opportunities for association and interaction with the faculty and administration of California State University, Fresno and to instill the desire for self-improvement, scholastic excellence and the cultivation of civic responsibility.

ARTICLE III **AUTHORITY**

Section 1 **This organization is a recognized student organization at California State University, Fresno and adheres to all campus policies as set forth in the Handbook for Student Organizations and Use of Campus Facilities and Grounds.**

Section 2 This organization is affiliated with (name of national or affiliated organization.)

Section 3 This organization may establish Standing Rules to govern administrative procedural matters (such as time and location of meetings, etc.). Standing Rules shall not conflict with these bylaws. Standing Rules may be adopted, amended, or temporarily suspended by a majority vote present at an organization meeting where a quorum is present (advance notice is not required).

Section 4 **The rules contained in the most recent version of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority for this organization and shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the organization may adopt.**

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 **Membership in the organization shall be open to all those regularly enrolled California State University, Fresno students who are interested in membership. There shall be no other requirements for admission to regular membership. Each regular member has equal rights and privileges.**

Section 2 This organization shall have associated members who are non-California State University, Fresno students. Associated members shall have all membership privileges except for the right to vote or hold office. By California State University policy, no more than 20 percent of the membership shall be individuals who are not CSU students (e.g., faculty, staff, community members, students at other colleges, etc.)

Section 3 **Eligibility for membership or appointed or elected student officer positions shall not be limited on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability. The organization shall have no rules or policies that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability.**

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1 **The elected officers of the organization shall be the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and others as deemed necessary.**

Section 2 **Powers and Duties of Officers:**

- a. The President shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization, shall preside at all meetings of the organization and shall prepare the agenda for meetings. The President shall be the official spokesperson of the organization, representing the policies, views, and opinions of the organization in its relations

with the campus and community at large. The President shall appoint all committees and committee chairs. The President shall have such further powers and duties as may be prescribed by the organization.

- b. The Vice President shall preside at organization meetings in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall perform all legal duties assigned by the President. The Vice President shall assume the office of President if the office becomes vacant.
- c. The Treasurer shall handle all financial affairs and budgeting of the organization, maintain all necessary accounting records, and prepare monthly financial reports for membership. These records shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The Treasurer shall collect and deposit all dues and fees. The Treasurer shall maintain bank accounts in the organization's name, requiring signatures of both the Treasurer and President for authorized disbursements.
- d. The Secretary shall take minutes at all meetings of the organization, keep these on file, and submit required copies to all organization members. The Secretary shall be responsible for all organization correspondence and shall keep copies thereof on file. The Secretary shall maintain membership records for the organization.

Section 3

Qualifications necessary to hold office in this organization are as follows:

The president and treasurer of the student organization are required to meet the minimum requirements established for Minor Student Representative Student Officers.

Minimum Academic Qualifications

Students must be matriculated and enrolled at a CSU campus and maintain a minimum overall 2.0 grade point average each term. The students must be in good standing and must not be on probation of any kind.

Incumbent Unit Load

This requires undergraduate students to earn six semester (nine quarter) units per term while holding office. Graduate and credential students must earn three semester (four quarter) units per term while holding office. Students enrolled at quarter campuses must attend a minimum of two quarters during the academic year to maintain eligibility.

Incumbent Maximum Allowable Units

Undergraduate students are allowed to earn a maximum of 150 semester (225 quarter) units or 125 percent of the units required for a specific baccalaureate degree objective, whichever is greater. Graduate and credential students are allowed to earn a maximum of 50 semester (75 quarter) units or 167 percent of the units required for the graduate or credential objective, whichever is greater. Students holding more than this number of units will no longer be eligible for minor student government office.

ARTICLE VI: SELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Section 1** **The President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary are elected once a year. Elections are held at the end of the spring semester and shall take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization at which a quorum is present. At least one week's notice shall be provided for any meeting at which an election is to be held.**
- Section 2** Nominations for officers shall be made at the regular meeting immediately preceding the election. Nominations may also be made from the floor immediately prior to the election for each office. Members may nominate themselves for an office.
- Section 3** The officers shall be elected in this order: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- Section 4** Officers shall be elected by majority vote. If no candidate receives a majority vote, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes. In the event of a tie, there shall be a revote. If the result of the revote is still a tie, the election shall be decided by the flip of a coin.
- Section 5** Votes shall be cast by secret ballot; however, when there is only one candidate for an office, a motion may be made to elect the candidate by acclamation.
- Section 6** **Officers shall assume office on the first day of the semester following the election and shall serve for the entire academic year.**
- Section 7** **Officers may be recalled from office for cause. To initiate a recall election, a petition signed by one-third of the total number of voting members must be submitted at a regular meeting and a recall vote shall be taken at the next regular meeting. The officer subject to recall shall be given written notice of the recall**

at least 72 hours prior to the meeting at which the recall vote will be held and shall be given an opportunity to provide a defense. A two-thirds vote is required to remove an officer.

Section 8 In the event that an elected officer is unable to fulfill his/her term of office, there shall be a special election to fill the vacancy. Any eligible member, including those already holding office, may be nominated for a vacant office.

ARTICLE VII: **MEETINGS**

Section 1 Regular meetings shall be scheduled weekly during the academic year.

Section 2 Special meetings may be called by any elected officer. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hour notice prior to the meeting time.

Section 3 Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as a majority of the voting membership. A quorum for this organization is defined as 50%+1 of the voting membership.

Section 4 Members must be present to vote. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted.

ARTICLE VIII: **ADVISORS**

Section 1 The organization shall appoint an individual employed on a half-time or more basis as a faculty or staff member by California State University, Fresno to serve as the university advisor to the organization. Auxiliary staff and student assistants are not eligible to serve as advisors. The advisor shall fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Handbook for Student Organizations and Use of Campus Facilities and Grounds.

Section 2 Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

Section 3 If an advisor is deemed to be ineffective by the organization, the advisor(s) may be removed from their role by majority vote of a quorum of the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting. A minimum of seven days notice must be given prior to such a vote.

ARTICLE IX: FINANCES

- Section 1** **This organization has the ability to assess the membership for special purposes. Assessments shall be determined by a quorum of the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting.**
- Section 2** Membership dues shall be \$20 per academic year.
- Section 3** Dues shall be paid by the second week of the fall semester. There will be a late fee of \$10 each additional week after the set deadline.
- Section 4** Members who have not paid their dues or special assessments by the due date shall be considered as not being in good standing and shall lose all membership privileges, including voting, until the dues are paid.
- Section 5** **Organization funds shall not be used to purchase or reimburse members for alcoholic beverages.**

ARTICLE X: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- Section 1** **Any member may be suspended or expelled from the organization for conduct** obviously contrary to the Constitution of the organization or for conduct which grossly impairs the rights of members to enjoy the benefits of the organization. The alleged offense must be in writing and submitted by a member. **After the alleged offense has been submitted to the organization, the accused member shall have a right to a hearing before the organization** at a regular meeting and may be suspended or expelled only upon the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the voting members present. The accused member has the right to appeal an adverse decision at a regular meeting, and the accused member shall be reinstated unless the suspension or expulsion is again approved by three-fourths vote.
- Section 2** **The membership shall review the hearing report in executive session, and the member accused of misconduct shall have an opportunity to rebut the information in the report. After providing a statement to the membership, the member accused of misconduct shall leave the room for the remainder of deliberations.**
- Section 3** **The membership shall vote first on whether the member has engaged in misconduct. If by a two-thirds vote, the membership determines that misconduct has occurred, the membership shall then by a two-thirds vote, determine appropriate sanction(s).**

The accused member shall be immediately notified of the outcome.

Section 4 By a two-thirds vote, the membership may reinstate a member who has been suspended or expelled.

Section 5 The University can place an organization on probation for failure to observe regulations and responsibilities, as well as financial obligations on campus.

Section 6 Official recognition of a student organization may be withdrawn for hazing. Hazing is defined as any method of initiation into a student organization or any pastime or amusement engaged in with regard to such an organization which causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger, or physical or emotional harm, to any member of the campus community; but the term “hazing” does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions. Organizations or individuals found guilty of violation of this section of the Education Code will be subject to suspension by the University. (Title 5, California Education Code, Subchapter 4, Article 1, Section 40301).

Section 7 If an organization loses recognition or benefits as a result of action taken by the Director of Student Involvement, it may appeal to the Dean of Students.

Section 8 A final appeal may be filed with the Dean of Students within ten (10) work days after receiving written notification from the Director of Student Involvement if the organization does not accept the decision and/or the sanctions. The written appeal must state all reasons why the student organization does not accept the decision of the Director of Student Involvement. The Dean of Students may meet with organization representatives or make his/her decision based on the information submitted for review and the written request for appeal. Written notification of his/her decision and any sanctions shall be sent to the organization within ten (10) working days after having received the appeal. The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

Section 9 A description of the student club & organization conduct review process is available:

<http://www.csufresno.edu/studentactivities/programs/studentorgs/index.shtml>

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be presented to the membership, in writing, one meeting prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon.

Section 2 Bylaw amendments require **approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting.** The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

Section 3 **A copy of any amendments to these bylaws must be submitted to the Student Involvement Office at California State University, Fresno within two weeks after adoption.**

ARTICLE XII: DISBURSAL OF ORGANIZATION ASSETS

Section 1 **In the event** (list your organization) **should become defunct, all assets will be turned over to** (list entity where funds will be turned over, example - the California State University, Fresno Associated Students, Inc.) to be used to promote student programming on the campus.

These bylaws were adopted on (date) and most recently revised on (date).

ONCE YOU'VE WRITTEN IT, WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?

Remember the reasons for having a constitution. It articulates the purpose of your organization and spells out the procedures to be followed for its orderly functioning. Once you have developed your constitution, review it at least once a year. The needs of your group will change over time and it is important that the constitution is kept up to date to reflect the current state of affairs. Do remember that any time you do revise the constitution; a copy should be filed with the Student Involvement Office.

Make sure that every member of the organization has a copy. This will help unite your members by informing them about the opportunities that exist for participation and the procedures they should follow to be an active, contributing member. **A thorough study of the constitution and bylaws should be part of officer training and transition.**