

**CONSTITUTION FORMAT**  
STUDENT ACTIVITIES 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 X 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 Activities Office.

## CONSTITUTION OF SAMPLE ORGANIZATION

### **ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

**Section 1**      **The name of this organization shall be** the Sample Organization of California State University, Fresno.

**Section 2**      **The purposes of this organization are** 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.

**Section 3**      **This organization is recognized by California State University, Fresno and adheres to all regulations as set forth in the Handbook for Student Organizations and Use of Campus Facilities and Grounds.**

### **ARTICLE II: REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP AND MEANS OF SELECTION OF MEMBERS**

**Section 1**      **Membership in this organization shall not be denied to any student of California State University, Fresno on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability.**

**Section 2**      **There shall be two types of membership in the organization: voting and honorary.**

**Section 3**      **Voting membership is limited to regularly enrolled students at California State University, Fresno.**

**Section 4**      Any eligible California State University, Fresno student who completes and signs a membership application shall be deemed a member upon filing of the application with the secretary.

**Section 5**      Any person who has tendered outstanding service to the organization may be conferred with honorary membership upon a majority vote of the organization.

**Section 6**      **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 the 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 7** Any member removed by such a vote may file a grievance with the University Student Grievance Board by contacting the Dean of Student Affairs Office. A member of the Dean's staff will review the procedures with the student.

**ARTICLE III:**      **OFFICERS**

**Section 1**      **The elected officers of the organization shall be** the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and others as deemed necessary - see provisions for amending.

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

- a. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the organization. He/She 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. He/She shall have such further powers and duties as may be prescribed by the organization.
- b. The Vice-Chair shall preside at organization meetings in the absence of the Chair. He/She shall perform all legal duties assigned by the Chair. He/She shall notify all members of the organization meetings.
- c. The Treasurer shall handle all financial affairs and budgeting of the organization, maintaining all necessary accounting records. Said records shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. He/She shall maintain bank accounts in the organization's name, requiring signatures of both the Treasurer and Chair for authorized disbursements. All disbursements in excess of \$50.00 require the majority approval of the organization.
- d. The Secretary shall take minutes at all meetings of the organization, keep these on file, and submit required copies to all organization members. He/She shall be responsible for all

organization correspondence and shall keep copies thereof on file. He/She shall also act as historian and shall maintain all records of 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.

**Section 4**            **Petition** by one-third of the total number of members **shall be cause for recall election.** The offense must be in writing and submitted by a member. After the offense has been submitted to the organization, the accused officer shall have at least 48 hours before the hearing. A recall election shall be held at the next regular business meeting after the presentation of the recall petition and shall be conducted as a special election. **Recall will require a favorable vote of three-fourths of the voting membership in attendance.**

**Section 5**            **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 IV:        MEETINGS**

**Section 1**            **Regular meetings shall be scheduled at least bi-monthly during the academic year.**

**Section 2**            **Special meetings may be called by any elected officer (i.e., Chairperson, Treasurer, etc.) or by 5% of the voting members of the organization. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours notice, weekends and holidays excluded, 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 50% + 1 of the voting membership.**

**ARTICLE V:        ELECTIONS**

**Section 1**            **Officers are elected once a semester. Elections are held at the end of each semester and shall take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization at which a quorum is present.**

**Section 2**            **At least one week's notice shall be provided for any meeting at which an election is to be held.**

**ARTICLE VI:        ADVISORS**

**Section 1**            **An individual employed on a more than half-time basis by California State University, Fresno, and not a University Auxiliary employee, will serve as advisor to this organization as required by University guidelines.**

**Section 2**            **The advisor(s) shall serve a term of one year and will be selected at the same time as the officers of the organization.**

**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 VII: DUES**

**Section 1** This organization has the ability to assess the membership. Assessments shall be determined by a quorum of the membership annually at a regularly schedule meeting.

**ARTICLE VIII: METHOD TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION**

**Section 1** Proposed constitutional amendments or changes shall be presented to the organization, in writing, one meeting before it may be voted on.

**Section 2** Approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting shall pass a proposed change. The change shall be put into effect immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

**Section 3** A copy of any alteration to this document must be filed within 90 days after any substantive change or amendment in the Student Activities Office at California State University, Fresno.

**ARTICLE IX: DISBURSAL OF ORGANIZATION ASSETS**

**Section 1** In the event the Sample Organization should become defunct, all assets will be turned over to the California State University, Fresno Associated Students, Inc., to be used to promote student programming on the campus.

**ARTICLE X: STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION**

**Section 1** This organization is affiliated with Sample Organizations International.

**Section 2** Any copy of any alteration to the Sample Organizations - International constitution and bylaws must be filed in the Student Activities Office at California State University, Fresno.

**ARTICLE XI:      RULES OF ORDER**

**Section 1**      **The Sample Organization accepts “Robert’s Rules of Order” (newly revised) as its rules of order.**

**Section 2**      **Any issue not directly spoken to in this document will be resolved by referring to the Rules of Order.**

**This constitution was approved on July 7, 1986.**

## **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 Activities Office.

**Make** sure that every member of the organization has a copy of it. 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.**