

# CONSTITUTION GUIDELINES FOR SOUTHWESTERN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## **Constitution Overview**

Student organizations at Southwestern University are required to create and maintain a constitution. Student Activities and The Student Government Association has established standards and guidelines for student organization constitutions that will help in the creation of a constitution for pending student organizations.

## **Purpose of a Constitution**

A constitution contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a foundation upon which an organization operates. The constitution provides details on the procedures and processes to aid the organization in functioning in an effective and efficient manner.

## **Constitution Review**

Each time new officers are elected, the constitution should be reviewed to ensure it is up to date and serving the needs of the organization. When a constitution is clear, concise and followed, the organization will operate more efficiently and will allow it to grow and develop in a successful manner.

## **Creation of a Constitution**

The constitution should be tailored to your organization's specific needs. It should also be written to ensure all members and activities are in accordance with University policy. The second page of this document lists the information that must be included in all student organization constitutions. Below is a checklist of recommended areas to include in the constitution.

### **Constitution Checklist**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title - Title of Constitution            | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 5 - Meetings           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preamble - Organization Overview         | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 6 - University Advisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 1 - University Compliance        | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 7 - Finances           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 2 - Prohibition of Hazing Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 8 - Elections          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 3 - Membership and Eligibility   | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 9 - Amendments         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 4 - Officers                     |   |

## **Submission of Constitution**

Newly registered student organizations are required to submit a constitution with their new student organization application. If your constitution is not in accordance with these guidelines, your organization will be asked to resubmit an edited constitution and official registration with Southwestern University will be delayed.

## Policies for Student Organization Constitutions

**These clauses MUST appear exactly as written in every student organization constitution.**

1. **Statement of University Compliance:** This organization is a recognized student organization at Southwestern University and shall comply with all campus policies as set forth by Student Activities and the Student Code of Conduct.
2. **Prohibition of Hazing Policy:** [ORG NAME] is against all forms of hazing and will uphold State law (§ 37.151 through 37.157 Texas Education Code) which defines hazing as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.
3. **Membership Restriction:** This organization restricts membership to students, faculty members, and staff members of the University,
4. **Eligibility of Membership:** This organization may not deny membership on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
5. **University Advisor:** In accordance with the Student Organizations Handbook, this organization is required to have a University Advisor who is not enrolled as a student at the University, and serves as:
  - a. a part-time or full-time employee of the University.
6. **Responsibilities to the University Advisor**
  - a. Notify the advisor of all meetings and events.
  - b. Consult advisor in the planning of all activities.
  - c. Consult your advisor before any changes in the structure of the organization or in the policies of the organization are made and before major projects are undertaken.
  - d. Discuss any problems or concerns with the advisor.
  - e. Attend all meetings and events scheduled by the advisor.
  - f. Be clear and open about your expectations for your advisor's role.
  - g. Acknowledge that the advisor's role is voluntary and can be revoked
  - h. Acknowledge the advisor's time and energy are donated and express appreciation.
7. **Constitution Updates (in Amendments section):** All amendments or changes to this constitution must be reflected in an updated constitution that must be submitted to Student Activities within 14 days of its approval.

**These following procedures MUST be included in every student organization constitution. Student organizations may establish guidelines and use language that fit the organization's needs.**

8. **Procedure for Member Removal (in Membership section):** The organization is required to include a "Membership Removal" section that outlines the procedure in which a member may be removed. The procedure should be clear and concise.

9. **Procedure for Officer Removal (in Officer section):** The organization is required to include a “Officer Removal” section that outlines the procedure in which an officer may be removed. The procedure should be clear and concise.
10. **Procedure for Constitution Amendments (in Amendments section):** In the “Amendments” section the organization is required to outline the procedure by which the constitution may be amended.

## **Constitution of [Name of org] At Southwestern University**

### **PREAMBLE**

[Name of org] is intended to (insert mission, purpose, aims and functions)

### **ARTICLE I – UNIVERSITY COMPLIANCE**

[Insert “Statement of University Compliance” text EXACTLY as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page]

### **ARTICLE II – PROHIBITION OF HAZING**

[Insert “Prohibition of Hazing Policy” text EXACTLY as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page]

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

[Insert “Membership Restriction” text **EXACTLY** as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page] [Insert “Eligibility of Membership” text **EXACTLY** as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page] [insert limitations, classes of, requirements, dues, and procedure for member selection. **Procedure for member removal is required.**]

### **Article IV – OFFICERS**

[Insert titles of all officers, duties, responsibilities, requirements, and selection process.  
**Procedure for officer removal is required.**

### **Article V – MEETINGS**

[Insert frequency of normal meetings, special meetings, calling meetings, attendance policy, voting]

### **ARTICLE VI - UNIVERSITY ADVISOR**

[Insert “University Advisor” text **EXACTLY** as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page] [Insert duties, responsibilities as outline in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page]

### **ARTICLE VII – FINANCES**

[Insert dues amount, collection of dues, who’s in charge of budget, process for requesting and spending funds)

**Note:** Sponsored Student Organizations must have a University account and are not allowed to have an off-campus bank account.

### **ARTICLE VIII – ELECTIONS**

[Insert when and how elections are held, how members are notified of upcoming elections, nomination process, voting process, number of members required to be present, and number of votes required to win]

### **ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS**

Procedure for Constitution Amendments is required. [Insert notification method of proposed amendments, vote that is required to ratify an amendment, who can propose an amendment]  
[Insert “Constitution Updates” text **EXACTLY** as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page]