

Constitution Guidelines

Preparing Your Constitution

A **constitution** is the guidelines under which an organization will operate. This document will serve your organization for many years to come. Please take the time to lay a strong foundation for your organization, so that future students may benefit from your initiative.

*The constitution defines the long-term purposes and structure of your organization. It should only be changed by amendment, approved first by a quorum of your organization's membership, and secondly reviewed by our office. Listed below is an outline of the **MINIMUM** constitutional provisions required.*

Required Constitution Outline (**MUST INCLUDE the following in THIS ORDER**)

Use a font that is easily readable. The preferred font is **Times New Roman, point 12.**

1. Name:

Name of the organization, noting any acronym/abbreviation.

NOTE: USF cannot be included in the title of the student organization; the only exception is "at USF".

2. Purpose, Goals & Association/Affiliation

The purpose and goals of the organization and the benefits that it will provide for its members. Include the type of activities your organization does or participates in.

A. Affiliation: Include any affiliations with other groups or national organizations your group identifies itself with.

If no affiliation/association, must state there is no affiliation/association to a group or national organization.

If a sports (recreational) organization, then must include Affiliation with the Sports Club Council and required guidelines. (For more information, please contact the Sports Clubs Coordinator at the USF Recreation Center).

3. Membership Qualifications:

A. Requirement for Membership (**paragraphs 1, 2, OR 3--MUST BE INCLUDED in this section:**)

Acceptable wording for Student Government funded organizations (A&S): (Minimum # of Members is 10)

- 1) 100% of active membership must be USF students. Associate membership may be granted to non-USF-students under special circumstances; these associate members shall not be given the rights and privileges of active USF students.

Acceptable wording for organizations that are not Student Government funded: (Minimum # of Members is 5)

- 2) 100% of active membership must be USF students. Associate membership may be granted to non-USF-students under special circumstances; these associate members shall not be given the rights and privileges of active USF students.

*(OR IF non-USF-student members are allowed into the active membership a **80-20 Rule** statement is needed requiring that non-USF-students do not exceed 20% of the organization's membership. Student Government is considering legislation, which would preclude organizations with non-USF-student members from being eligible for Activity and Service funding)*

- 3) 80% or more of active membership MUST be USF students. No more than 20% of active membership can be non-USF-students. Associate membership may be granted to non-USF-students under special circumstances; these associate members shall not be given the rights and privileges of active USF students.

B. Length of term for membership.

C. Requirements for continued membership.

D. Specifications for the removal of members from the group. Please specify a process for the removal of members, as well as what specific reasons might cause a member to be removed.

E. Voting rights (MUST include that non-USF-students cannot have voting rights).

4. Dues/Fees:

List all dues/fees (local and national) required by the organization. If no dues/fees are collected or charged, state so in your constitution. **NOTE:** Student Government funded organizations cannot charge local dues/fees and any national dues/fees must be optional for membership.

5. Quorum:

A quorum statement detailing the percentage of regular members that is required to form a quorum to vote on issues relating to the group's operation or its constitution.

6. Officer Description:

- A. Lists the titles of required officer positions and describe each officer's duties. Include length of term.
- B. Specify whether the position is elected or appointed. **Note:** *Non-USF-students may not hold any top leadership position within the organization.*
- C. List other optional officer positions within the organization's structure. Include the length of term.

7. Election of Officers:

Student organization officers are either elected or appointed to their positions. Please specify their term of office and the election process, including what happens when a position has been vacated either voluntarily or by removal.

8. Removal of Officers:

In the life of any student organization there may be a time when an officer has to be removed from his/her position. Please specify a process for the removal of officers, as well as what specific reasons might cause an officer to be removed.

9. Advisor(s):

Student organization advisor(s) is/are chosen by the leadership/membership. Please specify, if any, the procedure and criteria for selecting an advisor. Please list the minimum duties the organization has chosen for the advisor to fulfill.

10. Meetings:

- A. Must specify an officer transition(s) meeting by no later than 2 weeks following election of new officer(s).
- B. Specify frequency of general member and officer meetings (*i.e. weekly, monthly, etc.*).
- C. Specifications of calling special or more frequent meetings by decision of officers are included.

11. Rules of Order:

Select established Rules of Order for Parliamentary Procedure under which meetings will be conducted (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order or Sturgess Rules of Order).

12. Amendments:

Describe the procedure for amendments to constitution and by-laws. **MUST INCLUDE:** *Amendments and revisions to the constitution must be reviewed by the Office of Engagement & Involvement once adopted by the organization.*

13. Hazing (MUST INCLUDE WORD FOR WORD the statement in BOLD):

Anti-hazing statement and written-out copy of Florida State Statute #1006.63 and inclusion of USF Anti-Hazing policy:

“This organization prohibits its members, both individually and collectively from committing any acts of hazing as defined herein:

“Hazing” means any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for purposes including, but not limited to, initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a postsecondary institution. "Hazing" includes, but is not limited to, pressuring or coercing the student into violating state or federal law, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance, or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student, and also includes any activity that would subject the student to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment, or other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective.

For the purpose of this section, any activity as described above upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with this organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be a ‘forced activity,’ the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.”

14. Organization Agreement (MUST INCLUDE WORD FOR WORD):

Organization agrees to abide by Florida State Statute #1006.63 regarding hazing. Furthermore, agrees to abide by all Engagement & Involvement policies as outlined in the student handbook, to check the organization's mailbox regularly, to communicate via email upon request, and to update the organization's records whenever there is a change.