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# RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATION

# CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS TEMPLATE

All recognized student organizations at Widener University are required to have a current set of governing documents in place, which includes a constitution and set of bylaws.

The following guide is provided as a resource to student leaders and advisors in creating a new constitution and bylaws for their proposed student organizations. This guide is provided as a template only. If your organization chooses to use this document, then please ensure that you fill in all the necessary blanks and remove all instructional text and directions. Your organization’s actual constitution may be expanded or abbreviated, but must include the required sections provided in the template in order to be considered for recognition and approval as a new student organization. *If the new student organization is going to be a local chapter of a larger organization, special rules may apply. The larger organization will most likely have its own constitution and may require special provisions of its local chapters.*

There is often confusion over the definitions of the terms “constitution” and “bylaws”. However, there are important differences between the two. The constitution contains the fundamental principles of an organization and determines the responsibilities and rights of its officers and members. The bylaws deal with the detailed procedures and working guidelines of the organization and determine the routine operations of the organization. Both the constitution and bylaws are divided into separate parts, called articles. As necessary, the articles can then further be divided into sections and subsections*.*

The constitution and bylaws should be carefully formulated, clearly worded, and kept up-to-date so that the needs of the organization can be met. It is recommended that each member of an organization have a copy of the constitution and bylaws, and that all governing documents are reviewed and revised on a consistent basis.

An electronic copy of the constitution and bylaws of each student organization is required by the Office of Student Life when you register your organization each semester. If you have any additional questions, then please contact the Director of Student Organizations, Lauren Bolden, via email at labolden@widener.edu or stop by the Office of Student Life during our office hours.

ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION

**(NAME OF ORGANIZATION HERE)**

The (name of organization) declares this constitution for the purpose of establishing itself as a representative student organization, responsible to the student body, and campus community of Widener University.

**Article I: Name**

Section 1: The official name of this organization shall be . (If applicable) The organization may also be known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in correspondences.

**Article II: Purpose**

Section 1: The purpose of the organization is to \_\_ \_.

Briefly describe the purpose and objectives of your organization. List the purpose(s) for which your organization was formed. What does the organization provide to its membership? What does it provide to the Widener University campus? This statement will be used to describe what the organization is about to those looking for or at student organizations to join or work with.

**Article III – Affiliations**

Section 1 – Identify any local, regional, national, or international organizations with which the student organization is affiliated. This section may be removed if the organization is not affiliated with an entity other than the University.

**Article IV: Membership**

Section 1: **Membership**: This article should clearly state the eligibility for membership (which should also contain an equal opportunity statement which provides access to membership regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression). *General Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities are exempt from discrimination prohibitions on the basis of sex by federal law.* This section should also explain types of membership offered and qualifications for voting in the organization. Describe who is eligible for membership. Are there any restrictions on becoming a member (e.g., grade point average, class standing, community service requirements, etc.)? *Please note that organizations with membership restrictions based on grade point average and service requirements may not be eligible for funding from the Student Government Association*. Is your membership limited to undergraduate students, graduate students or undergraduate and graduate students? Graduate and part-time undergraduate students may become associate members of the organization, but cannot be included in the required amount for an organization to receive or maintain recognition. In addition, faculty and staff may not be included as members as they do not pay the student activities fee.

Section 2: **Membership Requirements & Responsibilities:** This is where you will explain what an active and inactive member looks like. Are there any restrictions on maintaining membership (this can be different then joining the organization) to remain in good standing/an active member? You may want to include grade point average requirements, paying a membership fee, community service requirements, amount of attendance at programs and meetings, and so forth. This article describes the responsibilities that each person in the organization must fulfill as a member. *Explain that active members have the rights and privileges to attend events, use the organization’s name, vote, run for office, and other privileges that you may think of. Ensure that you explain that inactive members do not have these rights.*

Section 3:  **Membership Fees (if there is no fee, you still need to put $0 in the constitution):** An annual membership fee of $ is due *(day/month)* to the Treasurer.

Members who are current on their dues payment shall be classified as “active” members.Members who are not current on their dues payment shall be classified as “inactive” members.

**Article V: Officers**

Section 1: The Executive Board shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer (*you may add more officers here as your organizational structure will require or allow*).

Section 2: The term of office for the Executive Board shall be from *(month) to*  *(month)*. *Remember someone still needs to in charge of the summer*. The Executive Board will take office in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (what semester?). *You may also want to put in a time for shadowing positions. Elections should occur prior to the recognition forms, which are typically due 2-3 weeks before finals week.*

Section 3: Executive Board members must be in good academic and disciplinary standing with Widener University.

Section 4: The Advisor shall be a non-voting member.

**Article VI: Meeting Procedure**

*How will you run your meetings? Will you use Robert’s Rules of Order? In this section establish a framework for how you will conduct business during your formal and informal meetings. Having an organized meeting procedure will help your meetings run more smoothly and efficiently.*

Section 1: The regular meetings of the voting membership shall be held every (insert day and time).

Section 2: Special meetings of the organization may be called by the President, or upon the requests of (percentage) of members of the organization.

Section 3: A quorum for the conduct of official business shall be defined as (percentage) of the voting membership.

Section 4: *Include a meeting agenda (if applicable)*

**Article VII: Supremacy Clause**

By having a supremacy clause, your student organization agrees to follow all Widener University, State, and Federal laws and policies.

Your supremacy clause could go something like, “The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ organization agrees to follow all Widener University, State, and Federal laws and policies.

**Article VIII: Anti‐Hazing Statement**

Your constitution must state that the organization complies and adheres to all Anti-Hazing State and Federal laws and the Widener University Anti-Hazing Policy*. General Greek-lettered Fraternities and Sororities must state that all members and associate members/new members will adhere to the Anti-Hazing and Risk Management policies created by FIPG.* Further, it should state that the members of the organization understand that any individual or organization found responsible for hazing will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in probation, suspension, or revocation of recognition.

**Article IX: Amendments & Ratifications**

*How are amendments to be proposed and by whom? Should there be a delay before voting on amendments? How are amendments to be voted upon? Who is eligible to vote?*

Section 1: The constitution and bylaws will be reviewed (annually/every two year). Amendments to this Constitution and bylaws may be proposed by either the officers or voting members of this organization.

Section 2: The following process must occur for any amendments to this constitution. *You should state that* consent by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members shall be necessary to approve amendments to the Constitution or bylaws.

ORGANIZATION BYLAWS

**(NAME OF ORGANIZATION HERE)**

**Article I: Duties of Officers and Chairpersons**

*In this section include, how many officers and chairpersons there are, their titles and duties? Do the officers constitute an executive committee? Are there standing committees other than the executive committee, i.e. Event Planning, Fundraising, etc.? Who is chairing these committees and what are those duties?*

Section 1: Only students in good academic and disciplinary standing may serve as officers and chairs.

Section 2: The duties of the President shall be to:

1. List duties and responsibilities here
2. List duties and responsibilities here

Section 3: The duties of the *(additional officer/chai)* shall be to:

1. List duties and responsibilities here
2. List duties and responsibilities here

Section 4: The duties of the *(additional officer/chair)* shall be to:

1. List duties and responsibilities here
2. List duties and responsibilities here

**Article II: Election and Removal Procedures for Officers and Chairpersons**

*In this section, consider how are officers to be elected? By what type of ballot? By what majority? Who is eligible for office? How can officers be removed?*

Section 1: All organization officers shall be elected by and will serve a term of *(month/year)* to *(month/year)*. *Remember,* *elections should occur prior to the recognition forms, which are typically due 2-3 weeks before finals week.*

Section 2: Officer elections will consist of the following process:

1. Nomination process
2. Elections
3. Run-off elections, if necessary

Section 3: In the event an officer is judged to be deficient in his/her duties (as determined by a unanimous agreement of the remaining executive officers and advisor), he/she may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the active organization membership. The advisor shall oversee the process of removal from office.

**Article III: Elections & Voting**

Each organization should have a standard procedure for voting and elections in order to insure continuity from year to year. Include eligibility, nomination and election process, and process for removing officers from duty.

**Article IV: Committees**

Most organizations work through a committee system. In this article the standing and ad hoc committees should be described and their functioning outlines. If you don't know which committees you will have, then via an article, grant the authority to develop them. You may also want to include how committee members are chosen (i.e. volunteer, assigned by chair, etc.)

**Article V: Role of Advisor**

The role of the faculty/staff advisor plays in an organization is extremely important. That role needs to be well defined in every organization's constitution. Use the Advisor Agreement Form as a framework for what to include.

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**REVISION HISTORY**

Created: (full date including year)

Revised: (full date including year)

Revised: (full date including year)

Revised: (full date including year)

Revised: (full date including year)

*Revision dates should be added as the documents are revised.*