



Institute of Technology
West Virginia University®

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
WORKBOOK FOR PROSPECTIVE
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AT
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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INTRODUCTION

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On the next several pages is the required format which must be used by students in developing a constitution and bylaws for prospective clubs, groups, and organizations in preparation for their recognition by Student Government Association of West Virginia University Institute of Technology. The outline is designed to address those basic elements of organizational structure which the college feels are essential. It is recognized, however, that there may be some minor variations among organizations in their need for certain positions, titles, and specificity within each section. When completed, the workbook should provide a “working draft” for discussion by organization members. Requirements should be incorporated into the final document.

Questions about the development of a constitution and bylaws should be directed to the Associate Dean of Students.

A WORD ABOUT CONSTITUTIONS & BYLAWS

Occasionally students have expressed some confusion over the definitions of the terms “constitution” and “bylaws”. For the sake of simplicity, these terms may be defined as follows:

Constitution - The fundamental principles of an organization which determine the responsibilities and rights of its officers and members.

Bylaws – The detailed procedures and working guidelines of the organization which govern the day- to-day operations of the organization and accompany the Constitution.

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PREAMBLE

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This section must include a statement of purpose for the organization. An equal opportunity statement must be included which provides for access to membership regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, age, or handicap.

Sample:

The purpose of the Indoor Gardens Club shall be to provide physical activity for hard-to-reach elderly citizens through the medium of horticulture. The club is designed to provide learning experiences for West Virginia University Institute of Technology students and to extend the resources of the college to the Fayette County community. Membership in Indoor Gardens shall be open to any students regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, age or handicap. The club shall strive to encourage a diverse membership.

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ARTICLE I – NAME

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This article should clearly state the name of the organization. Duplication of names of existing organizations should be avoided, and an effort should be made to reflect the essence of the organization in the title.

Sample: The Name of this organization shall be _____.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Sample: Section 1. All registered students shall be eligible for membership in the _____ (club, group, association).

Section 2. Voting members shall be designated as those persons who have attended _____ meetings in an academic semester.

Section 3. Honorary (non-voting) memberships may be given to _____.

ARTICLE III – OFFICERS

This article should include the titles and special qualifications for all the officers of the organization. The method for electing officers, filling vacancies, and the length of the term for each officer should be specified.

Sample: Section 1. The officers of the organization shall be:
a. President (or coordinator, chairperson, etc.)
b. Vice President (or co-coordinator, co-person, etc.)
c. Secretary
d. Treasurer.

Section 2. All student voting members of the organization in good academic standing shall be eligible to hold office.

Section 3. The term of office for the officers of _____ shall be from _____ of the regular academic year to the _____ of the following year.

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ARTICLE III – OFFICERS continued

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- Section 4. The officers shall be elected by _____ of the voting members of the _____ at the annual elections held on _____.
- Section 5. Vacancies of offices shall be (appointed, elected) by _____.

ARTICLE IV – EXECUTIVE BOARD

This article should be used to define the collective authority of the officers of the organization.

- Sample. Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice President Secretary, Treasurer, and the Advisor (s).
- Section 2. All executive and legislative power granted herin shall be vested in the Executive Board.
- Section 3. The Executive Board shall be empowered to recommend priorities for various projects and to plan activities for the organization.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

This article should explain when and under what circumstances meetings are held.

- Sample. Section. 1. The regular meetings of the membership shall be held at least _____ a month.
- Section 2. Special meetings of the organization may be called by the President, or by the Executive Board, or upon the written request of _____ members of the organization
- Section 3. A quorum for the conduct of official business shall be defined as _____ (percentage) of voting membership.

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ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

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Although no organization is required to have a standing committee structure, this section may provide a good opportunity to state the membership and duties of existing committees. It should provide for an ad hoc committee of inquiry which would be called together as needed to consider questions of impeachment, sanctioning and removal.

Examples of Possible Committees:

- Section 1. Ad Hoc Committee of Inquiry
- Section 2. Finance Committee
- Section 3. Publicity Committee
- Section 4. Rules Committee

ARTICLE VII – IMPEACHMENT, SANCTIONING, & REMOVAL

The organization should have some mechanism for the impeachment, sanctioning and removal for good cause of officers, members, and advisors. Sanctions such as censure or reprimand may be imposed for minor violations, in accordance with this article.

- Sample:
- Section 1. Officers, members and/or advisors may be impeached on the basis of not fulfilling the purposes and policies of the organization as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws or for violating of University programming and/or financial procedures.
 - Section 2. Any member of the organization may initiate impeachment proceedings by giving written notice to the President/Chairperson. If it is the President/Chairperson who is being impeached, noticed should be given to the Vice President/Vice Chairperson.
 - Section 3. Upon formal notification, it is the President/Chairperson's (or Vice President /Vice Chairperson's) responsibility to convene an ad hoc committee of inquiry in order to consider the filed allegations.
 - Section 4. Any individual who is impeached shall be given full notice of the allegations against him/her and shall have an opportunity to respond to them.

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ARTICLE VII – IMPEACHMENT, SANCTIONING & REMOVAL continued

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- Section 5. The ad hoc committee of inquiry will investigate the allegations, determine the validity of the charges, and makes recommendations regarding sanctioning to the full body (organization) for its consideration.
- Section 6. Recommendations for sanctioning made by the ad hoc committee of inquiry, in order to be implemented, must be approved by 2/3 of the members present and voting
- Section 7. Possible sanctions include, but are not limited to reprimand, censure, and/or removal.
- Section 8. An individual may appeal his/her sanction by submitting an appeal request to the organization's advisor within 10 calendar days of his/her notification of the sanction. If it is the advisor who has been sanctioned, appeals should be directed to the President/Chairperson.
- Section 9. An appeal may be requested only on the basis of one of the three following claims:
- a. That there was procedural error in the conduct of the impeachment proceedings.
 - b. That there is significant new evidence which was previously not available
 - c. That the sanction imposed was unreasonably harsh.
- Section 10. The advisor shall determine whether there are grounds for appeal and may choose to affirm the sanction or remand the case for a re-hearing by a new ad hoc committee of inquiry. The President/Chair person will act in the place of the advisor if it is the advisor who is requesting the appeal.
- Section 11. If an appeal hearing is granted, based upon one of the reasons in Section 9, it will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Sections 5-7, and with new evidence submitted or procedural error removed.

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ARTICLE VIII – RULES OF PROCEDURE

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The type of procedure for conducting the business of the organization and maintaining active recognition status at the University should be specified. “Robert’s Rules” are the suggested rules of procedure, but organizations may choose an alternative which better serves their needs.

- Sample:
- Section 1. Robert’s Rules of Order (Revised) shall be the parliamentary authority of this organization. Should Robert’s Rules of Order conflict with this Constitution, this constitution takes priority.
- Section 2. In order to maintain active status, the organization agrees to abide by those rules and procedures, including financial regulations which pertain to all student organizations.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

A procedure for amending the Constitution should be clearly outlined.

- Sample.
- Section 1. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed either by _____ of the Executive Board or by a petition submitted by _____ percent of the voting members.
- Section 2. _____ of the voting members shall be necessary to approve amendments to this Constitution.
- Section 3. Amendments to this Constitution shall be recommended for approval to the Dean of Students.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

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This section should specifically outline the duties of each officer.

- Sample. Section 1. The duties of the President shall be to:
- a. Preside over all Executive Board and regular membership meetings.
 - b. Call all special meetings.
 - c. Sign all financial documents of the organization.
 - d. The President shall be the organization representative to all necessary coordinating meetings with the Campus Life Office and/or Student Government Association.
- Section 2. The duties of the Vice President shall be to:
- a. Succeed the President should the President for any reason be unable to carry out the Presidential duties.
 - b. Assist the President in administering the business of the organization.
- Section 3. The duties of Secretary/Treasurer shall be to:
- a. Take brief minutes of each meeting and take care of any major correspondence concerning the organization as a whole.
 - b. Keep a record of all financial and historical documents and submit all financial records to the Dean of Students when required for audit.
 - c. Turn in all financial records for re-issue to the new Secretary/Treasurer when required or appropriate.

ARTICLE II – DUTIES OF THE ADVISOR

This article should clearly describe the role of the advisor to the organization. It should also indicate whether the advisor has voting privileges in the Organization.

- Sample: Section 1. A faculty/staff advisor shall be appointed by _____ of the voting members.
- Section 2. The advisor shall (shall not) be a member of the Executive Board.
- Section 3. The duties of the Advisor (s) shall be to:
- a. Attend Executive Board meetings and regular membership meetings.
 - b. Counter-sign all administrative financial forms.

ARTICLE II – DUTIES OF THE ADVISOR continued

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- c. Act as consultant for projects and special committees of the organization.

Section 4. The advisor shall (shall not) have voting privileges in the Organization.

ARTICLE III – ELECTIONS

Specific election procedures for the organizations should include information on eligibility, dates, and rules for handling election procedure violations.

- Sample:
- Section 1. Elections shall be held during the (first/last) _____ week of the _____ semester of each academic year.
 - Section 2. Candidates for offices shall be eligible provided they have met the requirements for that office as stated in Article III of the Constitution.
 - Section 3. Candidates running for office shall be members of the organization at the time of their election and during their term of office.
 - Section 4. Violations of election procedures shall be heard by a sub-committee of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE IV – FINANCES

This article should state the guidelines for use of dues, income, and other funds.

- Sample:
- Section 1. Dues will be paid by members of the organization as set by _____ of the voting members. (It is not necessary to have dues).
 - Section 2. Funds will be used for the operation of the organization as directed by _____ of the voting members.
 - Section 3. All finance shall be handled in accordance with the established fiscal procedure in effect for the University as outlined in written procedures.
 - Section 4. In the event of loss of organization recognition, any funds remaining in the organization's campus account shall revert to Student Government Association.

ARTICLE V – INITIATION PROCEDURES

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This article should state that the organization complies with applicable laws, which prohibit the practice of “hazing”.

Sample: Section 1. The _____ (name of organization) does not engage in any initiation procedures which could be considered illegal under applicable state and federal law.