Helpful Hints

- Upload most current version of Constitution to your organization’s Campus Connect page, and keep it on file with Student Activities
- Use acronyms sparingly

For new organizations:

- **Do not** start your name with UW-Parkside… this is confusing in alphabetical lists. Instead, put the University at the end (i.e. “Chess Club of UW-Parkside” not “UW-P Chess Club”)

- Allow members, advisor[s], and/or Student Activities staff review the Constitution before submitting.

*Information adapted from USC Student Affairs (http://sait.usc.edu/stuorgs/checklist_constitution.asp) and University of Texas at Austin Office of the Dean of Students (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sa/constbylaws.php)

---

**What is a Constitution?**

- A tool to help an organization and its members understand how they will govern themselves.

**Purpose**

- To give you and your members a shared sense of how things work in the organization
- To provide consistent organizational leadership, as it will be passed on to future officers
What Should a Constitution Include?

A constitution ought to be clearly understood by anyone reading it. He or she should be able to answer the following kinds of questions upon reading it:

• What is the name and purpose of this group?
• Who can be members and what are their rights and responsibilities?
• Who can be officers and what are their duties?
• Generally, when and how are members and officers selected or re-elected?
• If the need arises, how are officers or members removed?
• How are meetings called and how are they run?
• Will there be standing committees? How will they be established and what are their duties?
• Are there Bylaws or operating procedures?
• How can the constitution, Bylaws and operating procedures be amended?

Important Terms Defined

Quorum- minimum number of members that must be present in order to conduct business.
• Ex. one-third, one-half, two-thirds, etc. of total membership
• Define a quorum to hold meetings, take votes, elect officers, etc (can vary depending on business taking place)

Parliamentary Authority – a system of maintaining order within organizations that provides an approved and uniform method of conducting meetings.

Bylaws
• A document that further defines the Constitution and provides detailed procedures a group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner.

• Can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change
• Most organizations do not need bylaws. Use bylaws if there is more than one area that would change each year (ex. meeting times, appointed officers, election procedures, etc)

Reviewing and Revising the Constitution

Writing or reviewing your group’s constitution is a great opportunity to refine your mission, officer responsibilities, meeting rules, and membership requirements.

Remember:
- Revisions must be approved by the organization in the manner described in the Constitution
- The United States’ Constitution has averaged an amendment every decade, so if you are changing yours every year, you may be getting into too much detail

When should it be done?
- When questions arise about the activities or mission of the group
- With outgoing and incoming officers each year, or as changes occur within the organization

Requirements

All Constitutions of recognized student organizations must be in compliance with related policies outlined in the Student Organization and Advisor Handbook, including:

• There must be at least four officer positions held by UW-Parkside students
• Officers must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.25 and be in good academic standing, and are required to take a minimum of 6 non-audit credits at UW-Parkside
• Non-discrimination Policy: organization is open to all UW-Parkside students, and does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, or any other such factors.