

Constitution Guidelines

A constitution is the guiding document that dictates how an organization will operate.

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. Please use this as a guide.

Required Constitution Outline (MUST INCLUDE at minimum the following):

1. Name:
 - a. Provide the official name of the organization, noting any acronym/abbreviations.
2. Affiliation: (if applicable)
 - a. If the organization is affiliated with any other outside organizations, detail that affiliation. For example, if affiliated with a (inter)national organization, detail the relationship the club and its members will have with that (inter)national organization.
3. Purpose:
 - a. List the purpose and goals of the organization and the benefits that it will provide for its members. Include the type of activities the organization does and/or the activities in which the organization participates.
4. Membership Qualifications:
 - a. List all membership qualifications for the organization. Remember, membership is limited to current USFSP students **ONLY**. Others may be granted associate membership, but may not vote, hold office, or use organization funds. If the organization plans on granting associate memberships, these limitations must be listed in the constitution.
 - b. List whether any dues or fees are required for membership in the organization.
 - c. Include 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.
5. Statement of Non-Discrimination: **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM**

Students have the right not to be discriminated against by any agent or organization, including recognized student organizations of the USF System, for reasons of age, creed, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability, marital status, political or social affiliation, race, religion, or sexual orientation. This policy will include, but not be limited to, recruiting, membership, organization activities, or opportunities to hold office.

6. Hazing: **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM**

This organization prohibits its members, both individually and collectively from committing any acts of hazing as defined herein: "Hazing" as defined by §1006.63, Florida Statutes, 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, regardless of a person's willingness to participate. "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.

In addition to Florida Statutes §1006.63, hazing as defined by the USF system also includes, but is not limited to, the forced use of alcohol; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; physical and psychological shocks; deception; verbal abuse; personal servitude; kidnapping; deprivation of privileges granted to others in the organization by use of force or duress; and any other activities which are contrary to academic achievement, the stated purpose of the local and/or (inter)national organization, and/or the mission, policies or regulations of the USF system or applicable state law.

7. Officers:

- a. Lists the titles of required officer positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.; or similar).
- b. State the requirements of being an officer. For example, state whether an officer has to have a certain length of membership prior to running or whether they have to be a junior or senior, etc.
- c. Specify whether the position is elected or appointed.
- d. Election of Officers (if applicable): Please specify their term of office and the election process, including what happens when a position has been vacated either voluntarily or by removal.
- e. Appointment of Officers (if applicable): Please specify the manner in which officers are appointed. Include the term of office and what happens when a position has been vacated either voluntarily or by removal.
- f. Removal of Officers: In the life of any student organization there may be a time when an officer has to be removed from their position. Please specify

a process for the removal of officers, as well as what specific reasons might cause an officer to be removed.

8. Duties of Officers:

- a. Lists the titles of required officer positions and describe each officer's duties.

9. Advisor(s):

- a. Student organization Advisor(s) is/are chosen by the leadership/membership. Please specify the procedure and criteria for selecting an Advisor.
- b. Please list the minimum duties the organization has chosen for the Advisor(s) to fulfill.
- c. **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM:** The Advisor shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the organization.

10. Meetings and Quorums:

- a. Specify frequency of general member and officer meetings (*i.e. weekly, monthly, etc.*).
- b. Describe the process of calling special or more frequent meetings.
- c. Provide a quorum statement detailing the percentage of regular members or officers that are required to form a quorum to vote on issues relating to the groups operation or its constitution.

11. Parliamentary Procedure:

- a. **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM:** *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be followed by the organization in all cases involving parliamentary procedure when it does not conflict with the constitution.
- b. Specify the percentage of active and present voting members that are needed in order to suspend the rules.

12. Finances:

- a. Designate who is in responsible for all finances and how finances will be expended within the organization.

13. Committees: (If applicable)

- a. Include how committees within the organization are formed, who may sit on these committees, and what they can/will do.

14. Amendments:

- a. Describe the procedure for amendments to constitution and by-laws.
- b. **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM:** Amendments and revisions to this constitution must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Student Life & Engagement once adopted by the organization.

15. Ratification:

- a. **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM:** This constitution shall become effective at the first general business meeting of the organization following approval from the Department of Student Life & Engagement.
16. Organization Agreement: **MUST BE INCLUDED VERBATIM**
- a. This organization agrees to abide by Florida State Statute #1006.63 regarding hazing. Furthermore this organization agrees to abide by all federal, state, and local laws and all university and Department of Student Life & Engagement policies, to check the organization's mailbox regularly, to communicate regularly with the Department of Student Life & Engagement, and to update the organization's records whenever there is a change.