Sample Constitution

All recognized student organizations are required to have a constitution that describes the purpose of their organization and by-laws for the group. The constitution must be approved by the Sponsoring Unit for Sponsored Student Organizations and by Student Events & Activities Center before the group will be recognized.

The sections listed in the numbered list below MUST be included in your constitution in order for your group to be recognized. The items bolded in the constitution sample following the checklist correspond with the numbered items below. The non-bolded sections are optional, are additional items that many groups add, and should reflect your organization's purpose.

Items written in *italics* are intended to be an explanation of what is expected, recommended or clarification of rules/policies. This information should be removed in your organization’s final non-discrimination draft.

Governing Documents Checklist

1. Name
2. Purpose
3. OSU Non-Discrimination Policy
4. Members
5. Officers
6. Procedures for Removing an Officer and/or Revoking Membership
7. Advisors (for SSOs)
8. Methods for Amendments
9. Parliamentary Authority
CONSTITUTION OF (Your Organization)

Adopted (Date)

Article I - Name, Purpose, and Non-Discrimination Policy of the Organization.

Section 1: Name:

- Sponsored Student Organizations have permission to put “Oregon State University,” or “Oregon State,” in their title.
- Voluntary Student Organizations may include the “Oregon State University” with their title may do so only after the main portion of the name. For instance:
  - Acceptable: Knitting Club at Oregon State University (or Oregon State)
  - Unacceptable: Oregon State University (or Oregon State) Knitting Club
- Non-Affiliated Student Organizations may not use the “Oregon State University” name or any derivation thereof in connection with any part of their name

* If your organization is affiliated with a national or international organization, details of the affiliation should be adequately described in this section.

Section 2 - Purpose:

Organizations should take care to include a complete statement of purpose and objectives. Programs sponsored by the organization must comply and be consistent with the organization’s stated purpose and objectives.

Section 3 - Non-Discrimination Policy:

All student organizations desiring to benefit from recognized student organization status with Oregon State University must include in their constitution a non-discrimination policy statement that accords with and is at least as broad as the University’s Non-Discrimination policy statement.

An example of an acceptable non-discrimination policy statement is as follows:

Membership shall not be denied to any student on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Article II - Membership: Qualifications criteria and expectations

For Recognized Student Organizations, voting membership and those eligible to hold office should be defined as limited to currently enrolled Oregon State students. Others such as faculty, alumni, professionals, community members, etc. are encouraged to be involved and participate as non-voting associate or honorary members. University policy dictates that student organizations are to be student initiated, student led, and student run.

Section 1. Active Members:
Active Members shall be enrolled students at Oregon State University; have attended two consecutive meetings and have paid dues.

Section 2. Associate members shall be faculty or staff interested in__________. They shall not be eligible to hold office or vote.

Section 3. Annual dues of $_____ shall be paid by September 30 of each year, after which a member will be dropped for nonpayment of dues.
Section 4. All voting members and officers of (name of organization) must be currently enrolled for at least 6 credits at Oregon State University.

Article III – Officers (Organizational Leaders): Titles, terms of office, type of selection, and duties of the leaders.

Organization leaders represent the Executive Committee and general membership and are elected or appointed from the ranks of the organization’s voting membership. The titles of organization leaders, the length of terms, specification as to which leaders are elected or appointed and by whom, and the general duties of each leadership position should be clearly specified.

Section 1. The officers of the association shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by the constitution and bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the association.

Section 2. Officers shall be nominated in April or May of each year. Election shall be by secret ballot and the candidates receiving the most votes shall be named to their respective offices.

Section 3. Officers shall be elected to serve for one year or until their successors are elected, and their terms of office shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

Section 4. Vacancies in offices shall be filled by nomination and voting of a quorum of active members.

Section 5. Officers shall have earned at least 6 credit hours in their most recently completed term. This requirement does not apply to first-term freshmen or first-term transfer students.

Article IV - Executive Committee (if needed): Size and composition of the Committee.

This Committee (like a board of trustees or directors) represents the general membership and conducts business of the organization between general meetings of the membership and reports its actions at the general meetings of the membership. In many organizations, this Committee is comprised of the organization leaders, chairpersons of the standing committees, and sometimes ex officio members from related student organizations.

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall include the officers of the association. They shall supervise affairs of the association between its business meetings, make recommendations to the association and perform other duties as specified in the constitution and bylaws. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of the association and none of its actions shall conflict with actions taken by the association.

Article V - Standing Committees (if needed): Names, purposes, and composition.

These committees serve the organization leadership, Executive Committee, and general membership and are permanent and designed to carry out the basic functions of the organization. Chairpersons of these committees are often appointed by the organization leadership.

Section 1. Other committees, standing or special, shall be appointed by the President as the association or the Executive Committee deems necessary to carry on the work of the association.

Article VI – Method of Removing Officers and Members.

General members and elected or appointed leaders should be expected to meet certain standards and conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on the organization. In the event
that a member or leader does not meet those expectations, the organization should have procedures in place for objectively considering the member’s or leader’s probationary membership status or removal from the organization. The process described in the constitution should specify which body conducts this review and ultimately makes the decision. It should be noted that the organization’s non-discrimination policy should protect members from removal based on those listed statuses.

Article VII – Advisor(s) or Advisory Board (Required for Sponsored Student Orgs):

Only Sponsored Student Organizations are required to have a faculty advisor. Advisors of sponsored student organizations must be members of the University faculty or Administrative & Professional staff and be appointed/assigned by the sponsoring unit. The responsibilities and expectations of the faculty advisor should be clearly articulated in this section.

Voluntary Student Organizations are not required to have an advisor but organizations utilizing one should clearly and adequately describe the responsibilities and expectations of said advisor(s) in this section.

Article VIII – Meetings of the Organization: Required meetings and their frequency.

Required meetings and their number are specified here. For instance, two general meetings of the membership may be required each academic term except for summer.

Article IX – Method of Amending Constitution: Proposals, notice, and voting requirements.

Proposed amendments should be in writing, should not be acted upon but read in the general meeting in which they are proposed, should be read again at a specified number of subsequent general meetings and the general meeting in which the votes will be taken. Approval should require at least two-thirds of voting members present (and to conduct any business an organization should have quorum present at a business meeting, which is at minimum 50% + 1 of total organization members). The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently.

Article X – Parliamentary Authority

Most organizations use Robert’s Rule of Order to govern their organization’s decision making except when these rules are inconsistent with their constitution or by-laws of the organization. These rules are of Western cultural origin, and based on the premise that “though the minority shall be heard and absentees protected, the majority will decide.”

Section 1. The rules contained in the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the constitution, bylaws and special rules of order the organization may adopt.