

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS FOR REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS at UNC-CHAPEL HILL

An organization's constitution and bylaws outline the basic purpose of the organization and set the parameters that govern the action and activities of the group. This outline provides group members with direction and, if followed, saves time and promotes the development of sound work.

The document must:

1. Define the primary characteristics of the organization;
2. Prescribe how the organization functions;
3. Include all the rules that the group considers so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice to all members and the vote of a specified majority (such as two-thirds) and cannot be suspended.

It is a good idea for each member to have a copy of the constitution and bylaws. This allows members to familiarize themselves with the workings of the organization and can encourage full participation in the group.

The sections, phrases, and sentences in bold MUST be included or addressed in your constitution or bylaws in order for your organization to be registered by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

For questions about this sample constitution or for help developing your group's constitution and bylaws, please contact the Office of Student Life and Leadership at (919) 962-1157 or email studentlife@unc.edu.

MODEL CONSTITUTION

Article I - NAME

Section 1. Title: State the name of the organization. The name should be significantly different from the name of any other organization registered at UNC-CH. *Please note:* you can use "(The) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill..." "UNC-CH..." or "UNC-Chapel Hill..." **or** "Carolina..." BUT NOT "UNC..." so long as University sponsorship or endorsement is not implied or stated.

Section 2. Authorization (if applicable): If the organization is affiliated with a local, state, regional, or national organization, state the title of that organization. State any adherence of any rules by a governing body.

Article II - PURPOSE

State the reason for the formation of the organization and the organization's objectives.

Article IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Active Members: **Only UNC-Chapel Hill students may be active members.**

Section 2. Membership Rules of Order: Clearly state any requirements of members, such as general interest, willingness to learn, code of conduct, etc. **YOU MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS EXACTLY AS WRITTEN:**

This organization abides by UNC-Chapel Hill's Non-Discrimination Policy for Student Organizations, which states the following:

- **Membership and participation in the organization must be open to all students without regard to age, race, color, national origin, disability, religious status or historic religious affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Membership and participation in the organization must also be open without regard to gender, unless exempt under Title IX.**

- **Student organizations that select their members on the basis of commitment to a set of beliefs (e.g., religious or political beliefs) may limit membership and participation in the organization to students who, upon individual inquiry, affirm that they support the organization's goals and agree with its beliefs, so long as no student is excluded from membership or participation on the basis of his or her age, race, color, national origin, disability, religious status or historic religious affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or, unless exempt under Title IX, gender.**

Section 3. State which qualifications are required for all levels of membership.

Section 4. **State what rights and privileges are accorded each level of membership.**

Section 5. **State what policies or procedures must be followed to remove a member or officer.**

Article V - ADVISOR

Section 1. Confirm that **the organization has an advisor who is a full-time faculty or staff member of UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC Hospitals, or an affiliated department; an emeritus UNC-Chapel Hill faculty or staff member; a UNC-CH retiree with affiliate status; or a campus minister. The advisor does not have the right to vote.**

Section 2. State procedures for the qualifications and selection of an organization Advisor and the function and duties of said person.

Article VI – COACH/MANAGER (*Please note: applies for most sport clubs*)

Section 1. State procedures for the qualifications and selection of a Coach/Manager and the function(s) and duties of said person(s).

Article VII - MEETINGS

Section 1. Business Meetings: In general terms, state when business meetings will be held (e.g. once every two weeks), who arranges the time, place, etc., and what constitutes a quorum of membership (e.g. majority).

Section 2. Executive Board Meetings: In general terms, state when executive board meetings will be held (e.g. once a week), who arranges the time, place, etc., and any requirements for calling special meetings.

Article VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Officers: Name the officer positions, i.e. president, vice-president, etc. This executive board will consist of only active UNC-CH student members. **All major officers of the organization are full-time, registered students of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.** If the organization has additional criteria such as academic standing, length of membership, prior service to the organization, etc., those requirements should be specifically stated.

Section 2. Duties of Officers: Name each officer position and list their respective responsibilities.

Section 3. Election of Officers: Clearly explain the election process, including when elections are held, length of office, requirements for the nomination of candidates, how the election will take place (e.g. secret ballot, showing of hands), and required votes for election (e.g. 2/3, majority).

Section 4. Removal of Officers: Explain the process for removing officers from their positions. The job descriptions and functions of each officer should be clearly written into the constitution, bylaws, and/or officer manual. All removal procedures should follow due process and the organization should specify whether the process can take place at a regular meeting or if a special meeting (hearing) is necessary.

Article IX - ELECTIONS

Section 1. State which officers will be selected by the membership, how long the terms of these officers will last, and how many times a person may hold the same office.

Section 2. State the nominating procedures and when they will take place.

Section 3. State how the nominees will present their qualifications and how and when elections will be held.

Section 4. State procedures necessary in case a runoff is necessary.

Article X – COMMITTEES/DIVISIONS

Sections of committees include the names of any standing committees. State what standing and/or ad-hoc committees or what divisions will exist in the organization and the function and composition of each.

Article XI - FUNDS

Sections of financial structure include method of record keeping, signature authorization, compliance with university policy and state law on appropriate use of funds, etc. State procedures for allocation of organization funds (revenue and expense).

Article XII - RATIFICATION

State how the bylaws will be approved by membership.

Article XIII - AMENDMENTS

State how an amendment will be presented, to whom it will be presented, and how it will be ratified.

Article XIV - BYLAWS

Sections of bylaws deal with more detailed issues concerning the organization for the given year. Examples include actual dues assessed and details regarding delinquencies, provision for some accepted rules of order, specific meeting and election times, method of amending bylaws, etc. State procedures for the inclusion of any rules or regulations specific to the organization.

Article XV – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

State any parliamentary rules of order which are used.

The format above has been developed to be used as a guide to the development of a constitution and bylaws for your organization. It is not necessary to follow this form exactly, but it is important to include all areas that apply and to delete those sections that do not apply (e.g. Article VI).

If you believe your student organization is sustainable long-term and are interested in drafting bylaws that would be sufficient for later filings with the State and/or IRS (should your group later choose to file Articles of Incorporation and/or pursue 501(c)3 status), please visit Carolina Student Legal Services (CSLS).

CSLS has recently implemented a program -- My Student Group Policies -- that can both provide advice to student groups regarding best practices and draft legal organization documents. CSLS is located in FPG Student Union Suite 3512, and can be reached at csls@unc.edu.