

# Registered Student Organization Constitution Guidelines

Student Development & Campus Vibrancy | Stetson University

## **Purpose**

The Constitution is your formal, governing document that denotes in writing the exact procedures for operating your organization. Drafting this document involves making important and sustainable decisions about how your organization will navigate and uphold policy and procedure. It is important to think long-term when drafting your constitution, determining what is in the best interest of the organization's longevity. When issues arise, the Constitution is the first point of reference to answer questions.

## **Common Language Used**

**Constitution:** A document that describes the organization and the fundamental principles that govern its operation.

**By-laws:** By-laws may also be written but are not required. By-laws are rules governing the internal workings of the organization and can include similar ideas to the statement examples below:

1. *Standing procedures of the organization*
2. *Ad-hoc committees and how they are determined*
3. *Policies related to the time, location, and frequency of organization meetings*
4. *Statement that Robert's Rules of Order will be followed*

By-laws should be easier to amend than the constitution but still hold a higher standing than being amended through a simple majority vote at any one time.

**Quorum:** The minimum number of voting members who must be present to conduct business legally and usually consists of the average attendance at meetings. It can also be a specific number, i.e., 2/3 of voting members.

**Membership:** The requirements and qualifications necessary for an individual to join the organization. All organizations must identify their selection procedures in their constitution.

**Officer Duties:** State your organization's officers with an explanation of the expectations of each position (may be included in bylaws or built into the constitution). All organizations must have a President, Treasurer, a third executive officer (Vice President, Secretary, Historian, etc.) and faculty/staff advisor; these positions cannot be the same person.

**Amendments:** A formal/official change to the constitution. Usually, this is something that is voted on with a quorum.

**Due Process/Impeachment:** A formal process to remove/recall officers. Such procedures should be included in the constitution. The process that will take place if the organization determines an officer is no longer fit for their position.

## Sample Constitution Guidelines

The sample constitution provided by the Student Development & Campus Vibrancy below is to help guide your organization. The document contains areas typically addressed in constitutions. You may alter and add parameters to best fit your organization's needs. All Registered Student Organizations must follow this Constitution template to have shared standardized procedures that meet the expectations of operations established SDCV.

For your constitution to withstand the test of time, please refrain from including information that may change over the years, such as a specific amount for dues, specific meeting times, or specific dates for elections.

Key:

- **Highlighted** text is where organization leadership can edit. Any text that is not highlighted or italicized should remain with exact wording, spelling, formatting, etc. (with the exception of article numbers)
- (Parenthesis) or [Bracketed] texts are instructions for the writer and should not be included in the final draft.
- *Green Italicized text* are examples or helpful hints on phrases that should not be included.

Note:

- Article numbers may be altered
- You may add parameters after the required text
- A description of officer duties must be included either in bylaws or built within the constitution (including President, Treasurer, and Faculty/Staff Advisor)

Formatting:

- All text is black, Times New Roman font, size 12
- Delete anything in parenthesis or italicized, examples you did not use for your constitution.
- Review for grammar or spelling errors.
- Please do not submit the first two pages of this sample when you submit your constitution.

Organizations should review their constitution regularly and submit updated constitutions during re-registration periods established each semester.

When submitting the final version of your constitution, please remove the first two pages of this document.

# Constitution of [Name of Organization]

Stetson University

Effective Date: [Insert Date that Constitution is Updated]

## Article I - Name

This organization shall be named [Insert Name of Organization].

[INCLUDE IF APPLICABLE] Name of Organization may also be referred to as ACRONYM.

*Student Organizations can select a name of their choosing when chartering their organization. RSOs may use “at Stetson University” or “at Stetson” designation AFTER their name. For example, “Green Leaders at Stetson University” or “Green Leaders at Stetson.” They may not use “Stetson University Green Leaders” or “Stetson Green Leaders.”*

## Article II - Mission Statement

### Section 1 - Mission/Purpose Statement

[INSERT MISSION STATEMENT]

*A mission statement defines who you are, what you do, why you do it, and who you serve. It should be clear, powerful, and broad enough to guide your decision-making and help explain your organization to potential members. Developing your mission statement should be a group effort with input from many people. Be brief and concise, no more than 1 to 2 sentences.*

### Section 2 - Core Values (OPTIONAL)

The core values of Name of Organization are:

- [INSERT AS BULLETS, recommend 4-6 values]

*The core values of an organization express your highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and fundamental driving principles. They represent what you stand for and provide guidance for decision-making. Mission statements define where you're going but core values define how you operate. If included, it is recommended to have 3-5 core values.*

### Section 3 - Affiliation (INCLUDE IF APPLICABLE, REMOVE SECTION IF NOT)

This organization is affiliated with the Name of Regional, National, or International Organization

*This is for organizations that are affiliated with a regional, national, or international organization. Affiliated organizations must provide information about their parent organization within their annual registration application, including primary points of contact name and contact information.*

## Article III - Statement of Compliance with Campus Regulations

## **Section 1 - Non-Discrimination Clause**

[Name of Organization] shall not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or disability. Harassment or discrimination in any form based on any of these characteristics is strictly prohibited. Further, no individual shall be subject to retaliation (as defined below) for bringing a good faith complaint pertaining to harassment or discrimination within the organization against themselves or on behalf of another.

\*Retaliation: Any adverse action taken against a person participating in an activity because of their participation in that activity. Examples of activities include, but are not limited to, reporting behavior of any sort to the University which may violate the Code of Community Standards, including sexual harassment and assault, filing a discrimination or bias complaint, assisting someone in reporting discrimination or filing a report, participating in any manner in an investigation or conduct process (such as a witness). Retaliation may take the form of physical, verbal, written, or by electronic means. ([Code of Community Standards](#))

## **Section 2 - Requirements**

This organization shall comply with all Stetson University policies and procedures, including but not limited to those policies set forth in the [Student Organization Resource Guide](#), organization policies set by Student Development and Campus Vibrancy, and the [Code of Community Standards](#), as well as local, state, and federal laws.

## **Section 3 – Engage**

This organization's Engage page must be maintained regularly to reflect the current mission statement, governing documents, contact information, leadership roles, roster of members, and events to remain in good standing with Student Development and Campus Vibrancy and Stetson University.

## Article IV. Membership

### Section 1. General Membership Requirements

- 1) Members and officers must be enrolled students at Stetson University.
- 2) The organization must keep its membership roster on Engage up to date.

*This article outlines the requirements and expectations for membership to be granted into the organization. Each RSO must maintain a minimum of 5 actively-enrolled Stetson students. Things to consider: Who is eligible? Is there an attendance requirement at meetings/events? Is membership open to all students or limited to undergraduate/graduate/professional students? Is there a GPA requirement? Is membership only open to those in a specific major? Is an invitation to join required? The more detail provided here the better.*

*Additional Examples: General membership is available to all actively-enrolled students at Stetson. To remain in good standing with the organization, members must:*

- *Attend at least 60% of general membership meetings*
- *Attend at least one special event per semester*
- *Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 at Stetson*

### Section 2. Dues **(INCLUDE IF APPLICABLE, REMOVE IF NOT)**

*If financial dues are required to gain or maintain membership in the organization, this must be detailed in this section. What are the cost of dues? How frequently are dues collected? What happens if a member is unable to fulfill their financial obligations? Does payment of dues guarantee any specific items (such as a member t-shirt or certificate)? If dues are to be collected, organization leaders must be transparent with members on the expenditure of those funds.*

*NOTE: It is important to remember that organizations that charge semesterly dues are not eligible for semesterly funds offered through the Student Government Association. One-time dues/fees charged by an organization's national office does not count in this stipulation.*

## Article V. Executive Board/Officers

### Section 1. Positions

*Every student organization must have a **President** (or equivalent position title), **Treasurer** (or equivalent position title), and at least one additional **Officer** (Vice President, Secretary, etc). The structure of leadership within the organization may be unique and determined by its collective members. Additional leadership roles are at the discretion of organization members. Only students actively-enrolled at Stetson University may hold a leadership role in the organization. A minimum of three responsibilities must be listed under each position contributing to the organization's guiding principles.*

#### A. President (or equivalent position title).

The president shall:

- i. Serve as the primary contact person for the organization
- ii. Serve as the primary liaison for all official communication with Student Development and Campus Vibrancy
- iii. Ensure the annual re-registration of the organization with Student Development and Campus Vibrancy
- iv. [INSERT ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION]

*Examples:*

- *The president shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization and shall supervise general oversight of its activities and programs*
- *Preside over all general members and e-board meetings*
- *Meet regularly with the organization's faculty/staff advisor*
- *Work with the other officers of the organizations to ensure accountability for their position duties*

#### B. Treasurer (or equivalent position title).

The treasurer shall:

- i. Maintain up-to-date financial records
- ii. Provide transparency for all organizational funds
- iii. Serve as the primary point of contact for creating and managing purchase requests through SGA Finance
- iv. Assist organization President with budget management and act as the primary point of contact for semesterly funding requests through SGA
- v. [INSERT ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION]

*Examples:*

- *Provide a monthly statement of organizational income, expenses, and expected costs*
- *Manage all incoming funds for the organization (dues, fundraising, etc.)*
- *Pay all financial obligations of the organization in a timely manner*
- *Prepare annual budget*

C. [INSERT ADDITIONAL OFFICER ROLE]

The [INSERT ADDITIONAL OFFICER] shall:

- *Serve as the primary contact for space and marketing reservations on campus*
- [INSERT ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION]

D. [INSERT ADDITIONAL OFFICER POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES]

*Examples of additional positions could include:*

- *Vice President*
- *Secretary*
- *Marketing/Social Media Chair*
- *Community Service Chair*

## **Section 2. Eligibility Requirements**

*In this section, detail the requirements a student must meet to be considered eligible to hold a leadership position in the organization. These requirements can differ depending on the position held. Term limits should be included if the organization deems appropriate.*

*Examples:*

- *Any active member who is nominated and has been active for at least two (2) full semesters is eligible to run for office. (OR)*
- *All active members who have been active for at least one (1) semester are eligible to run for office. (OR)*
- *The president must have been an active member for at least one (1) semester but any active member is eligible to run for other officer positions.*

## **Section 3. Elections and Length of Term**

*Specifically detail the process of electing Executive Board members, the length of their terms, etc. Specificity in this section can prevent challenges to the process.*

- A. All members of the organization must be made aware of openings on the Executive Board.

B. Elections will be held in [INSERT TIME FRAME OF ELECTION]

*Example:*

- *Elections will be held in April of each year. (OR)*
- *Elections will be held at the end of the fall semester with new officers assuming their roles at the start of the spring semester.*

C. [INSERT THE NOMINATION PROCESS]

*Example:*

- *Any member may nominate another eligible member, including themselves.*
- *The nominated member must be willing and able to accept that nomination.*

D. [INSERT THE PARAMETERS REQUIRED FOR ELECTION INTO A POSITION]

*Detail what it takes to be elected to an officer position. Are elections held in person or online through the Engage? Does the winner need a simple majority of those who voted or is the threshold higher?*

*Example:*

- *Voting will occur by secret ballot*
- *An officer will be elected into a position upon receiving a simple majority of general membership votes in attendance.*
- *If there are more than two candidates running and no candidate receives a majority vote, there shall be a run-off vote between the top two vote recipients.*

E. All officers will serve a term of one (1) year or until their successor can be duly elected.

F. [INSERT ANY OTHER PROCESSES RELATED TO ELECTIONS]

#### **Section 4. Vacancies**

[INSERT OPERATING PROCEDURES IF AN OFFICER RESIGNS FROM THEIR ROLE]

*Detail what will happen if a vacancy in an elected position occurs outside of the regular elections schedule. Who will fill that role temporarily? How will a permanent replacement be determined? Is a special election held or will the board appoint someone into the position?*

*Examples:*



- *If a vacancy occurs in the President position, the vice president will fill assume the role until a special election takes place for the President position at a time and place determined by the Executive Board.*
- *If a vacancy occurs, the Executive Board will appoint an eligible member into the position by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. (OR)*
- *If a vacancy occurs a special election will be held and a winner will be chosen by a simple majority of voting members.*

## **Section 5. Removal of Executive Board Officers**

To remove an officer from their role, organizations must address the matter before removal process can officially begin:

- 1) Communication between all parties must take place, notifying that concerns exist. A reasonable timeframe must be allowed for any concern to be rectified.
- 2) Should concerns not be rectified, a mediation conversation should be held. This meeting should include the Advisor and/or SDCV Assistant Director in order to address concerns and create an action plan to move forward positively as an organization.

Each officer shall be responsible for their duties as listed in this constitution. Officers may face removal from their position if they fail to meet the outlined responsibilities, do not maintain the membership requirements of the organization, are found in violation of SDCV or Stetson University policy, or **[INSERT OTHER VIOLATIONS THAT COULD RESULT IN THE REMOVAL OF AN OFFICER].**

The following procedures are methods to remove an officer, only once the above steps have been satisfied.

### **A. Petition for Removal**

*Detail what it takes to initiate the removal of an officer from their position.*

*Example: A written request by at least 50% of general members of the organization should be submitted to the Executive Board.*

### **B. Procedure for Removing Executive Officers**

*Once a petition of removal is submitted, detail what is the procedure upon which an officer is actually relieved of their responsibilities.*

- 1) Notification sent to President (or Vice President if the concern is regarding President)
- 2) Communication within 48 hours to Advisor and SDCV Assistant Director for Student Organization Advising and Programming.

All parties, including active members, the Executive Board, advisor, and the Executive Board member who is up for removal must be notified at least two (2) weeks in advance of any vote to remove. Membership should be informed.

i. **[INSERT ADDITIONAL REMOVAL PROCEDURES]**

*Example:*

- A. A meeting must be held in which all Executive Board officers, general members, the Executive Board member who is up for removal, and advisor are invited to attend.*
- B. Removal proceedings must occur during the academic semester.*
- C. The moderator of the removal proceedings will be the president, unless they are the one being considered for removal, in which case it will be another member of the Executive Board.*
- D. The members who petitioned for removal as well as the Executive Board member who is up for removal will be given an allotted amount of time to state their case. Time will be reserved for questions or statements from general members.*
- E. Removal requires two-thirds majority vote of present members.*

## **Section 6. Officer Transitions**

- A. Each officer shall maintain a record of the duties and responsibilities performed in their position. These records should be maintained in an organizational shared digital drive and not in a personal digital drive.
- B. Outgoing officers shall make every effort to assist incoming officers through the transition process.

## **Article VI. Advisor**

The primary advisor for [Name of Organization] must be a full-time Stetson University faculty or staff member. The name and contact information for the primary advisor of this organization must be on file with Student Development and Campus Vibrancy in the organization's Engage portal and they must complete all requirements set forth by the department. Changes in the advisor role must be declared to Student Development and Campus Vibrancy within two weeks.

## **Article VII. Amendments to the Constitution**

### **Section 1. Amendment Proposals**

*Detail in this section who can propose amendments to this constitution and the process of submission. How long of a notice is required between submitted proposals and a voting date? How are members notified of proposed amendments?*

*Example:*

- A. Amendments to this constitution may be made by any member of the organization as defined in this document.*
- B. Proposed amendments must be submitted at least two (2) weeks in advance of a scheduled vote.*
- C. An email must be sent to all members of the organization at least one (1) week in advance of a scheduled vote with the proposed amendment for review.*

### **Section 2. Ratification**

*Detail in this section the process of voting to ratify the new constitution. Who is eligible to vote? How will debate regarding the amendment be conducted? Is there a minimum number of members required for a vote to occur and if so, what percentage? What percentage of votes is required to affirm the changes?*

*Example:*

- A. At least two-thirds of the Executive Board of the organization must be in attendance for a vote to be held on any proposed amendments.*
- B. The student who has proposed the amendment will present their proposal at the meeting scheduled for the vote. All organization members in attendance at the meeting must have the ability to state their opinion, if they choose.*
- C. All members of the organization as defined in this document are eligible to vote on proposed amendments.*
- D. A two-thirds majority of all organization members in attendance is required for approval of the amendment.*
- E. Unless stipulated otherwise in the amendment, changes to the constitution will take effect upon ratification.*

### **Section 3. Final Approval**

Once ratified, amendments to this constitution must be submitted in writing to Student Development and Campus Vibrancy for final review. Once approved by SDCV, the final constitution must be uploaded to the organization's Engage page and all previous versions must be removed.