

Hamilton College Student Organization Constitution Template

ORGANIZATION NAME CONSTITUTION

The constitution of an organization includes the fundamental principles which determine the rights and responsibilities of its officers and members.

Preamble

The preamble defines the guiding principles for the organization. The sections listed below provide a template that can be used to define these principles.

Article I – Name

Example: The name of this organization shall be the constitution template.

Article II – Purpose

This section **must include** a statement of purpose for the organization. If a future officer were to read this statement, he or she would understand the goals and intent of the organization

Example: The purpose of this organization shall be to provide and promote good examples of constitutional development for student organizations at Hamilton College.

Article III – Membership

This section **must include** an equal opportunity/non-discrimination statement and a statement that the organization is open to all Hamilton College students. It should also include information on the types of membership offered and any qualifications for voting in the organization.

Example: This organization complies with all State and Federal laws and Hamilton College policies on non-discrimination. This organization supports and encourages respect for political, religious, ethnic, racial, physical, generational, sexual and affectional, and intellectual differences because such respect promotes free and open inquiry, independent thought, and mutual understanding.

Thoughts: Will membership be offered to non-students? Can these people vote?

Article IV – Hazing

This section **must include** a statement that the organization does not engage in any form of hazing.

Example: This organization complies with all State and Federal laws and Hamilton College policies on hazing. This organization recognizes hazing to be any action taken or situation created to inflict physical or mental discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule upon an individual or group. Further, the members of this organization understand that any individual or group found responsible for hazing will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in probation, suspension, or revocation of College recognition.

Article V – Officers

This section should include the title and qualifications of each officer of the organization, the procedure(s) for electing officers and filling vacancies, and the length of term for each office.

Thoughts: Who are the officers of the organization (**must include** at least an Organization Contact and a Financial Contact)? Who is eligible to hold an office? How long is the position held? When are elections? What is the procedure for filling vacant offices?

Article VI – Executive Board

This section may be used, if needed, to define the collective authority of the officers of the organization.

Example: The Executive Board of this organization shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and Adviser.

Thoughts: What is chain of command? Who holds what power?

Article VII – Adviser

This section should describe the relationship between the adviser and the organization, and indicate whether or not the adviser has voting privileges within the organization. Define the selection of an adviser and qualifications.

Article VIII – Meetings

This section should explain when and under what circumstances meetings are held.

Thoughts: Regularity of meetings, special meeting procedure, voting rules under special circumstances, What defines quorum?

Article IX – Committees

This section may include the descriptions and responsibilities of any existing committees within the organization.

Example: finances, publicity, social, rules and voting

Article X – Sanctioning, Impeachment, and Removal

The organization should have some mechanism for the sanctioning, impeachment, and removal of members, officers, and advisers for gross neglect of duty and/or other just cause.

Article XI – Rules of Procedure

The type of procedure for conducting the business of the organization and maintaining active recognition status at the College should be specified. Robert's Rules of Order are the suggested rules of procedure, but an organization may choose an alternative that better serves their needs. What takes precedence, rules of procedure or constitution?

The constitution **must include** a compliance statement:

In order to maintain active status, this organization will comply with all Hamilton College policies and procedures, including financial regulations, which pertain to student organizations.

Article XII – Amendments

A procedure for amending the Constitution should be clearly outlined.

Thoughts: Who can propose an amendment? What is the voting procedure and percent of or number of votes to win?

Bylaws

The bylaws are the detailed procedures and working guidelines of the organization which govern the day-to-day operations of the organization and accompany the constitution.

Article I – Duties of Officers

This section should clearly outline the duties and responsibilities of each officer.

Article II – Duties of Adviser

This section should clearly outline the duties and responsibilities of the adviser.

Article III – Elections

This section should explain specific election procedures for the organization which may include information on eligibility, deadlines and dates, and rules for handling election procedure violations.

Article IV – Finances

This section should state the guidelines for appropriating organization funds, collecting dues or fees, and conducting fundraising activities within the financial regulations of the College. Who is authorized to submit financial requests to Assembly?

Article V – Activities

This section should specify any activities which are regularly conducted to fulfill the purpose of the organization.