

Sample Constitution and By-Laws

South Seattle College

A constitution explains the nature, function and limits of an organization and how it is governed. These documents should be clearly worded, intentionally structured, and kept up-to-date to meet the needs of the student organization.

The Constitution:

- Establishes the broad structure and fundamental principles of an organization
- Should be straightforward and comprehensive
- Should be difficult to amend

Bylaws are secondary laws which rule or govern the internal affairs of an organization. Basically, bylaws are an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures the organization should follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

The By-laws:

- Outline the rules of procedures for an organization
- Should be consistent with the constitution
- Tend to be easier to amend than the constitution

Feel free to write your constitution and by-laws to meet the needs of your organization. However, asterisked (*) sections below must be included in your constitution and by-laws to be considered a registered student club. For further assistance, contact the Club Center, southclubcenter@seattlecolleges.edu or (206)934-5330.

Sample Constitution -----

Constitution of _____ (Name of your group)

Article I: Name

*Section 1: The name of this organization shall be... (Provide actual name which will be used for all official business), hereafter referred to as...

Article II: Purpose

*Section 1: The purpose of this organization shall be... (State the purpose, aims, and function of the organization)

Article III: Affiliations

Section 1: This organization is affiliated with... (Indicate if your group has an affiliation with a South Seattle department and/or any other campus, local, state, national, or international organization and explain the relationship.)

Organizations with inter/national affiliations must submit their inter/national constitution or statement of purpose. **If your organization has no affiliation, this section may be omitted.**)

Article IV: Membership

*Section 1: The majority of the membership of this organization shall consist of enrolled South Seattle students. Voting membership of recognized campus organizations shall consist only of enrolled students. A majority of the voting members must be students.

Nonvoting membership, if any, must be comprised of the following categories:

1. Alumni of the organization who are no longer enrolled at South Seattle Community College.
2. Special members -a limited number of persons (who may not be affiliated with the college) who qualify for membership according to specifically stated criteria established for special membership.

(A statement like this is required for your constitution. If your organization allows non-South Seattle student members, you should indicate the guidelines for those members in this section as well.)

*Section 2: This organization... (All registered student organizations must include in their constitution a non-discriminatory policy statement that is consistent with South Seattle's non-discriminatory policy statement. An example would be: "This organization and its members shall not discriminate against any individuals for reasons of race, national origin, color, religion, gender, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, and/or ability status or political affiliation.")

Section 3: Membership in this group shall be open to all who are interested and... (List the criteria for membership to your organization, if you have any)

Qualification and Privileges

Active membership carries voting privileges. Privileges include participation in activities and programs sponsored by the organization.

Voting qualifications are as follows:

1. Members must be currently enrolled at South Seattle Community College
2. Membership must be in good standing as defined by the current Executive Board

Section 4. Selection process

The selection process must be listed for each type of membership.

Section 5. Removal procedures

The reasons for removal and process must be listed for the membership

Members of XYZ may be removed from chapter membership only for just cause by a vote of 3/4th of the entire voting membership. Any such removal must be approved by the chapter Advisor.

Article V: Officers

Section 1: The officers of the organization shall consist of... (State all officer titles and duties – examples below)

- A. President – The President shall...
- B. Vice President – The Vice President shall...
- C. Secretary - The Secretary shall...
- D. Treasurer - The Treasurer shall...
- E. Club Advisor—The Club Advisor shall...
- F. Etc.

1. Chairperson- Provides leadership and overall direction for the campus chapter. Prepares and maintains a calendar of scheduled chapter events, and oversee the chapter meetings. Take initiative when needed, reference this constitution and its by-laws to members when addressing situations.

2. Marketing director – Ensures campus involvement through advertisement of club meetings and events via physical and digital flyers, canvassing, and social media if club decides it wants

3. Recorder/ Admin - Maintains membership records, sends information to members and relevant others, prepares and maintains the minutes of all meetings. Assists the President in the management of campus chapter affairs; fills in for the President in his/her absence

4. Accountant- Receives and disburses funds and manages the financial affairs of the campus chapter, keeps a voucher system to account for all expenses and serves as chairman of the fund raising committee.

Section 2: The qualifications for each office... (State the qualifications, if any, for the offices)

Section 3: The term of each office shall be... (Example: one year from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30. Make sure elections are held before the term expires.)

Section 4: Should an officer's position become vacant during his/her term, the following will take place...

Section 5. A statement explaining the reasons for removal of an officer and the specific procedure must be included. Officers can be recommended for removal by the

Executive Board for just cause or if they fail to meet membership qualifications, fail to execute the duties of the office, or fail to satisfactorily attend the general and executive board meetings, unless excused by the President or Advisor(s). Approval by a majority vote of the active membership is necessary.

In case of resignation or dismissal, the outgoing officer must notify the Executive Board, which consists of the officers and advisor(s). The unoccupied position will be filled by appointment by the Executive Board unless the unfinished term of the officer is longer than a month before the annual spring elections, in which case an election will be held to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

Section 6: A specific method of election must be explained. Include the term/year of election, length of service, and month of officer transition. Transition is recommended for spring quarter which allows the new and old officers an opportunity to work together for a brief period of time. (*Interested members and officers in positions must speak to the Coordinator and must be voted in within the club*). A majority vote of the active membership will determine the election of officers. Officers will serve a term of one full academic year.

Article VI: Advisor

*Section 1: Our organization advisor must be a member of the faculty, administration, or staff of South Seattle Community College

*Section 2: The duties and responsibilities of the advisor shall be...

Section 3: Should the position of advisor become vacant during the year...

Article VII: Meetings

Section 1: Regular meetings of the organization shall be held... (Consider how often you would like to meet, who calls the meeting, etc.)

Section 2: Special meetings of the organization shall be held... (Consider who has authority to call these meetings, how much notice is required, etc.)

Article VIII: Responsibilities

****The following statement must be included:**

“The organization will adhere to SSCC policies, the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Washington, and the City of Seattle.”

Article IX: Amendments

Section 1: This constitution shall be amended by a vote of (2/3, 3/4, etc.) majority of the membership at any regular or special meeting. (Note: The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently)

Section 2: Provision for advance notice of amendment shall be... (Explain how eligible voting members will be informed of the proposed amendment such as posting, notification by email, announcement at two consecutive meetings, etc.)

Section 3. The statement must be included that, "Any revisions to the constitution and/or by-laws must be approved by the Coordinator for the Student Club Center."

Date Ratified (Insert date the constitution is initially ratified)

Date Revised (Insert date the constitution is revised)

Sample By-Laws -----

By-Laws of _____ (Name of your group)

Article I: Membership

Section 1: The procedure for selection of membership...

Section 2: Membership responsibilities shall include...

Section 3: Membership shall be terminated by...

Article II: Selection of Officers

*Section 1 The selection of officers shall be done by... (Clearly state election rules and voting procedures, eligibility for each office, and when the elections take place during the academic year, Method of nomination, voting, and number of votes required for electing officers.)

Section 2: The provisions for removal of an officer include...

Article III: Selection of Advisor

Section 1 The selection of the advisor shall be done by...

Section 2: The provisions for removal of an advisor include...

Article IV: Amendment

*Section 1: These by-laws may be amended by a vote of ... (Should be similar to constitution, but tend to be easier to amend. Example: simple majority vote, 2/3 vote, etc.)

Date Ratified (Insert date the by-laws are initially ratified)

Date Revised (Insert date the by-laws are revised)

Date Revised (Insert date the by-laws are revised)