

Constitutional Terms

Student Organization Handbook

What is a constitution?

A constitution is a document that describes the organization and how it operates.

What are bylaws?

These are the permanent body of legislative rules by which an organization operates. There is seldom any difference between the constitution and bylaws. Most organizations combine them.

Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of voting members who must be present in order to conduct business legally, and usually consists of the average attendance at meetings. It can also be a specific number, i.e., two-thirds of voting members. The quorum should be stated in the bylaws.

Membership

UW-L student organizations may not discriminate based on age, race, creed, color, handicap, sex, sexual orientation, developmental disability, national origin, ancestry, marital status, arrest record, or conviction record unless it is per an exception recognized by law. Selective organizations must identify selection procedures in their constitution/bylaws.

Officer Duties

Officer duties can be self-explanatory: the president presides; the treasurer keeps the accounts; the secretary takes notes and handles correspondence. Other officers can be appointed to suit the needs of the group. Vice presidents can handle membership, recruiting, and publicity. A good constitution provides an outline of what the organizations' expectations are for their officers.

Electing Officers

Having interested and capable members to run for officer positions is key to the continued success of your organization. Encouragement from current officers can motivate people to come forward and run for office. Plan to allow all candidates to address the group before voting.

Officer Transition

Officers should be elected in the spring semester for the following fall. Spring elections allow time for new officers to transition with outgoing officers and advisers. Electing officers during spring semester insures group continuity, and provides more accurate contact information for the Student Activities and Centers Office.

Removal of Officers

The following scenarios can be difficult: officers regularly skip meetings; officers have misspent the group's funds; etc. Organizations need to have a way to remove incompetent officers, and such procedures should be included the constitution. The Student Activities and Centers Office can help you create a procedure for your organization.

Adviser

Each student organization and club at UW-L must have a faculty/staff adviser. It is wise to include this adviser in your plans and events.



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