

Tusculum University Student Organization Constitution and By-Laws Process and Template

This document serves to guide student in writing or revising the constitution for a new or existing student organization at Tusculum University. An official student organization may structure and govern itself in any way it deems appropriate, so long as it does not violate the Code of Student Conduct and it fulfills the requirements of organizational standing (such items are bolded in this template).

A constitution is comprised of the fundamental laws and principles that prescribe the nature, function and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a basic structure upon which an organization operates. As a basic structure of the organization, amendments and changes to the constitution should be difficult to make, but not impossible, and should require a high level of participation/approval from the membership.

By-laws are secondary laws, which rule or govern the internal affairs of an organization. Basically by-laws are an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps for an organization to follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently. Since by-laws are more “nuts and bolts” procedures, they should be easier to amend/revise than the constitution.

Process

- Cut and paste a copy of the Constitution **TEMPLATE** (below) and customize for your organization, paying special attention to required language
- Submit your completed constitution in person to the Dean of Students, for filing and advancement to Student Government Association for review for recommendation to the Dean of Students for ratification in accordance with the Tusculum University Organizations Policy (see Code of Student Conduct).
- Please maintain a copy of your constitution and reference it in your group's record keeping and leadership transition processes

For additional assistance, please contact the Dean of Students.

Constitution Requirements

All student group constitutions must follow the format below and include each of the **articles** outlined in this template to be recognized. You may add articles or bylaws, but additions must adhere to campus regulations as stated in the Tusculum University Code of Student Conduct.

TEMPLATE

cut and paste the section below into a word processing document and customize for your organization

STUDENT ORGANIZATION NAME

Date Prepared / / - Amended: / /

Date Approved by Dean of Students: / /

Approved by: _____

PREAMBLE

An introductory statement usually no longer than two or three sentences, stating the intent or mission of the constitution.

For example: “We, the members of (name of organization), established to provide (your mission statement), do ordain and establish this constitution and subscribe to the regulations and policies of Tusculum University.”

ARTICLE I – Name

What is the exact title and any group acronym that will be used in addressing your organization?

NAME RESTRICTIONS: The following names and terms CANNOT BE USED in any part of your student group name: Tusculum University, Tusculum, TU.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

Briefly describe the purpose and objectives of your organization. List the purpose(s) for which your organization was formed. Be sure this information is clear and specific. This statement will be used to describe what the organization is about to those looking for or at student organizations to join or work with. It will also impact on decisions related to what are appropriate (and inappropriate) spheres of activity for the organization to be engaged in. The purpose statement should be broad enough in scope to allow the organization freedom of action but specific enough to show the uniqueness of the organization. This could be considered the most important article in this document.

[REQUIRED PURPOSE LANGUAGE]

It is also the purpose of this organization to abide by the Code of Student Conduct and uphold and the educational mission of Tusculum University.

ARTICLE III – Affiliation

If your organization is to be affiliated with a local, state, or national organization, a statement declaring the nature of the affiliation must be included. The relationship between the campus group and the organization it is to be affiliated with must be described. If no affiliation exists, a statement reflecting that fact must be included.

Article IV - Membership

Describe who is eligible for membership?

Are there any restrictions on University students (e.g., grade point average, class standing, etc.)?

List the procedures for selecting members, if any.

If your organization will be recognizing off-campus participants, including your group's alumni, you are required to include a statement about these "non-active" members in this section. Will there be associate, inactive, alumni, honorary or auxiliary members and how will these categories be defined and empowered?

How will members withdraw or be removed?

[REQUIRED MEMBERSHIP LANGUAGE]

Only currently registered students, faculty and staff may be active members in this organization. Only active members may vote or hold office.

[REQUIRED ANTI-HAZING STATEMENT]

This organization complies with all State and Federal laws and Tusculum University Hazing Policy (see Tusculum University Code of Student Conduct). 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 University recognition.

[REQUIRED NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT]

Active membership of this student organization shall be chosen without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, color, disability, national origin, age, or marital status, except in cases of fraternity and sorority organizations which are exempt by federal law from Title IX Regulations concerning discrimination on the basis of sex. 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.

ARTICLE V - Officers/Elections

List the officers by title (e.g., President) or define the leadership structure if another system is used (e.g., spokesperson by consensus). Must include at least an Organizational Contact and a Financial Contact.

What officers constitute an executive committee and what empowerment does this group have?

Describe the process and required majority of votes by your active, voting membership by which officers will be elected or selected.

What time of year will selection occur?

How long do officers serve?

What happens in case of a vacancy?

Which officer serves as the primary signatory?

How will officers be removed or replaced?

ARTICLE VI - Advisor

How will the advisor be selected?

What time of year will selection occur?

How long do advisors serve?

What happens in case of a vacancy?

Please note that an advisor is not someone who cleans up after a major event or makes sure that regular meeting rooms for the organization have been reserved; these are responsibilities of the student leadership of the organization. An advisor is not someone to invite to events but otherwise exclude from the business of the organization until the organization is in trouble; the advisor should be informed about and consulted with regard to the on-going business of the organization. An advisor does not take control of the organization; this is the responsibility of the student membership and if the organization ceases to exist due to inaction by the student membership, this is an unfortunate but appropriate outcome.

[REQUIRED ADVISOR CLAUSE]

This organization will select and secure an advisor from the active faculty or staff of Tusculum University and will register their name with the Dean of Students annually. The advisor will be informed of all meetings and activities of the organization and may call a special meeting of the organization to discuss concerns for the ongoing nature of the organization.

Article VII - Meetings

How often will the group meet?

Who will call the meetings?

What is quorum?

Will there be a call for special emergency meetings?

How will you notify people of emergency meetings?

ARTICLE VIII - Constitutional Amendments

Who can propose an amendment?

How are they proposed?

What is the required period of time between the proposed amendment and a final vote?

How will you notify active members that an amendment is going to be voted upon?

Incorporate into your constitution that an amendment will need a 2/3 majority vote from your active membership in order to pass.

Amendments change the structure of the group and it is important to have that 2/3 approval from the members at large.

[REQUIRED AMENDMENT CLAUSE]

All amendments, additions or deletions must be approved and filed with the Dean of Students.

ARTICLE IX – Dissolution

How will dissolution be decided?

What is the required majority of votes to dissolve the group?

What will you do with the unspent funds?

Optional Additions:

We encourage organizations to include an article in the constitution, citing the parliamentary authority to be used for points not covered in the constitution. Many organizations cite Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition. This often helps guide groups in times of conflict.

You may add articles or bylaws, but additions must adhere to campus regulations as stated in Student Handbook. By-Laws often include: Duties of Officers, Duties of Advisor, Installations, Committees, Activities, and Finances/Dues/Fees.