Constitution and By-Laws Guidelines for Student Organizations

The constitution and by-laws guide an organization in its operations and activities and, accordingly, are intended primarily for the organization’s benefit and use. The constitution contains the fundamental principles and structure of the organization, and the by-laws outline the basic rules of procedure by which a group’s membership govern their organization.

The constitution and by-laws should be carefully formulated, clearly worded, and kept up-to-date so that the needs of the organization can be met. It is recommended that each member of an organization have a copy of the constitution and by-laws.

The following outline is provided to assist in the preparation of a constitution and, if needed, by-laws. Use this guide to prepare the constitution for your new student organization. An electronic copy of the constitution is required by the Center for Student Leadership and Service when you register your organization. If there are any problems or concerns with your constitution, a member of the CSLS staff will contact you.

Constitution

The constitution should be simple yet comprehensive and difficult to amend, leaving any specific procedural rules to be included in the by-laws. When amending the constitution, as with the by-laws, previous notice of any proposed changes are usually required to be given to the membership and should not be changed in the same meeting in which proposed.

Article l –

1. Name: PERIOD at The Ohio State University

2. Purpose: PERIOD at The Ohio State University is a Chapter of the largest youth-run women’s non-profit in the U.S., aiming to destigmatize periods through the three pillars of service, advocacy and education. PERIOD will connect with a women’s homeless shelter to donate menstrual hygiene products, organize fundraising events and carry out educational programs aiming to educate people in the community about menstruation and using menstrual products. The intended membership is students at The Ohio State University.

3. Non-Discrimination Policy: This organization and its members does not discriminate against any individual(s) for reasons of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law in its activities, programs, and admissions.

Article II - Membership: Qualifications and categories of membership.

Voting membership is limited to executive board, unless it is in the case of elections. In this case, the general member must have attended a minimum of three meetings to vote and five meetings to run for an executive position. General membership should be defined as currently enrolled or recent alumni of The Ohio State University. Other members such as faculty, alumni, professionals, etc. are encouraged to become members but as non-voting associate or honorary members.

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Article III - Organization Leadership: Titles, terms of office, type of selection, and duties of the leaders.

Organization leaders represent the Executive Committee and general membership and are elected or appointed from the ranks of the organization’s voting membership.

The executive board and their duties are as follows:

* **President**- Communicate with executive board, interact with advisors, be the face of the organization.
* **Vice President**- Fulfill duties of president if president is unable to fulfill above duties, support other executive functions as needed
* **Treasurer**- Compile spreadsheets of all monies into and out of organization, sets a budget and communicates said budget to other executive members. Treasurer is expected to keep track of all expenditures and revenues and send reports to the National Non-profit.
* **Social Media Director**- Managing social media platforms and content (instagram, facebook, twitter pages)—Taking lots of pictures, Ideas for videos! Distributes photo-release forms and sends content to National Non-Profit.
* **Videographer/ Editor Head:** Produces videos for YouTube Channel; Coordinating with National Team and sending in Updates about our Chapter! Involves distributing and signing release forms and managing content-producing committee.
* **Editor in Chief for PERIOD Blog**: PERIOD Website with more information and pictures & Blog for OSU.
* **Arts/ Graphic Design Head**—Responsible for creating artistic content for PERIOD that will be featured on Instagram. Best pieces will be featured as Artist Spotlights and will be sent to the National Non-Profit.
* **Director of Membership:** Responsible for managing records (absences) of Chapter members, whether dues have been paid, as well as actively engaging and recruiting members.
* **Community Involvement Lead**: In charge of making connections and collaborating with other organizations in our community to achieve sponsorship. Additonally, will look towards establishing strategic collaborations on events with other organizations on campus and Ohio State’s Medical School.

**Fundraising Events Leader**: Responsible for organizing Fundraising Events on Campus and organizing packing parties to assemble and donate care packages to shelters.

Article VI – Method of Selecting and/or Removing Officers and Members.

VI.a. Members are not selected and the criterion to be a voting member is listed in article II. Elections for the executive board will be held at the end of Spring Semester and any general member who has meet the minimum criteria to vote is able to vote. Executive members will be elected by a majority vote of all previous executive members and all general body members. All votes count equally.

VII.b. In the case of officer removal, the first step will be an intervention with an advising faculty member. If the situation does not improve, there will be an executive board vote to remove the member. This vote will require a three-fourths majority vote to remove member.

Article VII – Advisor(s) or Advisory Board: Qualification Criteria.

Advisors of student organizations must be members of the University faculty or Administrative & Professional staff. Responsibilities and expectations of advisors will be addressed with each advisor prior to their commitment to the organization.

Article VIII – Meetings of the Organization: Required meetings and their frequency.

Three meetings a year are required to attend to be a voting general member. In terms of required meetings for general members to attend, there will be once a year- elections.

Article IX – Method of Amending Constitution: Proposals, notice, and voting requirements. Proposed amendments should be in writing, should not be acted upon but read in the executive meeting in which they are proposed, should be read again at a specified number of subsequent executive meetings and the executive meeting in which the votes will be taken. Approval should require at least two-thirds of voting members present (and to conduct any business an organization should have quorum present at a business meeting, which is at minimum 60% + 1 of total organization members). The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently.

Article X – Method of Dissolution of Organization

In the event or case that this organization is no longer able to fulfill its mission statement, all assets should be given to the Department of Bioethics and Medical Humanities. If this organization acquires an inactive state for four years, its status should be evaluated and dissolved.

By-Laws

By-laws contain the standing (permanent) rules of procedure of an organization. Articles in the by-laws may be covered in appropriate detail in the constitution of very small organizations. However, most groups keep separate by-laws because they usually contain more detail and are subject to change more than that of the constitution and, therefore, may require different procedures for amending.

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Provision for amendment of the by-laws should be somewhat easier than that of the constitution as rules of procedure should adapt to changing conditions of the student organization. When amending the by-laws, as with the constitution, previous notice of any changes is usually required to be given to the membership and should not be changed in the same meeting in which proposed. By-laws are more permanent, however, than passing a general motion, which may require only a simple majority vote of voters present at a general meeting of the membership (a quorum being present). By-laws cannot run contrary to the constitution.

Article 1 – Parliamentary Authority

Most organizations use Robert’s Rule of Order to govern their organization’s decision making except when these rules are inconsistent with their constitution or by-laws of the organization. These rules are of Western cultural origin, and based on the premise that “though the minority shall be heard and absentees protected, the majority will decide.”

A recommended wording is “The rules contained in [specify the source for parliamentary practice] shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the by-laws of this organization.”

Article II- Membership

Procedures for becoming a member, which may vary by membership category, amount of dues, if any, and how often they should be paid, termination of membership, and so on should be described in detail.

Article III- Election / Appointment of Government Leadership

Elections rules and procedures, including eligibility for office, the nominating process, design of ballots and balloting procedures, and so on should be specified as well as appointment and ratification procedures. The timing of elections and/or appointments should be specified along with procedures to cover special circumstances (resignations, impeachments, etc.).

Article IV- Executive Committee (if needed)

Specific duties of the Committee and its responsibilities to the membership.

Article V- Standing Committees (if needed)

Specific duties of each committee and their responsibilities to the organization leadership, Executive Committee, and general membership.

Article VI - Advisor/Advisory Board Responsibilities

Expectations of the advisor in the organization (e.g., availability, meeting attendance, second signer on checks, etc.)

Article VII - Meeting Requirements

Regular, special, size and determination of quorum (number of voting members required to vote on decisions placed before the general membership, executive, and standing committees).

Article VIII - Method of Amending By-Laws

Should be similar to amending the constitution. However, by-laws are apt to change more often than the constitution, thus amending should be somewhat easier. By-laws may be amended by proposing in writing and reading the change at a general meeting of the membership and then bring the proposed change up for a vote at the next general meeting with a 2/3 majority vote of the membership present (a quorum being present).