**This sample constitution is provided as a guide for use in developing constitutions for student organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University. Student organizations are encouraged to use and adapt this sample constitution to the unique needs and purposes of the organization.**

**Student Organization Constitution Template**

**ORGANIZATION NAME CONSTITUTION**

**\*Date of Adoption and/or Revision**

**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. This can be done in paragraph form or a bulleted list.

*Example: The purpose of this organization shall be to provide and promote good examples of constitutional development for student organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University*

*Or*

*The Purpose of this organization shall be:*

1. *To provide fellowship among students and faculty*
2. *Promote good examples of constitutional development for student organizations at VCU*

**Article III – Membership**

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

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

*Example:*

*Section 1: Membership in The Constitution Template shall be open to any an all students at VCU. Active membership shall be determined by interest in constitutional development. All active members have the ability to vote. (*Here you have your specific criteria for membership, i.e. GPA, or simply an interest in the organization, club etc.)

*Section 2: This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status. This policy will include, but not limited to recruiting, membership, organization activities, or opportunities to hold office..*

**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 Virginia Commonwealth University 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 registration privileges..*

**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 ? Who is eligible to hold an office? How long is the position held? When are elections? What is the procedure for filling vacant offices?*

*Example:*

*Section 1: The officers of this organization shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers shall be responsible for all administrative duties of the organization.*

*Section 2: Officers will be elected by written ballot, with each active member casting a vote. A majority of votes will constitute a victory. Elections of officers will take place a week before the last day of classes during the spring semester. Officers will assume office for a period of one year.*

*Section 3: The order of succession shall be: (1) President, (2) Vice President, (3) Treasurer, (4) Secretary*

*Section 4: Vacancies occurring in any of the elected offices shall be officially filled at the next regular organization meeting following the occurrence of such a vacancy or vacancies. The order of succession shall be followed in the filling of any vacant office during any unexpired term. If an officer declines to succeed to a vacant office, then an election shall be held to fill the office for the remainder of the unexpired term. The election procedure for filling the unexpired term of a vacant office shall be the same as for the normal procedure for elections.*

*Section 5: The officers of the organization must be in good academic standing with a 2.5 cumulative GPA as required by Virginia Commonwealth University.*

**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 President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Committee Chairs, and Advisor. Thoughts: What is chain of command? Who holds what power?*

**Article VII – Advisor**

This section should describe the relationship between the advisor and the organization, and indicate whether or not the advisor 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 a quorum?*

*Example:*

*Section1: General membership meetings shall be held once a week, with additional meeting called by the President as needed. Notice of additional meetings must be given to all club members in the timeliest manner possible, usually not less than one week. The official means of notifying members shall be agreed upon at the first meeting held after the election of a new President. The Executive Committee shall meet when called by the President.*

*Section 2: Quorum shall be defined as fifty percent plus one of the total numbers of organization membership. Quorum is needed for official votes to take place.*

**Article IX – Committees**

This section may include 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.

*Example:*

*Any member may be removed from membership for violation of the purposes of the organization by a two-thirds vote of the membership. All members must be notified of this pending action at least one week prior to the removal decision. Removal from office can occur either for failure to carry out the responsibilities of that office, or for actions which violate the purposes of the organization. Voting for removal from membership is to be done by secret ballot. The member in question must be notified immediately of the outcome of the vote.*

**Article XI – Rules of Procedure**

The type of procedure for conducting the business of the organization and maintaining active registration status at the VCU 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 VCU 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?*

*Example: Amendments to this constitution shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present at two consecutive meetings at which the amendment has been read.*

**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.

*Example:*

*The President:*

1. *Coordinates all activities of the organization*
2. *Calls regular and special meetings*
3. *Prepares agendas for meetings*
4. *Etc.*

**Article II – Duties of Advisor**

This section should clearly outline the duties and responsibilities of the advisor if the organization has one. Although VCU doesn’t require advisors, we encourage all organizations to have one. If the organization is affiliated with a national organization, it most likely will require the local chapter to have an advisor.

**Article III – 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 VCU. Who is authorized to submit financial requests to SGA Appropriations or other funding commission?

*Example:*

*Section 1: Dues shall be charged for membership in the organization, and shall be collected by the Treasurer. The amount of dues charged for each year/semester shall be determined at the first meeting of the Fall Semester. Semester memberships shall expire on the first day of the next semester. Yearly membership shall expire on the last day of the Spring Semester (including summer session) after the semester in which dues are paid. (If dues are not to be collected, delete this section)*

*Section 2: The organization shall, as it deems necessary, undertake fundraisers for its own purposes. All fundraising shall be conducted in accordance with University Policies.*

**Article IV – Activities**

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