

# Sample Constitution format

---

The constitution of an organization contains the fundamental principles which govern its operation. All organized groups should have their basic structure and methods of operation in writing. Not only is this a requirement of a recognized student organization at MxCC, but it assists in the continuity, consistency and unity of the group. *All student clubs must submit a Constitution document to the Student Activities Office.*

It minimally must contain the following information:

- Article I        NAME  
State what the club will be called.
- Article II        PURPOSE  
State what the club will do to fulfill the needs of the membership. The more general the statement, the better; it offers greater flexibility. Example: The purpose of this club or organization is to broaden the horizons of the intellectual reasoning through readings and discussions.
- Article III       MEMBERSHIP  
This section involves the mandatory non-discrimination statement. Membership in a student club must be in compliance with Title IX of the U.S. Higher Education Amendments of 1972. There shall be no restriction on membership based on race, religion, nationality, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation or preference, or political conviction. Members must be Middlesex Community College students.
- Article IV        OFFICERS  
State what positions will comprise an executive board and what some of the responsibilities/duties for each are. List officers in order of rank accompanied by their duties and term of office. Officers must maintain a 2.00 Semester GPA and overall GPA during their term. Officers of student clubs must be registered Activity Fee paying Middlesex Community College students in good academic, financial, and disciplinary standing.
- Article V        ELECTIONS  
Indicate what time of the year elections will be held and who is eligible. Indicate what will happen if there is a tie and indicate the process for removal from office. Officers must be elected by the student members.
- Article VI        MEETINGS  
State when this club will have its regularly scheduled meetings, what constitutes a quorum for purposes of conducting the meeting, how meetings will be conducted and under what circumstances a special meeting may be called.
- Article VII       FINANCES  
State if funding will be sought directly from Student Senate. Fundraisers should be mentioned here.
- Article VIII     COMMITTEES  
List any committees and how they are appointed here.
- Article IX.       RECALL/IMPEACHMENT  
State whether a member can be expelled for not fulfilling his/her duties, attending meetings and/or events.
- Article X        PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY  
Defines accepted rules or order or parliamentary procedure to conduct a business meeting; traditionally "Roberts Rules of Order".
- Article XI.       AMENDMENTS  
Prescribes the procedure for amending the rules of the organization, usually requiring written notice, discussion at no less than two meetings and a two-thirds vote of membership.

The constitution covers the fundamental principles but does not usually define specific procedures. **By-laws** detail the procedures your group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. By-laws provide further definition of the Articles of the Constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change. Many clubs and organizations include “by-law” detail in their constitution.

**By-laws** must not contradict provisions in the Constitution. They generally contain specific information on the following topics:

- ❖ Duties of the executive board and each officer
- ❖ What the organization defines as a “quorum” for the purposes of conducting business
- ❖ A provision of its accepted rules of order or procedure to conduct the meeting
- ❖ Date and method of selecting officers and delineating their duties
- ❖ Detailed information concerning the rights, duties, resignation and expulsion due process of the membership and officers
- ❖ Detailed information about the succession of officers in the event of resignation or impeachment
- ❖ A provision for amending the by-laws by the organization with little difficulty; usually a simple majority vote is enough, but the mechanism should be flexible and one that is established by the body.

Constitutions usually require a two-thirds vote of the membership for adoption by-laws only require a simple majority for passage. Once you have developed your constitution and by-laws, review them at least yearly. The needs of the group will change over time and it is important the governing documents are kept up-to-date.

Make sure every new member of the organization has a copy of your constitution (and by-laws). This will help to unify the members by informing them of the opportunities that exist for participation and the procedures they should follow to be an active, contributing member. Officer training and transition should include a thorough review of the governing document details.