

Student Organization Constitution Template

The process of writing and maintaining a constitution clarifies your organization's purpose, delineates your basic structure, and helps you build an effective organization. The objective is to draft and maintain a document that covers these topics in a clear and concise manner. The constitution will give members and the Lewis & Clark community a better understanding of what the organization is about and how it functions. An organization's constitution is the basis for the operation of the organization. Each recognized student organization is required to have an approved and current constitution on file with Student Activities. Student organizations are expected to operate according to their constitutions for all activities. Student organizations are encouraged to develop bylaws or rules of procedure as appropriate.

Your constitution should be well organized. Below, please find a template that may be useful for outlining the basic components of an organization's constitution.

- Article I. Official Name
- Choose the name of the organization wisely. It is linked to many things and is difficult to change
 - If appropriate, specify a variation of the official name or an acronym that the organization might use.
 - Avoid using Lewis & Clark as part of your organization's name.
- Article II. Affiliations
- Identify other groups (on-campus, local, state, regional, national, etc.) with which your organization is affiliated.
- Article III. Mission
- The Mission Statement provides a clear purpose for your organization.
 - A clear, concise, and specific mission helps others to understand your organization's activities and priorities.
- Article IV. Membership
- List qualifications, requirements, rights, duties, and all other conditions for membership in the organization.
 - If desired, include benefits and privileges of membership.
 - Specify how membership may be resigned or terminated.
 - Membership must be available to all L&C undergraduate students regardless of espoused or perceived identities.
 - Describe how membership lists will be maintained.
- Article V. Leadership
- Leadership must include at least three roles, one of which has financial responsibilities for the organization.
 - Provisions for removal or resignation.
 - Provisions for filling vacancies.
 - For each leadership role, the following information should be outlined:
 - Titles.
 - Duties and responsibilities.
 - Method of selection.
 - Qualifications for each position, if any.
 - Length of term of office.
 - Method and frequency of elections or selection.

Lewis & Clark College

Office of Student Activities

- All qualifications, requirements, or other conditions members must meet before they are eligible to take office.
- Specify who is eligible to vote in elections or confirm officer appointments.
- Method and frequency of transition procedures from outgoing to incoming leaders
- Specify what materials are handed down.

Article VI. Advisor

- Lewis & Clark requires a faculty/staff advisor who shall be an ex-officio member with no voting privileges.
- Do not list a specific person. Rather identify the criteria, qualities, and experiences that are important for an advisor to be effective with your organization.
- Method of selecting an advisor.
- Duties and responsibilities.

Article VII. Meetings

- How often do meetings occur?
- Who can call a meeting, what type of notice is necessary to convene a meeting?
- Who will set the agenda, take minutes, and keep a record of both? Also, include how the agenda and minutes are distributed.
- What constitutes quorum? This is the number of members required to be present to transact business at the meetings. Quorum is usually a simple majority of members. Articulating a percentage standard is generally more appropriate than a quantity of persons.
- For groups whose “meetings” will primarily be events, practices, rehearsals, or competitions, keep in mind the need for special business meetings from time-to-time.

Article VIII. Risk Management

- Identify anticipated risks associated with participation in the organizations’ activities.
- Describe measures planned to mitigate any safety or liability issues.

Article IX. Digital Presence

- The following disclaimer must be included as written, and should appear as a footer for all Electronic communication (email), websites, and social media (this article must be included exactly as it is written below)
- *“This organization’s email account(s) and website(s) are hosted on Lewis & Clark College servers, but are not an official Lewis & Clark College method of communication or website. The material contained in any email messages or on any sites and any links that they offer to other websites or social media have not been reviewed and are not approved, licensed, sponsored, or endorsed by the College. Lewis & Clark College assumes no express or implied responsibility for any component of student organization email communication or websites, including content, presentation, usability, accessibility, accuracy or timeliness, not any links directed from any email messages or sites.”*
- For social media, please be sure to include in your about section on your user profile the following, *“The views expressed herein do not represent those of Lewis & Clark College.”*

Article X. Amendments

- Specify the frequency with which your organization will review the constitution.
- Describe the process for amending the constitution. Considerations may be:

Lewis & Clark College Office of Student Activities

- Notice of timeframe required (e.g. consider tabling a vote for one week to allow members who were not present to review and then attend the following meeting to vote).
- Voting requirements (e.g. must pass by a 2/3s or 51% vote of membership, or of quorum).

Article XI.

Ratification

- Names of persons who authored the constitution and submitted it for ratification.
- Date of ratification
- Member names participating in ratification