

# How to Prepare your Organization's Constitution and By-laws

As a student organization, one of your main responsibilities will be to set up a constitution and by-laws that works for your organization. A constitution and by-laws should provide order, purpose, rules and continuity for your group.

## What Is In a Constitution?

**A constitution basically states how the group will be organized. It should contain:**

1. Name and purpose of the group.
2. Qualification of members.
3. Officers and procedure for their election.
4. Meetings of the group (including only what is essential, leaving the details to the by-laws).
5. How to amend the constitution and by-laws.

**An example of a basic constitution is as follows:**

### **ARTICLE I: Name**

Section 1 - The name of this club shall be the Outdoor Club of Youngstown State University.





**ARTICLE II: Purpose**



Section 1 - To promote student awareness of outdoor activities and sports.

Section 2 - To provide students with the opportunity to experience the outdoors through activities (hiking, camping, climbing).

Section 3 - To teach students to respect the outdoors.

**ARTICLE III: Membership**

Section 1 - Membership is open to all YSU students who are in good standing.

**ARTICLE IV: Officers and Election**

Section 1 - The officers of this group shall include the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

Section 2 - The executive committee of this group shall consist of the above mentioned officers.

Section 3 - The officers of this organization shall be elected by the regular members of the club and shall serve a one-year term.



**ARTICLE V: Meetings**

Section 1 - This group shall meet the first and third Tuesday's of each month (September-June).



**ARTICLE VI: Amendments to Constitution and By-laws**

Section 1 - Amendments to the constitution and by-laws shall be submitted in writing one week prior to their consideration to the president.

Section 2 - These amendments will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting of the group.

Section 3 - All amendments will require a two-thirds (2/3) vote for passage.

**ARTICLE VII: Officer Duties and Responsibilities**

Section 1 - President



- A) Run all meetings of the group.
- B) Be the official spokesman for the group.
- C) Appoint special committees of the group.
- D) Administer the budget with the aid of the treasurer.
- E) Meet twice a month with the advisor to review programs.

Section 2 - Vice-President

- A) Takes over the role of leader in the absence of the president.
- B) Assists the president in all areas necessary.
- C) Heads up all special projects of the group.





### Section 3 - Secretary

- A) Records all business of the group at its meetings.
- B) Distributes copies of the groups' minutes at each meeting.
- C) Handles all correspondence of the group.
- D) Familiar with all University regulations for student organizations.



### Section 4 - Treasurer

- A) Maintains all financial records of the group.
- B) Collects dues and distributes financial records of each member's financial standing in the group.
- C) Submits to the president at each meeting a financial report of the group.
- D) Prepares student government annual budget request and is familiar with student organization funding regulations.



## What are by-laws?



The by-laws of an organization are specific rules of the organization. By-laws should include all the rules not already in the constitution that are of such importance that they cannot be changed in any way without previous notice.

The by-laws of a student organization should be detailed rules that explain for the members their responsibilities, limitations and expectations as they pertain to the group. By-laws may include the meeting time and locations, dues to be paid, attendance requirements, election procedures, etc.

By-laws should be divided into headings such as dues, attendance or meetings with by-laws pertaining to them listed below. This makes your by-law system more organized and easier to use when the need arises.

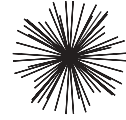
### Example of by-laws:

- I. Dues
  - A. Dues will be \$5 each month.
  - B. Dues will be paid at the first meeting of each month.
  - C. Failure to pay dues will result in suspension from all group activities until the dues are paid.





- II. Meetings
  - A. Meetings will be at 2:00 p.m. at the Outdoor Club's office.



- III. Attendance
  - A. Attendance is required at all regular and special meetings of the group, unless excused.
  - B. Members may be excused by submitting a written excuse to the president prior to the meeting they will be missing.
  - C. Three unexcused absences will result in expulsion from the group.

- IV. Elections
  - A. Elections shall take place the first week of May.
  - B. Any regular member having one semester in the group may be nominated for an executive office.
  - C. Elections will be by secret ballot.
  - D. All ties will be decided by the president.



**it's done...now what?**

When you have completed your organization's constitution and by-laws, you must present the Student Activities Office with a permanent copy. Everyone in your group should also receive a copy of them.

**need help?**

**This information will hopefully assist your organization in preparing a basic constitution and by-laws. If questions do arise when you begin to develop your constitution and by-laws, please contact us in the Student Activities Office at (330) 941-3575 and we'll be happy to help!**

