

CREATING A CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

What is a constitution?

A constitution contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a foundation upon which an organization operates.

Why are student organizations required to have a Constitution?

A student organization constitution:

- Clarifies the purpose of the organization and outlines the basic structure of the organization
- Provides the cornerstone for building an effective organization/group
- Allows members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is all about and how it functions.

What are Bylaws?

Bylaws are secondary principles that govern the internal affairs of an organization. Bylaws are essentially an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps the organization must follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

Why are student organizations required to have Bylaws?

Bylaws, can be helpful in the organization's operations. The constitution covers the fundamental principles but does not provide specific procedures for operating your organization. Bylaws should set forth in detail the procedures your group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. They provide further definition to the provisions contained in the constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change.

Creating a Constitution and Bylaws

A constitution and bylaws typically have the following items. Please use the checklist below and the sample constitution and bylaws that follow to assist you in developing your own.

Constitution Checklist

- Article 1 – Name of organization
- Article 2 – Purpose of organization
- Article 3 – Authority
- Article 4 – Membership
- Article 5 – Officers
- Article 6 – Meetings
- Article 7 – Faculty/Staff Advisor
- Article 8 – Finances
- Article 9 – Discipline
- Article 10 – Amendments and Ratification

Bylaws Checklist

- Article 1 – Officers
- Article 2 – Powers and duties of officers
- Article 3 – Qualifications to hold office
- Article 4 – Elections
- Article 5 – Executive Board/Committee
- Article 6 – Faculty/Staff Advisor(s)
- Article 7 – Meetings/Voting
- Article 8 – Special Committees
- Article 9 – Finances
- Article 10 – Discipline of Members
- Article 11 – Dissolution
- Article 12 – Non Hazing Clause
- Article 13 – Impeachment
- Article 14 – Vacancy of Office
- Article 15 – Amendments

CONSTITUTION
[Name of Organization] at
Kentucky Wesleyan College

ARTICLE I NAME

Section 1 The name of this organization shall be [Name of Organization]. [Optional: Include chapter designation if part of a national organization and/or the organization's founding date]

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Section 1 The purpose of this organization is to [insert organization's mission or purpose statement].

ARTICLE III AUTHORITY

Section 1 This organization is a recognized student organization at Kentucky Wesleyan College and adheres to all campus policies as set forth in the *Student Handbook and Student Organization Policy Handbook*.

Section 2 [If applicable]: This organization is affiliated with [Name of National or Affiliated Organization] and adheres to the [National or Affiliated Organization Bylaws or Governing Document(s)].

Section 3 This organization will establish bylaws to govern administrative and procedural matters (such as time and location of meetings, etc.). Bylaws shall not conflict with this constitution. Bylaws may be adopted, amended, or temporarily suspended by a majority vote present at two consecutive meetings where a quorum is present.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Membership in the organization shall be open to those regularly-enrolled Kentucky Wesleyan College students who [State eligibility criteria or qualifications for membership].

Section 2 Eligibility for membership of appointed or elected officer positions may not be limited on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability. The organization shall have no rules or policies that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability.

Section 3 [Optional]: Some organizations have additional categories of membership, such as honorary membership. If this applies, include the categories of membership along with associated requirements and privileges.

Section 4 [Optional]: Some organizations have a probationary period for new members before they become full members. If this applies, state the length of the probationary period, privileges and voting rights of probationary members, requirements and process to obtain full

membership, the process and vote required to dismiss a probationary member, and the vote required to obtain full membership.

Article V OFFICERS

Section 1 The officers of [insert name of student organization] shall be PRESIDENT, VICEPRESIDENT, SECRETARY AND TREASURER [Optional]: insert the name of additional officers if there are more or change the name to make them reflect what the organization will call them.

Section 2 In order to run for office members must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of [insert minimum GPA]

Section 3 While in office officers must maintain a [insert minimum GPA from above] GPA and must not have below [min GPA] for more than one semester.

Section 4 Officers must be a matriculated student and be in good standing (not on academic or disciplinary probation) at the time of their election or appointment and throughout their terms of office.

Section 5 All officers serve for a term of ONE (1) YEAR or until their successors shall be duly elected and qualified.

Section 6 Any officer who, during the term of their office, ceases to be a voting member, or fails to maintain his/ her status as a student maintaining a [x] g.p.a., in good academic and disciplinary standing with the college, shall be removed from their office and a replacement shall be elected.

Article VI MEETINGS

Section 1 Regular meetings shall be held [insert when meeting times; i.e. weekly, bi-weekly, monthly] during the academic year.

Section 2 Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Committee. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours' notice prior to the meeting time.

Section 3 [Optional]: Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present or a vote is being conducted through KWConnect and all members are given the opportunity to vote. A quorum for this organization is defined as a majority of the voting membership. *[Note: Organizations may choose to have a lower quorum, such as one-third, or a specific number of members.]*

Section 4 Members must be present to vote unless vote is being conducted through KWConnect

Section 5 In order to vote a member must be in good standing. *[State what constitutes “good standing.” This may include payment of dues, meeting attendance requirement, academic requirement, etc. If there is an attendance requirement, specify the number of excused and/or unexcused absences that results in loss of voting privileges, and define what constitutes an excused absence, if applicable.]*

ARTICLE VII FACULTY/STAFF ADVISOR(S)

Section 1 [Insert student organization name] shall have a Faculty or Staff Advisor who must be a full-time employee of Kentucky Wesleyan College. The advisor will fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Student Organization Policy Handbook. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

ARTICLE VIII FINANCES

Section 1 [Optional]: Membership dues shall be [insert amount, per semester or year].

Section 2 [Optional]: Dues shall be paid by [Specify due date]

Section 3 [Optional]: Members who have not paid their dues or special assessments by the due date shall be considered as not being in good standing and shall lose all membership privileges, including voting, until the dues are paid.

Section 4 Organization funds shall not be used to purchase or reimburse members for alcoholic beverages.

ARTICLE IX DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Section 1 All members of [insert organization name] are expected to uphold the rules and regulations of the Kentucky Wesleyan College Student Code of Conduct and adhere to the policies and procedures set for in the Kentucky Wesleyan College Student Organization Policies.

Section 2 Members that violate the Student Code of Conduct and Student Organization policies may face disciplinary action with the Office of Student Services as well as the Executive Committee of [insert organization name].

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be presented to the membership, in writing, one meeting prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon. [Optional] The Executive Committee and/or Bylaws Committee shall review and make recommendations on all bylaw revisions prior to consideration by the membership.

Section 2 Constitution amendments require approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting. The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

Section 3 A copy of any amendments to this constitution must be submitted to the Office of Student Services prior to its adoption.

Bylaws
[Name of Organization] at
Kentucky Wesleyan College

Section I The officers of the [insert student organization name] shall be the:

- a. [insert titles of officer]
- b. [insert titles of officer]
- c. [insert titles of officer]
- d. [insert titles of officer]

Section II Powers and Duties of Officers:

- a. The President shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization, shall preside at all meetings of the organization and shall prepare the agenda for meetings. The President shall appoint all committees and committee chairs. The President shall have other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the organization. The President shall participate in the yearly President's Training offered by the Student Services Office.
- b. The Vice President shall preside at organization meetings in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall perform all legal duties assigned by the President. The Vice President shall assume the office of President if the office becomes vacant.
- c. The Treasurer shall handle all financial affairs and budgeting of the organization, maintain all necessary accounting records, and prepare financial reports for the membership. The Treasurer shall collect all dues (if applicable) and revenue and submit it to their organizational advisor for deposit. The Treasurer shall work with the Student Organization's advisor to maintain the finances of the organization. The Treasurer shall participate in the yearly Treasurer's Training offered by the Student Services Office.
- d. The Secretary shall take minutes at all meetings of the organization, keep these on file, and submit copies to organization members upon request. The Secretary shall be responsible for all organization correspondence and shall keep copies on file. The Secretary shall maintain membership records for the organization.
- e. [Optional]: List duties of any additional elected or appointed officers

Section III Qualifications necessary to hold office in the [insert name of the organization] are as follows:

- a. Kentucky Wesleyan College policies require that to be eligible for office, candidates must be in good academic and disciplinary standing and regularly enrolled students at KWC. Additionally, students must have at least a [x] g.p.a to be eligible to hold an office.
- b. No member may hold more than one office. No member may serve more than two years in the same office.

Section IV Elections

- a. Elections are [insert date/time of elections, i.e. near the end of spring semester] and shall take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization at which a quorum is present. At least one week's notice shall be provided for any meeting at which an election is to be held.
- b. Nominations for officers shall be made at the regular meeting immediately preceding the election. Nominations may also be made from the floor immediately prior to the election for each office. If the vote is being conducted through KWConnect then the vote should be conducted after new nominees are added to the ballot. Members may nominate themselves for an office.
- c. Officers shall be elected by majority vote. If no candidate receives a majority vote, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.
- d. Votes shall be cast by secret ballot; however, when there is only one candidate for an office, a motion may be made to elect the candidate.

Section V Executive Board/Committee

- a. The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected and appointed officers, with the advisor(s) serving as non-voting member(s).
- b. The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the organization between meetings and is authorized to take action when action must be taken prior to the next meeting.
- c. The Executive Committee shall report to the membership all actions taken between meetings. Except when it is too late to do so (such as when a contract has been executed), any actions taken by the Executive Committee may be rescinded or modified by the membership by a majority vote.

Section VI Faculty/Staff Advisor(s)

- a. The advisor shall fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Student Organizations Policy Handbook and Advisor's Manual. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

Section VII Meetings and Voting

- a. Regular meetings shall be scheduled [insert day if you know it, otherwise just say during the academic year] during the academic year.
- b. Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Committee. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours' notice prior to the meeting time.
- c. Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as [insert your organization's definition of a quorum].
- d. Members must be present to vote. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted unless the vote is being conducted through KWConnect.
- e. In order to vote a member must be in good standing. [State what constitutes "good standing." This may include payment of dues, meeting attendance requirement, academic requirement, etc. If there is an attendance requirement, specify the number of excused and/or unexcused absences that results in loss of voting privileges, and define what constitutes an excused absence, if applicable.]

Section VIII Special Committees

- a. [OPTIONAL]: IF YOU HAVE SPECIAL COMMITTEES, LIST THEIR NAMES AND DUTIES; OTHERWISE DELETE THE FIRST LINE AND LEAVE THE LAST TWO].
- b. Special Committees may be established by the Executive Board and shall perform such duties as defined in their establishment.
- c. The Executive Board shall appoint, and may remove, committee members and a Chairperson for each committee.

Section IX Finances

- a. [Optional/if applicable]: Membership dues shall be [\$XX per semester or year].
- b. [Optional/if applicable]: Dues shall be paid by [Specify due date, such as "second week of each semester."]
- c. [Optional/if applicable]: Members who have not paid their dues or special assessments by the due date shall be considered as not being in good standing and shall lose all membership privileges, including voting, until the dues are paid.

- d. Occasionally the [insert name of organization] may need to assess a fee or collect money from the membership for special events/purposes. The amount of money collected shall be determined by a majority of the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- e. Organization funds shall not be used to purchase or reimburse members for alcoholic beverages.

Section X Discipline of members

- a. When a member believes that another member has engaged in conduct that is detrimental to the organization, a conversation should be held with either the Student Org Adviser or the Director of Student Involvement.
- b. If warranted, a written charge may be filed with the Director of Student Involvement. The Director of Student Involvement shall review the charge(s) and may conduct a preliminary investigation if deemed appropriate. If the preliminary investigation concludes that misconduct appears to have occurred, the Director of Student Involvement will work with the Executive Committee to determine if any sanctions are warranted. Possible sanctions may include expulsion, suspension, or lesser sanction(s) including, but not limited to, a reprimand, removal from office, a fine or other learning opportunities.

Section XI Dissolution

[Insert student organization name] may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of quorum votes to do so, or when the Student Organization fails to complete the KWC required registration and recognition process for two consecutive semesters. In the event of [insert organization name]'s dissolution, all of the organization's student organization financial assets become property of the Student Government Association and shall be added to allocations designated for recognized student organizations. All additional assets become property of the Office of Student Services.

Section XII Non-Hazing Clause [this must be included in your bylaws]

- a. The laws of the state of Kentucky concerning hazing shall be observed.
- b. Hazing is defined as "Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the emotional, mental, or physical health and/or safety of a student, or which removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in any organization operating under registration with or auspices of the College." This includes any action that endangers the health or well-being of an individual, is personally degrading, has an adverse effect on the academic performance of the student, or which violates any federal, state or local statute or College policy. Individual or group consent to

hazing activity in no way validates the activity or excludes those perpetuating it from being charged with a crime.

- c. Actions and activities, which are explicitly prohibited, include, but shall not be limited to the following:
 - a. Any activity that creates a substantial risk of physical or mental harm.
 - b. Paddling, beating, or hitting individuals.
 - c. Wearing anything designed to be degrading or to cause discomfort.
 - d. Depriving individuals of the opportunity to obtain a minimum of six hours of sleep per day, proper and adequate means, or access to means, of maintaining body cleanliness.
 - e. Activities that interfere with an individual's academic efforts by causing exhaustion or loss of reasonable study time.

Section XIII Impeachment

ANY MEMBER MAY INITIATE OFFICERS REMOVAL BY THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE.

- a. Petition Executive Board with signatures of 1/3 of all voting members petition should state reason for removal.
- b. Executive Board shall then notify officers and call for removal vote within fourteen days of the filing of the petition.
- c. Memberships shall be notified at least one week prior to removal vote meeting.
- d. At the meeting for removal, the petition's stated grievances shall be made public and the officer charged shall be allowed to respond to the charges of the petition.
- e. Removal from office shall require a vote of 2/3 of all voting members.

Section XIV Vacancy of Office

- a. In case of resignation or removal of any officer, an interim acting officer shall be appointed by the Executive Board.
- b. The President shall call for an election within fourteen days after vacancy of any office.
- c. Elections shall be conducted as stated in the bylaws.
- d. Should the office of President become vacant, the Vice-President should complete the President's unexpired term and call for an election for Vice-President consistent with elections process set forth in the bylaws.

Section XV Amendments

Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be presented to the membership, in writing, at two meetings prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon. [Optional]: The Executive Committee and/or Bylaws Committee shall review and make recommendations on all bylaw revisions prior to consideration by the membership.

Bylaw amendments require approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting. The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

A copy of any amendments to these bylaws must be submitted to the Student Services Office prior to being voted upon. Once approved an updated constitution and bylaws must be uploaded to KWConnect

These bylaws were created on [insert date].

These bylaws were revised on [insert date of latest edits].