

# Constitutions

## Is a Constitution Important?

YES! A good constitution contains the basics of how your organization will function. A constitution is the foundation upon which the organization will grow, mature, and perpetuate itself. It is designed to reduce internal conflict, to establish the organization's mission and goals and to protect the rights of all members and students of Concordia College.

## How Do We Write It?

The areas that must be included in your constitution are contained in the following guidelines. All organizations must comply with the *Equal Opportunity Statement*, the *General Institutional Policies*, and the *Concordia Rights and Responsibilities Document* found in the student handbook. These issues should be addressed under the membership section of the constitution. Sample constitutions or additional assistance can be obtained in The Cornerstone Programming Center, Fjelstad Hall.

\*\*Please note: If the organization is affiliated with another local, state, or national organization, a copy of that organization's constitution must also be provided.

## Now What?

After completing or revising the constitution, your organization must approve it. Then, you are ready to submit it to the Organizational Reviewal Committee for review and approval, according to Concordia's guidelines. An organizational support commissioner will work with you in making any necessary changes prior to approval. The committee will review your information and constitution in detail using the guidelines that follow.

## How Long Does This Take?

The committee will review your constitution within two weeks. If changes need to be made, the organizational support commissioner will return it to you at that time. Your organization will then have another two weeks to return the revised constitution to the Cornerstone.

Once your constitution has been approved, a representative from the committee will contact you. The entire process can be completed within a month.

\*\*Please note: All organizations will be contacted by the Cornerstone to conduct five-year revisions. This process ensures that constitutions are current and accurately reflect the changing needs and issues of the organization.

## Advisors

All organizations are required to have a Concordia faculty or staff advisor (note: advisor selection must be completed before your constitution is submitted). The importance of an organizational advisor should not be overlooked. Advisors, through their knowledge and expertise, are invaluable resources for your organization. Give serious consideration to the role of your organization's advisor and then select the advisor accordingly.

## Constitution Checklist:

Checklist of questions to ask before submitting final draft:

1. Have you included your mission statement?  
**The organization's mission and activities must be consistent with that of Concordia College and with the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.**
2. Have you selected a Concordia faculty or staff advisor?
3. Does your constitution follow Concordia's guidelines?
4. Have you included a national constitution, if appropriate?
5. Have you included the date and revision number?

## Some Required Statements...

In order for your organization's constitution to be recognized you are required to include the following:

### II. Purpose of the Organization:

A *mission statement* is required for each organization

### III. Membership

Equal Opportunity Statement: *It is the policy of Concordia College to provide equal opportunity for all qualified persons in its educational programs and activities. The college is in full compliance with the laws of the United States and all applicable regulations. The college does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or physical handicap in the educational programs that it operates.*

### Student Conduct Code Statement:

*This organization shall abide by the Concordia Institutional Policies found in the student handbook.*

*Issues of Equal Opportunity and Student conduct must be addressed by the officers at the initial meeting. Thereafter, all members shall be responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies*

# Concordia Student Organizations

Concordia College • Cornerstone Programming Center • Student Programming • Division of Student Affairs

## Constitution Structure and Guidelines:

The following structure may be used when writing constitutions. We recognize that some organizations may choose to modify the structure to better meet organizational needs; however, please note the statements required to be included in all Concordia student organization constitutions.

- I. **Name of Organization** (and date of submission)

Appeal policy for removal (i.e. verbal, written, time period, etc.).
- II. **Purpose of the Organization**
  - A. Mission Statement (see required statements on front). **This must be included!**
  - B. How does the mission of the organization support the mission of Concordia College?
  - C. What services will the organization provide?
  - D. For whom are the services provided?
  - E. What will members gain from their involvement?
  - F. How will the organization impact Concordia as a whole?
- III. **Membership** (Reminder: A minimum of 4 Concordia students is required to recognize an organization).
  - A. Who is eligible for membership? (Note: only full-time, currently enrolled Concordia students are eligible for membership).
  - B. Equal Opportunity Statement (see required statements on front) **This must be included!**
  - C. Student Conduct Code (see required statements on front) **This must be included!**
  - D. Criteria for continued membership (i.e., dues paid, GPA, meeting attendance, and projects).
  - E. Various categories of membership and rights (voting privileges) of each.
  - F. Reasons for removal (i.e. grounds and procedure for removal, vote required, appeal policies).
- IV. **Elections**
  - A. When are elections held and who calls for elections?
  - B. Nomination procedure (i.e., self-nomination, filing, nomination committee, application).
  - C. Method (i.e. letters, phone calls, etc.) and time (i.e. 2 weeks prior) of announcing elections.
  - D. Election Procedure (i.e. secret ballot, show of hands, verbal).
  - E. Time when new officers begin their term (be specific: i.e. fall, spring, etc.).
- V. **Officers**
  - A. Officer qualifications (i.e., length of membership).
  - B. Various officers and responsibilities of each.
  - C. Terms of office (i.e., semester, year).
  - D. Procedure to fill vacant offices (i.e., special election, appointment, ascending order.).
  - E. Procedure to remove from office and who initiates the process (i.e. vote required).
- VI. **Committees**
  - A. Indicate standing committees with ongoing responsibilities (i.e. executive board, publicity).
  - B. Purpose, duties, and duration of each committee.
- VII. **Meetings**
  - A. When are meetings held?
  - B. Who announces the meetings?
  - C. How are members notified of meetings?
  - D. Is a quorum necessary to transact business? (i.e. majority, 2/3 vote).
  - E. Method of conducting meetings (i.e. informal, parliamentary procedure).
- VIII. **Finances**
  - A. Are dues required? How much are dues? When are dues payable?
  - B. Person(s) responsible for the collection and disbursement of funds.
  - C. Person(s) responsible for authorizing all expenditures.
  - D. Procedure for disbursement of remaining funds upon dissolution of the organization.
  - E. **All funds collected on behalf of the organization must be maintained in a Concordia Account through the Business office. Organizations CANNOT maintain separate account.**
- IX. **Constitutional Amendments** (Note: All amendments must be submitted and a revised copy of the constitution will be placed on permanent file in the Cornerstone Programming Center).
  - A. Procedure for proposing amendments
  - B. Length of time between notification and vote on amendments
  - C. Vote required for passage
- X. **Advisor** (Note: Each organization is required to have a Concordia faculty or staff advisor).
  - A. Role of the advisor (i.e., responsibilities, duties).
  - B. Duration of term (i.e., academic year).
  - C. Criteria for selection of an advisor.
  - D. Criteria for change of an advisor.
- XI. **Ratification**

How will the constitution, as it presently reads, go into effect? (i.e., vote of acceptance, etc.).

