

# Western Illinois University

## Student Organization Constitution Guidelines

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### **Purpose:**

The Constitution is your formal, governing document that denotes in writing the exact procedures for operating your organization. Drafting this document involves making important and sustainable decisions about how your organization will navigate and uphold policy and procedure. It is important to think long-term when drafting your constitution, determining what is in the best interest of the organization's longevity. When issues arise, the Constitution is the first point of reference to answer questions.

### **Common Language Used:**

**Constitution:** A document that describes the organization and the fundamental principles that govern its operation.

**Bylaws:** By-laws may also be written, but are not required. By-laws are rules governing the internal workings of the organization and can include for example:

1. Standing procedures of the organization
2. Ad-hoc committees and how they are determined
3. Policies related to the time, location, and frequency of organization meetings
4. Statement that Robert's Rules of Order will be followed

By-laws should be easier to amend than the constitution, but still hold a higher standing than being amended through a simple majority vote at any one time.

**Quorum:** The minimum number of voting members who must be present in order to conduct business legally, and usually consists of the average attendance at meetings. It can also be a specific number, i.e., 2/3 of voting members.

**Membership:** The requirements and qualifications necessary for an individual to join the organization. All organizations must identify their selection procedures in their constitution.

**Officer Duties:** State your organization's officers with an explanation of the expectations of each position (may be included in bylaws or built into the constitution). All organizations must have a president, treasurer, and WIU faculty/staff advisor; they cannot be the same person.

**Amendments:** A formal/official change to the constitution. Usually, this is something that is voted on with a quorum.

**Due Process/Impeachment:** A formal process to remove/recall officers. Such procedures should be included in the constitution. The process that would take place if the organization determines an officer is no longer fit for their position.

**Key (take off final draft):**  
**Highlight** = required text  
(Parenthesis) = instructions - remove  
*Italicized* = examples - remove

# WIU Sample Constitution Guidelines

*The sample constitution provided by the Office of Student Engagement below is to help guide your organization. The document contains areas typically addressed in constitutions. You may alter and add parameters to best fit your organization's needs.*

*For your constitution to withstand the test of time, please refrain from including information that may change over the years, such as a specific amount for dues, specific meeting times, or specific dates for elections.*

## **Key:**

- **Highlighted** text should not be altered - please leave exact wording, spelling, formatting, etc. (with the exception of article numbers)
- (Parenthesis) texts are instructions for the writer and should not be included in the final draft.
- *Italicized* text are examples or helpful hints on phrases that should not be included.

## **Note:**

- Article numbers may be altered
- You may add parameters after the required text
- A description of officer duties must be included either in bylaws or built within the constitution (including President, Treasurer, and WIU Faculty/Staff Advisor)

## **Format:**

- All text is black, Times New Roman font, size 12
- Delete anything in parenthesis or italicized, examples you did not use for your constitution.
- Review for grammar or spelling errors

**Please do not submit the first two pages of this sample when you submit your constitution.**

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**The Constitution of**  
(WRITE ORGANIZATION NAME)  
**At Western Illinois University**

(Date of Adoption and/or Revision)

**ARTICLE I – Name**

*The name of this organization shall be the Western Illinois University Underwater Basket Weaving Club (UBWC). The UBWC is a student organization at Western Illinois University. This organization's purpose shall be to educate the students at Western Illinois University as to how to create baskets, while submerged underwater.*

**ARTICLE II – Objectives**

*The objectives of the organization shall be:*

- 1) *To promote interest in underwater basket weaving*
- 2) *To provide fellowship among students and faculty*
- 3) *To represent student needs and wants in regard to difficult activities underwater*
- 4) *To provide a forum for the presentation of innovative ideas to benefit the University community.*

**ARTICLE III – Membership** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here; Additional Info is Optional)

- 1) **Members and officers must be enrolled students at Western Illinois University.**
- 2) **Non-students may act as associate members, but may not vote or hold office.**
- 3) **The organization must keep it's membership roster on Leatherneck Link up to date.**

**ARTICLE IV – Officers** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here; Additional Info is Optional. President & Treasurer are required. Procedures must be democratic.)

- 1) Election of Officers
  - a) **Elections must take place by no later than the end of the 14th week of the organization's election semester.**
  - b) **The officers of this organization are the president, treasurer, vice president, and secretary.**
  - c) **Students must be in good standing with Western Illinois University to serve as executive board members.**
  - d) *Officers will be elected by written ballot, with each active member casting a vote. A majority of votes will constitute a victory.*
  - e) *Officers will assume office for a period of one year.*
  - f) *Students must be in good standing with the university to serve as an executive board member.*
- 2) Recall of Officers
  - a) *Officers are subject to recall for malfeasance in office. Malfeasance shall be defined as:*
    1. *An inability to perform the requirements of office*

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2. *Willfully disobeying Western Illinois University Rules and Regulations governing student organizations*
  3. *Breaching the Student Code of Conduct*
  4. *Mismanaging club funds*
- b) *Recall procedures will be initiated at the request of five active members.*
- c) *A hearing will be conducted at a regular meeting for the presentation of evidence from all concerned parties*
1. *Those requesting a recall of officer(s) shall be given 20 minutes to present their case*
  2. *Those officers being recalled will have 5 minutes to question their accusers*
  3. *Those officers being recalled will have 20 minutes to rebut the charges presented against them*
  4. *The club will then have 5 minutes to question those being recalled*
- d) *A two-thirds majority of those active members voting in a recall at the end of the hearing is necessary to remove any officer.*

#### **ARTICLE V – Voting**

- 1) *This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of those voting, a quorum being present.*
- 2) *Voting on amendments must be conducted after a minimum notice of 2 weeks.*

#### **ARTICLE VII – Advisor** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here)

This organization must have an advisor at all times and they must:

1. Be a full-time faculty or staff member at Western Illinois University
2. Be chosen by the organization
3. The full-time advisor cannot be a graduate student
  - a. Graduate students can act as co-advisors under the supervision of the full-time advisor but can not sign off on documents

#### **ARTICLE VI – Not-for-profit Statement** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here)

This is a not-for-profit organization.

#### **ARTICLE VII – Statement of Non-discrimination** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here.)

As exempted by Federal law, social fraternities, and sororities organizations may omit “gender”

This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status. This policy will include, but not limited to recruiting, membership, organization activities, or opportunities to hold office.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – Financial Obligation**

*A majority of voting members of this organization may determine reasonable dues, fees, and fines assessed to each member at the beginning of each semester.*

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*A specific member or members, designated by this organization shall be responsible for payment in full of all debts accumulated by the organization not covered by funds on deposit.*

**ARTICLE IX – Statement of Non-Hazing** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here)

This organization will not conspire to engage in hazing or commit any act that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending the institution.

**ARTICLE X – Statement of Compliance with Campus Regulations** (Must Be Included Exactly as Found Here)

This organization shall comply with all university and campus policies and regulations and local, state, and federal laws.

**Please Note:** a description of officer duties must be included either in bylaws or built within the constitution. WIU requires a President, Treasurer, and WIU Faculty/Staff Advisor for all Registered Student Organizations.

**Sample Bylaws**

**Cabinet**

**I. President**

- a. Coordinates all activities of the organization*
- b. Acts as liaison to University community*
- c. Serves as official representative of organization*
- d. Calls regular and special meetings*
- e. Presides at meetings*
- f. Prepares agenda for meetings*

**II. Vice President**

- a. Assumes duties of president, when necessary*
- b. Assists president in coordinating activities*

**III. Secretary**

- a. Maintains accurate and current information of the organization and membership*
- b. Assists president and vice-president to coordinate organization activities*
- c. Keeps accurate minutes of each meeting and forward copies to other officers*
- d. Keep attendance records for meetings.*

**IV. Treasurer**

- a. Serves as liaison to WIU for all purpose of organizational funding*
- b. Maintains accurate and current account of all organizational funds*
- c. Responsible for dispensing of funds in accordance with the goals and programs established by the organization*

**Meetings**

*General assembly meetings are open to all organization active and associate members, faculty, staff, and non-member students. Meetings will be held every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. Executive board meetings will be held weekly; date, time, and location will be determined*

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*prior to the start of the semester and held constant unless otherwise decided upon. Members will be given advance notice of meeting details from the secretary.*

*Last Revised 03042024 - NK/CP*

