

## **SKELETON CONSTITUTION**

University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

*Please pay special attention to the italicized areas below, which must be stated in your constitution in order to be granted permanent recognition.*

An organization's constitution is a written document which incorporates the organization's basic principles and rules, and defines the way in which it will be governed. All constitutions must include:

**THE PREAMBLE** – The preamble states the purpose of the organization and regulations and makes clear that the purpose and activities of the organization are lawful and not in conflict with university policies. (Affiliation with an extramural organization should not, in and of itself, affect recognition of an organization.)

**ARTICLE I – NAME OF ORGANIZATION** – An organization name may not duplicate the name of any other recognized group. If UWSP or Stevens Point is used in the title, please place it at the end of the organization name (i.e., Jolly Laughter's of UWSP).

**ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP** – Please state that membership within the local and/or affiliated organizations will be open without regard to age, race, creed or religion, color, handicap, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation or political affiliation. NOTE: Please state that participating membership will include at least five (5) students in good academic standing (Cum. GPA of 2.0 or above).

Any non-student memberships must be approved by the Student Involvement and Employment Office after reviewing how important members are to the educational potential of the organization.

If non-student members are approved, your constitution **must** state the following:

*“Non-students may join our organization. However, they may not hold office in it, nor may they handle our finances, ride in university vehicles, or act as agents of the state for our organization. Because the university's self-funded insurance covers only UWSP students, our non-student members may wish to arrange for their own liability insurance to cover them for any activities they engage in as members of our organization.”*

**ARTICLE III – OFFICERS** – This section should contain

- a list of the officer positions available within the organization;
- qualifications required for holding office;
- method of electing officers;
- when elections are to be held; and
- a description of officer duties when not otherwise addressed.

NOTE: Please state that the holding of office shall be restricted to full- or part-time students in good academic standing (cum. GPA of 2.0 or above). Honorary membership may be extended to other persons on a limited basis.

**ARTICLE IV – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** – This section states

- the makeup of any executive committee, board or council which is formed; and
- the method of selection and term of office for members of any such committee, board or council. Provisions for filling vacancies in offices and other executive positions may be included in a section under this article.

**ARTICLE V – MEETINGS** – This section states regular meeting time and makes provisions for calling special meetings. If meetings cannot be held regularly; authority to call meetings may be stated here. NOTE: Must meet at least once a semester.

**ARTICLE VI – FINANCES** – This section provides for membership dues and establishes the procedure to be used for disbursement of funds in the event the organization is dissolved. Please state that if Student Government Association funds are allocated, those funds will be returned to SGA upon the organization's dissolution.

**ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS** – This section contains information about how to make amendments to the constitution. Making an amendment requires that previous notification be given to members, in writing, and also a two-thirds or three-fourths affirmative vote of members voting for its adoption.

**ARTICLE VIII – RATIFICATION** – How many members are needed to ratify the document—two-thirds vote, majority of active members, etc.? If more than a majority of those present is desired, a special article should be included.

**ARTICLE IX – DATE OF CONSTITUTION** – When date was ratified by your group.

Amending the constitution should not be too easy, and the constitution should always carry the date it was last reviewed. It is a good idea to insert in parentheses the dates of which amendments are passed. Please state that the Constitution will be reviewed and updated a minimum of once every three (3) years. Constitutions on file in the Student Involvement and Employment Office will be the constitution deemed official by the university.

## **BY-LAWS**

By-laws deal with

1. members' rights, duties, resignations and expulsions;
2. initiation fees, dues, assessments, delinquencies;
3. names and duties of standing committees and methods for choosing chairpersons and members of them;
4. provision for rules of order or parliamentary manual to be used, such as ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, REVISED;
5. number of persons constituting a quorum;
6. provision for permitting honorary members or officers if group so desires; and
7. a method for amending by-laws (usually a majority vote).

The process of amending the by-laws should be easier than the one for amending the constitution. Again, insert date amendment was passed in parentheses.