**California State University, Los Angeles Clubs and Organizations**

**Constitution Guide**

Constitution Requirements and Guidelines Updated to Reflect CSU Sample Constitution Guide

This document is intended to serve as a model you may follow when writing the constitution of your organization. An official student organization may structure and govern itself in any way deemed appropriate, so long as it does not violate any criteria stated in the Student Organization Handbook with regard to organization chartering and registration.

Writing Instructions:

1. Use this guide when writing and/or updating the constitution of your club/organization.
2. Your constitution must include all the Articles outlined in this guide.
3. Sections that are highlighted must be included in the constitution.
4. Sections that are **highlighted and bolded** must be written verbatim in your constitution to be approved.
5. You may include additional articles and/or sections as you deem necessary.

Download and Upload Instructions

1. Download template by clicking File $$\rightarrow  $$

Save As $$\rightarrow  $$

Download a Copy $$\rightarrow  $$

Begin Editing
2. When completed, please upload a **PDF file WITHOUT highlights** of the constitution on Presence to the [Organization Registration Form](https://calstatela.presence.io/form/organization-registration). **DO NOT INCLUDE THIS PAGE.**
3. Your constitution PDF file should follow this naming protocol:
	1. Student Organization Name Constitution Year.pdf
		1. e.g. Biology Club Constitution 2023.pdf

Definitions:

* A constitution is comprised of the fundamental laws and principles that prescribe the nature, function, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a basic structure upon which an organization operates. Your constitution must include all the Articles outlined in this guide.
* By-laws are secondary laws, which rule or govern the internal affairs of an organization. Basically, by-laws are an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps for an organization to follow to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

[Insert Name] Constitution

## **“The actions and opinions of this organization do not necessarily reflect those of the students, staff, faculty, or administration of California State University, Los Angeles.”**

## Title (Official Name of Organization, as described in Article I below)

### Preamble

#### Statement of Purpose

An introductory statement is usually no longer than two or three sentences, stating the intent or mission of the constitution for forming this organization, as well as organizational goals.

### Article I Name of Organization

#### Organization Name

**[Recommended Language:** The name of this organization shall be (full name of organization), hereinafter referred to as (shortened name of organization as will appear throughout the constitution [optional].**]**

Comment: One of the privileges granted with University recognition/chartering, is the option to use the name of the University in the title name of the organization. The name of the organization will be used in a variety of University and Center for Student Involvement publications. It is recommended that the name be stated in the document exactly how the organization prefers to be addressed. If an organization chooses to use the University name it must be written as follows, “{Name of Organization} at California State University, Los Angeles.”

### Article II Purpose of Organization

State the purpose of the organization.

For example:

“The purpose(s) of this organization shall be:

1. ….
2. ….
3. (etc.)”

In this section if applicable, the purpose of any national governing board or off-campus affiliate groups

Recommended Information:

* What is the purpose for establishing the organization?
* What is the intended impact of the organization on the University community?
* What services will be provided and for whom?

### Article III Membership of the Organization

**“Regular voting membership in this student organization shall be open to all currently enrolled and continuing students of California State University, Los Angeles. An organization or its membership may not discriminates on the basis of race or ethnicity (including color, caste, and ancestry), religion (or religious creed), nationality, citizenship, age, medical condition, genetic information, gender (or sex), gender identity (including nonbinary or transgender), gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran or military status, political status, or disability (physical or mental) (hereafter referred to as the nondiscrimination statement) with the limited exception that a social fraternity or sorority may impose a gender limitation as permitted by Education Code Section 66273.”**

**“All members of the organization are required to comply with University Procedures including but not limited to the Administrative Procedure 019-Alcoholic Beverages,  CSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Exploitation, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation (Nondiscrimination Policy), Student Conduct Procedures (Executive Order 1098),the University Rules Governing Student Organizations, California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Standards for Student Conduct, Section 41301(b)(8), and Cal State LA Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures for University Recognized Student Organizations.”**

#### Section 1: Eligibility for Membership

State the membership qualifications.

**All currently enrolled students of California State University, Los Angeles shall be eligible for membership.**

**Faculty, staff, and alumni of Cal State LA, as well as non-students may be considered for non-voting membership in this organization. Only currently enrolled or continuing students of Cal State LA may be voting members.**

Recommended Information:

* Who is eligible for membership? (currently-enrolled Cal State LA students, faculty and staff members, perhaps community members)

#### Section 2: Criteria or Qualification for Membership

Recommended Information:

* Are there any specific qualifications needed or criteria, which need to be met for membership (i.e. minimal GPA requirements, dues that need to be paid)?

#### Section 3: Categories of Membership

Recommended Information:

* Are there various categories of membership such as active, associate, inactive, alumni, honorary, auxiliary, etc.?
* What are the privileges, duties and/or responsibilities of each type of membership?

#### Section 4: Withdrawal or Removal of Members

Recommended Information:

* What is the process for withdrawal from the organization?
* What are the grounds for removal of a member (i.e. under what circumstance would/could this occur, votes required)?
* What is the process for a removal of a member of the organization?
* Who has a right to request removal or withdrawal of a member?

### Article IV Elections

#### Section 1: Time and Period when Elections Occur

Recommended Information:

* How often and what time of year are elections held for the organization?
* Are there any special elections?

#### Section 2: Nomination Procedure

**“Only currently enrolled or continuing students in good standing at California State University, Los Angeles may serve as officers of this organization. The officers shall be:”**

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Historian
6. (Other)”

Recommended Information:

* How are nominations made?
* Are there self-nominations?
* Is an application process required for nomination?
* Does a nomination committee exist which monitors the nominating process?

#### Section 3: Notification and Posting of Elections

For example

* What is the process for notifying others or posting information regarding organization elections?
* Are letters, flyers, or posters used on campus?
* Are verbal announcements made at meetings?
* How long is the notification and posting period?

### Section 4: Election Procedures

Describe the election process.

For example: “Officers of this organization shall be elected by a majority vote (51%) of the regular student membership of the organization. Elections shall take place once a year and they will be held at the next to the last meeting of the spring quarter of each year.”

Recommended Information:

* What is the specific procedure followed for elections?
* Is there a secret ballot taken, or is it a show of hands or verbal vote?
* What number or percentage of members or quorum is necessary for elections to be complete? (i.e. 2/3’s, etc.) Who is eligible to vote?

### Article V Officers

#### Section 1: Description of Officers

Recommended Information:

* How many officers are there in the organization?
* List the officers’ titles.
* Will there be any type of executive committee including officers??

#### Section 2: Duties and Responsibilities of Officers

Recommended Information:

* List the duties and responsibilities of each officer.

#### Section 3: Qualifications for becoming an Officer

Recommended Information:

* Who is eligible for office (i.e. only Cal State LA Students, GPA or credit limit requirements, specific skills, or necessary experience, class level requirements)?

**Minimum Academic Qualifications: Students must be matriculated and enrolled at a CSU campus and maintain a minimum overall 2.0 grade point average each term. The student must be in good standing and must not be on probation of any kind.**

**Incumbent Unit Load: Undergraduate students must earn six semester units per term while holding office. Graduate and credential students must earn three semester units per term while holding office.**

**Incumbent Maximum Allowable Units: Undergraduate students are allowed to earn a maximum of 150 semester units or 125 percent of the units required for a specific baccalaureate degree objective, whichever is greater. Graduate and credential students are allowed to earn a maximum of 50 semester units or 167 percent of the units required for the graduate or credential objective, whichever is greater.**

#### Section 4: Terms of Office

Recommended Information:

* Specify time frame (i.e. quarter, academic year, etc.) When do officers assume their positions?

#### Section 5: Procedure for Filling Vacated Offices

Recommended Information:

* Are special elections held?
* Is ascending order used?
* Are appointments made, or are interviews coordinated?

#### Section 6: Procedure for Removal of Officers

Recommended Information:

* Who can initiate the removal of an officer?
* What is the specific procedure to be followed for removal?
* What type of vote is required for removal?

#### Section 7: Appeal Policy

For example:

* Is there such a policy in your organization?
* Is there a set time period to carry out an appeal?
* What are the steps involved with an appeal?
* Specify time frame (i.e. quarter, academic year, etc.)
* When do officers assume their positions?

### Article VI Committees

#### Section 1: Types of Meetings

Recommended Information:

* State the names, purposes, and responsibilities of the various standing committees. These might include: executive board, publicity committee, fund-raising committee, etc.
* How are members selected for each committee-by choice or by appointment?
* What are the heads of the committees called, and how are they chosen?

#### Section 2: Temporary/Special Committees

Recommended Information:

* How and when are such committees formed?
* What are the purposes and responsibilities of special committees?
* What is the duration of a temporary or special committee?

### Article VII Meetings

### Section 1: Types of Meetings

Recommended Information:

* **Are there different types of meetings (i.e. business, regular, special, executive)?**
* **Who is required to attend each type of meeting?**

#### Section 2: Time and Occurrence of Meetings

Describe your meeting schedule.

For example: “Regular meetings shall be held at least once a week during the school year, excluding quarter breaks and final exam weeks. Meetings shall be held on campus unless a majority of the regular members vote to change the location. Emergency meetings may be called by the President as needed.”

Recommended Information:

* How often are meetings held (i.e. weekly, monthly, etc.)?
* Is there a set date for meeting (i.e. a set day of the week that does not change)?

#### Section 3: Special Meetings

Recommended Information:

* State the provisions for special meetings-how or by whom they are called, how many members must be present.
* What are the circumstances under which special meetings may be called?

#### Section 4: Quorum

A quorum usually consists of the next whole number above one half of the total active membership. However, the number should be determined according to the organization’s needs.

For example:

* **State the purpose for the quorum (i.e. when it is to be used).**
* **State the percentage or number of members needed for a quorum.**
* **What happens if quorum does not exist on a meeting?**

#### Section 5: Method of Conducting Meetings

Recommended Information:

* State the rules which shall govern the conduct of business for the organization;
	+ for example, “all regular and special meetings of (name of organization) shall be conducted by Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised.”

### Article VIII Finances/Fiscal Responsibilities

#### Section 1: Dues/Membership Fees

Recommended Information:

* Is there a set fee or dues amount?
* When are fees due?
* Who is the officer or member responsible for collecting and monitoring fees?

#### Section 2: Budget Expenditures

Recommended Information:

* Who is the officer(s)/member(s) responsible for authorizing all expenditures and reimbursements?
* What is the procedure for disbursement of all remaining funds upon dissolution of the organization?

### Article IX: Advisors

#### Section 1: Selection of Advisors

Recommended Information:

* How is an advisor selected – by appointment, election, or selection?

#### Section 2: Qualifications

In this section, describe the process for selecting an advisor and explain the term of office for each advisor.

Note: Advisors must be Cal State LA employees and may not be Center for Student Involvement employees. Student organizations may have an advisory board composed of community members or alumni however at least one advisor must be a faculty or staff member of Cal State LA. If your organization needs assistance in securing an advisor, please contact the Center for Student Involvement.

Recommended Information:

* Are there any specific criteria for selecting an advisor for your particular organization?

#### Section 3: Term of Office

Recommended Information:

* How long of a term does/can the advisor serve?
* Are there limitations on the number of terms?

#### Section 4: Roles and Duties of an Advisor

Recommended Information:

* What are the responsibilities of the Advisor?
* What are the group’s expectations for involvement?

### **Article Amendments**

#### Section 1: Proposing Amendments

Recommended Information:

* What is the procedure for proposing amendments (i.e. in writing, verbally, etc.)
* Who can propose amendments?

Usually, amendments are submitted in writing and are read at one or two meetings before a vote is taken.

#### Section 2: Provisions

Describe the process for amending the constitution.

For example: “This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the entire voting student membership. A copy of the minutes of the meeting that documents the approval of the changes in the constitution or by-laws or organization name shall be placed on file with the Center for Student Involvement. An officer of the organization shall sign the minutes.”

Recommended Information:

* When can an amendment be proposed?
* Is there any notice required in advance for amending the constitution and/or by-laws?
* How many members must be present for adoption of the amendment?
* Who can vote on the amendment?
* How many votes are required for passage?
* When do new amendments take effect?

### Article XI Ratification

#### Section 1: Procedure for Ratification

#### Recommended Information:

* How and when will the constitution and/or by-laws go into effect?
* Indicate the margin of a vote that must be in favor of a proposed change in order to ratify an amendment. Ratification is usually accomplished through either a two-thirds or three-fourths vote of the active membership.

After amendments have been made, an organization’s constitution should be submitted to the Center for Student Involvement so updates can be indicated on your file.

Date last update – please include the last updated date so that your organization and CSI knows how updated the constitution is at any given time.



For more information or additional assistance, please contact:

Center for Student Involvement, University-Student Union Room 204

P. (323) 343-5110 | [www.calstatela.edu/usu/csi.](http://www.calstatela.edu/usu/csi)

This document was adapted from Clubs & Organizations Non-Greek Constitution Requirements & Guidelines from the Matador Involvement Center at California State University, Northridge.