Structure of a Constitution

Article I. Name
The name of the organization should reflect the nature of the organization.

Article II. Purpose
This section should state the requirements and size limitations of the organization.

Article III. Membership and Dues
This section should state the requirements and size limitations of the membership and the dues structure, if any.

Article IV. Officers
This section should be a list of the officer positions and the duration of terms. Also, provisions should be made for office vacancies. Names should never appear in the constitution, only the positions.

Article V. Faculty/Staff Advisor
This section should state the procedure for selecting a faculty consultant.

Article VI. Meetings
This article should state the provisions for setting up regular meeting times as well as any provisions to be made for calling meetings. The officer position which has the authority to call meetings should be stated here.

Article VII. Quorum
This section would indicate the rules pertaining to the numbers of members or the percentage of the membership required to be present to transact business.

Article VIII. Amendments
Amending the constitution should not be too simple a process for the sake of stability of the organization. All amendments are subject to final approval by the appropriate governing body.

Article IX.
This section would state the requirements for ratification of the constitution of the newly formed organization.

Sample Constitution

Article I.

Name

Section I.
The name of this organization shall be the “MUSC Student Organization.”

Article II.

Purpose
Section 1.

The purpose of the organization shall be:

1. to function as a student organization;
2. to endorse participation in the organization;
3. to foster loyalty to the organization;
4. etc., as desired.

Article III.

Membership and Dues

Section 1. Membership of this organization shall be open to all MUSC students, faculty, and members of their families. Students are full members; other persons joining would be associate members.

Section 2. Membership shall be maintained by the payment of dues which are established by the executive committee (or as decided by the membership), or there shall be no dues.

Article IV.

Officers

Section 1. The officers of the organization shall consist of a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

Section 2. Duties and Powers:

a. The duties of the president shall be (for example) to preside at all meetings, to call special meetings, to appoint committees, etc.

b. The duties of the vice president shall be (for example) to perform all duties of the president in his/her absence, to serve as program chairman, etc.

c. The duties of the secretary shall be (for example) to keep accurate, permanent records of the minutes and proceedings of the organization, to take charge of all correspondence, to notify all members of meetings, etc.

d. The duties of the treasurer shall be (for example) to keep accurate and complete records of all monetary transactions, to collect dues, etc.

e. Include any other officers as decided by the organization.

Section 3. Elections of Officers

a. The officers shall be elected at the next to last meeting of the academic year or a Steering Committee should be appointed to provide leadership until officers are elected or as provided for by each organization.

b. State any qualifications necessary to hold office.

c. The candidates shall be nominated in the following manner: (for example) a nominating committee, nominations from the floor, or a combination of both of these.

d. Voting shall be by ballot, standing vote, show of hands, oral vote, etc., as decided by the group.

e. A majority of 3/4 or 2/3 (one of these should be specified) of all votes cast shall be necessary for election.

Article V.

Faculty/Staff Consultant/Advisor
Section 1. The selection of an advisor is at the discretion of the individual organization.

Section 2. All registered student organizations are required to have faculty/staff advisor. This person must be a full-time University employee.

Article VI.

Meetings

Section 1. The Medical University of South Carolina Student Organization shall meet (once and month, the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, etc.) as decided by the organization.

Article VII.

Quorum

Section 1. To constitute a quorum to transact business requires 2/3, 3/4, etc. of the membership.

Article VIII.

Amendments

Section 1. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing and read at a regular meeting and shall be acted upon at the following meeting.

Section 2. The constitution may be amended by a majority vote of 2/3 of those members present at the meeting.

Article IX.

Ratification

Section 1. A 2/3 majority of those present at the first meeting of the newly formed organization will be necessary to ratify this constitution.

By-Laws Structure

The by-laws should contain:

1. Detailed material concerning members, rights, duties, expulsion, and resignation procedure.

2. Provisions for honorary members/associate members if the group so desires.

3. Provisions for membership fees, dues, and assessments, if there are to be any, should be indicated in detail.

4. Duties, authority, and responsibility of the Executive Committee.

5. Name of the standing committees, if any, and the method of choosing the chairpersons and committee members. Duties of the committee(s) should be stated.

6. A provision for some accepted rules of order for parliamentary procedure, such as Robert’s Rules of Order, provide.

7. A method to amend the by-laws which would usually be a majority vote.

8. Other specifics as needed by the organization.

Sample By-Laws

1. Parliamentary Conduct (for example, Robert’s Rules of Order)

2. Order of Business (for example):
a. call to order
b. roll call
c. minutes of last meeting
d. additions and/or corrections to minutes
e. reports of committees
f. old business
g. new business
h. discussions, programs, etc.
i. adjournment

3. Specific amount of dues

4. Specifics regarding membership

5. Special committees

6. Other specifics as needed by the individual organization