Student Org Missions & Constitutions

MISSION STATEMENT

Every MHC registered student organization is asked to submit an Organization Mission Statement. Sometimes included in your organizations constitution, your mission statement should be used within the organization to guide decision making when prioritizing activities and goals, and can be used externally to inform the community about your purpose.

New Organizations will need to submit their Mission Statement as part of their registration form.
Existing organizations can update their mission statement in the Student Programs Office at any time.
TIP: Prospective students and members OFTEN look at the orgs listed on the Student Programs website, so take time to review your mission statement and keep it fresh to attract new members.

STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of an organization contains the fundamental principles which govern its operation. The by-laws establish the specific rules of guidance by which the group is to function. The process of writing a constitution will serve to clarify your purpose, create your basic structure and provide the cornerstone for building an effective group. It will also allow members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is all about and how it functions. If you keep in mind the value of having a written document that clearly describes the basic framework of your organization, the drafting of the Constitution will be a much easier and more rewarding experience.

You should keep a copy of your organization's constitution on file in the Office of Student Programs, as well as with your organization's files and with your organization advisor.

(view the MHC SGA constitution at www.mtholyoke.edu/org/sga.)

Helpful Hints:

Draft the Constitution with a sub-committee of 2-3 members, then present to the general membership for approval or change.
Keep it simple. Avoid confusing ‘legalistic’ terms.
Use the outline below and/or examine other orgs’ constitutions as examples to guide your process.
Make sure you file a copy in your org folder at Student Programs, give one to your advisor and distribute copies to all members.
Terms:

*Constitution*: A document of fundamental laws & principals that prescribes the nature, functions, and limits of your organization.

*By-Laws*: Secondary set of laws or rules governing internal affairs of an organization, not included in the Constitution, which are of such importance that they cannot be changed without using formal procedure but are more easily amended than the Constitution. By-laws may detail member responsibilities, meeting times, location, attendance requirements, election procedures, etc.

*Amendments*: A formal statement of a revision or change to the constitution or by-laws

Sample Constitution Outline:
This Constitution has been adopted on <insert date> by a majority vote of all members.

**ARTICLE I - Name, Purpose or Mission, and Affiliation**  
Section 1. Name of organization. 
Section 2. Purpose or Mission of organization (objective/s) 
Section 3. Organization affiliation (local, state, national, or international orgs)

**ARTICLE II- Adhere to College Policies**  
Section 1. Statement that organization adheres to college regulations, and policies (incl. Honor Code) 
Section 2. Statement that organization will adhere to all local, state, and federal laws

**ARTICLE III - Membership**  
Section 1. Membership requirements (state who may be a member—MHC students, faculty, staff, 5-College students, etc.) 
Section 2. Membership privileges 
Section 3. Requirements and privileges of active membership in organization. 
Section 4. Organization does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation

**ARTICLE IV - Officers**  
Section 1. Titles of officers. 
Section 2. Qualifications of officers (must be matriculated MHC students in good academic standing and studying on campus – *not abroad*) 
Section 3. Duties of officers

**ARTICLE V - Advisor**  
Section 1. How the advisor is chosen. 
Section 2. Expectations of Advisor (how often advisor will meet with org, expected assistance, etc.)

**ARTICLE VI - Election and Removal of Officers**  
Section 1. Time of election (elections should be held in April of each year) 
Section 2. Election procedures. 
Section 3. Procedure for removal of officers

**ARTICLE VII - Meetings**  
Section 1. Frequency of regular meetings. 
Section 2. Provision for special meetings

**ARTICLE VIII - Finances**  
Section 1. Who are to be the Authorized Signers 
Section 2. How are funds to be used

**ARTICLE IX - Quorum**  
Section 1. Definition of a quorum (i.e., 2/3 majority, 50% + 1, etc.) 
Section 2. When is a quorum necessary (typically for voting on officers or major decision making)?

**ARTICLE X- Amendments and By-Laws**  
Section 1. Provision for creating By-laws of the Organizations. 
Section 2. Provision for creating amendments to the constitution and by-laws
ARTICLE XI – Committees
Section 1. Outline any standing committees. Section 2. Outline procedures for creating new or short-term committees

ARTICLE XII - History
Section 1. State when the constitution was created. Section 2. State when any and all changes were made