How to Start an Organization under SGA

Two important things to note before getting started:
1. Your proposed organization must have a UNIQUE purpose- it CANNOT duplicate or be a rephrasing of a current existing organization.
2. Your proposed organization must have a large enough group of interested people to carry on the activities of the organization, not just fill the executive board
   a. A group must have at least four (4) executive board members consisting of a: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary, as well as have at least five (5) interested people.
   b. It is up to the group’s discretion to add in additional executive board members such as Public Relations or Historian, so long as they have the main four (4) executive board members listed above.

First Steps:
1. The organization should have an interest meeting open to the public and advertised to gain interest as well as to organize.
2. The organization must have an advisor who is recognized by SUNY Potsdam or PACES as a Faculty/Staff member.
3. A temporary chairman should be elected and lead the group in discussing the specific goals of the organization and to develop a constitution. (see attached sample and guidelines)

IMPORTANT:
No Organization may be recognized by SGA unless it has a constitution.

IMPORTANT:
Organizations that require dues can be recognized, but need to consult with SGA Treasury before receiving funding.

OK, you wrote the constitution. Now what?
1. Submit the Constitution to the SGA office in room 213 of the BSU and send it electronically to: sga@potsdam.edu and sga@potsdam.edu.
2. The constitution shall be made into a bill which shall be given to the SGA Assembly; at which point, it will be referred to the SGA Vice-President and the SGA Constitution Committee for review.
3. After it has been reviewed, the chair of the committee will contact you to set up a time to meet so they can go over any and all changes that are recommended.
4. Once the recommended changes are made, you resubmit the constitution to the Constitution Committee where they will approve it.
5. Once it is approved, the chair of the committee will contact the chair of the organization and let them know that the constitution shall be referred to the SGA Vice-President and shall be brought before the assembly for a vote.
6. It is IMPORTANT that the chair of the organization or a representative be present when the constitution is up for a vote to answer any questions the assembly may.
7. The constitution may be remain on the Assembly floor for discussion for several meetings prior to the Assembly’s approval.
8. Once the Assembly approves the constitution, the organization shall be considered SGA recognized and shall be authorized all rights and liberties of an organization under the SGA umbrella, as well as, adhere to any policies SGA dictates as described by: the SGA Constitution, By-laws, and Financial Policies and Procedures.

Recognition Includes:
- Eligibility to receive Program funding.
- Eligibility to sign out campus spaces.
Please Note:
  o Once approved, the organization must send a representative to the weekly SGA Senate meeting Wednesday at 5pm (see SGA office for details on meeting location) to be considered for any funding within that academic year.
  o An organization must exist for one (1) academic year and regularly attend the SGA Senate meeting to be eligible to request a budget.
      o This does not guarantee that the organization shall be granted a budget.
  o If an organization only wishes to be recognized by SGA and not be considered for a budget, they may be excused from attending the weekly SGA Senate meetings. For this the organization must submit in writing to the SGA office a written letter stating: “We ____________ do not wish to seek funding from SGA and only wish to seek recognition to be considered for campus space and operation.”

There are additional stipulations for sports club.
For more information or questions please contact the SGA Vice-President, or stop by the SGA Office.
Constitution Outline

(Insert Organization Name) Constitution

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be called _______________ (acronym, if applicable).

ARTICLE II- PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be _______________

ARTICLE III- MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership shall be open to all State University of New York (SUNY) Potsdam Student Government Association (SGA) fee paying students.

Section 2. Membership shall be obtained by __________

ARTICLE IV- MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular meetings shall be held ________ during the academic year.

Section 2. Executive Board meetings shall be held ________ during the academic year.

ARTICLE V- EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of the following officers: ___________

Section 2. The duties of the Executive board are:
   A. President
      a. __________
      b. Attend appropriate SGA meetings.
   B. Vice President
      a. __________
   C. Treasurer
      a. __________
      b. Attend appropriate SGA meetings
   D. Secretary
      a. __________

ARTICLE VI- ELECTIONS, VACANCIES, & REMOVALS

Section 1. Eligibility:
A. All Executive Board members must not be on academic probation or judicial probation;
B. ________________

Section 2. Nominations:
A. ________________

Section 3. Elections:
A. ________________

Section 4. Vacancies:
A. ________________

Section 5. Removals:
A. ________________

ARTICLE VII- FACULTY ADVISOR

Section 1. This organization must have at least one (1) Faculty Advisor per academic year.

Section 2. ________________

Section 3. ________________

ARTICLE VIII- AMENDMENTS

Section 1. ________________

Section 2. ________________

Section 3. ________________

Section 4. All amendments are subject to SGA Assembly approval.

ARTICLE IX – SUPREMACY CLAUSE

This Constitution shall be the supreme law by which the members of the Student Government shall abide except in those cases in conflict with the Student Code of Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct.

ARTICLE X – NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, material status, veteran’s status, or religious affiliation within this organization.
ARTICLE XI – HAZING

Respect for the dignity and rights of other students are a basic tenet of the College community. Any activity expected of someone that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or which endangers the mental, emotional, physical health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in an organization or team whose members are or include students at SUNY Potsdam is prohibited. Hazing may occur regardless of the person’s willingness to participate. Note: A person commits a hazing offense if the person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids or attempts to aid another engaging in hazing; or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur. Hazing is prohibited in this community.

For more information please visit the SUNY Potsdam Code of Conduct office.
### SGA Organizational Constitution Guidelines and Information

#### Constitution Descriptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEADER</td>
<td>The header is very simple. Just name your organization, and add “constitution” after it. All of the header should be in capital letters. So if your organization’s full name is “Happy Fun”, then your header will be “HAPPY FUN CONSTITUTION”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLE I - NAME</td>
<td>Just make sure you use the full name of your organization. If you have an acronym, then put it in brackets. Then you can use the acronym elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLE II - PURPOSE</td>
<td>It is advisable to state the purpose of the organization in terms of general purposes, but not go into great detail or to limit it too definitely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>For most organizations, this section is complete. If you have further types of membership (beyond officers) i.e. associate members, adjunct members, staff members, etc., please consult the SGA Constitution Committee. This section is also for determining how membership can be gained or lost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS</td>
<td>Define your meetings as weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc. But do NOT list a specific day or time. Also define who sets meetings, and what officer(s) can set special meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE BOARD</td>
<td>Here you need to state the officer positions in the organization in section 1. In the following section you need to fill in what the duties of each officer shall be. For your convenience, on the Constitution Outline, we have listed the main four (4) board members and how the layout shall be. You may add additional board members that you see fit, however, you must have the main four (4) listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLE VI - ELECTIONS, VACANCIES, &amp; REMOVALS</td>
<td>Section 1. Who is eligible to be an officer? Subsection A must be in your constitution word for word. Section 2. Who can make nominations? When can nominations be made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Section 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>VII- Faculty Advisor</td>
<td>This is what is used by organizations. If you want to use something different, talk to SGA constitution committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII- Amendments</td>
<td>Method of submitting amendments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX- Supremancy Clause</td>
<td>This section MUST be the final section in this article, word for word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X- Non-Discrimination Clause</td>
<td>This section MUST be the final section in this article, word for word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI- Hazing Clause</td>
<td>This section MUST be the final section in this article, word for word.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acronyms:**

Any time you wish to use an acronym (including SUNY or SGA), you must ensure they are spelled out the first time you use them. For example, SGA would be like this: “Student Government Association (SGA)”

**Grammar:**

Constitutional grammar is tricky. Most of the grammar is just like you would use in an essay. The difference is that when you finish a section or subsection, you end with different punctuation. So, when you end a subsection you always end it with a period (.) But when you are finishing a section or an article you need to use a period.