

HOW TO START A CLUB OR TEAM

There are two things needed to start any club. First, the club should have a unique purpose, and not duplicate the purpose of an existing club. Second, the club should have a group of interested people large enough to carry on the activities of the club.

The club should have interest meetings open to the public and advertised to gain interest and to organize. The club must also have an advisor who is recognized as an employee of SUNY Potsdam or PACES. At the meetings, a temporary chairman should be elected. The chairman should lead the group in discussing the specific goals of the club and have the group begin to formulate the constitution of the club, using the attached sample as a guide. The constitution is important. No club may be recognized by the Student Government Association unless the club has a constitution.

Once the constitution is written, submit it to the SGA Office in Room 213 of the Union. From the office it will go to the Assembly Constitution Committee who will review the constitution and contact your chairman if there are any problems. After the Constitution is approved by the Committee, it will go before the Assembly for approval. Once Assembly approves, the club is officially recognized by SGA.

Recognition entitles the group to the use of the SGA vans (rental) and eligibility to receive program funding. They may also sign out meeting rooms in the Union. A club, though, must exist for one year before it is eligible to request a budget, although existing for one year is **not a guarantee** for a budget. Some smaller groups will function more efficiently by staying under program funding. (See Organizational Guidelines for Funding).

There are additional stipulations for sports clubs – see attached. If there are any questions or problems you should contact the SGA Vice President, or simply stop by the SGA Office.

OUTLINE OF A CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be called _____.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this club shall be: (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.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all SGA fee paying students. If your organization is made up of representatives of other organizations, this should be stated here).

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of this organization shall be:

Section 2. The officers shall be elected by ballot at the _____ meeting each year to serve for _____ (year/semester). They may be re-elected for _____ additional term(s).

Section 3. Qualifications for specific offices – (Officers of an organization must not be on academic probation)

Section 4. Duties for specific offices

Section 5. Method of replacing officers.

ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of _____. (This group acts as a steering committee for the organization. Its chief function is to meet at intervals between the meetings of the organization itself. It may sometimes act for the organization, but the Board is subordinate to its parent group).

Section 2. Vacancies on Executive Board are filled by...

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular meetings shall be _____.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by _____.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Method of submitting amendments

Section 2. Method of notifying members of proposed change.

Section 3. Method of voting and percentage of votes needed to amend.

Section 4. All amendments are subject to SGA Assembly approval

ARTICLE VIII – AFFIRMATIVE ACTION CLAUSE

There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, politics, or religion within this organization. Any reference to the male gender in this organization shall likewise apply to any female, as the case may be.

ARTICLE IX – SUPREMACY CLAUSE

This Constitution shall be subsidiary to the Constitution of the SGA of the State University of New York at Potsdam, and shall operate in accordance with the SGA Constitution, the Student Code of Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct, and in other ways determined by the committee itself.

ARTICLE VII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. Roberts' Rules of Order, Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for this organization.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. (Method of amending the by-laws should be specifically stated).

ARTICLE XII – HAZING

Hazing in any form is strictly prohibited. Hazing is considered an interference with personal liberty, and includes any act of domination by any students over others which may lead to physical or emotional injury and discomfort. Hazing involving forced consumption of alcohol or drugs for the purpose of initiation or affiliation with any organization is specifically prohibited by SGA and SUNY Potsdam.

OUTLINE FOR BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1- (specific qualifications for membership should be listed here).

Section 2 – (Method of replacing members – particularly if the group is a committee)

ARTICLE II – DUES

Section 1. The annual dues (if necessary) shall be _____.

Section 2. Annual dues are payable on or before _____.

Section 3. Members who have been declared in arrears in the payment of dues shall not be eligible to vote.

Section 4. Any member whose dues have not been paid by _____ from the date on which they were due may be dropped from membership by a majority vote at any regular meeting.

ARTICLE III – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The president shall (responsibilities and duties should be defined here)

Section 2. The Vice President shall (there should be a separate section for each officer, with duties clearly defined).

ARTICLE IV – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of _____.

Section 2. The duties of the Executive Board shall be _____. (The powers of the Executive Board should be clearly defined here).

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

Section 1. (How the committees shall be selected should be outlined here).

Section 2. The standing committees should be as follows:

ARTICLE VI – QUARUM

Section 1. (The percentage of the group present which is necessary to transact business should be stated here).

ORGANIZATIONAL ADVISORS

Advisors are members of SUNY Potsdam's faculty/staff. They are not held responsible for the organization's actions, and do not sit in a capacity that lets them dictate organizational policy.

Advisors do not have to attend meetings or events held by the club (exception- see Organizational Guidelines for Funding and Additional Guidelines for Sports Clubs), but it is hoped that their interest will lead to this involvement.

The following are some of the aspects of being an advisor to Student Government organizations:

1) Provide continuity and direction to the organization.

With the yearly turnover of officers and club membership, advisors are needed to provide continuity to the organization by acting as a resource of past activities, and helping the new membership continue in the original philosophical intent of the organization.

2) Answer questions about the college.

The advisor is a knowledge base for information about college policies, and how the organization's activities relate to them.

3) **Funding supervisor.**

In some organizations the advisor will help the treasurer monitor monetary expenditures by reviewing treasury records.

4) **College liaison.**

A contact person for the college if they have questions or concerns about the organization, and will help mediate between the two if problems arise.

5) **Suggestions and support.**

The most important duty of the advisor is to help the organization by giving suggestions, and supporting their decisions.

The relationship of the advisor to the organization is best defined by the involved groups, and what works for them. This list is merely a suggestion by members of SGA President's Cabinet and it outlines what some of their advisors are currently doing.

(This packet shall also include Bill 9315 – ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING & ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SPORT CLUBS)