



STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION GUIDE

Writing or refining a constitution is vital to the operations of your student organization. When questions arise about the activities or the mission of the organization, the constitution is the document that guides those decisions.

Use the guidelines listed in this document to review all of the sections of a constitution as a checklist for exactly what is required. This guide discusses all of the required sections and the different decisions that you need to make to effectively write your constitution. If you have any questions about the requirements in a student organization constitution and whether you fulfill those requirements, contact the Office of Campus Activities at cua-activities@cua.edu.

ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization must be uniquely different from any other currently registered student organization and may reflect the nature and activities of the organization. In addition, any organization abbreviations or acronyms must be formally referenced in this article. Organizations are permitted to include “The Catholic University of America” or “CUA” as part of the organization name. If the organization is affiliated with a parent organization, that information must be stated in this article of the constitution.

NOTE: The Office of Campus Activities requires a copy of both the student and parent organization’s constitution (if applicable).

Sample: The name of this organization shall be CUA Society of Servant Leaders. This organization will utilize the acronym SSL and may be referred to as “The Society.” CUA Society of Servant Leaders is affiliated with the National Society of Servant Leaders operating in Washington, DC.

ARTICLE II. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of a student organization at The Catholic University of America is integral to determining both the organization’s goals and identifies how the organization supports the University’s mission.

“As the national university of the Catholic Church in the United States, founded and sponsored by the bishops of the country with the approval of the Holy See, The Catholic University of America is committed to being a comprehensive Catholic and American institution of higher learning, faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ as handed on by the Church. Dedicated to advancing the dialogue between faith and reason, The Catholic University of America seeks to discover and impart the truth through excellence in teaching and research, all in service to the Church, the nation and the world.”

- Mission Statement of The Catholic University of America

The Office of Campus Activities and the University expect that organizations will support the *ideals* of the Catholic Church.

“As a Catholic university, it desires to cultivate and impart an understanding of the Christian faith within the context of all forms of human inquiry and values.”

- Aims of The Catholic University of America

An organization’s mission statement must make apparent: 1) its long term purpose, 2) its short-term goal(s), 3) how the organization fits within the context of the University’s mission statement, and 4) how the organization demonstrates a commitment to service either concurrently or in addition to its other stated goals.

MISSION STATEMENT SELF-CHECKLIST

Example 1: CUA Society of Servant Leaders

- 1) Long-term purpose: “promoting personal and professional self-development...”
- 2) Short-term goal: “educate the CUA community about the selfless leadership style of Jesus...”
- 3) Fit the University mission? Yes. CUA is “dedicated to advancing the dialogue between faith and reason”, which is paralleled in the short-term goal above.
- 4) Commitment to service? Yes. Servant leadership is “dedicated to stewardship and service.”

Example 2: Cardinal Scholars of CUA

- 1) Long-term purpose: “promote and encourage undergraduate research to students...”
- 2) Short-term goal: “creating scholarly mentoring opportunities...”
- 3) Fit the University mission? Yes. CUA “seeks to impart the truth through excellence in teaching and research.”
- 4) Commitment to service? Yes. Through “excellence in research and development”, the organization hopes to “impart the truth” to serve the Church, the nation and the world.

Sample 1: With a purpose of promoting personal and professional self-development to the campus community at The Catholic University of America, CUA Society of Servant Leaders strives to educate the CUA community about the selfless leadership style of Jesus Christ through programs and initiatives dedicated to stewardship and service.

Sample 2: The mission of the Cardinal Scholars of CUA is to promote and encourage undergraduate research to students of The Catholic University of America, by creating scholarly mentoring opportunities between dedicated faculty and undergraduates and serve the community through excellence in research and development.

The support, both financially and through professional assistance, that the University offers to student organizations is contingent upon an organization’s willingness to engage in service; it is expected that all organization will reserve time for activities that ideals of Christian charity.

NOTE: A new student organization may not duplicate the purpose(s) of any existing club/organization. If a proposed student organization is found to be too similar in nature, it may be suggested that the two student organizations merge.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

A student organization seeking recognition must be open to the entire CUA undergraduate and graduate populations. This section should outline who is eligible for membership and describes the new member process. This can be as simple as showing interest, or something more in-depth (tryouts, attendance at a certain number of meetings, be voted in, etc.).

Sample 1: Membership shall be open to all undergraduate and graduate students at The Catholic University of America.

Sample 2: To be eligible for membership, a person must attend and sign in to at least one meeting.

Sample 3: Any woman interested in joining will fill out a membership application, be formally installed at the end of the fall or spring semester, pay dues as decided upon the organization, and attending meetings and organization events.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

This section should list the titles of the officers and their term of office. Any specific requirements to becoming an officer should be listed, as well as any other restrictions or limitations. List the duties each officer is responsible for. Major things to include here are things that are imperative to running the organization (Who will plan and run meetings? Who will take attendance? Who will coordinate events?).

NOTE: The University requires a 2.25 GPA for any student organization officer, but your organization can choose to require a higher GPA.

Sample 1: Officers

Section 1: The elected officers of the CUA Society of Servant Leaders are the President, Vice President and Treasurer. The term of office will be for the Fall and Spring semesters.

Section 2: The requirements to become an officer are that a person must be a student of The Catholic University of America and maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.25.

Section 3: The president is in charge of running the meetings. The Vice President is responsible for maintaining membership, assisting the President, and running meetings in the absence of the President. The Treasurer is in charge of handling all of the finances of the organization in accordance with the appropriate University Policies.

Sample 2: Officers

Section 1: The elected officers of the Cardinal Scholars of CUA are the President, Vice President and Treasurer. The appointed officers are the Events Chair and Service Chair.

Section 2: The requirements to become an officer must be a full-time undergraduate or graduate student at CUA and maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.5.

Section 3: The president is responsible for running the meetings. The vice president is responsible for networking with faculty to find research opportunities. The treasurer is responsible for handling all of the finances of the organization and searching for research grant opportunities for students.

Section 4: The Events Chair is ultimately responsible for planning all aspects of the annual spring research symposium. This includes call for papers, event management during the symposium and post-event assessments.

Section 5: The Service Chair is responsible for ensuring that Cardinal Scholars of CUA meets the minimum standard of community service hours needed for active organization status. This policy is set by the Office of Campus Activities. The Service Chair is also responsible for coordinating the organization's participation in Relay for Life.

ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Any rules and procedures of elections and/or nominations should be specified here. How often are elections? How are elections conducted? (ex. How are nominations run, what kind of ballots are used [secret ballot, hand vote, etc.], who counts the votes, etc.).

Sample 1: Elections and Nominations

Section 1: Nominations for all officers will take place annually from the members at the last general meeting of the academic year. Any active member may nominate any other voting member, including himself or herself.

Section 2: Voting will occur by secret ballot and a simple majority vote is required to elect an officer. The secretary will count the votes. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Sample 2: Elections and Nominations

Section 1: Annual elections are to be held during the second meeting of the fall semester.

Section 2: Nominations are to be taken at the beginning of the meeting, and then a vote will be conducted using a secret ballot. The outgoing Vice President will count the ballots, along with the outgoing Treasurer, and whoever has the most votes for each respective office is elected. No one can hold more than one office.

ARTICLE VI: REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

This article should describe the grounds in which a person can be removed from office. What is the procedure? What sort of vote occurs? How many votes are needed to successfully remove the person from office? (majority of membership, 2/3 vote, etc.). What are the ultimate consequences? Does that person retain membership in the organization? Can they be eligible to run for that or any other office in the future?

Sample 1: Removal of Officers

Section 1: A person is eligible to be removed from office if the other two members of the executive board, or if the majority of the organization feel as if they are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

Section 2: To remove someone from office, the people launching the complaint must present the reasons for removal during a general meeting. A vote will then be taken by a secret ballot and 2/3 majority vote from the organization is needed for removal.

Section 3: A person removed from office is still eligible to be an active member of the organization.

Sample 2: Removal of Officers

Section 1: Officers may be removed from office with a two-thirds vote of the general body. The officer in question must be notified of the vote of removal at least one week in advance and shall be granted the opportunity to speak before the general body prior to the vote.

NOTE: Officers that fall below the University's 2.25 GPA requirements will be subject to removal.

ARTICLE VII: REPLACEMENT PROCEDURES

What is the required protocol to fill a vacant position? When is the election held? Is the election held in a normal fashion or will a different vote be required?

Sample 1: Replacement Procedures

Section 1: To fill a vacant position, an emergency election will be held at the next general meeting. If the position is needed to be filled sooner, the President or Vice President will call for a meeting sooner for the sole purpose of elections.

Sample 2: Replacement Procedures

Section 1: In the instance a position is vacant, the executive board will temporarily appoint a member, by majority vote, to carry the duties until the next election. The interim officer is eligible for permanent office in the next election. The interim term does not apply towards the set term limit.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETING RULES

Outline rules and regulations of organization meetings in this section. How will meetings be conducted? Will the President serve as chair? What meeting rules will be used?

NOTE: Robert's Rules of Order is strongly recommended.

Sample 1: Meeting Rules

Section 1: All meetings of the organization will follow the most up-to-date version of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE IX: ADVISOR

The following statement must be included in this article:

The advisor of the organization must be a faculty or staff member of The Catholic University of America.

Describe the selection of the organization's advisor in this article.

Sample 1: Advisor

Section 1: The advisor of the organization will be selected by a majority vote of the organization. The advisor must be a faculty or staff member of The Catholic University of America.

ARTICLE X: UNIVERSITY POLICY

***Note:** This article must appear in the constitution verbatim as indicated below.

This organization is to abide by all University policies as laid out at <http://policies.cua.edu>.

ARTICLE XI: NO HAZING STATEMENT

**Note: This article must appear in the constitution verbatim as indicated below.*

This organization will not participate in any activities which could be regarded as hazing. “Hazing” refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate.

ARTICLE XII: NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

**Note: This article must appear in the constitution verbatim as indicated below.*

This organization fully adheres to the University’s non-discrimination policies which can be found at <http://policies.cua.edu/EEO/affirmact.cfm>.

ARTICLE XIII: AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Describe the process for constitutional amendments. Who can initiate a constitutional change? (one member, an officer, a committee, etc.). When and how can the constitution be amended? Are there certain times in the semester that amendments cannot take place? How are the amendments voted on? What are the procedures for finalizing amendments?

Sample 1: Amending the Constitution

Section 1: To amend the constitution, the members of the executive board will create an idea of the change and it will be voted on at the next general meeting. Any member can submit ideas for changes in writing to the President to be discussed at the next executive board meeting.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

This last section outlines your constitution’s history throughout its time at CUA. Tag this to the bottom of your constitution, ensuring that the “amended” section is updated every time a change is made.

Created: 10 Apr 1987 [insert date of creation]
By: Red D. Cardinal, Edward Eagle, Peter Penguin [insert authors]

Amended:
Revision 6.2, 22 Apr 2008. Cassie Canary. [insert section, date & author of amendment]
Revision 3.1, 15 Oct 2000. Joe Bluejay. Ex. Revision 3.1 = Article III, Section 1.

Record of Organization Standing:
Chartered: 28 Apr 1987 [insert date of recognition]