

## FAMU-ESUA Constitution Guidelines

The following outline and questions are designed to help you write or update your constitution for your club/organization. The constitution should contain statements concerning enduring aspects of the club/organization.

By-laws are the rules established to govern the internal operations of the club/organization. Standing rules pertain to rules which may be adapted by a majority vote at any club/organization meeting. Items that are subject to frequent revision should be included in the By-Laws.

### **What is a constitution?**

A student club/organization's constitution provides a foundation to govern the purpose and future actions of the club/organization. This document should be used to refer back to when discussing the operations of your club/organization, such as meeting structure, member recruitment, and elections. It allows a group and its members to be held accountable.

### **Why is a constitution required for all organizations?**

The process of writing a constitution serves as a guide to clarify the organization's purpose, create a basic structure, and build a foundation for an effective organization. It allows members to have a clearer, holistic understanding of the functions of the organization. It also, allows the Office of Student Activities to clearly classify different clubs/organizations and also ensure that the club/organization is in compliance with all institutional policies and regulations.

### **What is the difference between a constitution and bylaws?**

**Constitutions** contain the fundamental principles that govern an organization's operations.

**Bylaws** establish specific rules by which the group is to function. Bylaws detail the procedures a group must follow to conduct business and provide further definitions to articles in the constitution. Bylaws tend to be a more fluid document that can be adapted as needs change for the organization.

### **Template:**

The statements highlighted in **red** must appear verbatim on all bylaws, constitutions, and printed publicity. Prior to submission, please be sure to remove all parenthetical directions and notations.

### **Does my group need to have both a constitution and bylaws?**

No. Each group is required to have a constitution. A separate bylaws document helps flesh out details if a group finds it necessary. If you do NOT have a separate bylaws document, be sure to incorporate the bylaws checklist into your constitution.

### **What should be in a constitution?**

Below is a resource containing a checklist of what should be included in a basic constitution. The document should cover these areas in a clear and concise manner. Be sure to remove anything that is not needed or items meant as a guide.

Once the constitution and bylaws are developed, it is important to review them regularly. The needs and goals of the organization will shift over time, and it is important that the constitution and bylaws reflect the current state of the organization.

### **Required points to consider:**

- The constitution should also include reference to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion of the RSO,
- The FAMU Regulation 2.028 – Anti-Hazing Policy, holds members accountable to this policy.
- Transition of officers
- Financial Policy - How funds are collected. Acceptable fund collection applications/systems. Reporting and tracking funds. Authority over the account.
- FAMU Authority Statement

If you are working with a National organization, their constitution should also be uploaded to your registration form, if one is available.

# COVER PAGE

(REPLACE WITH YOU'RE YOUR SHEILD/SEAL/LOGO)



**CLUB OR ORGANIZATION NAME**

**CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS**

**LAST REVISED [MONTH YEAR]**

## PREAMBLE

This section should be a statement of the group's establishment. The preamble should contain the name of the organization. The preamble should include the date on which the Constitution was ratified or amended.

### Article I. Name of the club/organization

**Section 1:** What is the exact title of this organization? Include full name/title.

The name of this organization shall be the [Name of Organization] at Florida A&M University. [Note: Your Organization name as listed in your bylaws must match the organization name as indicated in your RSO application. Optional: Include chapter designation if part of a national organization and/or the organization's founding date]

**Section 2:** This club/organization is also referred to as well as **ABBREVIATION/ACRONYM**.

### Article II. Purpose, Aim(s) of the club/organization

[What is the purpose? Is it fostering a broad educational goal? Does it have a social, cultural or political aim? Why was the group founded? Be precise enough so that a non-member would understand the group.]

**Section 1:** The purpose of **ORGANIZATION NAME** shall be to ... (generally 60 words or less)

**Section 2:** The goals/purpose/philosophy of this organization are to ...

**Section 3:** (If applicable) This organization is associated with the following local, state, national, or international organization: **NAME OF PARENT ORGANIZATION**, and adheres to the [National of Affiliated Organization Bylaws or Governing Document(s)].

**Section 4:** This section should be a statement of the group's willingness to abide by all university policies. **This organization is a recognized student organization at Florida A&M University and adheres to all campus policies as set forth in the SDSU Student Organization Handbook.**

### Article III. Membership Requirements and Limitations

**Section 1:** How does one become a member? How are voting members identified? Voting members must be full-time undergraduate students at the University. What is the date in any one year by which one must join to still be able to vote? Who keeps the official membership list?

- a. The organization shall consist of **UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE STUDENTS** of FAMU who are interested in the purpose of the **ORGANIZATION NAME** and who shall be approved by the Officers.
- b. Approval results through the completion of the membership form, which solely consists of stating the reason for interest.

- c. **ORGANIZATION NAME** complies with the anti-discrimination policies of FAMU, titled Non-Discrimination, Policy Statement, which can be found in on the university website or [click here](#)

Section 2: Removal of membership may be provided for \_\_\_\_\_. Can a member remain in the organization if she/he fails to pay dues?

- a. Impeachment
- b. Voluntary Withdrawal

**Section 3:** Membership must be open to all FAMU full-time undergraduate/GRADUATE students, who meet the minimum requirements set forth by the university in conjunction with those established by the club/organization national/regional/stage offices and the club/organization itself.

#### **Section 4: Inactive Members**

#### **Section 5: New member recruitment.**

- a. Recruitment for **ORGANIZATION NAME** occurs at the beginning of each semester.
- b. The organization recruits through **iSTRIKE**, social media, and .....
- c. Membership is granted based on approval/sign-up/application/try-outs/interview...outline your process.
- d. The first meeting post-recruitment is dedicated to training new members and getting to know existing members.

### **Article IV. Officers**

#### **Section 1. Elected Officers.**

[How many officers are there? What are their titles and duties? Will the officers constitute an executive committee? Will your structure be hierarchical or flat?]

- a. The elected officers in ORGANIZATION NAME shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, iSTRIKE Liaison, and any other officers listed in **ORGANIZATION NAME's** Standing Rules, Policies, and Procedures.

**Section 2:** Officers must be full-time undergraduate/graduate students at the university.

**Section 3: President. The President shall:**

**Section 4: Vice president. The Vice President shall:**

**Section 5: Secretary. The Secretary shall:**

**Section 6: Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:**

**Section 7: iSTRIKE Liaison. iSTRIKE Liaison shall:**

**Section 8: Chapter Delegates. Chapter Delegates shall:**

**Section 9:** and on... if you have any other positions such as assistant secretary, financial secretary, parliamentarian, historian or etc.

## **Section 10: Term of Service**

## **Section 11: Elections**

## **Section 12: Officer Transitions.**

- a. Each officer shall maintain a record of their position, including budgets and activities of the office, to provide to incoming officers following elections. This is a part of the transition officers' process.
- b. Outgoing officers shall also make every effort to assist in the transition process, including helping to ensure that incoming officers are aware of their responsibilities.
- c. After elections and officers have been finalized, a special meeting will be called for all current and newly elected officers to meet and go over their roles.

## **Section 11: Vacancies**

- a. Any officer may resign by submitting a letter to the Executive Board.
- b. In the event of a vacancy of a position, the President shall, with the majority approval of the Executive Board, appoint a replacement to serve until the next General Body/Membership Meeting, at which point a special election will be held to fill the position.
- c. A vacancy of the office of President shall be treated as a temporary absence as defined in this Article.
- d. Any person selected to fill a vacancy shall meet the eligibility requirements prescribed for that position.
- e. Current officers shall be eligible to run for the vacant position, but would be required to vacate their original position immediately upon election.
- f. In the event that a new vacancy is created by the special election, another will be held to fill that vacancy, and so on until all positions are filled.

## **Article V. Operations**

**Section 1:** How are officers elected? What constitutes a quorum? What type of ballot? Who may vote? When are they elected, and for what period? Who is eligible for office? When do officers assume office? How will mid-year vacancies be filled? You may wish to clarify the role of your advisor.

## **Article VI. Finances**

**Section 1:** Will there be membership dues?

**Section 2:** The club/organization will utilize [back or credit union information]

**Section 3:** Who has access to accounts

**Section 4:** the club/organization will utilize a designated club/organization paypal/etc. to collect funds.

**Section 5:** The group must express willingness to comply with all financial policies, including placing all funds in its account.

## **Section 6: Reports and tracking of funds, withdraws, deposits and etc**

## **Section 7: Deposit and Withdrawal process**

- a. The following persons/positions will need to sign off before funds can be deposited or withdrawn

## **Article VII. Meetings**

All meetings will occur on a weekly/bi-weekly basis or other regular basis at a time selected by “**Name of Organization**” and will follow the procedure set forth below:

- a. Attendance/Roll Call
- b. Report by the President
- c. Treasurer Report
- d. E-board Reports
- e. Committee Reports
- f. Vote on all committee motions and decisions
- g. Any other business put forward by members of the club/organization
- h. Advisor’s Comments/Report
- i. Announcements
- j. Dismissal by the President

## **Article VIII. Hazing**

- a. **Organization/clubs hazing statement**
  - a.
- b. **University Hazing Statement/Policy**

### **FAMU REGULATION 2.028 ANTI-HAZING POLICY**

Regulations of Florida A&M University 2.028 Anti-hazing.

(1) Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (“University”) strictly prohibits any student(s), group(s) of students or student organization(s) affiliated with the University from engaging in any form(s) of hazing activities. Moreover, the University has zero tolerance for violation of any provisions of the Anti-hazing Regulation 2.028. “Zero tolerance” means that given the factual circumstances of the alleged violation, the charged student may be removed from University Housing and receive a penalty up to suspension or expulsion from the University.

(a) Due process protections in accordance with University Regulation 2.013 will be appropriately accorded the charged student.

(b) “Student” is given the same meaning herein as it is defined in the Student Code of Conduct, Regulation 2.012.

(c) “Engaging” is defined herein and prohibited by this Regulation as anyone who (i) perpetrates hazing activities by planning and/or executing the hazing activities; (ii) is the object of or consents to hazing activities; or (iii) observes or has knowledge of hazing activities and fails to report the incident within twenty-four (24) hours as required.

(d) This Regulation is incorporated into University Regulation 2.012.

(2) The term hazing shall include, but not be limited to, pressuring or coercing the student into violating state or federal law, any brutality of a physical nature, such as striking in 2.028 Anti-hazing 2 of 3 any manner, whipping, beating, branding, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of food, liquor, drugs, or other substances, or other forced physical activities that would adversely affect the health or safety of the student and also includes any activity that would subject the student to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contacts, forced conduct that would be demeaning or results in extreme embarrassment or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective. For purposes of this section, any activity as described above, or any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for purposes, including, but not limited to, initiation or admission into or affiliation with a University sanctioned organization, shall be presumed to be hazing and a “forced activity.” (a) It shall not be a defense that the consent of the victim to participate was obtained, the conduct or activity was not part of an official University organizational event or was not otherwise sanctioned or approved by the University organization, or the conduct or activity was not done as a condition of membership to a University organization.

(3) Any student found in violation of this Regulation from conduct occurring on-campus or off-campus will be subject to appropriate sanctions by the University, which may include but is not limited to: the imposition of fines; withholding of grade(s), transcripts and/or diplomas pending payment of fines or compliance with the Student Code of Conduct, Regulation 2.012; the imposition of counseling, probation, suspension, or expulsion of said person(s) or organization(s), the rescission of certification for the University organization(s); and/or removal from University Housing.

(4) All penalties imposed by the University do not absolve the student(s), group(s) of students, or student organization(s) from any penalty imposed for violation of the criminal laws 2.028 Anti-hazing 3 of 3 of the State of Florida, including but not limited to such criminal penalties prescribed in section 1006.63, Florida Statutes, for penalties imposed in civil proceedings or for violation of any other University Regulation(s) to which the charged student(s) may be subject.

(5) All University certified organizations are required to include in their by-laws an anti-hazing section fully incorporating this Regulation. A copy of the by-laws shall be kept on file in the Office of Student Activities. Advisors and each member of a University certified organization must attend one Fall semester and one Spring semester hazing workshop each academic year.

(6) Any person, including trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students, members of direct support organizations, vendors, guests and volunteers having knowledge of or receiving information regarding any activity which may constitute hazing or a violation of this regulation must contact the FAMU Department of Public Safety at (850) 599-3256 or [www.stophazingatfamu.com](http://www.stophazingatfamu.com) within twenty-four (24) hours of gaining such knowledge or receiving information. Any person who fails to report any activity of hazing shall be in direct violation of this regulation.

(7) It shall be expressly prohibited for any person, including trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students, members of direct support organizations, vendors, guests and volunteers, to retaliate against a person because that person has been a victim of hazing, reported hazing, refused to participate in hazing, assisted in the investigation of hazing, or participated in the prosecution of any alleged hazing.

(8) Any person who has experienced retaliation for reporting any activity, which may constitute hazing or a violation of this regulation, shall have the right to file a retaliation complaint with the Division of Audit

and Compliance within twenty-four (24) hours of becoming aware of the act of retaliation at [\(866\) 445-4968](tel:8664454968).

*Specific Authority: Article IX, Section 7(c), Florida Constitution 001.74(4), FS. Law Implemented 1001.74(10)(d), (e), 1006.60, 1006.61, 1006.62, 1006.63 FS. History–New 4-3-83, Formerly Rule 6C3-2.028, Amended 1-26-04, 5-9-12. Amended 7-15-13.*

## [Click here to view full electronic Hazing Regulation](#)

### **Article IX. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standards**

#### **Section 1. Respect for Others**

Respect for every person is at the core of FAMU's identity. In a university, it is particularly necessary that this respect encompass diversity and differences of opinion. A student club/organization may be held accountable for actions that violate the dignity of another member of the university community. CLUB/ORGANIZATION shall not discriminate or exclude others based on, sexual orientation/identification, social status, ethnicity, creed, age, or any other exclusionary category.

#### **Section 2. Specifically Prohibited Actions**

Discrimination. (Any act that distinguishes or excludes an individual on any criterion other than individual merit.)

Hazing. (Any ritual of membership that demeans, humiliates, injures or weakens a student or otherwise interferes with the pursuit of an education by a student.)

Interfering with another group's freedom of expression. (Protesting an event or activity in such a manner that the speaker's right to free speech or others' right to see and hear a speaker is violated.)

Disruption. (Activity that endangers or imminently threatens to endanger the safety of any member of the community or of any of the community's physical facilities, or any activity that disrupts or

### **Article IX. Advisor**

- a. The club/organization shall appoint an individual employed as a faculty or staff member of Florida A&M University to serve as the university primary advisor to this organization as required by FAMU. Graduate/Intern student assistants are not eligible to serve as primary advisors. The advisor shall fulfill the responsibilities specified in the FAMU Student Organizations Handbook. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.
- b. Outlines the authorities, responsibilities, role, and expectations of the advisor
- c. Outlines the selection, approval, and removal process of the advisor

### **Article X. Amendments**

Section 1: How are amendments to be proposed and by whom? Usually, they are proposed at one meeting and voted on at the next after notifying members. What majority is needed for amendments to pass? What is a quorum for this meeting?



## **BY-LAWS (optional)**

Your constitution may also include a “Provision for By-Laws” article or a clause pertaining to the establishment of by-laws. The by-laws might include some of the following items:

### **Standing committees of the organization**

Ad-hoc committees of the organization are established for a single purpose, or 1-year commitment. Such committees will be eliminated from the by-laws once abolished or defunct.

Policies pertaining to the time and location of organizational meetings.

Structures/purposes of committees.

**These bylaws were adopted on [date] and most recently revised on [date].**

This Constitution has been approved by 2/3 of the active and fully financial General Body of the CLUB/ORGANIZATION, on this

**\_\_DAY\_ Day of \_\_MONTH\_\_, \_\_YEAR\_\_.**

### **Current E-Board Signatures**

_____ President	_____ Vice President	_____ Secretary
_____ E-Board Position	_____ E-Board Position	_____ E-Board Position
_____ E-Board Position	_____ E-Board Position	_____ E-Board Position
_____ Primary Advisor	_____	_____ Co-Advisor