

Sample Constitution & Checklist



The University of Alabama

Every student organization at The University of Alabama must submit a constitution and bylaws that provides the organization with guidelines for operations and activities. These documents should be well written and kept up-to-date to meet the needs of the student organization.

The constitution:

- Establishes the broad structure and fundamental principles that govern the organization
- Should be straightforward and difficult to amend

The bylaws:

- Outline the rules of procedure for an organization
- Should be consistent with the constitution
- Are often easier to amend than the constitution

STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

The following checklist is designed to aid student organizations in creating a document that will be of benefit to the organization's management and functioning on The University of Alabama campus. The Student Handbook requires organizations to include the following information in each constitution (*see attached sample constitution*):

_____ *** ARTICLE ONE (Name)**

State the name of the organization. (*Organizations should not use "The University of Alabama" in the title of the organization or any other trademarked UA phrase or saying.*)

_____ *** ARTICLE TWO (Purpose)**

State the purpose, objectives, and aims of the organization.

_____ *** ARTICLE THREE (Members)**

Within Article III you **MUST** state the requirements for membership and **MUST** include the following aspects of organizational membership:

- (1) Organizations must allow for self-nomination for membership.
- (2) If non-University of Alabama students are allowed membership, at least 50% plus one of the membership should be University of Alabama students. All organization officers must be University of Alabama students.
- (3) Membership selection and expulsion procedures should be outlined.
- (4) Must include the following language: "Membership in registered student organizations shall be open to all students of The University of Alabama, without regard to race, religion, sex, disability, national origin, color, age disability, gender identity or expression, sexual identity, or veteran status except in cases of designated fraternal organizations exempted by federal law from Title IX regulations concerning discrimination on the basis of sex."

***NOTE: Religious student groups will not be denied registration solely because they limit membership or leadership positions to students who share the same religious beliefs.**

_____ *** ARTICLE FOUR (Offices)** Include a (1) list of offices, (2) the terms of office, (3) descriptions of office responsibilities, (4) officer election/selection procedures, and (5) provisions for filling vacancies.

_____ *** ARTICLE FIVE (Meetings)** State when regular meetings are to be held as well as provisions for calling special meetings. *State what number constitutes a quorum at any organizational meeting.*

_____ *** ARTICLE SIX (Relationships)** State any present or intended relationship the organization may have to any other local, state, or national organization. Include one copy of the constitution and by-laws of any such related organization.

_____ *** ARTICLE SEVEN (Finances)** State provisions for allocation of any bank account funds held in the name of the organization in the event that the organization goes defunct or is terminated with The SOURCE.

_____ *** ARTICLE EIGHT (Committees)** Include the structure of the executive committees, a description of standing committees, and the responsibilities of each committee/committee chairperson, and the method of membership and chairperson selection.

_____ *** ARTICLE NINE (Advisors)**

State the selection procedures for the advisor(s), the advisor's responsibilities, and the length of the advisor's term. The advisor(s) must be a full-time faculty, staff, or a full-time employee of The University of Alabama.

_____ *** ARTICLE TEN (Parliamentary Authority)**

Provide for some form of parliamentary authority (*Robert's Rules of Order recommended*).

_____ *** ARTICLE ELEVEN (Amendments)** State provisions for adopting amendments.

_____ *** ARTICLE TWELVE (By-Laws)** State provisions for adopting by-laws.

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION OF THE AARDVARK TIDDLYWINKS ASSOCIATION

ADOPTED MAY 1990
REVISED MAY 1994

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Aardvark Tiddlywinks Association.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purposes of this association are to promote interest in the history and development of tiddlywinks and to provide opportunities for members to play tiddlywinks.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERS

Section 1. Persons interested in becoming members may join after attending two consecutive meetings and paying the required dues. No formal application or interview is required.

Section 2. Active members shall be enrolled students at The University of Alabama. Associate members shall be faculty or staff interested in tiddlywinks.

Section 3. The number of active members in the organization must be one more than 50% of the total number of members. Associate members are not eligible to hold office or to vote.

Section 4. Annual dues of \$5.00 shall be paid by September 30 of each year, after which a member will be dropped by nonpayment of dues.

Section 5. In order to maintain active membership status, a member must compete in at least three (3) tiddlywinks games per semester. Failure to meet this requirement will result in expulsion from the association. Expelled members must wait a semester (excluding summers) before they may seek active membership status.

Section 6. Membership in the Aardvark Tiddlywinks Association shall be open to all students of The University of Alabama, without regard to race, religion, sex, disability, national origin, color, age disability, gender identity or expression, sexual identity, or veteran status except in cases of designated fraternal organizations exempted by federal law from Title IX regulations concerning discrimination on the basis of sex.

ARTICLE IV

OFFICE

Section 1. The officers of the association shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers shall comprise the executive committee.

Section 2. Officers shall be elected at the first meeting in April each year from the pool of nominations. Active members seeking office may be nominated by other members or by themselves.

Section 3. Elections shall be by secret ballot. Candidates receiving one vote more than 50% of the total number of votes cast shall be named to their respective offices.

Section 4. Officers shall be elected to serve for one year, beginning at the close of the meeting at which they are elected. Vacancies in offices shall be filled by nomination and voting by a quorum of active members.

Section 5. The President is responsible for presiding over all meetings and determining play dates of the next tiddlywinks game.

Section 6. The Vice President is responsible for setting up all game materials at each play date and ordering new materials as needed.

Section 7. The Secretary is responsible for recording the minutes and the results of each tiddlywinks game. Those records must be open to inspection to all members.

Section 8. The Treasurer is responsible for collecting membership dues and dispensing funds for the purchase of new game equipment.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meetings of the association shall be held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from September to May unless otherwise ordered by the organization or by the Executive Committee.

Section 2. The regular meeting on the first Wednesday in April shall be known as the annual meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports from officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the President or of the Executive Committee and shall be called upon the written request of 10 members of the association. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice, and three days notice shall be given except in cases of emergencies.

Section 4. Fifty percent of the active members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VI

RELATIONSHIP

Aardvark Tiddlywinks Association shall have no relationship to or be controlled by any other local, state or national organization.

ARTICLE VII

FINANCES

In the event that the organization, Tiddlywinks Association becomes defunct or is terminated, all funds held in the Tiddlywinks Association account at the Alabama Credit Union shall be donated in full to the University of Alabama Student Organization Scholarship Fund and the account officially closed.

ARTICLE VIII

COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall include the officers of the association. They shall supervise affairs of the association between its business meetings, make recommendations to the association and perform other duties as specified in these by-laws. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of the association, and none of its acts shall conflict with actions taken by the association.

Section 2. Other committees, standing or special, shall be appointed by the President as the association or the Executive Committee deem necessary to carry on the work of the association.

ARTICLE IX

ADVISOR

One or more advisors shall be elected each year in the same manner as the association’s officers. Responsibilities shall be those assigned by The University of Alabama Student Handbook and shall include:

- a.
- b.
- c.

ARTICLE X

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current addition of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these by-laws and special rules of order the association may adopt.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the association by two-thirds vote, provided the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

ARTICLE XII

BY-LAWS

By-laws to this constitution may be added at any regular meeting of the association by two-thirds vote, provided the by-laws has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

Document History:

Created:

[INSERT DATE OF CREATION]

by:

[INSERT AUTHORS]

Amended:

[INSERT DATE, SECTION, & AUTHOR OF AMMEDMENT]

Record of Organization Standing:

Chartered:

[INSERT DATE OF RECOGNITION]

Signed By: _____

President

Signed By: _____

Advsiior

Signed By: _____

Secretary

Additional Tips for constitution creation

- A constitution is a founding document that provides a clear outline of the structure and mission of the organization and provides a basic set of rules that will govern the group. Its intent is to provide consistent leadership for the organization as it will be passed on to future officers.
- Bring all stakeholders together, including organization advisor
- Start by creating a mission statement that describes the purpose of the group, along with a list of activities that will accomplish the purpose.
- Define the composition your membership and the requirements for admission into the group
- Write officer descriptions in third person using position titles instead of pronouns, i.e., "The President will."
- Keep the document in an editable digital format (.doc), a permanent digital format (.pdf), and in print

You can also include bylaws for your constitution. A detailed description of bylaws and what should and can be included is found below. Bylaws are not a necessary requirement for your constitution; however, they do provide the opportunity to be more specific regarding constitutional requirements. Typically bylaws are intended to establish rules or procedures necessary to carry out the constitution. It is important to note that your bylaws must not change, amend, or conflict with your constitution.

- More detailed material concerning members, rights, duties expulsion, and resignation procedure.
- Provisions for honorary members/associate members, if the group so desires.
- Provisions for membership fee, dues and assessments, if there are to be any, should be set down in detail.
- Detailed description of the officer positions, if desired.
- Duties, authority, and responsibility of the Executive Committee.
- Name of the standing committees, if any, and the method of selection of committee chair:
- The duties of the committee(s) should also be stated.
- Provisions for creation of new committees
- A provision for some accepted rules of order for parliamentary procedure (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order).
- A method to amend the by-laws, typically a majority vote (***)Required should you choose to have bylaws)