YOUR ORGANIZATIONS FOUNDATION & SELF GOVERNANCE

In this document you will find information about...

- Mission and Purpose
- Statements & Best practices
- Constitution

- Developing agendas
- How to run a meeting
- Post meeting procedures

MISSION AND PURPOSE

Establishing a mission and purpose helps guide and focus your organization. Understanding this makes building the constitution easier. A mission statement assists in the decision-making process and explains to members and non-members what the organization hopes to accomplish. The purpose statement adds some context to the mission statement and provides some examples. These define why the organization was established and what it will strive to accomplish. They should be specific, clear, and describe easy-to-understand goals.

MISSION AND PURPOSE STATEMENTS

SHOULD BE:

- Simple. Use common words and get rid of the fluff

- Compelling. Inspire others to take action

- Continuously relevant. Stay releveant as time passes

SHOULD NOT BE:

- Made with haste. Don't hastily make something that fails to add value

- Unachievable goals. Make sure the statements sets reasonable goals and expectations

- Use Jargon. using jargon makes understanding your statement difficult for outsiders to understand

BEST PRACTICES

You should consult with your members for input before drafting these statements. Their feedback is an important and valuable tool in building buy-in and ensuring participation in the future. At these meetings members share what they think of the values, core services, and unique attributes of the organization will be. There will likely be variations in these answers so look for patterns or commonalities that everyone can agree on. You can use a Values List to collectively decide on the organization's values. Start by eliminating all the values the membership determines to be not relevant to the organization's mission and purpose. With the remaining values list, discuss between one another which values to eliminate until 5 are left. From these 5, determine how to discuss and implement them into the mission and purpose statements.

MISSION EXAMPLE

The Podcasting Club's mission is to provide a community for its members where they can share in their appreciation for podcasting.

PURPOSE EXAMPLE

The Podcasting Club's purpose is to learn about the podcasting industry by sharing insights and inviting podcasters to come and share their experiences; further to discover new podcasts that members are listening to via group meetings and discussions.

CONSTITUTION

Your constitution is a founding document of the organization, outlining the structure and mission of the organization. This document will establish basic rules to govern the group by outlining instructions on how meetings might run or how officer elections are to be held.

All organizations are required to have a constitution and to submit these to the Department of Student Involvement.
Below you will find a checklist and a skeleton of a constitution that are downloadable for you to take back to your organization and work on collaboratively.

Broadly, your constitution will require sections detailing the name and purpose of the organization, membership requirements, officer requirements, rules around meetings and voting, how finances are to be handled, and how amendments or revisions can be made.

Documents:
Constitution Checklist Download Constitution Checklist
Sample Constitution Download Sample Constitution

Following the guidelines from these documents and building your constitution will ensure your organization can function properly and hold members and officers accountable for their responsibilities.

DEVELOPING AGENDAS

Before your organization hosts a meeting of any kind it is important to define the purpose of the meeting. If you can't come up with a purpose, don't have a meeting.

Prior to the meeting taking place you should develop an agenda and provide a system for the officers to add to the agenda.

An example of agenda components may be:
- Distribute the agenda and circulate background material, such as lengthy documents or articles, prior to the meeting so that members will be prepared and feel involved. (with platforms like Teams and the online Microsoft suites, you can more easily share meeting documents digitally too)
- Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it. Remember that members have other commitments.
- If possible, arrange members so that they face each other. For larger groups try U-shaped rows. A leader can better facilitate the meeting when they are centrally located.
- Choose a location suitable to the group size. Small rooms with too many people get stuffy and create tension. A larger room is more comfortable and encourages individual expression.
- Use visual aids, such as PowerPoints, for interest.
- Retain the same meeting location, when possible, to allow for participants to have consistency and the facilitators to be comfortable within the meeting location.
- Below is a template Download template for organizing your meeting agenda. Use whatever agenda template works best for your organization.