

Starting a New Club

1. Meet with Center for Student Involvement Staff

This initial meeting is to discuss your idea for a club, review the requirements and paperwork, and talk about how the Center for Student Involvement can assist you.

To schedule a meeting

- e-mail the Director for CSI at adriennevictor@sunyorange.edu
OR
- Stop by the Center for Student Involvement in the Shepard Student Center in Middletown or Tower Basement in Newburgh

2. Recruit Members

A club must have at least 6 active members in order to be recognized.

- Active members attend meetings regularly and participate in group events and planning.
- All members must be currently enrolled, credit students at SUNY Orange.
- The Center for Student Involvement can help you in your recruitment efforts by reserving rooms for meetings and reproducing flyers, posters and other advertisements. Word of mouth can also be a very effective recruitment tool. Talk to students in your classes and in the cafeteria and student lounges.

3. Find an Advisor

All clubs are required to have a Faculty or Staff Advisor, but finding the right one can sometimes be difficult. A good Advisor is extremely important to a club's success. They must be an active and involved part of your club, and not just a name on paper. They can help you avoid potential problems and to understand how to best use available College resources to accomplish your club goals. The Advisor does not run your club---student clubs are always student run. However, their experience and knowledge is extremely important and their suggestions and feedback should always be seriously considered. The best way to find a good Advisor is to talk with faculty and staff members that you know well. While they may not be best suited to be your club Advisor, they may be able to recommend a colleague that could help. Before deciding on an Advisor, your club should meet with them and review the expectations outlined in the Club Advisor Agreement found on the [website](#). The Club-Advisor relationship should be

viewed as a partnership with expectations on both sides and in which frequent and open communication is the key to success.

4. **Write a Constitution and Complete the Club Recognition Paperwork**

Every club must complete the Club Recognition Form on our [website](#) and have the Advisor complete the Advisor Agreement/Grade Verification form. Please note – new clubs do NOT need to complete a budget request (this is for returning clubs only). Every club is required to have a constitution. This is a very important document because it lays out how your club is going to operate and the rules that you will follow. Important elements might include job descriptions for officers, how and when elections are held, and, for those “worst-case scenario” situations, how and under what circumstances members and/or officers may be removed. Writing the constitution should be taken very seriously and all members should be involved, especially in approving the final draft. A sample constitution can be found in **APPENDIX A**. The CSI staff can also assist your club with writing your constitution. Once all of the forms are completed, they should be returned to the Center for Student Involvement.

5. **Meet with the Student Senate**- The final step in the recognition process is to obtain the approval of the Student Senate. When you submit your completed form, the Senate will schedule a meeting for final approval. It is strongly recommended that the club send representatives to both of these meetings to answer questions that may arise. You will be notified via e-mail of the vote to recognize your club.

CLUB RECOGNITION

What is a recognized club?

The club is officially part of the College and will be included in official listings and publications such as the College Catalog, the Student Handbook, and the College Website. Recognized means clubs can:

- reserve rooms and facilities on campus
- hold meetings and sponsor events on campus
- advertise and post notices on campus bulletin boards and online
- hold fundraising events

- apply for funding from the Student Senate
- have a mailbox in the Center for Student Involvement and receive mail at the College
- make use of Center for Student Involvement resources including faxing, photocopying and producing posters

Constitution Checklist

Items that should be included in any club constitution

- The Club's Official name and any abbreviation if needed (For example: Changing Outlooks Through Activities (COTA))
- The purpose or mission of the club
- Requirements for membership (Any club funded by the Student Senate must be open to all OCCC credit students. However, alumni, community members who are not currently registered in credit classes can NOT participate in a club.) You may list other requirements such as attendance and participation in club events.
- Active versus inactive membership – how is a person's status determined
- Duties and responsibilities of club officers including GPA requirements. (All club officers are required by the College to maintain a 2.0 semester and cumulative grade point average)
- Voting procedures for officer elections-When are the officer elections held (fall, spring, etc)? Is there a nomination process before elections? Is the membership allowed to ask questions of the candidates before the vote is held? Is the vote secret ballot?
- How are officer positions filled if a vacancy occurs between elections?
- Process for removing members-occasionally, a member may become a detriment to the club due to disruptive behavior or other harmful actions. There should be a fair process defined in the Constitution for how to remove these members. Efforts should always be made to resolve any issues through discussions before seeking to remove a member. The club advisor can be helpful in this process.
- Process for removing an officer if they are not performing their job as outlined in the Constitution
- Process for changing the constitution-How are amendments made?
- When/how does the club meet-Do not be so specific as to include days, times, or rooms or you will have to change your constitution every semester. You should indicate whether the club will meet weekly, bi-weekly, etc.
- How will the meetings be run? Most groups cite Robert's Rules of Order as the authority for how meetings will be conducted. If you have questions about

Parliamentary Procedure or Robert's consult that section in the Club Resource Manual or contact the Center for Student Involvement.

- Quorum-what is it and how it works-Quorum is the number of active members that must be present for a meeting to be considered official and for any voting to take place. It is usually set at 50% plus one of the active members. Clubs may set a higher standard, but it should never be lower than the standard outlined above. What the standard for Quorum is to be, it should be reflected in the Constitution.
- Minutes/records of meetings (archiving minutes)- The Constitution should indicate who will take minutes of the meetings (usually the Secretary) and how they will be archived. Good meeting minutes are extremely important for passing on important information to future years of the club.
- Role of advisor-the basic responsibilities of the advisor are outlined in the Club Advisor Agreement that every club completes each semester. The Constitution should outline specifics for the club including how the advisor is selected and other specific responsibilities.
- Committees (ad hoc/standing)- Some clubs, especially larger groups that sponsor many events, many use committees to work more efficiently. Committees can be either Standing (committees that exist semester to semester for an ongoing reason) or Ad Hoc (temporary committees appointed to serve a one-time function and then disbanded.) If committees are to be used, the Constitution should outline how they are formed.
- Spelling and grammar count- this is the most important document your club has...please take the time to proofread it!
- Format for constitution-How should the final version of your constitution look? You can refer to the Club Resource Manual for a sample Constitution or come to the Center for Student Involvement for advice or to see other examples.

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section 1: Name

State the name of the club- you may abbreviate the name after this section if you identify that abbreviation here.

Section 2: Purpose/Mission

State the purpose/mission of your organization-the reasons why you exist. This can be in a list format, or in a paragraph.

Section 3: *Affiliation*

If your organization is affiliated with any regional/national organizations, please state those affiliations here.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility for Membership

Recognized clubs must be open to any currently enrolled credit student of SUNY Orange.

Section 2: Voting Member Criteria

State how a student becomes a voting member [e.g. attends a certain % of meetings/events, pay dues,etc] and if there are any criteria for any other membership categories. This is an important issue for your organization – you want to make sure that students listed on your voting member list are active, interested students in your group.

Section 3: Removal of Members

State the process to remove any member who is not in good standing with the club. Due process must be followed. Things to consider are: reasonable notice to the person being considered for removal, opportunity to defend their position, quorum needed to vote, timeline for the process, appeal process. While you will hopefully not need this section, it is very important that have a process in place. When you need it, this will clarify the procedure and take out some of the difficult personal issues.

Article III: Officers

Section 1: Officer Qualifications

Identify what qualifications a student must have to be eligible to be an officer. This may include QPA, length of time in organization, previous experience, etc. All officers must be currently enrolled SUNY Orange credit students with a QPA and CQPA of at least 2.0.

Section 2: Elected Officers

List the positions in descending order (e.g., President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary)

Section 3: Duties of Officers

List each officer position and their duties. You can include this information in Section 2 if you prefer. Typical duties include:

President: preside at meetings, call special meetings, primary contact with the institutions, appoint committee chairs, runs the election process.

Vice-President: assume President's duties in his/her absence, schedule meeting/practice rooms/facilities.

Treasurer: keeps all financial records, notifies organization of financial issues, prepares budget/allocation requests.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1: *Regular Meeting/Club Activities*

Address how often business meetings will occur, any regular club activities, etc, process to notify members of meetings/activities.

Section 2: *Special Meetings*

Identify why you would call special meetings, and the process used to call these meetings/notify members, etc. Will these meetings be run any differently than regular meetings?

Section 3: *Parliamentary Authority*

Will you use Robert's Rules of Order? How will the meetings be run....

Section 4: *Quorum**

What % of your membership must be present for official club business to occur?

*A quorum is a certain percentage of voting members required to be present during a vote. It is VERY important to clearly indicate what your quorum will be. You want to make sure that when a vote takes place, that you have a representative sample of your voting membership present.

Article VII: Committees

Section 1: *Committee Structure*

Include what committees (if any) that your club will have. Include responsibilities of each committee and who is responsible for each committee. Examples include Membership, Programs, Elections, Fundraising, etc.

Article VIII: Amendments

Section 1: *Ratification*

Identify the process to be used regarding proposed constitutional amendments: voting procedures, timeline, etc.

Section 2: *Submittal to Center for Student Involvement*

Any changes made to this constitution must be submitted to the Center for Student Involvement.