

## 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](mailto: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 7 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.

## Registering a Returning Club

In order to maintain recognition for a new academic year, all clubs must complete the club recognition documents which can be found on our [website](#)

- Club Recognition Form
  - Includes info about the club, officers, a constitution request, and a full membership List (clubs must maintain a minimum of 7 active members)
- Signed Club Advisor Agreement/Grade Verification form
  - Must be completed by your advisor
- Budget Request Form

They must be returned to the Center for Student Involvement by the advertised deadline each semester or the club will lose its recognition and all related privileges. A club would then have to reapply for recognition.

# 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

## Maintaining Recognition

Title IX

About Title IX

- All club officers are must fulfill their Title IX requirements. Title IX is a federal civil rights law that prohibits sexual discrimination in education programs including athletic programs or activities that receive federal funding. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Reauthorization Act (2013) also prohibit sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. SUNY Orange is committed to the prevention of sexual assault and provides workshops, prevention information programs, and links to direct services and resources in the area.

Title IX Completion

- All club officers are required to view *Not Anymore*, an online interpersonal violence prevention program from Student Success™. This video-based program will provide critical information about Consent, Bystander Intervention, Sexual

Assault, Dating and Domestic Violence, Stalking, and campus specific policies and reporting procedures.

This training will inform you of your rights as a student, provide you with Title IX related college policy information, and give you the steps involved to make a report if it becomes necessary for you to do so. Not Anymore will help you better understand how vitally important these issues are and what you can do to help make your campus safer.

Disclosure: The training contains sensitive material involving sexual and interpersonal violence. While trigger warnings and resources are provided throughout the program, we understand such programming may be problematic for some viewers. Please contact Madeline Torres-Diaz for confidential support and/or to discuss alternatives.

A notice will be sent to all clubs and advisors at the beginning of each academic year with instructions and the deadline date for club officers to complete the training. Any club that fails to meet this requirement will lose its Student Senate funding. Additionally, if the club officers change at any point during the academic year, the new officers must immediately complete the Not Anymore training.

This is an important state requirement that must be taken seriously. If you have any questions about the policy or the process, please contact the Center for Student Involvement.

### **COLT Night (and Organization Leadership Training)**

Each year COLT Night (Club and Organization Leadership Training) brings together representatives from every recognized SUNY Orange club and organization on both campuses for an evening of networking and leadership training focused on addressing real problems and challenges our clubs are facing and helping participants to develop the skills and strategies needed to help their clubs continue to grow and prosper. It also gives the clubs an opportunity to network with each other and their student government representatives to foster more cooperation and support. The program derives its name from the school mascot, the SUNY Orange Colt.

COLT Night features three interactive workshops facilitated by staff and faculty from the college. The three workshops are each offered twice in two 50 minute blocks, allowing

participants to attend the sessions of their choice.

### **Inter-Club Council (ICC)**

Meets once a month and brings together the Student Senate, the Board of Activities and representatives of all clubs. It is an opportunity to ask questions, share ideas and look for opportunities to work together. Each club is required to send one representative to the ICC. It does not have to be an officer, just a member who knows what is going on with the club and will bring back information to share. The Student Senate will notify all clubs of the ICC meeting dates, times and locations at the beginning of each semester. Clubs who do not send a representative are subject to financial penalty. On the rare occasion that no person from a club can attend an ICC meeting, the Student Senate must be notified in advance of the meeting in order to grant an excused absence.

# 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 and students 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 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 site 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.

# CONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

-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 all active members. Clubs may set a higher standard, but it should never be lower than the standard outlined above. Whatever 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, may 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, pays 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 you 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.



# SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

Secretary: takes and distributes minutes of all club meetings, recorder keeper (current and past members, files minutes, etc), club historian, notify members of meetings, handles the official correspondence of the club.

## *Section 4: Vacancy in Office*

In the event a vacancy should occur (resignation or removal), provisions must be made to fill the vacancy. Officer succession/"chain of command" should be addressed (e.g., in the event that the President leaves office, the Vice President will assume those duties until a special election is held. Then refer readers to the special election section of Article IV.

## *Section 5: Removal of Officers*

Grounds for removal of an officer must be clearly identified. Similar to the removal of members, due process must be followed. (see above) Make sure you note the role of your club advisor.

One example:

A petition to remove the officer in question must be submitted to another officer. This petition must contain the signatures of x% of voting members. When such petition is received, the officer shall call a meeting of the club to determine whether or not the officer should be removed.

*Grounds for removal are to presented by the officer in charge at a regular or special club meeting.*

The officer in question shall be provided an opportunity to present a defense either in person or in writing.

*A quorum shall be present, and a (50% +1, 2/3, simply majority) vote of the voting members shall decide upon removal.*

While you will hopefully not need this section, it is very important that you have a process in place. When you need it, this will clarify the procedure and take out some of the difficult personal issues....

## Article IV: Elections

### *Section 1: Nomination Process*

State how officer candidates will be nominated (by a current officer/member, self-nomination, etc.) and the timeline associated with the nomination process.

### *Section 2: Election*

Election procedures, quorum present, method of voting (secret ballot, etc.), number of terms a person can serve, and when the elections will be held

### *Section 3: Special Elections*

This section outlines what procedures will take place if an officer leaves/is removed from office. Clearly state the timeline for these procedures (e. g, within "x" weeks of vacancy occurring). You may use the same procedures from Section 2, with a revised timeline.

## Article V: Advisor

### *Section 1: Selection*

Indicate how your club will choose an advisor. Note: All clubs are required to have an advisor who is a SUNY Orange faculty or staff member.

### *Section 2: Duties*

What do you want your advisor to do?

# SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

## 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.

### *Section 2: Special/Ad-Hoc Committees*

State that special/ad-hoc committees may be formed if needed...

## 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.

