How to Write a Bylaw/Constitution

Generally speaking, a good constitution is a document outlining the basic principles agreed to by the members of your organization. It establishes the structure and purposes of the organization, the methods of selecting members and officers, and the powers and responsibilities of each. Your constitution will be organized in a variation of an outline form; you may find it helpful to divide the outline into articles and sections, but it does not need to follow that format. Below is an example to guide you.

Article I: Introduction
Section I: Name of Organization
Section II: General purpose/goal of the organization

Article II: Membership
Section I: Who is eligible to be a member of your organization?
Section II: How are the members selected? (open to all, application, ballot)
Section III: Qualifications and responsibilities of the members

Article III: Executive Board/Officers
Section I: What are the different positions?
Section II: Who is eligible for each position?
Section III: Qualifications and responsibilities of each position.

Section IV: What is the process for selecting the officers? (election, application, appointment, etc.)
Section V: How are the officers removed from office if necessary?
Section VI: How are vacant positions filled if necessary?

Article IV: Advisor
Section I: What is an advisor?
Section II: How is the advisor chosen?
Section III: Qualifications and responsibilities of the advisor

Article V: Meetings
Section I: How often does the organization meet?
Section II: Who presides over the meeting/what happens?
Section III: Who must attend?

Article VI: Amendments to the Bylaw/Constitution
Section I: What is the process for offering an amendment?
Section II: How is the amendment ratified (2/3 majority?)

Your Bylaw/Constitution may be more elaborate or simple, depending on your organization. It will need to reflect the reality of your organization, but it should not encompass every possible occurrence that you can imagine.

Source adopted from Cabrini College

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