

# **New Student Organization Handbook**

**2012 Edition**

## **New Student Organization Handbook**

Starting a new student organization is a fun and exciting experience as you are creating something brand new on our campus. We look forward to supporting your organization in any way possible as you begin to gather the necessary materials towards approval. Please use the following pages of information as a resource guide and if you have any further questions feel free to contact the Director of Student Activities.

Best Wishes,

Brian Starkel

Director of Student Activities

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### **Requirements:**

1. A new organization must have a faculty/staff advisor.
2. A new organization must create a constitution outlining the guidelines of the group.
3. A new organization must recruit at least five students to be a part of the group.
4. A new organization must submit their constitution along with the above information to Student Senate for approval.

## **Creating a Constitution**

The constitution will serve as a guide for your student organization in its operations and activities. The constitution contains the fundamental values and structure of your organization.

The constitution easy to understand and carefully worded as this is a living document that will be updated, hopefully, everything new membership comes into the organization's executive position.

It would be helpful for each member to receive a copy of the constitution once approval has been made.

## **Sample Constitution**

The constitution should be simple yet comprehensive and difficult to amend, leaving any specific procedural rules to be included in the by-laws. When amending the constitution, as with the by-laws, previous notice of any proposed changes are usually required to be given to the membership and should not be changed in the same meeting in which proposed.

### *Article I – Name & Purpose*

Section 1: Name of Student Organization

Section 2 - Purpose: Organizations should take care to include a complete statement of purpose and objectives. Programs sponsored by the organization must comply and be consistent with the organization's stated purpose and objectives.

### *Article II - Membership: Qualifications and categories of membership.*

Voting membership should be defined as limited to currently enrolled Defiance College students.

### *Article III - Organization Leadership: Titles, terms of office, type of selection, and duties of the leaders.*

Organization leaders represent the Executive Committee and general membership and are elected or appointed from

the ranks of the organization's voting membership. The titles of organization leaders, the length of terms, specification as to which leaders are elected or appointed and by whom, and the general duties of each leadership position should be clearly specified. Organizations need to have the necessary leaders to conduct their activities.

*Article IV - Executive Committee (if needed): Size and composition of the Committee.*

This Committee (like a board of trustees or directors) represents the general membership and conducts business of the organization between general meetings of the membership and reports its actions at the general meetings of the membership. In many organizations, this Committee is comprised of the organization leaders, chairpersons of the standing committees, and sometimes ex officio members from related student organizations.

*Article V - Standing Committees (if needed): Names, purposes, and composition.*

These committees serve the organization leadership, Executive Committee, and general membership and are permanent and designed to carry out the basic functions of the organization. Chairpersons of these committees are often appointed by the organization leadership.

*Article VI – Method of Removing Officers and Members.*

General members and elected or appointed leaders should be expected to meet certain standards and conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on the organization. In the event that a member or leader does not meet those expectations, the organization should have procedures in place for objectively considering the member's or leader's probationary membership status or removal from the organization. The process described in the constitution should specify which body conducts this review and ultimately makes the decision. It should be noted that the organization's non-discrimination policy should protect members from removal based on those listed statuses.

*Article VII – Advisor(s) or Advisory Board: Qualification Criteria.*

Advisors of student organizations must be members of the University faculty or Administrative & Professional staff. Responsibilities and expectations of advisors should be clearly and adequately described.

*Article VIII – Meetings of the Organization: Required meetings and their frequency.*

Required meetings and their number are specified here. For instance, two general meetings of the membership may be required each academic term except for summer.

*Article IX – Method of Amending Constitution: Proposals, notice, and voting requirements.*

Proposed amendments should be in writing, should not be acted upon but read in the general meeting in which they are proposed, should be read again at a specified number of subsequent general meetings and the general meeting in which the votes will be taken. Approval should require at least two-thirds of voting members present (and to conduct any business an organization should have quorum present at a business meeting, which is at minimum 50% + 1 of total organization members). The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently.

### *Article X – Method of Dissolution of Organization*

Requirements and procedures for dissolution of the student organization should be stated. Should any organization assets and debt exist, appropriate means for disposing of these assets and debts should be specified clearly and unequivocally.

Adapted from The Ohio State University.

### **Finding a faculty/staff advisor**

It is essential that a group finds a faculty or staff advisor for the new student organization. An advisor will act as a guide and mentor to group members and should be someone who has enough time in their schedule to take on another extracurricular activity at Defiance College. If your group has a connection to a certain content area (i.e. Education, Arts & Humanities), it is recommended that an advisor would be a part of the faculty within that particular area as they can provide a certain expertise to the group. Please note that any faculty or staff member is eligible as an advisor but choose wisely as they will be a primary resource now and into the future.

### **Recruitment of students**

It is required that you have a membership of at least five members before submitting your materials for approval. As there are a wide variety of student organizations, athletic teams, and activities on campus, one of the hardest parts may be to maintain and recruit membership to your student organization.

Great recruitment comes from hard work and sharing a consistent message that will allow people to be excited to be a part of your group. Make sure to utilize all the resources on campus to get your message out about your student organization. These methods may include:

- An Onestop email
- Facebook group/fan page
- Posters and signs (supplies can be found in the student organization room in Hubbard/McCann)
- Announcements in class or at other meetings

As a student, you are creating a new student group because you feel this is a need for the campus community. Other students are looking for the same thing you are looking for: a place to belong and/or utilize the student organization to serve an interest. Begin recruiting people

who share the same interests and if you are having trouble finding/maintaining membership make sure to drop by the Office of Student Activities for more resources and ideas.

### **Student Senate approval**

Students who have all the requirements completed must submit a request to Student Senate. You can contact the Student Senate advisor Ken Wetstein at [kwetstein@defiance.edu](mailto:kwetstein@defiance.edu) to submit your constitution, roster, and name of your advisor.

### **After Approval**

Once approval is given by Student Senate, there are many benefits of becoming a full-fledged student organization. These advantages include the ability to book rooms on campus, request funds from Student Senate, be eligible to co-sponsor events, and many, many more. To maintain your status as an active student organization, you must have one representative come to the bi-weekly Student Senate meetings to report on the happenings of your group and any updates you may want to share with the general campus community.