

Guidelines for Writing Bylaws

Writing your By-laws

Your by-laws describe how your organization will operate. It needs to be tightly enough constructed that it will hold water, but it needs to be loose enough to give you some flexibility when necessary.

Article I Name

Give the organization's name. Spell out any acronym.

Article II Purpose

A. Include your mission statement or purpose of your organization.

1. Why does your organization exist?
2. What purpose does it serve?

B. If your organization is affiliated with a local, regional, or national organization, say so

Article III Membership

Indicate who is eligible for membership.

Article IV Requirements for Membership

List any requirements for membership. Although most organizations are open to all, honor societies are only open to certain students who have met particular grade requirements.

Article V Officers

Describe your officer structure, and include the duties of ALL the officers.

Give any requirements for officers (need to have been a member for one year, need a certain gpa, etc.). All officers must be in good standing, academically and behaviorally

Article VI Officer Eligibility

Who can run for office?

Article VII Officer Election

Describe your regular officer election process. When are they elected? Who is elected? Who can vote?

How will the election be held? When do the old officers leave office and the new officers begin?

Article VIII Officer Replacement

A. Describe the process by which officers will be replaced if they resign.

1. Will the VP move up?
2. Or will a special election be held?
3. Will someone simply be appointed?

B. You should include the circumstances under which an officer can be removed and how that removal will occur. We suggest that you try to always work out your differences!

Article IX Meetings

State how often meetings will be held, and who has the authority to call meetings. State the circumstances which must be met if you want to call special meetings.

Article X Finances

If your organization wants to charge annual or semi-annual dues of its members, please indicate so in this section. Again, you might not want to be so specific. You might want to say

“dues will be determined at the first meeting of the semester.”

Article XI Advisor

State whether the advisor is voting or non-voting and give some specifics about his/her role. We suggest that advisors not vote. We would also suggest that you put in your by-laws that officers will meet a particular number of times per semester with the advisor. Indicate how a new advisor will be selected if your other one leaves.

Article XII Non-Discrimination Policy

Include a non-discrimination statement. Here's one you can use:

“(name of organization) does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, creed, color, handicap, disability, veteran status, national origin, ancestry, or sexual orientation.”

Article XIII Non-Hazing Policy

State that the organization will not practice any physical or psychological forms of hazing, and that members are free to discontinue their membership without undue pressure or interference.

Article XIV Amendments to By-Laws

State the procedure for changing your by-laws; for example, who can make the proposal, does it need to be written and presented at one meeting and then voted on the next, etc?

