SAMPLE Constitution

*This Registered Student Organization (RSO) sample constitution is provided for use as a guideline only. If you like this format, you may use this document as a template. Simply delete this introductory paragraph, put your organization’s name at the top, and fill in the sections with information relevant to your organization. Your organization’s actual constitution may be expanded or abbreviated but must include the following asterisked (\*) sections below in order to be considered for registration as a student organization at Kennesaw State University. Drafted constitutions for new RSOs will be reviewed by a Department of Student Activities staff member and recommended changes will be provided at the “Getting Started” Meeting.*

**\*- Components marked with an asterisk are required for RSO constitutions. Constitutions submitted without these components will not be approved.**

**\* Article I – Name**

\* Section 1 – This is where you will state the formal name of the organization as well as any nicknames or abbreviations, especially if you plan on using these abbreviations throughout the document. You can include something like “The name of this organization shall be [Insert the formal name by which the student organization shall be officially known.], hereafter referred to in this document as [nickname]”

1. This is a subsection. Throughout the document you may find it helpful to break sections down into smaller components, such as when you identify the requirements for membership. That way you can avoid long paragraphs of text, and it makes navigating the document much easier as a whole. You could continue to drill down into sub-subsections as well.
   1. This is a sub-subsection.

**\*Article II – Purpose or Mission Statement**

\* Section 1 – This section is where you identify what the goals of the organization are to be. It is not expected that you will go into great detail here, but rather, you should be exploring what the reason(s) are for establishing this group. You can say something such as “The purpose of this organization shall be to [Insert the organization’s defined purpose (to promote, to organize, to educate, etc.) and if available, its mission statement.]”

**\*Article III – Affiliations**

\* Section 1- Kennesaw State University: **(This section needs to be included in the document written exactly as is with only the name of the organization inserted where applicable)**

1. This organization is a Registered Student Organization (RSO) at Kennesaw State University, but is not part of the University itself.
2. In all correspondence and publications, it may refer to itself as an organization at Kennesaw State University, but not as part of Kennesaw State University itself.
3. [Name of RSO] accepts full financial and production responsibility for all activities it sponsors.
4. [Name of RSO] agrees to abide by all pertinent Kennesaw State University policies and regulations, including the most current RSO Manual and Student Codes of Conduct. Where Kennesaw State University policies and regulations and those of RSO differ, the policies and regulations of Kennesaw State University will take precedence.
5. [Name of RSO] recognizes and understands that the University assumes no legal liability for the actions of the organization.

\* Section 2 – If the group is affiliated with any state/national non-student entity, you would need to identify that here, using the formal name of the national/regional entity. If not, this section may be removed.

**\* Article IV – Membership**

\* Section 1 – Who can be members? Keep in mind that all RSOs can allow non-KSU students to be affiliated with the organization, but they will not be recognized as full members with voting rights. If your organization would like to be open to Georgia Highlands College students who take classes at the Marietta Campus, include a statement such as “This organization is open to all KSU students and Georgia Highlands College Marietta students.”

\* Section 2- What makes someone a “member”? This is where you will outline the basic requirements for membership (i.e. dues, attendance, training, etc.). “Active members of [insert organization name] are required to [pay dues, attend 50% of meetings, maintain a certain GPA, etc.]”

Section 3- What are the privileges of membership? Typically, most members will be allowed to vote or serve in leadership or on committees, but are there other perks (i.e. access to organization events, being able to use organization resources, etc.)?

\* Section 4 – Insert provisions for removing a member, in the event it is necessary.

**\* Article V – Officers or Executive Board**

\* Section 1 – This is where you will list the officers of the organization. You will also then need to include subsections for each officer as it relates to duties. You can say something like “The officers of this organization shall be: [Insert the number of officers and their titles.]” **Per Student Activities, you will minimally need to identify which position will be recognized as President (chief executive officer), Reservation Delegate (a second person to have the authority to make space reservations on behalf of the organization), and Treasurer (financial officer) in Owl Life.** The officers in these roles do not have to go by the names “President”, “Reservation Delegate”, and/or “Treasurer”, but it is the expectation that organizations will identify who will be listed in those roles in Owl Life for the organization. You may also with to include other officers such as a Vice President (to serve in lieu of the President), a Secretary (to handle minutes and formal communication), and various committee chairs**.**

1. Subsections would be a good idea here, one for each officer. This is where you could include their duties. It’s best to think of all the different responsibilities that someone needs\* to be doing for the organization and make sure that those tasks are assigned to someone who is an officer. Some examples are included below.
2. “President- The president of the organization shall be responsible for leading all organization meetings, monitoring the performance of all other officers, and serving as the chief executive.”
3. “Vice President- The vice president will assume all the responsibilities of the president in the case of their absence, will assist the president in the performance of their duties, and will serve as the Reservation Delegate for the organization.”
4. “Treasurer- The treasurer will be responsible for all financial activity of the organization including collection of dues, maintaining an accurate balance of the organization’s finances, and serving as a fiduciary for the organization.”
5. “Secretary- The secretary is responsible for taking minutes at all organization meetings and dispatching all official correspondence for the group. The secretary is also responsible for maintaining organization documents and social media accounts.”

\* Section 2 – What are the qualifications for each office, if any. For example, “Officers must have been a member of the organization for at least one calendar year to be eligible to run for election as president.”

\* Section 3 – What are term lengths of each position. Being specific may be helpful, like “…one year from October 1 to September 30.” Be careful to include provisions for holding elections before an officer’s term expires.

\* Section 4 – Insert provisions for removing an officer, in the event it is necessary.

**\* Article VI – Elections**

\* Section 1 – Establish a timeline for your elections process. When will they be? Who will announce elections? The candidates? The results? A provision should be made that specifies how far in advance election meetings will be announced. You may also want to include the timeline for the transition of officers. “Election of officers shall be held [Insert the month of elections and specify which member of the organization will oversee them.] and the formal transition of officers will be held [how long after elections before the new officers are installed]”. Per the RSO Manual, this process must be democratic.

\* Section 2 – How will you fill vacancies mid-term if they arise? Ad hoc vote? Appointment by executive board/President?

\* Section 3 – What will be your procedures for voting during elections. Some organizations make provisions for a secret ballot, for example, whereas some feel a vote by a show of hands is best. What percentage of those voting shall constitute a candidate’s election? Consider procedures for election proceedings in which no candidate has won.

**Article VII – Meetings**

Section 1 – How often will regular meetings of this group be held? Specify the frequency of meetings. Determine who has the authority to call a meeting and who has the responsibility of notifying members of meetings and how it should be done. For example, “The secretary shall notify members of the business meeting, via e-mail, no later than five business days in advance of the meeting.”

Section 2 – Insert quorum info here. A quorum is defined as the number or percentage of the total membership that must be present at a meeting in order to conduct the business of the organization. If you don’t have enough voting members present, it wouldn’t be right for a small group of people to make decisions for the entire group, for instance. “Quorum shall consist of [insert the percentage of] voting members.”

Section 3 – In many instances, a group’s constitution doesn’t cover the entire scope of organizational activities, for this reason, many groups identify an outside governance manual that can fill in the “gaps”, such as Robert’s Rules of Order or Parliamentary Procedure. For example, “The [specify edition] edition of Robert’s Rules of Order [or Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure] shall govern meetings of this organization within the requirements of this constitution and bylaws adopted by the membership of this organization.”

**\* Article VIII– Advisors**

\* Section 1 – There shall be at least one full time Kennesaw State University faculty or staff advisor who shall serve as an advisor to the organization. You will need to identify what the rights and responsibilities of the advisor are here. Remember, per the RSO Manual, the advisor cannot make decisions for the group (think guide, not supervisor).

Section 2 – How will your advisor be selected? What if you need to change your advisor? Can an advisor serve for an indefinite term, or will they need to be confirmed annually or semi-annually?

**Article IX – Committees (if applicable)**

Section 1 – Insert a description of standing committees, their function, financing, powers, etc. Examples could include committees on finance, planning a key event, recruitment of new members, marketing and publicity, elections, etc. Also consider who will lead these committees.

1. Subsections might not be a bad idea here either. That way you can capture each committee as a different subsection.

Section 2 – Describe the selection of committee members. For example, “Members of the marketing committee shall be appointed by the President, with a majority vote of approval by the general membership” or “all active members are required to serve on at least one committee of their choosing”.

**Article X – Finances (if applicable)**

Section 1 – Specify dues requirements here. Will there be a one-time fee, monthly, annually? For example, “Members shall pay dues in the amount of [insert a dollar amount], due [the schedule for which they are assessed], and will be submitted to [the individual responsible for collecting and processing dues.]”

Section 2 – Provide a description of accounting procedures, how funds are allocated, how accounts are maintained, etc. Be sure to include provisions for transparency and checks and balances between officers as well as between officers and the general membership.

**\* Article XI – Constitutional Amendments**

\* Section 1 – How will you make changes to this constitution if needed? What is the process by which revisions may be proposed? How far in advance must proposals be distributed to the membership? Are changes effective immediately upon their passage? May this take place at any meeting, or may changes only be proposed and passed at an official business meeting? For example, “This constitution may be amended by a vote of [Insert the number or proportion of the membership required to amend the constitution.] at any regular meeting of the organization, quorum having been established”.

**\*Article XII – Non-Discrimination Policy (This section needs to be included in the document exactly as written)**

Section 1 – Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all students without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all students as stated in the Kennesaw State University Non-Discrimination Statement. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states that: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

**Article XIII – Bylaws (if applicable)**

Section 1 – Some organizations may find it necessary to implement policies other than the primary guiding rules described in a constitution. The constitution, in many ways, is the backbone of the organization and as such, it may not be appropriate to include secondary policies in this document (such as the judicial process for holding members accountable or how officer transitions will be carried out). This collection of secondary or detailed policies are typically known as Bylaws. The Bylaws are not included in the constitution, but there needs to be a clause in the constitution recognizing the existence and authority of the Bylaws, which would go here.

Section 2 – If you end up adding Bylaws, you may wish to identify how the Bylaws will be changed/updated/added to here in this section. One easy way to accomplish this is to mirror the language outlined in the Amendments to the Constitution section, but in some instances, a less strict standard may be used for changing Bylaws.

**Article XIV- Dissolution**

Section 1- What happens if the RSO were to dissolve? What happens to any property, money, social media accounts, or other organization-related items if the organization were to stop operating? Even though no organization plans on ending its operations, it can be helpful to establish some provisions for that scenario if it were to occur. Consider adding provisions about how the decision is made to end the organization and what happens to its resources afterward.