

Student Government Association

How to Start a Club



Help us help you!!!

This packet is designed to help you create a constitution for a new club that you would like to form, or revise a current constitution for an existing club. Included is a model constitution for you to follow, the constitution processing procedure, a checklist for creating a constitution, the Club Charter Process, Active Club Guidelines and an Interest Group Form. It is important that these documents are very explicit and accurate, so please follow the provided material. If you have any questions feel free to contact the Student Government Association office at 5302, or email us at studentgovernment@cobleskill.edu. Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you.

Constitution Committee of Student Government

Club Charter Process

SGA Policy # 18

When a club begins the charter process with the Student Government Association, they must abide by the following process in order to officially receive their charter.

1. Find a group of at least six interested students and a committed faculty/staff advisor.
2. Submit an Interest Group Form to the Student Government Association.
3. Begin holding meetings. Minutes and Club Attendance Sheets must be turned into the Student Life Center. Interest groups must meet at least six times during their trial period before their charter will be considered.
4. The interest group must submit a constitution to the Student Government Association. The club should vote on this before submission.
5. There must be campus-wide advertising of club meetings. Campus-wide advertising includes flyers and use of Sharepoint.

After a successful two month trial period, Student Government will then vote to accept the club's charter. The two month trial period begins after the Interest Group Form is submitted and the first official meeting is held.

Reasoning:

The Student Government Association needs to monitor the activity of potential clubs in order to assure that new clubs are going to be successful. When a club gets chartered, the Student Government Association will know that they are going to be an active club.

Active Club Guidelines

SGA Policy # 19

Each chartered club of the SGA is expected to follow these guidelines:

1. Meet at least twice a month.
2. Regularly turn in minutes and attendance sheets to the Student Government Association. Minutes are due no later than two weeks after the meeting is held.
3. Keep an updated constitution on file.
4. Actively recruit and retain members.
5. Fulfill your club's purpose by abiding by your club's constitution.
6. Report your officers, advisors and meeting day, time and location to the Student Life Center by October 1st in the fall semester and March 1st in the spring semester.

If a club does not comply with the above guidelines, a review process will begin. A club will receive a warning e-mail that will outline their non-compliance in regards to specific guidelines referenced above and the deadlines to reach compliance. A club's budget may be frozen and ultimately the club may lose their official charter if they do not comply. If a club is inactivated, the club's remaining budget will be moved to Additional Funds.

Compliance of the above guidelines will be a factor when determining club budgets during the Spring semester.

To reinstate a club, you must completely follow the Inactive Club Policy.

Reasoning:

There are expectations for each club in order to be "active" and maintain their official charter. SGA needs to have a complete, accurate list of active campus clubs. Inactive clubs need to be taken off the official list of clubs.

Furthermore, since CAP guidelines only reflect several of the Active Club Guideline in the Fall semester, the Active Club Guidelines as criteria for club budgets will ensure continual adherence to these guidelines in the Spring semester.

Constitution Processing Procedure

Step 1

Submit the attached Interest Group Form to the Student Government Office.

Step 2

Write a new constitution for your club. SEE ATTACHED COPY OF THE SAMPLE CONSTITUTION FOR HELP.

Step 3

Submit your constitution to the Student Government Association by email to studentgovernment@cobleskill.edu. It will then be reviewed by Constitution Committee.

Step 4

After your constitution is reviewed by the Constitutions Committee, it will be sent back by e-mail to the officer(s) and advisor(s) of your club. You may then go over the corrections and recommendations as stated by the Constitution Chair, making sure to make all necessary changes. If your constitution was accepted as submitted the first time, then the process moves to Step 6. If your constitution requires changes, then continue to step 5.

Step 5

Re-submit your constitution to SGA with the necessary changes recommended by the Constitution Committee. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until the Constitution Committee has *officially* approved your constitution.

Step 6

The Constitution Committee will then present the approved copy to the Student Government Association to be voted on by the members. There needs to be a majority vote to become a chartered club or for the amendments to be ratified.

Step 7

The Student Government Association will notify you when it officially approves your constitution and will be put it on file in the Student Life Center. At this time, your charter will be official.

Checklist for Writing a Constitution

- The last date of revision, or date written
- The name of the club
- Purpose of the club, including the community service clause
- Who can be a member
- Club members' responsibilities
- Officers' qualifications (GPA requirement 2.0)
- Officer eligibility
- Officers' duties
- How many advisors are there
- What are the advisors' responsibilities
- How are the advisors decided
- How often do meetings occur
- How will meetings run (Parliamentary Procedure)
- Quorum requirements
- How special meetings are called
- When are elections of new officers
- How will elections/nominations take place
- What officer positions are needed
- Reasons for removal from office
- Procedure from officer removal from office
- Procedure to fill vacant officer seat
- Procedure for amending the Constitution
- Who creates the budget
- How the budget is approved
- Include the line "The budget must be approved by the Student Government Association"
- Is the following clause inserted? "All money is to be handled through the SUNY Cobleskill Business Office and governed by commonly accepted accounting standards while abiding with Student Government Association's guidelines."
- Is the following clause inserted? "The organization will not discriminate in the acceptance of members or assignment of voting privileges, rank, or office on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability or handicap, marital status, or previous affiliations."

SAMPLE CONSTITION

BASKET WEAVING CLUB OF SUNY COBLESKILL

Revised on January 23, 2001
Originally Developed in 1939

ARTICLE I ***Name***

Section A: Our name shall be the Basket Weaving Club of SUNY Cobleskill.

ARTICLE II ***Purpose***

Section A: The purpose of the Basket Weaving Club is:

1. To weave baskets.
2. To educate others in our skills and trade.

In addition to the elements listed, the club shall engage in community service projects.

ARTICLE III ***Membership***

Section A: Any SUNY Cobleskill student who has a 2.0 GPA cumulative average can be a member.

Section B: Anyone can join if they have the desire to weave baskets.

1. All members are to help out at fundraising activities.
2. Promote basket weaving as a peaceful relaxation method.
3. To weave baskets.

ARTICLE IV ***Officers and duties***

Section A:

1. Any member may be an officer as long as they show leadership skills.
2. Officers must have a 2.0 GPA cumulative average.
3. The elected officers shall be President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Section B:

1. The duties of the President are to set the agenda and preside over each meeting of the Basket Weaving Club. The president will coordinate club activities, and have the power to create committees and delegate work to these committees.

2. The role of Vice-President is that of a deputy to the President. If the President is unable to attend a meeting, then the Vice-President shall chair the meeting. The Vice-President is to support the President with the coordination of club activities, and shall help with committees where necessary.

3. The duties of the Treasurer are to keep accurate records of all disbursements and financial obligations created by the club. The Treasurer will be responsible for giving financial reports at every meeting. In the spring semester, the Treasurer shall also be responsible for creating a proposed budget on behalf of the Basket Weaving Club.

4. The duties of the Secretary are to record the events of every club meeting. His/her responsibilities will also be to file the minutes, and make sure a copy of all minutes are forwarded to the Student Government offices through the Student Life Center Secretary within a week of the recorded meeting. The Secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of attendance at every club meeting. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining any club correspondence.

ARTICLE V

Advisors

The Advisor(s) duties are to train, advise, and motivate the members of the Basket Weaving Club. They are to only advise the Club to follow the rules presented by Student Government. There must be at least one Advisor present at every meeting of the Basket Weaving Club. There is no upper limit as to how many Advisors there may be in the Basket Weaving Club, but there must always be at least one advisor. Any SUNY Cobleskill staff or faculty member (non-student) may be eligible to be an Advisor, providing the Basket Weaving Club and Student Government approves the selection. Advisors are elected/removed according to Student Government's Advisor Election Policy.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

Section A: A regular meeting time and location shall be scheduled at the beginning of each semester, and conveyed to all members. The meetings will take place bi-weekly, or as deemed necessary by the Club. The meeting place and time will also be reported to SGA in the first month of each semester.

Section B:

1. The meetings shall loosely follow the parliamentary procedure as contained in Robert's Rules of Order.
2. Quorum for an official business meeting to occur must be one (1) over 50 percent of the total membership.

Section C: The President or Advisor can call a special meeting if it is felt that one is needed. It shall be their responsibility to inform all club members of the time and location of the special meeting.

ARTICLE VII***Elections***

Section A: Any club member can run for any office. Any club member can nominate any other club member, or themselves. Nominations must take place one meeting prior to elections.

Section B: Elections shall take place within the first month of the fall semester each year. In the event that there is a vacancy at another point in the school year, then an election will be called as needed.

Section C: All nominees must give a speech before the elections. Standard procedure is a secret ballot, although the voting procedure can be decided at the meeting.

Section D: The elected offices are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary.

Article VIII***Removal from Office***

Section A: An Officer can be removed from office if they fail to live up to the duties of their office, and/or if they fail to attend three Club meetings.

Section B: Removal of office can be achieved by obtaining a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote at a Basket Weaving Club meeting. For a vote to occur, the issue of removal from office must have been brought up at the prior meeting. The officer in question shall have the right to speak prior to the vote, unless they waive their right, or if he/she fails to show up to the meeting.

Section C: A vacant office, whether through removal from office, or due to resignation shall be filled according to Article VI.

Article IX
Amendments

Section A: Any amendment to the constitution can be proposed at any regular meeting of the Basket Weaving Club. The vote on the proposed amendment must take place at the following meeting. To pass, the amendment needs to obtain a 2/3-majority vote of the club members. Any constitution change will only be made official after the change has been presented to, and approved by Student Government.

Article X
Finances

Section A: The Treasurer, on behalf of the Basket Weaving Club as outlined in Article IV, Section B, Part 3, creates the proposed Budget. The budget shall be brought before the Basket Weaving Club prior to being presented to Student Government. The vote on the proposed budget must take place at the following meeting and requires a 2/3 majority vote to pass.

Section B: The proposed budget is presented to the Student Government Association at budget hearings. The budget must be approved by the Student Government Association.

Section C: ***All money is to be handled by the SUNY Cobleskill Business Office and governed by generally accepted accounting principles while abiding with Student Government Association's guidelines. ****

Article XI
Discrimination Clause

Section A: The organization will not discriminate in the acceptance of members or assignment of voting privileges, rank, or office on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability or handicap, marital status, or previous affiliations.



Interest Group Form

Student Government Association

Club Name: _____

First Draft of the Club's Purpose: _____

Advisor(s): _____

President: _____

Vice President: _____

Treasurer: _____

Secretary: _____

Members: _____

First Meeting Day, Time and Location: _____

Submit this form to the Student Government Association after your first meeting.
After submitting this form, the group should work on their club constitution, submit club minutes and advertise club meetings according to SGA Policy #18.

Official communication will be made through e-mail to the club advisors and officers.