

# Constitutional Guidelines

All constitutions (or by-laws) must address specific topics. While they do not have to follow this outline exactly, the following format is used by a majority of student organizations. However, there are certain required statements or sections that must be in all constitutions.

## **Article I: Name of Organization**

Section 1. Name of organization and national affiliation (if applicable). If the organization has a national affiliation, copies of their by-laws and constitution must be presented for review and will be added to your organizational file in the Office of Student Activities.

For most organizations, the name will read:

XYZ or XYZ at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. If the organization is a sponsored organization, meaning it is stated in the advisor's job description to advise a specific organization, the organization may format the name to read Texas A&M University-San Antonio XYZ.

## **Article II: Purpose**

Section 1. The purpose should state why the organization exists and specifically state the objectives (do not list specific activities) of the organization.

## **Article III: Membership**

Section 1. General Requirements. A statement defining who is eligible for membership must be included. An optional but suggested statement is "Membership in this organization will be open to any student interested in furthering the purposes of this organization."

### **The following statement must be included:**

This organization will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex\*, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status. \*Organizations that are exempt from the Title IX provision of including both sexes are not required to extend membership to students of the opposite sex. Such organizations are fraternities, sororities and single sex sports organizations.

Section 2. Categories of Membership

The types of membership (regular, honorary, alumni, faculty, staff etc.) in use must be listed. The qualifications and privileges (voting and non-voting) of each membership category must be included. Only students who are taking classes at A&M-San Antonio may vote on student organization business (hence the reason it is a *student* organization). Faculty or staff that serve as advisors may vote, depending on how their role is defined in the constitution or by-laws. Students taking classes at another college or university may hold membership status, but may not vote and cannot benefit from funds received through Office of Student Affairs.

Section 3. Selection Process

If there is a selection process, it must be listed. This includes minimum GPA and course load requirements. **At minimum, the university requires that members be currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio with a GPA minimum requirement of Undergraduate 2.0, Graduate 3.0.**

Section 4. Removal Procedures

The reasons for removal and process must be listed for membership. This is necessary even if the organization has loose membership requirements. It is suggested that a majority of the active membership be required to remove a member or that a majority or unanimous vote of the officers/executive board be required.

## **Article IV: Meetings**

- Section 1. State how often meetings will be held (once a week, month, etc). It is not necessary to list specific times or days.
- Section 2. The specific guide to parliamentary procedure (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised) must be listed.
- Section 3. Quorum Defined-A quorum is the minimum number of members who have to be at a meeting for the group's business to be officially conducted. A quorum is generally either the average attendance at meetings or the largest number of members who can be depended on to attend regular meetings. This should be listed as a percentage (i.e.: 50% of the active membership) and not a hard number as that number may change and become outdated.
- Section 4. Majority Defined-For most organizations, decisions are brought to the membership for a vote. Before a vote can be taken, a quorum must be met. Once the quorum is met, most groups use a simple majority (50%+1) or a 2/3 majority vote to declare a decision valid.

**Article V: Dues**

- Section 1. State how dues will be decided and who will be involved in the decision. It is best NOT to specify the exact amount of dues, but rather explain how the dues will be calculated.
- Section 2. State when dues will be collected, who will collect the dues and the checks and balances system. A good guideline is that all money collected is deposited within three (3) business days of receipt and two signatures (suggested that, at a minimum, one be the advisor's and one being an officer's) to withdraw funds.

**Article VI: Officers**

- Section 1. List of the officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) must be listed and their specific duties and responsibilities must be stated.
- Section 2. All qualifications for holding an office must be stated, including a minimum course load GPA requirement. Course load (full time or part time) must specify which semesters it applies to (fall, spring, summers). All organizations must have a minimum cumulative GPA requirement no lower than a 2.0.
- Section 3. A specific method of election must be explained. Include the term/year of election, length of service and month of officer transition. A transition period is recommended to allow new and old officers an opportunity to work together for a brief time. It is strongly recommended to **not have elections in August or September**. This does not allow for planning during the summer and officers may not return to school or graduate and the organization will have fewer officers (if any) to make plans for the upcoming year.
- Section 4. A statement explaining the reasons for removal of an officer and the specific procedure must be stated.

**Article VII: Advisor**

- Section 1. The advisor's duties must be stated.

**The following statement must be included:**

The advisor shall work with the organization to coordinate activities to ensure that they are conducted in compliance with all municipal, state and federal laws, the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook (<http://www.tamusa.edu/studentengagementsuccess/StudentRightsAndResponsibilities/index.html>) and all University policies and procedures.

- Section 2. A specific method for selection must be explained. This is usually done as a vote by the membership. If the organization is sponsored by a department, the selection statement must be approved by the department head or designee.

Section 3. A statement explaining the reasons for removal of an advisor and the specific procedures must be explained.

**Article VIII: Committees (Optional)**

Section 1. Executive Committee or Executive Board  
Some organizations require meetings of officers, and advisor(s), and certain representatives for executive sessions. If this is applicable, a quorum, and specific responsibilities must be listed.

Section 2. Standing Committees  
Many organizations establish regular standing committees to handle needs membership, publicity, and social events. These committees are led by a specific member and is made up of any number of specified members and non-members. Items such as the formation procedure and the function of each committee can be addressed in the by-laws or the constitution.

Section 3. Special or Ad Hoc Committees  
These committees are formed and dissolved as specific needs are addressed.

**Article IX: Responsibilities**

Section 1. **The following statement must be included:**  
This organization will adhere to all municipal, state and federal laws, the Texas A&M University- San Antonio Student Handbook and all University policies and procedures.

Section 2. **Each organization should adopt a risk management policy.** Risk Management Policies identify possible areas of risk for the student organization, such as travel, sexual assault, student behavior/misconduct. The Policy should specifically address what your organization will do to minimize or deal with areas of risk. The policy should guide the organization in preparation for event planning, organization operations, and every day function.

**Article X: Amendments**

Section 1. A statement listing the specified proposal requirements for amendments must be listed. Be sure to list the exact steps for amendment presentation and the percentage of votes needed for a proposal to be considered.

Section 2. The statement must be included that, "The constitution and by-laws of this organization must be reviewed and resubmitted to the Office of Student Activities every three (3) years."

Section 3. The statement must be included that, "Any revisions to the constitution and/or by-laws must be approved by and filed with the Office of Student Activities."

Signatures: The document must be signed by the advisor and president, which verifies that the document has been approved by the membership.

# SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

## **Article I: Name**

The name of this student organization shall be known as Jaguar Pack.

## **Article II: Purpose**

The purpose and goals of Jaguar Pack are to promote Jaguar spirit and pride in students and university employees; promote attendance at athletic and other university sponsored events.

## **Article III: Membership**

### Section 1. Eligibility

Membership in this organization will be open to any interested student meeting criteria. Jaguar Pack will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or veteran status.

### Section 2. Selection Process

Application for membership will be open year round.

### Section 3. Attendance

Attendance at all meetings and organizational events is expected.

### Section 4. Removal Procedures

Any member or officer who displays a negative attitude or who undermines the activities of the organization shall be removed from the organization. A quorum of 50% + 1 must be present at the meeting and a 2/3 vote must be obtained in order to remove the individual.

## **Article IV: Meeting**

### Section 1. Frequency

Meetings shall be held twice a month at a convenient time, to be determined by the officers and members.

### Section 2. Procedure

Jaguar Pack follows Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

### Section 3. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of the active membership and must be present to conduct official business.

## **Article V: Dues**

### Section 1. Determination

Dues will be set by a general vote of the organizational membership and will be based on the activities planned for the semester.

### Section 2. Collection

Dues will be collected by October 1 of each year.

### Section 3. Deposit and Withdrawal

Money collected by the organization will be deposited into the Jaguar Pack account within three (3) business days of receipt. In order to withdraw money, two signatures are required: that of the advisor and either the president or treasurer.

## **Article VI: Officers**

### Section I. Requirements for Officers

The officers must meet the following requirements: a) have at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the time of their election and post at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA during the term of office; b) be in good standing with the university and enrolled in at least six credit hours in a regular semester during the term of office; and c) be subject to removal from office by the organization and/or the organization's official university advisor should the student fail to maintain the requirement as prescribed in (a) and (b).

### Section II. Officers and Duties

*President* - shall preside over regular and executive meetings, coordinate group activities and communicate with the officers and advisor on all matters.

*Vice President* - shall assist the President and preside over meetings in the absence of the President; shall coordinate recruitment and selection of new members during the year.

*Secretary* - shall record and distribute minutes at all meetings and check attendance at functions.

*Treasurer* - shall collect dues, pay bills, oversee other monetary transactions including fund-raising and social activities, and prepare and maintain an annual budget.

### Section III. Election Process

Elections shall be held at the first regular meeting during the month of April. A quorum must be present and as simple majority vote will win. Newly elected officers shall resume responsibility at the following meeting.

### Section IV. Removal of an Officer

Refer to Article III, Section IV; an election to fill the vacancy will be held immediately.

## **Article VII: Advisor**

### Section 1. Duties

1. Give advice and suggestions on matters of interest to the organization.
2. Inform the President and/or the Membership when the organization may be taking an action that could violate applicable laws and/or policies.
3. Refrain from overriding the organization, its actions, and/or its members, with the exceptions of possible violations of University Policy, as well as violations of local, state, and/or federal laws, or in instances of severe liability exposure to the organization and University.
4. Verify expenditures of the organization and manage its account.
5. Serve on the Executive Committee, without a vote.
6. Assist the organization in meeting its goals.
7. Aid in the continuity of the organization by attending meetings and by being available for advice and consultation.
8. Check grades of officers a minimum of one time in January and one time in June.

### Section 2. Selection

The advisor shall be selected by the organizational membership once every two years, providing the individual selected is a full-time faculty or staff member at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

### Section 3. Removal

The advisor may be removed for deliberate violations of the constitution or for failing to maintain acceptable advisor-officer-member relationships with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the membership.

## **Article VIII: Committees**

The officers will take suggestions from the membership for standing or ad-hoc committees. A committee head will be appointed by the president and approved by the officers. It shall meet as needed to accomplish goals.

## **Article IX: Responsibilities**

This organization will adhere to all municipal, state, and federal laws, the Texas A&M University- San Antonio Student Code of Conduct and all university policies and procedures.

*See last page for sample risk management policy.*

## **Article X: Amendments**

### Section 1. Proposals

Members wishing to amend the constitution will bring the proposed changes to a regular meeting. The proposal will be discussed at that meeting and voted on at the following meeting. Quorum and majority used is listed in Article IV.

### Section 2. Review and approval

The constitution and by-laws of this organization must be reviewed and resubmitted to the Office of Student Activities every three (3) years. Any revisions to the constitution and/or by-laws must be approved by and filed with the Office of Student Activities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **SAMPLE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

STUDENT ORGANIZATION NAME AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO

## **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

All events sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_, or any event our organization is associated with, including off-campus events, must be in compliance with the stated policies below. All organizational members must observe the risk management guidelines of Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

### **ALCOHOL/ILLEGAL DRUGS**

No member of \_\_\_\_\_ shall take part in acts that are illegal and/or abusive as it relates to alcohol and drugs and/or activities that violate policies of Texas A&M University-San Antonio. If any member is found participating in such acts, we the members, reserve the right to take all necessary actions to correct this behavior for the betterment of the organization.

The possession, use and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages, during any organization event, any event that an observer would associate with the University, or in any situation sponsored or endorsed by the organization, must be in compliance with any and all applicable laws, policies and regulations of the state, county, city and Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The unlawful possession, sale and/or use of any illegal drugs or controlled substances at any organization sponsored event, or at any event that an observer would associate with the organization, is strictly prohibited. The organization shall not use or condone the use of alcoholic beverages/illegal drugs as part of their membership intake recruitment or education programs.

### **HAZING**

No member of \_\_\_\_\_, shall take part in hazing activities, and if any member is found participating in such acts, we the members, reserve the right to take all necessary actions to correct this behavior for the betterment of the organization.

Hazing activities are defined as (but not limited to): Any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off organization premises or during organization functions, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Our organization will abide by the Texas A&M University-San Antonio hazing policy as stated in the Student handbook.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ABUSE DISCRIMINATION**

The act of sexual harassment/abuse discrimination, in any form, is strictly prohibited by members of \_\_\_\_\_. No member shall take part in activities deemed sexual harassment and/or abuse discrimination, and if any member is found participating in such acts, we the members, reserve the right to take all necessary actions to correct this behavior for the betterment of the organization.

The organization will not tolerate or condone any form of abusive or discriminatory behavior on the part of its members, whether physical, mental or emotional in respect to sex, race, ethnicity, physical or emotional handicap, age, marital status or sexual orientation. This includes any actions not limited to sexual assault, verbal harassment or deemed demeaning to all.

## **FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, shall strictly abide by all rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures of AngeloState University as it relates to the fire and life safety, to ensure our members, officers, event organizers, and advisors take the necessary precaution to fulfill this obligation for the wellbeing of all present at our events.

All organizational activities and events shall adhere to state, local and University fire and health codes and standards. Our organization will post emergency numbers for fire, police and ambulance near common telephones. Evacuation routes will be reviewed during event planning or posted near residential sleeping areas. The possession and/or use of firearms or explosive devices of any kind within the confines of organizational owned or University owned property is forbidden.

## **GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, shall strictly abide by all rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures of Texas A&M University-San Antonio as it relates to the general health and safety, to ensure our members, officers, event organizers, and advisors take the necessary precaution to fulfill this obligation for the wellbeing of all present at our events.

All activities planned in conjunction with the organization shall take into account the health and safety of all participants. Planning of projects and activities will include evaluating appropriate personal safety equipment (ear plugs, eye protection, gloves, etc.), training (use of tools and equipment), and supervision. All equipment to be used in conjunction with said activities will be in good working condition and will be used in a safe manner.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, shall strictly abide by all rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures of Texas A&M University-San Antonio as it relates to transportation.

Any individual who drives or otherwise provides transportation in conjunction with organization activities shall obey all applicable motor vehicle laws, including, but not limited to, those concerning vehicle safety, vehicle operation, insurance, and the transportation and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Operators will ensure that vehicles are not overloaded and are driven in a safe manner. Rental vehicles shall be operated in accordance with rental contracts.

## **FINANCIAL**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, shall strictly abide by all rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures of Texas A&M University-San Antonio as it relates to contractual and financial issues. No organization may enter into a contract or financial agreement using the specific name of Texas A&M University-San Antonio. This includes, but is not limited to, such agreements as leases, contracts, hold harmless agreements, liability releases, account agreement, purchase orders, and hotel or banquet contracts.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, shall strictly abide by all rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures of Texas A&M University-San Antonio as it relates to the utilization of personal property.

Use of personal property for organization activities shall be strictly voluntary and the sole responsibility of the owner. The organization shall not assume liability for personal property used in conjunction with organization activities, nor for any damages resulting from said use.

**ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

We, the advisor(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, shall act in a manner that ensures the organization is accountable and responsible in their preparation for each activity and/or event organized or planned.

Advisors serving on behalf of the university will do so in accordance with the policies of Texas A&M University-San Antonio, including but not limited to risk management. Advisors shall adhere to the provisions of this and all applicable policies when engaging in organization related activities. Advisors shall recognize the appropriate authority of elected or appointed officers of the organization and work with the officers to adhere to all applicable local, state and university policies.

**RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, shall strictly abide by all rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures of Texas A&M University-San Antonio as it relates to risk management to ensure our members, officers, event organizers, and advisors take the necessary precaution to fulfill this obligation for the wellbeing of all present at our events.

All reasonable efforts will be made to insure each student member, pledge, associate member, and honorary member shall be instructed on risk management policies including but not limited to alcohol/illegal drugs, hazing, sexual harassment/sexual assault, fire and life safety, travel, and behavior at parties. The organization will indicate their understanding of and compliance with the Risk Management Policy statement on an annual basis. Organizers of events will reasonably inform guests (including non-members, alumni, advisors and visiting members) of applicable policies.

Compliance with risk management policies places a high value on the dignity and worth of a human being. We the members of \_\_\_\_\_ will abide by the elements of the risk management program as outlined in this document. We hereby affirm our commitment to abide by these policies and recognize that non-compliance with any of these policies has no place in the membership program of our organization.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Risk Management Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Coordinator for Student Organizations

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date