The purpose of this document is to assist registered student clubs and organizations at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) when drafting or amending their organization’s constitution. Given the wide variety of student organizations and the fact that each may have its own unique or innovative structure, the information in this guide is very general in nature and will need to be tailored to meet the needs of each individual student organization. All language listed in the sample constitution is required, optional information is highlighted in yellow.

Student Clubs & Organizations must submit a copy of its current constitution and its by-laws, if applicable, when registering or renewing with the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership. Together these documents should provide a clear outline of the structure and mission of the organization as well as a basic set of rules that will govern the group’s operations. The organization’s constitution and its by-laws should be carefully considered, clearly worded, and kept up-to-date in order to effectively guide the activities of the organization and its members. If drafted properly, these documents establish a standard for reliable leadership in the organization and will ensure a consistent vision for the future of the organization.

When it becomes necessary to amend an organization’s constitution or its by-laws, the organization must update the document with Student Engagement and Leadership by uploading the document to your organization’s profile on Viking Connect.

For more information or assistance with your student organization, contact:

Office of Student Engagement & Leadership
Walter N. & Henrietta B. Ridley Student Center, Suite 211
Phone: (252) 335-3143
Email: studentengagement@ecsu.edu
What is a constitution?
A constitution contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a foundation upon which an organization operates.

Why are student organizations required to have a Constitution?
A student organization constitution:
- Clarifies the purpose of the organization and outlines the basic structure of the organization
- Provides the cornerstone for building an effective organization/group
- Allows members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is all about and how it functions.

What are Bylaws?
Bylaws are secondary principles that govern the internal affairs of an organization. Bylaws are essentially an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps the organization must follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

Why are student organizations required to have Bylaws?
Bylaws can be helpful in the organization's operations. The constitution covers the fundamental principles but does not provide specific procedures for operating your organization. Bylaws should set forth in detail the procedures your group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. They provide further definition to the provisions contained in the constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change.

Creating a Constitution and Bylaws
A constitution and bylaws typically have the following items. Feel free to use the checklist below and the sample constitution and bylaws that follow to assist you in developing your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constitution Checklist</th>
<th>Bylaws Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article 1 – Name of Organization</td>
<td>Article 1 – Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 2 – Purpose of organization</td>
<td>Article 2 – Powers and duties of officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 3 – Authority</td>
<td>Article 3 – Qualifications to hold office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 4 – Membership</td>
<td>Article 4 – Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 5 – Officers</td>
<td>Article 5 – Executive Board/Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 6 – Meetings</td>
<td>Article 6 – University Advisor(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 7 – University Advisor</td>
<td>Article 7 – Meetings/Voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 8 – Finances</td>
<td>Article 8 – Special Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 9 – Discipline</td>
<td>Article 9 – Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 10 – Amendments and Ratification</td>
<td>Article 10 – Discipline of Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 11 – Dissolution</td>
<td>Article 12 – Non-Hazing Clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 13 – Impeachment</td>
<td>Article 14 – Vacancy of Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 15 – Amendments</td>
<td>Article 16 – Amendments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARTICLE I  NAME
Section 1  The name of this organization shall be the [Name of Organization] at the Elizabeth City State University. [Optional: Include chapter designation if part of a national organization and/or the organization's founding date]

ARTICLE II  PURPOSE
Section 1  The purpose of this organization is to [insert organization's mission or purpose statement].

ARTICLE III  AUTHORITY
Section 1  This organization is a recognized student organization at Elizabeth City State University and adheres to all campus policies as set forth in the Elizabeth City State University Code of Student Conduct and the Elizabeth City State University Student Organization Policies and Guidelines.

Section 2  [If applicable]: This organization is affiliated with [Name of National or Affiliated Organization] and adheres to the [National of Affiliated Organization Bylaws or Governing Document(s)].

Section 3  This organization will establish bylaws to govern administrative and procedural matters (such as time and location of meetings, etc.). Bylaws shall not conflict with this constitution. Bylaws may be adopted, amended, or temporarily suspended by a majority vote present at an organization meeting where a quorum is present (advance notice is not required).

ARTICLE IV  MEMBERSHIP
Section 1  Membership in the organization shall be open to those regularly-enrolled Elizabeth City State University students who [State eligibility criteria or qualifications for membership].

Section 2  Eligibility for membership or appointed or elected student officer positions may not be limited on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability. The organization shall have no rules or policies that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability.

Section 2  [Optional]: This organization shall have associated members who are non-ECSU students or who do not meet the above criteria. Associated members shall have all membership privileges except for the right to vote or hold office. By Elizabeth City State University Office of Student Engagement and Leadership practice, no more than 20 percent of the membership shall be individuals who are not ECSU students (e.g., community
Section 4 [Optional]: Some organizations have additional categories of membership, such as honorary membership. If this applies, include the categories of membership along with associated requirements and privileges.

Section 5 [Optional]: Membership in some organizations is by invitation. If this applies, indicate who is authorized to extend an invitation to join and the selection process and vote required.

Section 6 [Optional]: Some organizations have a probationary period for new members before they become full members. If this applies, state the length of the probationary period, privileges and voting rights of probationary members, requirements and process to obtain full membership, the process and vote required to dismiss a probationary member, and the vote required to obtain full membership.

Article V OFFICERS

Section 1 The officers of the [insert name of student organization] shall be a PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT, SECRETARY AND TREASURER [Optional]: insert the name of additional officers if there are more or change the name to make them reflect what the organization will call them.

Section 2 In order to run for office in the [insert name of student organization], members must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (g.p.a) of 2.5.

Section 3 While in office officers must maintain a 2.5 GPA and must not have below 2.5 for more than one semester.

Section 4 Officers must be currently registered students.

Section 5 All officers serve for a term of ONE (1) YEAR or until their successors shall be duly elected and qualified.

Section 6 Any officer who, during the term of office, ceases to be a voting member, or fails to maintain status as a matriculating undergraduate/graduate (exception University organizations) student maintaining a 2.5 g.p.a., in good academic and disciplinary standing shall be removed from office and a replacement shall he elected.

Article VI MEETINGS

Section 1 Regular meetings shall be held [insert when meeting times; i.e. weekly, bi-weekly, monthly] during the academic year.
Section 2  Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Board/Committee. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours’ notice prior to the meeting time.

Section 3  [Optional]: Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as a majority of the voting membership. [Note: Organizations may choose to have a lower quorum, such as one-third, or a specific number of members.]

Section 4  Members must be present to vote.

Section 5  In order to vote a member must be in good standing. [State what constitutes “good standing.” This may include payment of dues, meeting attendance requirement, academic requirement, etc. If there is an attendance requirement, specify the number of excused and/or unexcused absences that results in loss of voting privileges, and define what constitutes an excused absence, if applicable.] To be in good standing each member must complete 10 hours of community service each academic year.

ARTICLE VII  UNIVERSITY ADVISOR(S)

Section 1  The [insert student organization name] shall have a University Advisor who will be a full- or part-time member of the University faculty, staff, or administration. The advisor will fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Club & Organization Guide for Advisors. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

ARTICLE VIII  FINANCES

Section 1  [Optional: Membership dues shall be [insert amount, i.e. $XX per semester or year].

Section 2  [Optional]: Dues shall be paid by [Specify due date, such as "second week of each semester."]

Section 3  [Optional]: Members who have not paid their dues or special assessments by the due date shall be considered as not being in good standing and shall lose all membership privileges, including voting, until the dues are paid.

Section 4  Organization funds shall not be used to purchase or reimburse members for alcoholic beverages.

ARTICLE IX  DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Section 1  All members of the [insert organization name] are expected to uphold the rules and regulations of the Elizabeth City State University Student Code of Conduct and adhere to the policies and procedures set for in the Elizabeth City State University Student Organization Policies.
Section 2 Members that violate the Student Code of Conduct and Student Organization policies may face disciplinary action.

ARTICLE V  AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be presented to the membership, in writing, one meeting prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon. [Optional]: The Executive Committee and/or Bylaws Committee shall review and make recommendations on all bylaw revisions prior to consideration by the membership.

Section 2 Constitution amendments require approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting. The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

Section 3 A copy of any amendments to this constitution must be submitted to the Office of Student Engagement and leadership within two weeks after adoption via your portal in Viking Connect.
Bylaws
[Name of Organization] at Elizabeth City State University

Section I  The officers of the [insert student organization name] shall be the:

a. [insert titles of officer]
b. [insert titles of officer]
c. [insert titles of officer]
d. [insert titles of officer]

Section II  Powers and Duties of Officers:

a. The President shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization, shall preside at all meetings of the organization and shall prepare the agenda for meetings. The President shall appoint all committees and committee chairs. The President shall have other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the organization. The President shall participate in the annual trainings offered by the Office of Student Engagement & Leadership.

b. The Vice President shall preside at organization meetings in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall perform all legal duties assigned by the President. The Vice President shall assume the office of President if the office becomes vacant.

c. The Treasurer shall handle all financial affairs and budgeting of the organization, maintain all necessary accounting records, and prepare financial reports for the membership. The Treasurer shall collect all dues (if applicable) and revenue and deposit it into the organizations on campus account or off campus account.

d. The Secretary shall take minutes at all meetings of the organization, keep these on file, and submit copies to organization members upon request. The Secretary shall be responsible for all organization correspondence and shall keep copies on file. The Secretary shall maintain membership records for the organization.

e. [Optional]: List duties of any additional elected or appointed officers

Section III  Qualifications necessary to hold office in the [insert name of the organization] are as follows:

a. Elizabeth City State University policies require that to be eligible for office, candidates must be in good academic and disciplinary standing and current enrolled students at the Elizabeth City State University. Additionally, students must have at least a 2.5 g.p.a to be eligible to hold an office.

b. No member may hold more than one office. No member may serve more than two years in the same office.
Section IV  Elections

a. Elections are held not later than the 2nd Friday of March and shall take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization at which a quorum is present. At least one week’s notice shall be provided for any meeting at which an election is to be held.

b. Nominations for officers shall be made at the regular meeting immediately preceding the election. Nominations may also be made from the floor immediately prior to the election for each office. Members may nominate themselves for an office.

c. Officers shall be elected by majority vote. If no candidate receives a majority vote, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

d. Votes shall be cast by secret ballot; however, when there is only one candidate for an office, a motion may be made to elect the candidate.

Section V  Executive Board/Committee

a. The Executive Board/Committee shall consist of the elected and appointed officers, with the advisor(s) serving as non-voting member(s).

b. The Executive Board/Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the organization between meetings and is authorized to take action when action must be taken prior to the next meeting.

c. The Executive Board/Committee shall report to the membership all actions taken between meetings. Except when it is too late to do so (such as when a contract has been executed), any actions taken by the Executive Board/Committee may be rescinded or modified by the membership by a majority vote.

Section VI  University Advisor(s)

a. The advisor shall fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Elizabeth City State University Student Organizations Handbook. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

b. The advisor shall participate in the advisor training or recertification process yearly.

Section VII  Meetings and Voting

a. Regular meetings shall be scheduled [insert day if you know it, otherwise just say during the academic year] during the academic year.

b. Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Board/Committee. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours’ notice prior to the meeting time.
c. Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as a majority of the voting membership.

d. Members must be present to vote. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted.

e. In order to vote a member must be in good standing. [State what constitutes "good standing." This may include payment of dues, meeting attendance requirement, academic requirement, etc. If there is an attendance requirement, specify the number of excused and/or unexcused absences that results in loss of voting privileges, and define what constitutes an excused absence, if applicable.]

Section VIII   Special Committees

a. [OPTIONAL]: IF YOU HAVE SPECIAL COMMITTEES, LIST THEIR NAMES AND DUTIES; OTHERWISE DELETE THE FIRST LINE AND LEAVE THE LAST TWO.

 b. Special Committees may be established by the Executive Board and shall perform such duties as defined in their establishment.

c. The Executive Board/Committee shall appoint, and may remove, committee members and a Chairperson for each committee.

Section IX    Finances

a. [Optional/if applicable]: Membership dues shall be [$XX per semester or year].

b. [Optional/if applicable]: Dues shall be paid by [Specify due date, such as "second week of each semester."]

c. [Optional/if applicable]: Members who have not paid their dues or special assessments by the due date shall be considered as not being in good standing and shall lose all membership privileges, including voting, until the dues are paid.

d. Occasionally the [insert name of organization] may need to assess a fee or collect money from the membership for special events/purposes. The amount of money collected shall be determined by a majority of the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting.

e. Organization funds shall not be used to purchase or reimburse members for alcoholic beverages.

Section X.     Discipline of members

a. When a member believes that another member has engaged in conduct that is detrimental to the organization, a conversation should be held with either the
organization Advisor or the Executive Director of Student Engagement and Leadership.

b. If warranted, a written charge may be filed with the Executive Director of Student Engagement and Leadership.

c. The Executive Director of Student Engagement and Leadership shall review the charge(s) and may conduct a preliminary investigation if deemed appropriate. If the preliminary investigation concludes that misconduct appears to have occurred, the Executive Director of Student Engagement and Leadership work with the Executive Board/Committee to determine if any sanctions are warranted. Possible sanctions may include expulsion, suspension, or lesser sanction(s) including, but not limited to, a reprimand, removal from office, a fine or other corrective remedy.

Section XI. Dissolution

a. Upon the dissolution of the [insert student organization name] for any reason, all work, funds, and property controlled by the organization will be (action that will be taken).

Section XII. Non-Hazing Clause

Elizabeth City State University requires that no fraternity, sorority, or student organization shall allow any of its alumni, associates, potential new members, new members, members, or others to participate in any form of hazing. Hazing is defined as any planned or spontaneous activity or situation, whether on or off campus, that is demeaning to an individual; calculated to produce ridicule or harassment; produce physical or mental duress; reduce a person to a state of subjection by physical or psychological means which impairs or destroys and individual's freedom of thought; or in any way threatens or endangers the health or safety of an individual. Such activities or situations include, but are not limited to:

- Any form of paddling
- Any activity which causes physical discomfort, pain or excessive fatigue
- Any morally demeaning, embarrassing or humiliating experience
- Activities which produce physical, psychological or emotional duress
- Any unnecessary, mandatory activities which interfere with academic class schedules or other scholastic activities

Individual or organizational violations will be immediately investigated and, if found guilty, issued sanctions of suspension. Additional sanctions may be appropriate depending on the severity of the violation.
Section XIII. Impeachment

Any member may initiate officer removal by the following procedure.

a. Petition executive board/committee with signature of 1/3 of all voting members petition should state reason for removal
b. Executive Board with shall then notify officers and call for removal vote within fourteen days of filing the petition.
c. Memberships shall be notified at least one week prior to removal vote meeting
d. At the meeting for removal, the petition stated grievances shall be made public and the officer charged shall be allowed to respond to the charges of the petition
e. Removal from office shall require a vote of 2/3 of all voting members.

Section XIII. Vacancy of Office

a. In case of resignation or removal of any officer, an interim acting officer shall be appointed by the Executive Board.
b. The President shall call for an election within fourteen days after vacancy of any office.
c. Elections shall be conducted as stated in the bylaws.
d. Should the office of President become vacant, the Vice-President should complete the President's unexpired term and call for an election for Vice-President consistent with elections process set forth in the bylaws.

Section XV. Amendments

a. Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be presented to the membership, in writing, one meeting prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon. [Optional]: The Executive Committee and/or Bylaws Committee shall review and make recommendations on all bylaw revisions prior to consideration by the membership.
b. Bylaw amendments require approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting. The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.
c. A copy of any amendments to these bylaws must be submitted to the Elizabeth City State University Office of Student Engagement and Leadership within two weeks after adoption via Viking Connect portal.

These bylaws were adopted on [insert date that you make edits] and most recently revised on [insert date of latest edits].