**Club Constitution Guidelines**

All Student Government Clubs require a constitution to outline their structure and create a framework for daily operations. Any new club’s constitution, and any change to an existing club’s constitution, must be approved by the Club Review Committee.

The following are general rules for new clubs, and reasons the Club Review Committee may reject a proposed club:

* It is similar to a club that is already recognized
* It is not beneficial to the general campus community or student body
* The constitution does not comply with SUNY, SUNY Cortland, or Student Government policy
* The constitution does not create a sustainable or appropriate structure
* The constitution is not clearly understandable

Special note: Clubs cannot restrict membership, and must be open to any SUNY Cortland student. Prohibited restrictions include: GPA, race, gender identity, sex, political or religious affiliation, major or area of study, age, etc.

**Constitution Tips**

* In general, make sure that your constitution creates a flexible framework that allows for adaptation to future circumstances without having to make time-consuming amendments.
* Make your constitution as broad as possible while still accomplishing what it needs to do. Restrictions in your constitution are the bare minimum requirement that have to be met, but your club can act however they choose within that limit. For example, clubs frequently meet once a week, but their constitution only require they meet at least once a month. Leaving the constitution more broad gives future club leader leeway to adapt to changing circumstances.
* Constitutions should spell out processes for creating new positions or committees without amending the constitution.
* Only put policies in the constitution if they are essential to the long-term, proper running of the club.

Example Constitution Outline

Section 1: **Purpose.** Outline the purpose and mission statement of the proposed club. What are its broad goals and what does it aim to do on campus?

Section 2: **Membership.** Define the process of becoming an active member of the club. Clubs often have to vote on business or elect officers. It is important to know who can vote in those circumstances. Some clubs simply allow any student that attends that day to vote as a member. Other clubs prefer a more restricted process, and require students to attend a set number of meetings in order to be considered an active member, for example. Only SUNY Cortland students can be active or voting members.

Section 3: **Meetings.** Outline how frequently the club must meet, at minimum. Clubs can meet more often than their constitution requires. Also determine who has the authority to schedule meetings, cancel meetings, or call special meetings.

Section 4: **Committees.** Define each standing committee of the club, and the process for creating and staffing ad hoc committees. Standing committees are committees that always exist, and serve to assist in executing the business of the club. Be sure to define how committee members are selected. Ad hoc committees are temporary, and meant to accomplish a single goal before disbanding.

Section 5: **Executive Board.**Specify which officers the club will have and what each officer will be required to do. SGA requires that all clubs have at least a President and Treasurer. This would also be the area for requirements relating to the whole executive board, such as how often they are need to meet, the process for their election, or any GPA requirements.

Section 6: **Elections & Vacancy***.* Outline the process of electing Executive Board officers, including the length of their terms, when elections should occur, any term limits, requirements to serve in office, etc. Also specify what should happen if an office vacancy occurs, such as a special election, or the Vice President becomes President, etc.

Section 7: **Policies & Procedures.** This section is required by the SGA to say the following: “This club shall adhere to all policies and procedures of the Student Government Association.” and “The latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall serve as the rules of this organization, except in areas where it contradicts this constitution or the policies of the Student Government.”

Section 8: **Amendments.** This section should outline the process for amending the club constitution, and it must include approval from the club membership, and approval from the Student Government.

**Free Candy Club Constitution**

§1.00 **Purpose.** The name of this organization shall be the Free Candy Club, and it shall serve to provide a variety of opportunities for all SUNY Cortland students to both obtain and organization the distribution of free, safe candy.

§2.00 **Membership.** Membership shall be open to all members of the SUNY Cortland Student Body. Students must attend at least two meetings per semester in order to be considered an active member and have the right to vote in club elections and referenda.

§3.00 **Meetings.** The club shall hold a general meeting at least once each month during the fall and spring semester. The President shall have the authority to call special meetings, cancel club meetings if there is not sufficient business or inclement weather, and set the regular schedule of meeting times and locations with approval from the Executive Board.

§4.00 **Committees***.* Define each standing committee of the club, and the process for creating and staffing ad hoc committees. Standing committees are committees that always exist, and serve to assist in executing the business of the club. Be sure to define how committee members are selected. Ad hoc committees are temporary, and meant to accomplish a single goal before disbanding.

§5.00 **Executive Board.**The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and the Advisor, as a non-voting member. The Executive Board must meet at least once every month during the fall and spring semester. All Executive Board officers, except the advisor, must be a member of the SUNY Cortland student body and must uphold all policies of this club and the Student Government Association.

§5.01 **President.** The duties of the President shall be to:

1. Preside over all meetings of the Club and the Executive Board.
2. Oversee the operations of all other club officers.
3. Set the general direction of the club.
4. Work with the Treasurer to create the annual budget proposal.
5. Serve as the club’s top representative to the Student Government, SUNY Cortland, and the community.

§5.02 **Vice President.**The duties of the Vice President shall be to:

1. Assume the duties of the President in their absence or at their request.
2. Assist the President in the daily management of club operation.
3. Serve as the Club Senator and liaison to the Student Government.

§5.03 **Treasurer.** The duties of the Treasurer shall be to:

1. Oversee all club finances, including the budget and spending.
2. Submit all financial requests in accordance with Student Government policies and procedures.
3. Keep the Executive Board informed on financial issues, and keep them updated on the club budgets and funds.
4. Represent the club during all meeting with the SGA Financial Board or Chief Financial Officer.
5. Work with the President to create the annual budget proposal.

§5.04 **Secretary.** The duties of the Secretary shall be to:

1. Record minutes at all Executive Board and general club meetings, including an accurate record of attendance and any votes taken.
2. Distribute such minutes to all club members and officers for their approval, in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order.
3. Oversee all internal club communications and records.

§5.05 **Advisor.** The duties of the Advisor shall be to:

1. Assist and advise the club in their daily operations.
2. Ensure a smooth transition of club officers and the long-term success of the club.
3. Serve as a liaison between the club and the faculty/staff of SUNY Cortland.

§6.00 **Elections & Vacancy.**

All Executive Board officers shall serve a one year term, beginning at the end of the spring semester following their election. All officers shall be elected by the membership of the club at a regularly scheduled club meeting. Elections shall occur by the end of April.

If an Executive Board office is made vacant before their term is up, the vacancy shall be announced at the next club meeting, and the special election to fill the vacant office held at club meeting following the meeting in which it was announced.

§7.00 **Policies & Procedures.**

The club shall adhere to all policies and procedures of the Student Government Association. The latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall serve as the rules of this organization, except in areas where it contradicts this constitution or the policies of the Student Government.

§8.00 **Amendments.**

 Amendments may be proposed from the floor during any business meeting. A Two-thirds majority vote of the members present, as well as approval from the Student Government.