

West Hills Community College

HOW TO START A NEW CLUB

1. Students may form clubs for social, service, honorary, political, or special interest purpose.
2. Article V: Subsidiary organizations, section 1 of the ASB Constitution (found in the Student Handbook) states:

“Any organization which has submitted its purpose for forming, in writing, to the Student Council and the President, may be recognized temporarily for one semester. It will be necessary for that organization to submit a Constitution and By-Law within that semester to be recognized permanently.

A Statement of Purpose and Constitution Outline are attached

3. Each organization shall have a faculty/staff advisor
4. Each organization shall send a representative to the Inter-Club council meetings.

Section One: Am I ready for this?

This section will detail methods for determining if there is interest in forming a club and preparing for actual formation.

General Outline:

1. Determine what will be general idea for the club
2. Determine if there is interest in the idea.
3. Find an advisor (a college faculty/staff member)
4. Hold preliminary meeting and begin the recognition process (Section 2)

The Embryonic Idea.

So you think you have a great idea for a club. Forming a club can be a great enhancement to your college career. However, forming a club can be time consuming.

Therefore, before you go any further, there are some things that you need to consider. The first step is to dissect the basic idea:

Is the scope too limited? While you may enjoy folding origami swans, that doesn't mean it would make a great club. In this case, perhaps a more general craft club it called for.

Is the scope too open? Certainly a club for anyone with a pulse would have a lot of members, but could that club move towards any specific goals?

All clubs must have a clear scope of interest that is general enough to encourage vast participation, but specific enough to maintain a sense of direction.

Having done this bit of soul searching, the next step is to find if there are any interests among your fellow students. If you have 5 or more friends who think this is a good idea, then move on to the next section.

If you are new to the college and only have one or two friends to bounce ideas off of, you will need to get the views of other students. Before you get apprehensive, remember that you and your fellow students share at least one thing in common; you are all attending West Hills College, so they can't be all that different from you.

Now ask yourself, is there enough interest to go ahead and form the club?

If you are finding that you still don't have enough people interested, one final thing you may try is to hold an introductory meeting. Set a time and date, and post some flyers. If, after the meeting, there still is not enough interest, don't force it. You and anyone else that is interested can still get together. On the other hand, if you do have good participation, we can move on.

Finding and Advisor

All clubs must have advisor. The advisor must be a faculty/staff member. Advisors are a great resource for a club. They can offer advice and expedite any dealings with the college administration.

The key to finding an advisor begins with asking someone. Most staff members have a general idea of what the rest of the colleges' employees are interested in. If the person you first ask is not interested in personally advising club, he or she can probably suggest someone who may be.

Don't get frustrated. You may have to do this several times. However, in most instances, there is a 100% chance that there is a staff member who would just love to advise your club. Just keep trying. There are dozens of staff members who really enjoy working with students but have just never been asked. Ask and I can almost guarantee, someone will help you.

So now that there is interest and you have an advisor, the next step is to hold a meeting and begin the recognition process. Proceed to Section 2.

Section Two: Nice to Meet you!

This section will review the procedure you must use when making your club “official”. After this phase, you should really be ready to go.

General Outline:

1. Hold your first meeting and draft a constitution.
2. Using the constitution you have drafted, elect officers.
3. File your constitution, advisor name, and list of officers with the Office of Student Activities.
4. Determine if you want the seed money provided by ASB. If so, attend the next ASB meeting and make your formal request.
5. Move on to the next section.

Details:

What’s official anyway?

Many new clubs are mystified by the fact that they must go through an official recognition procedure. After all, aren’t you official if you can hold regular meetings and have vast participation? What we’re talking about here is official in terms of the college structure. That means being able to hold fundraisers on campus, using campus facilities, having a voice in student government, and myriad of other things.

Therefore it is necessary to identify who the representatives of the club are and to have written a group of procedures that you will operate under.

One of the first things you must do is draft a constitution. Included in this book is a general outline of generic constitution. This form can be very useful if you aren’t interested in making a very specific, specialized document. Take some time now and look over the sample. You are encouraged to add or delete sections as you see fit.

If you don’t like the way this skeletal constitution provided is worded or if you had something else in mind, that’s fine. Constitution writing is an inexact science. Just ask our founding fathers. However, there are several main points that every club constitution needs to include:

1. The name and the purpose of the club. Coming up with a name is usually easy. Defining your purpose in writing can be hard. Using our crafts club from section one as an example, they might say in their constitution.

“The purpose of this organization is to encourage crafts of various sorts both as an art form and as a hobby among the students of West Hills College”

You want to avoid being too vague though:

“The purpose of this club is to be.”

Somewhat Shakespearean but a bit too esoteric. You also want to avoid being too specific:

“The purpose of this club is to fold origami swans on Wednesday at 2:00pm

The first statement is a good balance. It does not constrict the club into a small niche, while it does not leave any question as to what the purpose of the organization is.

2. Who can become a member and what are the qualifications for becoming an officer? When determining who can join and who can hold an office, they are few basic rules. You may not restrict membership based on race, religion, sex, national origins, or physical limitations. Beyond that, you may add any restrictions you like. Also, many clubs restrict officers to students with a certain Grade Point Average.
3. Will there be dues? If ever there was an angst causing question, this is it. In many organizations, the first meetings are dominated by talk of dues. We're talking money here and people can get touchy.

But before you waste valuable time and nerves let me assure you, it is perfectly alright to charge reasonable dues (Actually it's alright to charge unreasonable dues). What are reasonable dues? At this time (late 1992) most clubs on campus are charging between zero and two dollars per month for dues. Most are charging zero. Another thing to consider when deciding on dues is what you need the money for. Our craft club might buy craft supplies for its members, in which case dues or fundraisers are necessary. Keep these sorts of things in mind when deciding on dues.

4. What officers will be held and what method will be used in appointing them? Most groups have a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasures. You don't have to have these offices. You could have a chairman instead of a President, a Vice President of Finance instead of Treasurer, or a Recorder instead a Secretary. Anything goes as long as there is one person who is the clear leader, and there is one person to serve as your clubs representative to the 1.C.C. The president should keep order at meetings and represent this club to the college administration. The 1.C.C Representative should be available for all 1.C.C. meetings.

Next you must decide how these offices are filled. You can have the advisor appoint them, or you can have your club members vote on them. Most clubs limit elections to club members. Whatever method you chose, this information must be included in your constitution.

5. Who is in charge of the money?

If your club is going to have any financial dealing at all, you must designate someone to act as a Treasurer type person. You don't have to have a Treasurer per se but someone must be responsible for signing the necessary forms for using your club's money. If you don't want a Treasurer, you may just designate the President as this person.

Once the basic premises of your constitution are agreed upon, appoint someone to type them out in a clear and concise manner.

If you have not already elected or appointed your officers, now is the time to do so. Then submit your constitution with a list of officers and your advisors' names to the Office of Student Activities (O.S.A.) from that point on you are an officially recognized club. Temporary Recognition.

There are some cases when you do not have to draft a constitution. Namely, if you only want your club to be recognized for one semester. You can send a list of officers and your advisors' names to the O.S.A. However, this official status will expire at the end of the current semester. ASB Seed Money.

Now there is one final step that can be taken. If your club chooses to, the ASB will provide a small amount of "seed" money to your club. This money is for you to buy some supplies and must be paid back. If you would like to take advantage of this, send a representative to the next regularly scheduled ASB meeting and formally ask for it. Don't worry, the ASB supports clubs and it's almost guaranteed to be approved, provided you have been following the steps up to now.

Sample Constitution

West Hills Community College

(Fill in the name of you club)

Constitution

Article I: Name and Purpose of the Organization.

The name of this organization shall be the West Hills Community College
_____. (Fill in the name of your club)

The purpose of this organization shall be to _____

(Fill in your purpose statement)

Article II: Membership

Any West Hills Community College Student _____

(Fill in this blank with any restrictions you have on your membership. Leave blank if open to all students)

May become a member of this organization. Membership dues shall be
_____. (Fill in dues information, or leave blank)

Article III. Qualifications and Election of officers

The officers of this organization shall be the President.
Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. (If you want different or additional officers, change
this section as needed)

The President must have a 2.0 GPA or higher.

Officers shall be elected by membership of the club. (or by whatever method you have
decided on)

Article IV. Duties of officers (check all the apply)

President-

- _____ To preside over all meetings
- _____ To call special meetings
- _____ To carry out the provisions of the constitution
- _____ To oversee the actions of committees

Vice President-

_____ To assume the responsibilities of the president in his/her absence.

_____ To represent the Club to the Inter-Club Council

Secretary-

_____ To keep accurate records of all meetings.

_____ To act as correspondence clerk

Treasurer-

_____ To keep financial records

_____ To collect dues

Article V: Impeachment and replacement of officers

An officer may be removed from office if _____

(State reason for impeachment)

Replacing officers shall take place by voting, at the next regular club meeting. (Change this if you wish)

Section VI: Responsibilities

This organization accepts full responsibility for all activities which bear its name as official sponsor, and will adhere to all college regulations. All publicity for an event must bear the name of the sponsoring organization.

Section VII: Amendments to the constitution

Any amendment to this constitution requires a 2/3 vote at regular meeting.

(After this skeletal constitution has been completed, re-type it leaving out anything in parenthesis, and deleting any sentences that do not apply. Once it is re-typed, the membership of your club can vote to approve it.)

Section Three: Let's get together

This section includes some of the basics of Parliamentary Law, and tips for scheduling successful meetings.

General Outline:

1. All meetings should be conducted using an agenda, which list the order of business.
2. Parliamentary law protects the rights of all members and is you're most effective tool for holding organized meeting.
3. Meetings should be scheduled when most of the members can attend. Do not try to work around everyone's schedule. You will probably never find a time when everyone can be there.
4. Productive meeting are short, organized, and held in a pleasant atmosphere.

The Details:

Who needs rules?

So now you are an officially recognized organization and you have vast participation. How do you effectively conduct club business with so many members? Well, let's discuss three areas that will help agendas, Parliamentary Law, and effective meeting planning.

Some small organizations hold meeting in free forum type setting with no set procedures or discussion guidelines. Sometimes this method will work, but in a larger group. Business is conducted in a much more efficient manner if an agenda is used.

An agenda is a list of items used as guide for conducting business.

Sample Agenda

West Hills Community College

_____ Club

AGENDA

November 21, 1992

Room PL-2

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Reports
 - 3.1 President report
 - 3.2 Treasurers report
 - 3.3 Advisor report
 - 3.4 Dance committee report
4. Unfinished business
 - 4.1 Tamale fundraiser
 - 4.2 Membership dues
 - 4.3
5. New business
 - 5.1 Club days booth
 - 5.2 Name Tags
 - 5.3
6. Adjournment

Now let's examine each section individually

1. The organizations name and meeting information. This section is obviously self-explanatory.
2. Call to order. This is where the chairperson bangs the gavel or asks for everyone's attention. The meeting is now ready to begin.
3. Roll call. Not every club takes a detailed role of members. Most usually note the number of members in attendance and what officers, if any were absent.
4. Reports. This is where any committees would give progress reports. Also, a list of correspondence, and a financial report may be given at this time.
5. Unfinished Business. This section lists items that may have been discussed at a previous meeting. It should only list things that are still relevant and that require more discussion.
6. New Business. This section is for new items. Things that have never before been brought up.
7. Adjournment. At this time, if there is not more business, the meeting can end.
Parliamentary Law, The basics.

Parliamentary Procedure

A thorough discussion of parliamentary law can be found in the excellent pamphlet, "The A-B-C's of Parliamentary Procedure", published by Channing L. Bete Co. Inc., available from the office of Student Activities. For real Parli-Pro Freaks, you may check out a copy of "Roberts Rules of Order", first published in the 19th century. A copy may be available at the college library.

Here in the Club Handbook, we will attempt to give you just enough knowledge to be effective. Clubs do not need to be as rigidly organized as the ASB or the Board of Trustees.

Why do we use Parliamentary Law? The long and short of it is that Parliamentary Law provides a fair hearing for all viewpoints while allowing the majority to rule.

It is very important that in a meeting, there is one person who is the chairperson. This person must stick to the agenda and maintain order. This chairperson should call on members who wish to speak.

Now let's see an example of parli-pro in action

Under unfinished business, an item listed as Christmas Parade may be listed. You feel that it would be great idea if your club made a float for the event. You also have some pretty good ideas for the float and can probably make the time to work on the float.

When the meeting reaches that point on the agenda, raise your hand. When the club president recognizes you, stand and state your idea, preceded by the words "I move".

"I move that we form a committee, chaired by myself, to plan and build a float for the Christmas parade".

Or, you might say:

"I move that we build a float for the Christmas parade"

It is always best to be as detailed as possible whenever you make a motion. A good motion will leave little questions as what your intent is.

After you make this motion, the chairperson should ask,

"Is there a second?"

At this time, another club members who agrees with the motion can shout, "I second". If no one seconds the motion, then there probably was not enough interest in the idea, and then item dies lack of a second.

If the motion is seconded, the chairperson should ask for discussion on the item. Each club member should be given a chance to state their opinion on the item before anyone gets a chance to speak twice. Each club member should raise their hand when they wish to speak, and the chairperson should call upon each student in turn. It is important that the discussion does not become free-form debate.

Once the chair feels that the discussion has ended he may then call for a vote. Voting may be done by asking those in favor to say "Aye" and then asking those opposed to say "Nay". The chair should then announce the winner. If the vote is close, a member could stand and ask for a "decision of the house". Whenever a member asks for a division of the house, the chair should ask those in favor to raise their hands, and then ask those opposed to raise their hands. This time an accurate count is made and the results are clear.

At any time, the maker of the motion can withdraw his motion. This should be done if the discussion seems to indicate that a better course of action can be taken. In a more structured environment, a motion can be amended or changed. This can become somewhat confusing to a group that is generally not familiar with parliamentary procedure. Actually, a lot can happen to a main motion before it is approved. I feel that the process above will suffice and it won't frighten anyone from using basic parliamentary procedure.

Scheduling and Enjoyable Environments

Deciding when and where to hold meetings is a lot simpler than many people may think. The problem most people encounter is trying to find a time when all interested parties can attend. In most instances, there is not a time when everyone can attend. You should schedule a meeting when most people can attend, and stay with that time. It is easier to get more people to sign up when your club meets every week at the same time and place.

Also, when selecting a location, take into consideration the type of things your club will be doing. Our crafts club may meet in the art instructors' classroom. A political club may meet in a conference room to isolate it from the noise of other students. Choose a location that best suits your needs.

Meetings should be as short as possible. In order for meeting to be short though, planning should take place beforehand. The chairperson should have an agenda that lists all of the items for discussion prepared, and he should make copies for all of the members. The members should not talk amongst themselves when business is being discussed, and the chairperson should not ramble on when addressing the membership. Everyone should be polite and friendly.