

RTU Constitution

How we are structured and governed



Bylaws, Constitution ?

Bylaws are the constitution of your local union.

They define your rights and responsibilities as a local member, they say how elections will be run, and they set the powers for your officers.

Bylaw vs. Policy

Bylaws have a prescribed procedure for being changed, requiring involvement of the entire membership.

Policies are more fluid, requiring only the executive and/or delegates to adopt or change.

Bylaws: Broad, general	Policies: Specific and detailed
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Bylaw Guidelines

Bylaws Don't Trump Everything

Bylaws can't tell the organization to operate in a way that's illegal or that's contrary to the documents via which your group is legitimate.

Best practice is to find the law that governs your kind of group, such as the property owners association act, non-profit corporations act, etc., and read it. Then check your bylaws to make sure that they don't prescribe practices that are in *direct* conflict.

Bylaw Guidelines

Bylaws Should Major on the Majors

Bylaws exist to give an organization structure. They define the organization's primary characteristics, how it functions, and the rights and duties of members.

With this principle in mind, please resist the urge to turn your bylaws into an encyclopedia that provides details on every topic your organization might need to address now and forever. Save the procedural and operational details for other documents – special rules, procedure manuals, etc.

Bylaw Guidelines

Bylaws Should be Hard to Change

There's an additional reason that bylaws should stay high-level: They are (or should be) hard to change.

Every organization is different, but typically, to change bylaws, you have to give everyone a heads-up before the meeting, and you need at least a majority vote to adopt a change.

So, the message is, don't put anything in bylaws that you want freedom to change easily.

Areas Covered by bylaws and policies

1. Articulate and define important objectives, principles or values
2. Limit or prescribe what kind of action will be taken in different situations
3. Defines roles, responsibilities and authority

Specific Areas generally covered by Constitution

Here are some typical sections usually included in Bylaws:

- *Definitions* – definitions of the main terms used throughout the bylaws
- *Membership* – categories of members, member admission and renewal, dues, termination and suspension of membership, how good standing is maintained
- *Meetings of Members* - annual and special meetings, calling a meeting, notice, new business, quorum, voting and proxies
- *Governance* – number of Directors, eligibility of Directors, powers of Directors and members, discipline of members, election and appointment of directors, removal of directors, board vacancy, meetings of the Board
- *Officers* – number of Officers, how Officer positions are filled, duties of Officer positions, removal and vacancy
- *Committees* – appointment of committees, size and requirements, committee restrictions
- *Finance and Management* - fiscal year, appointment and role of the auditor, maintaining books and records, which individuals have signing authority, borrowing and borrowing restrictions, conflict of interest, Director remuneration
- *Amendments and Fundamental Changes* – how bylaws are amended, types of amendments that are considered ‘fundamental changes’ (if any) under the incorporation legislation
- *Notice* – required period of notice, errors
- *Dissolution* – what happens when the organization is dissolved
- *Indemnification* – absolving Directors, insurance
- *Adoption* – when the bylaws were adopted

Policies

- typically determined and approved by the Executive Committee.
- Members(teachers) have little input on the creation or application of a policy.
- Executive Committee may delegate the responsibility of creating policies to Committees of the Executive
- policies should connect to the organization's mission, vision, and values. If an organization values 'integrity' the content of the policies should reflect this value in action.
- Executive Committee can develop policies and procedures to operate the organization and manage members.
- may be consolidated into a policy manual or may exist as stand-alone documents.

Reasons to produce Policies

- The policy is required by law
- Members are frustrated by a lack of processes within the organization
- The organization's leadership frequently changes
- A recurring issue requires a standard solution
- The policy provides a path to manage an issue from beginning to end

Specific areas best covered by policies

RTU as an Organization:		RTU as an Employer	
Code of Conduct	Confidentiality	Employee code of conduct	Ethics policy
Discipline and Complaints	Photo Release	Employee disciplinary action policy	Travel policies
Expenses	Social Media Strategy	Employee complaint policies	Compensation and benefits policy
Dispute Resolution	Official Languages (optional)	Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies	Equal opportunity policy
Conflict of Interest	Gender Equity	Expenses	

Rules

RULES

The Executive Committee may create rules for the operation of meetings, events, equipment, or activities.

Similar to policies, this material also does not need to be approved by the Members and it should exist separately from the policies and procedures. Just as with policies, committees can also have input on the creation and implementation of rules – but the final decision usually rests with the Executive Committee.

