

Newsletter

September | 2021

Special Edition:
Constitution Day

Happy Constitution Day !

What is Constitution Day?

September 17 is designated as Constitution Day. On this day each year, the United States commemorates the September 17, 1787 signing of the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution was actually signed about 11 years after the United States declared its independence through the Declaration of Independence. The holiday began in 1940 when Congress and the President passed a resolution creating "I Am an American Day." Later the holiday was renamed to "Constitution Day."

What are the parts of the Constitution?

The Constitution has three main parts: the Preamble, the Articles, and the Amendments. The Preamble focuses on the purpose of the document. The Articles set out the legal framework under which the United States is governed. The U.S. later added the Amendments to modify the Constitution. Often, the Amendments clarify and expand on rights of the people. The first ten Amendments are the "Bill of Rights" and, like the other Amendments, add to the country's governing legal framework.

What are the first words of the Constitution?

"We the people of the United States..."

Why are those first words significant?

These words reflect who adopted the document. The Constitution is not owned by the government or any branch of government. Rather, the people do. The words symbolize democracy. They also reflect the individual states joining as one nation. Additionally, over time, voting rights have expanded. Therefore, more of the "people of the United States" can now contribute to the nation's governing laws.

How is the Constitution relevant to a University setting today?

As a public university, SUU is the "government." Therefore, requirements for state governments in the Constitution apply to processes and activities here.

For example, under the First Amendment (freedom of expression) a student may express their views without being disciplined for that expression (subject to certain very limited exceptions). See [SUU Policy 5.51](#).

Another example is the due process clause. It grants students the right to receive notice and an opportunity to be heard /respond to allegations before a public university can take away the student's ability to attend school. These are just a few examples, among many, of how the Constitution influences students and SUU's operations today.

DO YOU KNOW THE FREEDOMS GUARANTEED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT?

- religion
- speech
- press
- assembly
- petition the government for redress of grievances

CONSTITUTIONAL FUN FACTS

- The Constitution has approximately 4,543 words
- Spelling error: "Pensylvania" above the signers' names
- Thomas Jefferson did not sign the Constitution
- Of the signers of the Constitution, two became president: George Washington and James Madison
- Delaware was the first state to ratify the Constitution
- Rhode Island was the last state to ratify the Constitution

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