

The Constitution of Will Rice College



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Article I - Foundation

Section One: Establishment

1. The name of the organization shall be Will Rice College, hereinafter referred to as the College. The College is named in honor of William Marsh Rice, Jr., nephew of the founder of Rice University.

Section Two: Mission

1. It shall be the mission of the College to provide and maintain an atmosphere that will advance the social and scholastic growth of its members and to organize events that will unite students for service, holistic intellectual development, and fellowship.
2. The governing authorities of the College shall act to execute the will of the Members and to justly and earnestly represent the views of the Members on the affairs of the community in accordance with the highest ideals of democratic representation.

Article II - Membership

Section One: Designation of Membership

1. College membership, hereinafter referred to as the Members, shall be determined by officials of Rice University, hereinafter referred to as the University, from matriculating undergraduate and graduate students of the University.
2. Membership in the college, once determined, shall not be subject to change or revocation except by the Masters of the several colleges acting in concert according to the policies of the University.

Section Two: Rights of Members

1. Membership in the College entitles each member to receive the full benefits and privileges available to each member of the college; That is, rights of membership are shared equally among the Members.
2. Membership benefits and privileges may, as determined through appropriate legislation, be granted to persons other than those expressly granted membership under this Constitution, as long as such benefits and privileges do in no way infringe upon the rights of the Members of the College.
3. No member shall be compelled to participate in any activity against his will save those vital to the interests of Will Rice College.
4. The College shall not tolerate any conduct or method of initiation that willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any person.

Article III - The Executive

Section One: Composition

1. The Executive Officers of the College shall be the President, the Vice- President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary.
2. These Officers shall be elected by the Members to serve a term of one year. Election shall be by secret ballot, and all Members of the college shall be eligible to vote in the election. Procedures governing elections shall be determined by By-Law.
3. Only members of the College shall be eligible for election to the Executive Offices of the College.
4. No Officer of the College may concurrently serve in more than one executive or legislative office.
5. No person is eligible to be elected to the office of President or Vice- President who has not yet completed three regular semesters as a member of the College.
6. The Executive Officers shall reside in the College during the majority of their term.

Section Two: Powers and Duties of the President

The powers of the Chief Executive shall be vested in a President, who shall:

1. establish executive agenda to lead the College toward further fulfillment of its mission;
2. convene and preside over official meetings of the College and of the Executive and Legislative bodies of the College, except at such times as he may delegate this function to another Executive Officer;
3. prepare the agenda for meetings of the College and of the Executive and Legislative bodies of the College;
4. execute the policy of the College as expressed by the Diet or by the entire College in referendum;
5. be the official representative of the College, except at such times as he may delegate this function to another Officer of the College;
6. appoint such executive assistants as shall be deemed necessary for the proper execution of his duties, and have the power to remove such persons from their positions;
7. aid the Treasurer in forming a budget for college activities;
8. serve as a representative of Will Rice College to the Rice University Student Association;
9. appoint members of the Judiciary as vacancies occur;
10. perform or cause to be performed the duties of any Executive Officer in the event of their temporary absence or disability;
11. be present during Orientation Week to perform administrative and executive duties, but shall not serve as a New Student Advisor;
12. perform such other duties as may be prescribed by By-Law.

The President shall have all of the privileges of a full voting member of the Diet, but shall only vote to break ties. No more than one person shall hold the office of the President.

Section Three: Powers and Duties of the Vice-President

The Vice-President shall serve to ensure the effectiveness of College efforts by assisting the President in his or her duties and by advising and supporting representatives and Chairs.

It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to:

1. perform the duties of the President in the temporary absence or incapacity of the President;
2. preside at meetings of the Diet at times when the President is an advocate or beneficiary of a resolution;
3. convene and preside over meetings of the Activities Council and, as such, provide for the supervision and coordination of the committees and auxiliary organizations of the College;
4. oversee the efforts of division Chairs, assisting in the facilitation of their activities;
5. aid the Treasurer in forming a budget for College activities;
6. serve as a full voting member of the Diet;
7. direct legislation to appropriate committees for review;
8. coordinate, convene, and preside over the annual Housing Eligibility Jack, Room Jack, and Parking Jack, in accordance with specific rules and regulations as shall be established by By-Law;
9. perform such other duties as may be prescribed by By-Law.

No more than two people shall hold the office of the Vice-President.

Section Four: Powers and Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have charge of the finances of the College, including the prudent maintenance, investment, and disbursement of College funds.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to:

1. maintain the financial records of the College, including records of all receipts and disbursements, for the years including his term and for the two preceding years;
2. report regularly to the Diet at large on the status of College funds and the progress of financial initiatives;
3. oversee financial planning for major College activities;
4. pursue and manage funding of the College by Rice University and other organizations;
5. disburse funds from College accounts upon the approval of the Diet;
6. in consultation with the President, Vice-President, and Chairs, create an operating budget for the year of his term, and submit that budget for the approval of Diet at the beginning of each academic year;
7. maintain the College budget and monitor spending of College funds;
8. serve on the Activities Council and, as such, provide financial guidance to the Vice-Presidents, committees, and auxiliary organizations of the College;

9. serve as a full voting member of the Diet;
10. coordinate all budgetary requests and appropriations;
11. upon seven class-days notice of inquiry of the Diet present a statement to the Diet of the financial condition of the college and all its accounts;
12. render a final account of the finances of the College at the last regular
13. meeting of the Diet during his term;
14. perform such other duties as may be prescribed by By-Law.

The office of the Treasurer shall be held by two individuals running on alternating two year terms.

Section Five: Powers and Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall serve to keep the members of the College aware of the business and conduct of the Officers of the College and to provide administrative support to those Officers.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to:

1. record minutes of all official meetings of the College and the Executive and Legislative bodies of the College;
2. to include in those minutes a summary of the discussions and actions conducted in each meeting, a record of all motions passed during each meeting, and a record of the ballot pursuant to each motion;
3. make public a record of attendance at meetings of the Diet;
4. distribute the minutes of meetings to the Members by conspicuous posting on the College grounds and by internet posting;
5. maintain copies of agendas and minutes for all meetings convened during his term;
6. gather and distribute the minutes and reports of committees and of the Activities Council;
7. publicize College activities;
8. oversee the scheduling of activities in the common spaces of the College;
9. serve as a full voting member of the Diet;
10. perform such other duties as may be prescribed by By-Law.

No more than two people shall hold the office of the Secretary.

Section Six: Executive Council

1. The Executive Council shall consist of the aforementioned Executive Officers
2. Meetings of the Executive council shall be held at the discretion of the President or upon the request of more than two members of the Executive Council.
3. The Executive Council may, upon consent of a majority of the Executive Council, hold a closed executive session. No official votes shall take place in closed sessions.
4. Other guests (e.g. Chairs, representatives, University Officials) may be invited to attend and participate in meetings of the Executive Council at the discretion of the President or upon the request of more than two members of the Executive Council.

Section Seven: Vacancies and Succession

1. If the office of the President falls vacant after the President has been duly installed, the Vice-President shall immediately assume the office.
2. If, for any reason, the President-elect is permanently unable to assume the Office of the Presidency, the Vice-President-Elect shall be installed as President at the inauguration for the full term.
3. If the Vice-President assumes the duties of the President and more than one person holds the office, there shall be an immediate special election to determine which of the individuals may assume the office of President.
4. If any other Executive office falls vacant either before or after that officer has been duly installed, the Legislature shall by majority vote elect a successor to the position.

Section Eight: Other Officers

The duties and powers of other officers shall be prescribed by By-Law.

Article IV - The Diet

Section One: Composition

1. The legislative authority of the College shall be vested in a governing body called the Diet.
2. The voting Legislative Officers of the College shall be the Executive Officers of the College as provided in Article II, four Division Chairs, two At-Large Representatives, one Off-Campus Representative, and one Freshman Representative.
3. These aforementioned Officers shall be elected by the Members to serve a term of one year. Election shall be by secret ballot. All Members of the college shall be eligible to vote in the election, except where a more specific constituency is set defined for an Office by this Constitution. Procedures governing elections shall be determined by By-Law.
4. Only members of the College shall be eligible for election to the Legislative Offices of the College.
5. No Officer of the College may concurrently serve in more than one executive or legislative office.
6. The Master(s), Resident Associate(s), and Parliamentarian shall be non- voting ex-officio members of the Diet.

Section Two: Powers and Duties of the Diet

The Diet shall:

1. enact legislation concerning matters of policy affecting the Members and their welfare;
2. vote and conduct official business only when a quorum, constituted by presence of two-thirds of the voting members, is present;
3. confirm nominations by the President to appointed offices;
4. review and at its discretion approve the operating budget proposed by the Treasurer;
5. allocate and authorize the expenditure of College funds;
6. supervise the public use of the common spaces of the College;
7. oversee the search for candidates for the positions of College Master(s) and Resident Associate(s) when a vacancy in any of those positions occurs;
8. establish rules of procedure for meetings, and to establish and enforce rules of conduct and attendance for members of the Diet;
9. approve the dates and the procedure of all college elections under the rules and regulations provided in the By-Laws;
10. at its discretion and by unanimous vote name Honorary Members of the College, who shall be afforded all the privileges of college membership;
11. in the case of unforeseen circumstances, act in concert with the Master to enact emergency policies and make interim appointments;
12. prescribe individual duties of representatives by By-Law.

Section Three: Meetings

1. The Diet shall convene regularly (no less than once per month) at meetings called by the President.
2. Special meetings of the Diet may be called by the President, by the Masters, by written request of more than five Diet members, or by petition of more than thirty-five members of the College.
3. Any student or representative of a student group, having given notification in advance to the President, shall have the right to appear at a regular meeting of the Diet to present for consideration matters of interest to the Members.
4. All meetings of the Diet shall be open to the public.

Section Four: Duties and Responsibilities of Division Chairs

1. The four Division Chairs shall be the Facilities Chair, the Programs Chair, the Socials Chairs, the Legacy Chair.
 - a. The Facilities Chair shall oversee and ensure the security, upkeep and improvement of College facilities and properties.
 - b. The Programs Chair shall oversee and ensure the creation and maintenance of quality programs for the College to encourage the artistic and intellectual development of Members.
 - c. The Socials Chair shall oversee and ensure the creation and promotion of frequent social activities to facilitate fellowship among Members.
 - d. The Legacy Chair shall oversee and encourage the scholastic, professional, and philanthropic pursuits of the College and its Members and shall work to establish and maintain healthy relationships of the College with its alumni and associates.
2. Standing committees shall be determined by By-Law and assigned into a Division to be overseen by the Chair of that Division. Each Division Chair shall support and facilitate the prudent efforts of the committees he oversees.
3. In the event that a committee does not have a Committee Chairperson, the appropriate Division Chair shall perform or cause to be performed the duties of that Committee's chairperson until a new Committee Chairperson can be selected by the usual process.

Section Five: Responsibilities of At-Large Representatives

The At-Large Representatives shall be elected from among the Members to represent the opinions and concerns of the entire membership of the college. Especially, they shall ensure proper attention to meeting logistics, including the procurement of food, the accommodation of Members, and the distribution of agendas.

Section Six: Responsibilities of the Off-Campus Representative

The Off-Campus Representative shall be elected from among the members not residing in the College to represent the opinions and concerns of members who reside off campus. Especially, they shall work to ensure that off-campus members remain aware of and active in College programs and initiatives.

Section Seven: Responsibilities of the Freshman Representative

The Freshman Representative shall be elected from among freshman and first- year members to represent the opinions and concerns of newly matriculated members of the college. Especially, they shall work to ensure that freshmen and other newly matriculated members remain aware of and active in College programs and initiatives.

Article V - Activities Council

Section One: Composition

The Activities Council shall be comprised of the Vice-President, acting as Chairperson, the Treasurer, the Division Chairs, and the chairpersons of the various committees of the College.

Section Two: Purpose

The purpose of the Activities Council shall be to coordinate the efforts of the various committees of the College, to provide a forum for soliciting interest and ideas by the various committees, and to foster collaboration between the various committees.

Section Three: Meetings

1. The Activities Council shall convene regularly (not less than once per semester) at meetings called by the Vice-President.
2. Special meetings of the Activities Council may be called by the Masters, by written request of more than five Activities Council members, or by petition of more than thirty-five members of the College.

Article VI - The Judiciary

Section One: Commission

The College shall have an independent judiciary, vested with the power of judicial review. Its purpose and power shall be to:

1. interpret the Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of the College;
2. decide cases arising under the Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules, including violations of the ordinary amenities of civilized life or of the Rights of college members;
3. try cases of college infractions, as defined by the Rice University Code of Student Conduct, which occur within the College or at a College function;
4. impose sanctions consistent with the prescriptions of the Rice University Code of Student Conduct;
5. at its discretion, or upon appeal, refer cases to the Judicial Affairs Officials of Rice University;
6. create, by majority vote, rules and procedures for the conduct of its hearings.

Section Two: Composition

1. The College Court shall be led by a Chief Justice, who shall be elected by the Members to serve a term of one year. Election shall be by secret ballot, and all Members of the college shall be eligible to vote in the election. Procedures governing elections shall be determined by By-Law.
2. The Court shall include four Associate Justices, who shall be appointed by the Chief Justice to serve a term not exceeding their individual tenures as matriculated students of Rice University. These appointment shall be approved by the President.
3. Only members of the College shall be eligible to hold the office of Justice, and no Justice may concurrently serve in any executive or legislative office.

Section Three: Powers and Duties of the Chief Justice

The chief Judicial Officer of the College shall be the Chief Justice, who shall:

1. be present during Orientation Week to advise new College members in Judicial matters;
2. ensure the compliance of the Members with the Rice University Alcohol Policy and Code of Student Conduct;
3. investigate infractions against standing University and College regulations;
4. convene and preside over hearings of the Court;
5. oversee other functions of the Court;
6. issue opinions and make rulings. If his ruling is disputed, a hearing before the entire Court shall be convened.

The Chief Justice shall reside at the College during the majority of his term. No more than one person may hold the office of Chief Justice.

Section Four: Associate Justices

The Associate Justices shall:

1. be present at and participate in all hearings of the Court;
2. assist the Chief Justice in the fulfillment of his duties.

No more than one person may hold each office of Associate Justice.

Section Five: The Ombudsman

1. When the Court is convened, there shall be an Ombudsman, who shall:
 - a. advise Members of the College in questions of judicial procedure;
 - b. advise and represent defendants in any case before the Court;
 - c. be present at all meetings of the Court.
2. The President shall appoint the Ombudsman, subject to the majority approval of the Diet, and shall have the power to remove the Ombudsman from service.
3. The Diet shall, by two-thirds vote, have the power to remove the Ombudsman from service.

Section Six: Rules and Procedures

Rules and procedures for the conduct of the Court and its hearings shall be enumerated by By-Law.

Article VII - The Associates

Section One: Composition

The Associates of the College shall be:

1. The Master(s), who shall be the highest ranking Associate(s) of the College, and who shall be a faculty member of good standing;
2. The Resident Associates, who shall be faculty, staff, or graduate students of the University, and at least one of whom shall be a faculty member of full standing;
3. Faculty Associates, who shall each be faculty members of full standing;
4. University Associates, who shall be members in good standing of the staff or administration of the University;
5. Community Associates, who shall be selected from the greater Houston community.

Section Two: Duties of Associates

1. The Master(s) shall:
 - a. serve as the official Faculty representative of the College and, as such, be a member of the Rice University Committee of Masters;
 - b. advise the Members on academic, judicial, and procedural matters;
 - c. be available to the Members for consultation;
 - d. exercise disciplinary powers as enumerated by the Rice University Code of Judicial Procedure.
2. The Resident Associates shall:
 - a. reside in the College during their terms as Resident Associates;
 - b. be available to the Members for consultation;
 - c. assist the Master(s) at and according to the request of the Master(s).
3. The Faculty, University, and Community Associates shall:
 - a. advise the Members on academic, judicial, and other collegiate matters;
 - b. be available to the Members for consultation.
4. Other duties of Associates may be prescribed by By-Law.

Section Three: Selection of Associates

Associates shall be chosen so as to enrich the culture of the College and aide in the fulfillment of its Mission. Rules and procedures governing the selection of Associates shall be determined by By-Law.

Article VIII - Referendum, Initiative, and Recall

Section One: Initiative of Members

A petition of ten percent of the Members, presented to the President, shall be sufficient to compel the Diet to, within ten class-days upon receipt of such a petition, take action on a specific issue or vote upon specific legislation.

Section Two: Referendum and Recall

A referendum on any non-disciplinary act of Diet or the Court, or to recall any Diet or Court Officer or Committee Chairperson, shall be called by a resolution passed by two-thirds vote of the Diet or upon written petition of at least one quarter of the Members to the President:

1. The majority decision on questions in referendum shall be binding on the Court or Diet.
2. A positive vote of two-thirds of those voting to recall a Diet or Court Officer or Committee Chairperson shall be sufficient to require that the office be vacated and filled again by the usual procedure.

A referendum vote shall be arranged and executed within ten class-days of receipt of the initiating resolution or petition.

Article IX - Rules

Section One: Contents and Keeping

1. The Rules of the College shall contain such regulations and wisdoms as are necessary to ensure order, civility, and excellence in the College.
2. The Parliamentarian (or, if there is no Parliamentarian, the Secretary) shall keep a List of the Rules of the College.

Section Two: Establishment, Amendment, and Archival

1. Establishment or amendment of rules may be proposed either by a two-thirds vote of the Diet or by petition of more than thirty-five of the Members to the President.
2. Rules shall be established by a two-thirds vote of the Diet after reading of the rule(s) in at least one regular meeting of the Diet.
3. Rules may be amended (or nullified by amendment) by a two-thirds vote of the Diet after reading of the affected rule(s) in at least one regular meeting of the Diet, but rules may only be removed from the List of the Rules of the College upon unanimous approval of the Diet after reading of the affected rule(s) in at least two regular meetings of the Diet.

Article X - Enactment and Amendment

Section One: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed either by a two-thirds vote of the Diet or by petition of more than thirty-five of the Members to the President. Amendments shall be enacted when ratified by two-thirds of the Members voting in referendum, which shall take place after no less than seven days public notice.

Section Two: By-Laws

Enactment or amendment of By-Laws to this Constitution may be proposed either by a two-thirds vote of the Diet or by petition of more than thirty-five of the Members to the President. By-Laws shall be enacted by a four-fifths vote of the Diet after reading of the By-Law(s) in no less than two meetings of the Diet. By-Laws shall be amended as set forth in provisions of the affected By-Laws or, if no such provision is made, by a four-fifths vote of the Diet after reading of such amendment(s) in no less than two meetings of the Diet.

Section Three: Ratification

This Constitution shall be enacted when ratified in referendum by at least two-thirds of the Members voting. Upon enactment of this Constitution, the present constitution of the College shall be amended throughout by substitution of this Constitution therefore. All Rules and By-Laws that are in effect at the time of ratification of this Constitution and are not inconsistent with this Constitution shall remain binding upon the College until they may be revised in accordance with this Constitution.

Section Four: Severability

If any provision(s) of this Constitution or of the By-Laws to this Constitution are determined to be invalid or unenforceable, the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall not be in any way impaired thereby.

Section Five: Supersedure

This Constitution supersedes all prior By-Laws and Constitutions of the College. The provisions of this Constitution shall have superseding authority over the provisions of the By-Laws and over the Rules of the College.

Section Six: Approbation

*O-Week, Beer Bike, and the rest: We know Will Rice is the best.
With much myth, power, and value — the end.*