

## **SAMPLE ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION**

### **Article I. Name and Purpose**

*Section I.A. Name.* The name of this organization shall be *ORGANIZATION'S NAME*, abbreviated *ABBREVIATION*.

*Section I.B. Mission Statement.* As members of the Rice community, we believe that by working together we can fulfill our overall objective of addressing issues having to do with animal welfare by raising awareness and being a direct voice in bringing about change in the plight of animals in the Houston area and around the world. We will fulfill our goals by sponsoring various educational programs, by partnering with organizations in the animal welfare community, and by engaging the Rice, Houston, national, and international community in a conversation about issues having to do with the welfare of animals.

*Section I.C. Purpose.* The purpose of this organization shall be:

**I.C.1.** To foster a general awareness throughout the Rice community and the overall Houston community on the plight of various species of animals by starting a conversation about animal welfare issues;

**I.C.2.** To engage the Rice, Houston, national, and international community on issues having to do with animal welfare;

**I.C.3.** To provide opportunities for Rice students to address problems of animal welfare;

**I.C.4.** To make partnerships with various organizations in the Houston animal welfare community to further expand opportunities for students to become involved and to further enlighten the Rice community on animal welfare issues;

**I.C.5.** To academically study the various animal species by working with the Rice academic community in order to be able to better understand the animals, their environment, and threats to their welfare; and

**I.C.6.** To be a unifying voice on campus for those who are concerned about the welfare of animals in order to be a stronger advocate in the Houston community, the national community, and the international community for the better treatment and protection of animals.

### **Article II. Membership**

*Section II.A. Classes.* There shall be three classes of members:

**II.A.1. Student Members.** All currently registered students at Rice University shall be eligible for student membership. Student membership shall be granted to any eligible person who submits a completed member information form to the Secretary and pays dues to the Treasurer.

*II.A.1.a.* At no time shall fewer than half of the organization's members be student members.

**II.A.2. Community Members.** All those not eligible for student membership shall be eligible for community membership. Community membership shall be granted to any eligible person who submits a completed member information form to the Secretary and pays dues to the Treasurer.

**II.A.3. Honorary Members.** By a majority vote of the membership in accordance with other applicable provisions of this Constitution, any person may be granted an honorary membership. Honorary members shall have none of the obligations of membership but shall be entitled to all the privileges of membership except of voting, making motions, and holding office.

### *Section II.B. Removal*

**II.B.1. Grounds for Removal.** Any of the following shall constitute grounds for removal of membership:

*II.B.1.a.* Conduct injurious to the organization and its mission, where injurious conduct is any conduct tending to injure the good name of the organization, disturb its wellbeing, or hamper it in its work;

*II.B.1.b.* Conduct unbecoming a member of the organization; and

*II.B.1.c.* Ineligibility for membership according to the requirements of this organization, the Student Association, and/or Rice University, whichever are applicable.

**II.B.2. Process for Removal.** If an officer or the sponsor of the organization has reason to believe a member has acted in a manner warranting removal under Section II.B.1, the member may be called before the officers and sponsor in a closed meeting. After hearing the alleged grounds for removal and the member's response, the officers may remove the member by a majority vote. The President shall notify the member of the decision in writing within 48 hours.

## **Article III. Officers**

*Section III.A. Definition.* The officers of this organization shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.

### *Section III.B. Executive Committee*

**III.B.1. Definition.** The officers shall constitute the Executive Committee.

**III.B.2. Authority.** The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the organization between its regular meetings, make recommendations to the membership, and perform any other duties listed in this constitution. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of this organization, and none of its acts or omissions shall conflict with action taken by this organization. Accordingly, the Executive Committee shall be authorized to spend this organization's funds.

**III.B.3. Meetings.** The Executive Committee shall select its own time and place of meeting. A special meeting may be called at the President. Upon the request of two other officers, the President shall be obligated to call a special meeting.

### *Section III.C. Duties of Officers*

**III.C.1.** The President shall:

*III.C.1.a.* Oversee all meetings and activities of the organization;

*III.C.1.b.* Chair all meetings of the membership and of the Executive Committee; and

*III.C.1.c.* Ensure the organization abides by the rules and regulations of the Student Association and of Rice University at all times.

**III.C.2.** The Vice-President shall:

*III.C.2.a.* Assist the President in the execution of his or her duties;

*III.C.2.b.* Be in charge of programming; and

*III.C.2.c.* Submit all required forms to the Student Association and the Office of Student Activities by their respective deadlines.

**III.C.3.** The Treasurer shall:

*III.C.3.a.* Manage this organization's funds;

*III.C.3.b.* Maintain a correct balance of this organization's funds;

*III.C.3.c.* Present a budget to the membership no later than November 1;

*III.C.3.d.* Accept payment of dues from members and update the organization's records accordingly; and

*III.C.3.e.* Make available, at the request of any member, the Student Association, or Rice University, a current breakdown of the organization's income and expenses.

**III.C.4.** The Secretary shall:

*III.C.4.a.* Take minutes at all meetings of the membership and of the Executive Committee;

*III.C.4.b.* Distribute minutes to the membership or the officers in a timely manner;

*III.C.4.c.* Maintain the membership list, any mailing lists, and the organization's website;

*III.C.4.d.* Accept membership information forms from new members; and

*III.C.4.e.* Manage the organization's correspondence.

*Section III.D. Eligibility.* Only student members who are not on Disciplinary Probation or otherwise prohibited from holding office in a registered student organization shall be eligible to seek and hold office. No member may hold more than one office at a time. No member may be elected to the same office more than twice in a row.

*Section III.E. Selection.* Officers shall be elected in accordance with Article V (Voting) at a regular meeting.

*Section III.F. Term.* Officers shall serve until their replacement, removal, or resignation.

*Section III.G. Removal*

**III.G.1. Grounds for Removal.** Any of the following shall constitute grounds for removal from office:

*III.G.1.a.* Failure to satisfactorily fulfill the duties of the office;

*III.G.1.b.* Conduct injurious to the organization and its mission, where injurious conduct is any conduct tending to injure the good name of the organization, disturb its wellbeing, or hamper it in its work;

*III.G.1.c.* Conduct unbecoming a member of the organization;

*III.G.1.d.* Ineligibility for membership according to the requirements of this organization, the Student Association, and/or Rice University, whichever are applicable; and

*III.G.1.e.* Violation of Rice University rules or regulations, including the Code of Student Conduct and the Rice Alcohol Policy, where the violation occurs in the course of fulfilling the duties of the office, and where the member has been found in violation by an appropriate judicial body or official.

**III.G.2. Process for Removal.** An officer may be removed through either of the following processes:

*III.G.2.a.* Upon receipt of a petition of at least 20 percent of the voting members of the organization, the President shall be required to schedule a recall election to be conducted between 48 hours and two weeks from the time of receipt. A two-thirds vote of voting members present is required to remove an officer in a recall election.

*III.G.2.b.* If an officer or the sponsor of the organization has reason to believe an officer has acted in a manner warranting removal under Section III.E.1, the officer may be called before the other officers and sponsor in a closed meeting. After hearing the alleged grounds for removal and the officer's response, the other officers may remove the member by a unanimous vote. The President (or Vice-President if the removal hearing is for the President) shall notify the member of the decision in writing within 24 hours.

*Section III.H. Vacancies.* In the case of a vacancy for any office, the Executive Committee shall call a special election to be conducted between 48 hours and two weeks from the time of vacancy.

## **Article IV. Meetings**

*Section IV.A. Regular Meetings.* Regular meetings of this organization shall be held at a time and place that is convenient for the membership. The membership may, at its discretion, change the time or place of meeting. Regular meetings shall be held at least monthly. The Secretary shall send a reminder to the membership via appropriate means between 24 and 48 hours in advance of each regular meeting.

*Section IV.B. Special Meetings.* Special meetings may be called by the President or the Executive Committee. The President shall be obligated to call a special meeting upon the written petition of at

least 10 percent of the student members. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. At least 48 hours' notice must be given for special meetings.

*Section IV.C. Quorum.* Fifteen percent of the student members shall constitute a quorum for all purposes under this constitution.

*Section IV.D. Attendance.* Officers are expected to attend all meetings.

## **Article V. Voting**

*Section V.A. Voting Members.* Voting members shall be those student members without outstanding dues.

*Section V.B. Threshold.* Except where otherwise noted, any matter put to a vote shall be decided by a majority of voting members present.

*Section V.C. General Elections.* Elections shall be held annually in the spring semester for all officer positions. A majority of voting members present shall be required to elect an officer. Preferential ballots shall be used in all officer elections involving more than two candidates. If no candidate receives a majority of the first-preference votes, a preferential method shall be used to determine the winner.

**V.C.1.** The general election must be held at a regular meeting with at least one week's notice that general elections are to be held.

*Section V.D. Special Elections.* Special elections shall be held in the same manner as general elections, except that they may be held at a special meeting when appropriate.

## **Article VI. Finances**

*Section VI.A. Budget.* The Treasurer shall prepare a proposed budget by November 1 of each year. The budget may be approved or amended only by a majority vote of voting members present at a general meeting with at least 48 hours' notice.

*Section VI.B. Dues.* Annual dues shall be set by a majority vote of the membership at a regular meeting no earlier than September 1 and no later than October 1. All members must pay the annual dues on or before November 1 of each year. A member who has not paid dues by December 1 shall be placed on probationary status without any of the privileges of membership until his or her dues are paid.

**VI.B.1.** In cases of financial hardship, the Executive Committee may reduce or waive a member's dues by a majority vote. Members who have received a waiver or paid a reduced amount shall be considered current with their dues. A waiver or reduction must be requested annually.

**VI.B.2.** New members shall pay pro-rated dues based on the number of whole months remaining until dues are next due.

**VI.B.3.** The dues for student members and community members may be different.

*Section VI.C. Club Funds.* All funds gathered by the organization must be deposited into a club account through the Office of Student Activities within one business day of their receipt.

*Section VI.D. Misuse of Funds.* The sponsor shall refer to the relevant University office(s) any member reasonably suspected of spending club funds without authority, failing to deposit club funds appropriately, or otherwise misusing or abusing club funds.

## **Article VII. Sponsor**

*Section VII.A. Requirement.* The organization must have a sponsor who is a member of the Rice faculty or staff and who plans to be at Rice for the full academic year.

*Section VII.B. Selection.* The sponsor shall be selected at a regular meeting by a majority vote of voting members present.

*Section VII.C. Term.* The sponsor shall serve until his or her resignation or replacement.

*Section VII.D. Training.* The sponsor must meet the training criteria set by the Office of Student Activities by the deadline determined by that office.

*Section VII.E. Replacement.* If the sponsor resigns, is replaced, or is otherwise unable to continue serving as the sponsor for the remainder of the academic year, the organization shall select a new sponsor and notify the Office of Student Activities of the change within 15 class days.

## **Article VIII. Parliamentary Authority**

*Section VIII.A.* The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order this organization may adopt.

## **Article IX. General Policies and Regulations**

*Section IX.A. Nondiscrimination Policy.* This organization shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status.

*Section IX.B. Anti-Hazing Policy.* This organization shall not engage in any form of hazing, as defined by the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable Rice University rules and regulations.

*Section IX.C. Conflict of Interest Policy.* The business of this organization shall not be conducted in any manner that creates a conflict of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof.

*Section IX.D. Approval of Contracts.* No commitments or contracts shall be made by any member of this organization on behalf of this organization without the approval of both the sponsor and a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

*Section IX.E. Interpretation of this Constitution.* This document shall be interpreted based on the letter, the spirit, and the intent of any provision(s) in question, with reference to appropriate archival documents to provide insight into the intent or spirit of a provision where relevant. Article and section titles are intended to aid in reading and interpreting the document but shall not be construed as binding upon or limiting the content of their respective articles and sections. Where a general

statement and a specific statement appear to be contradictory, the specific statement shall be taken as a binding exception to the general statement.

#### **Article X. Primacy of the Student Association**

*Section X.A.* This organization shall recognize the primacy of the Student Association Executive Branch, the Student Senate, and ultimately, the Student Association.

*Section X.B.* This organization shall be bound by the requirements of the Constitution of the Student Association and any associated rules and regulations.

*Section X.C.* This constitution and any bylaws or policies adopted by this organization are subordinate to the Constitution of the Student Association.

#### **Article XI. Amendments**

*Section XI.A. Approval by Membership.* Proposed amendments to this constitution may be approved by the membership only by a three-fourths vote of voting members present with at least one week's prior notice.

*Section XI.B. Approval by Student Association Parliamentarian.* Amendments approved by the membership shall be submitted to the Student Association Parliamentarian. Amendments may not take effect until they are approved by the Parliamentarian or the Student Senate in accordance with the Constitution of the Student Association. The Date of Last Revision on the title page of this constitution shall be updated to reflect the date of approval by the Parliamentarian or Senate.