

# THE CONSTITUTION OF WILL RICE COLLEGE

Current March 2003

## I. Name

The name of this college shall be Will Rice College.

## II. Purpose

It shall be the purpose of Will Rice College and its government to advance through group living and participation in its activities the scholastic and social development of its members.

## III. Membership

**A.** Membership in Will Rice College shall be open to undergraduate and graduate students of Rice University.

**B.** The members of Will Rice College shall be designated by Rice University officials.

**C.** Membership in the college, once attained, may not be relinquished by a college member except with the specific approval of the Masters of the several colleges acting together.

**D.** No person shall live in the college during the academic year who is not a member or a resident associate of the college without the consent of the Master.

**E.** Only members of the college shall hold any appointive or elective office of the college.

**F.** No person shall hold a college office who is on college or university probation of any kind.

**G.** All members of Will Rice College are also members of the Student Association as long as Will Rice College is a member of the Student Association.

## IV. The Executive

**A.** The executive officers of the College shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.

**B.** The executive officers shall be elected in the spring semester of each year and shall serve until the inauguration of their successors in the spring semester of the following year. The election shall be by secret ballot. All members of the college shall be eligible to vote, and a candidate with a simple majority of the votes cast shall be elected. The election shall be conducted in accordance with the By-Laws.

**C.** All executive officers shall reside in the college during the academic year of their terms in office. Both the President and the Vice-President shall be classified as juniors or above during the major portion of their terms. Both shall also be required to have completed three full semesters as members of the college before declaring their candidacies.

**D.** No executive officer shall be elected to another position within Will Rice College while in office.

**E.** The functions of the officers shall be defined as follows:

**1. The President**

The President shall preside at meetings of the Diet. He shall act as official representative of the college at all university and college functions. The President, with the Vice-President, shall appoint chairmen of the college committees and members of the judiciary as vacancies occur, subject to Diet approval. He shall serve as one of the college representatives to the Student Senate. The office of the President shall be held by no more than one person.

**2. The Vice-President**

The Vice-President shall assist the President in the execution of his duties and shall assume the duties of the President in his temporary absence or incapacity. The Vice-President shall act as Chairman of the Activities Council and, as such, shall be directly responsible for providing overall direction and long-range planning for the college. The Vice-President shall aid the Treasurer in providing a budget for college activities. The Vice-President shall be responsible for holding Room-Jack and Parking Lot Jack in accordance with the By-Laws and Rules of the college. The office of the Vice-President shall be held by no more than two people. 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 for President.

**3. The Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall have charge of all college finances. He shall serve on the Activities Council and be responsible for planning the yearly committee budgets and for coordinating all budgetary requests. The Treasurer shall keep accurate, up-to-date records of all receipts and disbursements. He shall be required to present a statement of the financial condition of the college upon seven days' notice by the Diet. The Treasurer shall render a final account of the finances of the college at the last regular meeting of the Diet during his term. The office of the Treasurer shall be held by one person.

**4. The Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the Diet. These shall include a resume of the discussions which occur during the meeting, a record of all motions passed during a meeting, and a record of the balloting pursuant to each motion. Copies of each set of minutes shall be provided for the Master's files and the files of the college. The Secretary shall prepare and publish a resume of each set of minutes which shall be made available to all college members. The Secretary shall be responsible for publicizing all college activities and for the public relations of the college. The Secretary shall be responsible for the scheduling of activities in the common spaces of the college. The office of the Secretary shall be held by no more than two people.

**V. The Legislative**

**A.** The legislative functions of the college shall; be vested in a central governing body called the Diet, comprised of the following members:

1. The executive officers of the college, as defined above, who shall also serve as voting officers of the Diet, except for the President who shall vote only in the case of ties.

2. Eighteen voting representatives elected in the first three (3) weeks of the fall semester. For this purpose Will Rice College shall be partitioned into eleven constituencies. Every member of the college shall be a member of one and only one constituency as determined by his place of residence at the time of the election. Every representative from a constituency shall be elected by and from its members.

- a. The six constituencies electing one (1) representative shall be: the Fourth Floor of the Old Dorm, and the Thirties, Forties, Fifties, Eighties and Nineties stairwells of the New Dorm.
- b. The four constituencies election two (2) representatives shall be: the First, Second, and Third Floors of the Old Dorm and the rooms which comprise the Tower of the New Dorm.
- c. The Masters, Resident Associates, and Parliamentarian, ex-officio, without votes.

## **B. Election of Representatives**

1. The election of executive officers shall be held within four weeks of the beginning of spring semester.
2. The election of voting representatives shall be held within three weeks of the beginning of the fall semester.
3. In the event of a vacancy in the Diet, a new representative will be elected within two weeks, excluding holidays, of the date of the occurrence of the vacancy. The same electoral procedure will be used as in the original election.

## **C. Powers and Duties of the Diet**

1. The Diet shall supervise the public use of the Commons, the receipt and disbursement of college funds, and those responsibilities vested in it by the legitimate authorities of Rice University.
2. The Diet shall approve the dates and the procedure of all college elections under the rules and regulations provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws.
3. The Diet shall have the power to name "honorary members" by unanimous vote. Honorary members shall be afforded all the privileges of college membership.
4. In the case of unforeseen circumstances the Executive Officers of the Diet, with the Master, shall have the power to enact emergency policies, make interim appointments or take any other action deemed necessary until normal legislative procedure can remedy the situation.

## **VI. Other Elected Offices**

**A.** Other elected officers of the college shall be a Student Association Senator, Rice Programs Council Representative, Honor Council Representative, University Court Representative, and chairperson(s) of the Social, Programs, Beer Bike, and Whimsy committees. There shall be a team of two or three Orientation Week Coordinators. There shall also be a Fall and Spring College Night Coordinators.

**B.** These officers shall be elected in the spring semester of each year and shall serve until the inauguration of their successors in the spring semester of the following year, except for the College Night and Beer Bike Coordinators who shall be elected the semester prior to the event they coordinate. The election shall be by secret ballot. All members of the college shall be eligible to vote, and a candidate with a simple majority of the votes cast shall be elected. The election shall be conducted in accordance with the By-Laws.

**C.** Qualifications and functions of the officers shall be defined as follows

1. The Student Association Senator shall serve as a representative of the college to the Student Senate.

2. The Rice Program Council Representative shall serve as liaison to the Rice Program Council.
3. The Social Committee Chairperson(s) shall be responsible for all on-campus social events of the college.
4. The Programs Committee Chairperson(s) shall organize films, speakers, concerts, and other programs to enrich the cultural life of the college.
5. The Whimsy Committee Chairperson(s) shall plan various off-campus social events which are not covered by the Social or Cultural Committees.
6. The Orientation Week Coordinators shall organize Orientation Week and choose advisors subject to Diet approval. Coordinators shall be classified as juniors or above, and shall have at least one year's experience as Orientation Week advisors. At least one coordinator shall have a minimum of one year's experience as a Will Rice Orientation advisor. Coordinators shall be elected as a team of two or three.
7. The College Night Coordinator(s) shall be responsible for fall college night.
8. The Spring College Night Coordinator(s) shall be responsible for spring college nights.
9. The Honor Council Representative shall serve as a liaison to the Honor Council.
10. The University Court Representative shall serve as a liaison to the University Court.
11. The Beer Bike Coordinator(s) shall be responsible for Will Rice Beer Bike and related events.

## **VII. Activities Council**

- A.** There shall be an Activities Council consisting of the college Vice-President, who shall act as chairman, the college Treasurer, Secretary, and the chairmen of the various committees of the college.
- B.** The purpose of the Activities Council shall be to better coordinate the various college committees in the planning and execution of college activities by providing an overall direction and by actively soliciting the interest and ideas of the various committees.
- C.** Meetings of the Activities Council shall be called at the discretion of the Vice-President acting as chairman, or within five class days after presentation of a petition of thirty-five members of the college. There shall not be less than one meeting per month during the academic year.
- D.** Appointed committee chairmen are subject to recall by a two-thirds vote of the Diet, upon recommendation of the Vice-President.

## **VIII. The Judiciary**

### **A. The College Court**

1. There shall be a College Court which shall exercise jurisdiction over
  - a. violations of the ordinary amenities of civilized life or of the rights and persons of college members;

b. violations of the Constitution, By-Laws and/or Rules of Will Rice College by individual college members.

2. The Court shall be empowered to determine the guilt or innocence of any college member accused of an offence on the basis of evidence and testimony presented. If the college member is found guilty of a violation of college Rules, the Court shall have the power to assess an appropriate penalty which shall be executed by the Chief Justice.

3. The Court shall consist of five members appointed by the President, one of whom shall be appointed Chief Justice, with the advice and consent of the Diet. A two-thirds majority of the Diet shall be necessary to approve the appointment of a member of the Court.

4. No member of the Court shall be a member of the Diet during his tenure on the Court.

5. A member of the Court shall retain his office only during good behavior or until his graduation or official withdrawal from the college. The Chief Justice of the Court shall be required to reside within the college during his tenure of office.

6. The Court shall include no more than two members from any one class.

7. In the event that the Defendant or the Plaintiff is a member of the Court, the Vice-President shall serve as a temporary voting member of the Court for the duration of the case in question. The President shall appoint a temporary member if both the Vice-President and a member of the Court are involved in the case.

8. The Diet shall, by a three-fourths vote, have the power to remove any member from the Court.

9. Any Court member may disqualify himself from a case. In such an event the Vice-President shall serve as a temporary member of the Court for the duration of the case in question. If the Vice-President feels unable to deliver an impartial opinion, the President shall appoint a temporary member.

## **B. The Appeals Board**

1. There shall be an appeals Board which shall exercise appellate jurisdiction on petition of either party involved in the case, or on petition of a college member concerning a decision of the Elections Committee.

2. In the event of an appeal, the Appeals Board shall be empowered, as provided in the By-Laws, to review the verdict of the Court when either (a) procedural error, or (b) substantive evidence is presented in appeal. The appeals Board shall, at its discretion, review penalties on appeal by the Defendant or the Plaintiff. In all cases on appeal by the Plaintiff, if the decision is reversed, the Appeals Board shall have the power to assess an appropriate penalty which shall be executed by the College Court Chief Justice.

3. The Appeals Board shall exercise original jurisdiction over the interpretation of the Constitution, By-Laws and Rules of the college. Upon petition of any member of the college, the Appeals Board shall, within one week, publicly post its interpretation of the article, by-law or rule in question. In all cases of interpretation, the majority decision of the Appeals Board shall be binding unless overturned by the initiative procedure.

4. The Appeals Board shall consist of five members appointed by the President, one of whom shall be appointed Chairman with the advice and consent of the Diet. A three-fourths majority of the Diet shall be necessary to approve the appointment of a member of the Appeals Board.

5. No person shall simultaneously be a member of the Appeals Board and of the college Court. No member of the Appeals Board shall be a member of the Diet during his tenure on the Board.

6. A member of the Appeals Board shall retain his office during good behavior or until his graduation or official withdrawal from Will Rice College. The Appeals Board shall include no more than two members from any once class.

7. In the event that a Defendant or the Plaintiff is a member of the Appeals Board, the President shall serve only for the duration of the case in question. The Vice-President shall appoint a temporary member if both the President and a member of the Appeals Board are involved in the case.

8. The Diet shall, by a three-fourths vote, have the power to remove any member from the Appeals Board.

### **C. The Ombudsman**

1. There shall be an Ombudsman who shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Diet. A two-thirds majority of the Diet shall be necessary to approve the appointment.

2. The Ombudsman shall, upon request, advise any college member on any questions concerning judicial procedure, and shall advise the parties in any case before the Court or Appeals Board. He shall be required to be present at all meetings of the Court and Appeals Board.

3. The Diet shall, by two-thirds vote, have the power to remove the Ombudsman from office.

### **D. The Advocate**

1. There shall be an Advocate who shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Diet. A three-fourths majority of the Diet shall be necessary to approve the appointment.

2. The Advocate shall serve on the Rules Committee as the Parliamentarian to the Diet, and shall be responsible for collecting evidence and testimony for Court and Appeals Board cases. The Advocate may, at the request of a college member, take cases to Court for college members.

3. The Advocate shall retain his office only during good behavior or until graduation or official withdrawal from the college.

4. The Advocate shall not be a member of the Diet, Court, or Appeals Board during his tenure of office.

5. The Diet shall, by a three-fourths vote, have the power to remove the Advocate from office.

### **E. Provisional Appointments**

The President may appoint temporary members to the College Court or the Appeals Board if a majority of the members remaining on that body so request. The length of such temporary appointments shall be declared by the President at the time they are made.

## **IX. Meetings**

### **A. College Meetings**

Meetings of the college shall be called by the President at his discretion, or by petition of thirty-five members of the college.

## **B. Diet Meetings**

1. Meetings of the Diet shall be called by the President at his discretion, or upon the formal request of three members of the Diet, or by petition of thirty-five members of the college. After the election of the voting representatives, there shall not be fewer than one meeting every two weeks during the regular semester.
2. A quorum for meetings of the Diet shall be two-thirds of the Diet membership.
3.
  - a. A member of the Diet may be removed from the Diet by the Executive Committee after two absences, including those where proxies are sent.
  - b. A Diet member must send a proxy in their stead upon prior notice to the President.

## **X. Associates**

**A.** Faculty Associates of this college shall be invited by the college and shall fall into the following categories:

1. The Master, who shall be the highest ranking Faculty Associate.
2. Resident Associates. There shall be two resident associates, one of whom a faculty member of full standing, the other a member of the faculty, staff or graduate student. Both RAs shall reside in the college.
3. Non-Resident Associates, who shall be faculty members of full standing.

**B.** Non-Faculty Associate membership shall be conferred only by the Associates Committee in concert with the Master. Non-Faculty Associates shall include:

1. University Associates from the administration or staff of the university,
2. Community Associates from the greater Houston community.

## **C. Duties of the Associates**

### **1. The Master**

- a. The Master and a specially convened search committee, appointed by the President with the advice of the Diet, shall make recommendation to the Diet concerning the appointment of Resident Associates. After consultation with the Search Committee he shall invite the faculty members to become Non-Resident Associates of the college.
- b. All Associates shall be appointed for three-year terms, to be renewed at the discretion of the Master in consultation with the Associates Committee
- c. The Master shall act as an advisory member of college committees when the Diet or the committee in question requests him to do so.

## **2. Resident, Non-Resident, and Non-Faculty Associates**

a. Resident, Non-Resident, and Non-Faculty Associates shall further the main purposes of the college by joining with the student members at meals and at other college functions, and by advising both the students and the Master on matters pertaining to the college.

b. Resident, Non-Resident, and Non-Faculty Associates shall, at their convenience, act as advisory members of college committees which request them to do so.

## **XI. Funds**

**A.** The college shall assess dues equally from each member.

**B.** Funds may be obtained through college-sponsored enterprises subject to the approval of the Diet and of the authorities of the University.

## **XII. Initiative, Referendum and Recall**

### **A. Initiative**

1. Within ten days, excluding University holidays, of the President's receipt of a petition of seventy college members, an election shall be held to adopt or reject specific legislation proposed by that petition. Initiative elections shall be conducted according to procedures stipulated by the Diet and in the By-Laws.

2. A two-thirds majority of the college members voting shall be sufficient to adopt legislation by this method.

### **B. Referendum**

1. Referenda may be held on any act of the Diet or any legislation passed by the initiative procedure.

2. A referendum may be called by a resolution passed by a two-thirds vote of the Diet or on petition of thirty-five members of the college. The referendum must be held within ten days, excluding university holidays, of the presentation of the resolution or petition to the President, as provided in the By-Laws.

3. A simple majority of those voting shall be sufficient to endorse or reject a referendum. Referenda shall be binding and final.

### **C. Recall**

1. A petition of one-third of a Diet member's constituency shall be sufficient to demand an election for his recall, which shall be held within one week, excluding university holidays, of the President's receipt of the petition.

2. A majority of the constituency of a Diet member shall be necessary and sufficient to remove him from his office. The recall election shall be conducted as provided in the By-Laws.

3. Elected committee chairmen shall be subject to the recall procedure applicable to members of the Diet.

## **XIII. Rights of Members**

No member of Will Rice College shall be compelled in any manner to participate in any activity against his will save those vital to the interests of Will Rice College and/or Rice University. Furthermore, no college member shall ever be subject to the violation of his personal rights by other members of the college or university. No member of Will Rice College shall ever have his membership involuntarily revoked, without due cause as determined by the Master and the Will Rice College Court.

#### **XIV. By-Laws**

By-Laws can be passed or changed by a two-thirds vote of the Diet, upon forty-eight hours notice of the changes to the College.

#### **XV. Constitutional Amendments**

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by two-thirds vote of the members of the Diet or by a petition of one-fourth of the total membership of the college. A Constitutional election to ratify an amendment must be held within two weeks, excluding university holidays, of the presentation of the amendment to the college. A two-thirds majority of the college members voting shall be sufficient to ratify any amendment to this Constitution.