

# THE BEST COLLEGE'S CONSTITUTION

MARIAN AND SPEROS P. MARTEL COLLEGE  
WILLIAM MARSH RICE UNIVERSITY



Ratified: February 2016

Amended:

## Article 1: Purpose and Membership

1. Purpose

- a. The purpose of Martel College is to provide a community that promotes an atmosphere of trust, support, enjoyment, intellectual and social growth, and family for the benefit of all of its members. Members of the college are expected to:
  - i. Respect Martel College property. Failure to do so may result in fines imposed by the College Court.
  - ii. Respect other members of the college.
  - iii. Positively represent Martel College to the rest of the university.
- 2. Undergraduate Membership
  - a. Undergraduate members will be inducted to Marian and Speros P. Martel College by the authorities of Rice University and Martel College. Once a member of Martel College, students are expected to uphold the tenets of Martel College and abide by the Rice University Student Code of Conduct.
  - b. Undergraduate membership in Martel College may not be revoked except with approval of the Master in accordance with university-wide procedures.
- 3. Alumni Membership
  - a. Unless revoked, Martel College membership is life-long. Upon graduation, undergraduate members of the college become alumni members.
- 4. Associate Membership
  - a. Associate membership consists of faculty, university, and community representatives.
    - i. Faculty associate membership includes university faculty members.
    - ii. University associate membership includes people employed by the university. Resident Associates (RAs) may be included in this group.
    - iii. Community associate membership includes people representing the greater community.
  - b. Associate members of the college are selected by students of Martel College in collaboration with the college masters.

## Article 2: The Parliament

- 1. Overview
  - a. The Parliament of Marian and Speros P. Martel College will perform the executive and legislative functions of the College. The Parliament is made up of four groups; the Executive Council, non-executive voting members, non-voting members, and general members.
    - i. Attendance at Parliamentary meetings is required by the Executive Council, non-executive voting members, and non-voting members. General members are encouraged and welcomed to attend Parliamentary meetings.
- 2. Executive Council
  - a. President
    - 1. The President is the chief executive of the college, charged with orchestrating public assemblies of the college and Parliament, representing the college at meetings of university leaders, and

appointing officials of the college whose roles are not defined herein.

2. When needed, the President will appoint a chair for the search committees for new Masters, Resident Associates, or a college coordinator.
3. The President is not eligible for any other Martel Government positions during his/her presidency.
4. The President must have completed two full semesters at Rice University to be eligible for the position. Only one member of the College will hold the position of President.
5. The President does not vote, except in the instance of a tie, when (s)he will be awarded one tie-breaking vote.

b. Chief Justice

- i. The Chief Justice is the head of the Martel College court and is responsible for overseeing its proceedings and selecting its associate justices, as well as enforcing the Martel College Judicial Code.
  1. See Article 4: "The College Court"
- ii. The Chief Justice serves as the primary liaison between university police and the college.
  1. In the event that the Chief Justice is unable to fulfill this duty, (s)he must appoint an associate justice to temporarily act in his/her stead
  2. All noise complaints must be sent directly to the Chief Justice and the Chief Justice must be given adequate time to respond before any member of the college may relay noise complaints to RUPD.
- iii. The Chief Justice is responsible for being well-versed in the Martel College Judicial Code, Constitution, and Bylaws; as it is his/her responsibility to be the primary enforcer of all such documents.
  1. The Chief Justice must attend Parliament, but does not receive a vote.

c. Vice President

- i. The Vice President will oversee the operation of the Floor Lords, oversee Martel public spaces, work with the spaces supercommittee/director for the improvement of public spaces, and serve as the first substitute for the President at all functions outside the college.
  1. The Vice President will oversee the obtainment and spending of Ambiance and Matching Funds.
- ii. The Vice President is in charge of Eligibility Jack, Room Draw and Parking Jack.
- iii. The Vice President must have completed two full semesters at Rice University to be eligible for the position. Only one member of the College will hold the position of Vice President. The Vice President receives one vote.

d. Prime Minister



- a. After their first year, transfer students may only run to be representatives of their respective graduating class.
      - ii. Class representatives are expected to hold a minimum of two town hall events for their class per semester, the structure of which they may determine.
      - iii. Each Class Representative must serve on a committee.
      - iv. Each Class Representative receives one vote.
    - b. Orientation Week Coordinators
      - i. The Orientation Week Coordinators will perform all duties requested of them by the Dean of Undergraduates' Office and Student Success Initiatives. They will work together to plan and execute all aspects of Martel College orientation week.
      - ii. Orientation Week Coordinators will facilitate integration of new students into the college by hosting at least two events per academic year to encourage interaction between new students and the upper classes.
      - iii. The Orientation Week Coordinators will serve as a resource to all College Committees and affiliated organizations with regard to involving and communicating with new students.
      - iv. The Orientation Week Coordinators will be selected by a committee comprised of the current President, Masters, Resident Associates, College Coordinator, and former Orientation Week Coordinators who are current students.
        - 1. The selection process for Orientation Week coordinators should begin in the fall semester and conclude no later than the beginning of the third week of classes of the Spring semester.
      - v. The Coordinators will represent the incoming new students from the time of changeover Parliament to the end of the spring semester. The three coordinators will collectively share one vote, which should be cast in the interest of the incoming new students.
4. Non-Voting Members
  - a. Super Committee Directors
    - i. Directors work to ensure that the success of each committee under their supervision. They should meet regularly with each committee, aid them in committee operations, and make sure the super committee regularly meets and communicates throughout the semester, with a minimum of two meetings.
    - ii. Directors are required to facilitate the yearly transferral of knowledge relevant to each committee and the supercommittee as a whole.
    - iii. The Prime Minister selects super committee directors through an application sent to the college after changeover. Selected individuals should have previous experience relevant to their super committee.
      - 1. The Prime Minister must consult with the Vice President when selecting a facilities director.

- iv. The prime minister and the directors will work together to select committee heads through an application sent out to the college following director selection.
    - v. Only one individual may serve as the director of each super committee.
  - b. Honor Council Representative.
    - i. The Honor Council Representative will represent the college to the University Honor Council and report to the events and policies of the Honor Council to the college.
  - c. Student Association Senator.
    - i. The Student Association Senator represents the college within the Student Association, acts as an adviser and partner to the President at all meetings of the Student Association, and reports the events and policies of the Student Association to the college.
    - ii. The SA Senator along with the President will select New Student Representatives as dictated by the SA Senate.
  - d. University Court Representative
    - i. The University Court Representative will represent the college to the University Court, and report the events and policies of the University Court to the college.
  - e. Rice Program Council Representative
    - i. The Rice Program Council Representative will represent the college to the University Court, and report the events and policies of the Rice Program Council to the college.
- 5. General Members
  - a. Any member of the college not holding one of the positions previously outlined is a general member of the college. Such individuals are encouraged but not required to attend Parliament, report their desires to the appropriate representatives, participate in referendums and elections, and serve on committees to help better Martel College.
- 6. Sessions of Parliament
  - a. The Parliament will meet in a session open to the entire college at least once every two weeks during the academic year.
  - b. The president will preside over open sessions of the Parliament, but in absence of the President, the Prime Minister will preside. All members of the college and any guests thereof may attend open Parliament sessions.
  - c. When the president deems it necessary, the Parliament may meet in a closed session in which the President will preside. Only members of the Parliament, voting and nonvoting, and guests, at the discretion of the President, may attend closed Parliament sessions
  - d. A quorum of the Parliament is constituted by nine non-executive voting members, and any two members of the Executive Council.
  - e. Executive, non-executive voting, and non-voting members of the Parliament are expected to attend all Parliament sessions. If they are unable to attend, they must submit a proxy to the secretary in writing at least one hour in advance.

## Article 3: Election Procedures

1. As stated in Section 2.2.b, the college court is responsible for conducting and publicizing elections, with the outgoing chief justice as its overseer.
2. Election Overview
  - a. No later than one week before elections for a given position begin, the outgoing officials must hold a mandatory information session for the succeeding nominees.
    - i. The mandatory information session must include but is not limited to: an overview of each position, details of the election procedure, and grounds for impeachment.
  - b. Candidacy is declared through both of the following actions:
    - i. Attending the mandatory information session relevant to the position of interest.
    - ii. Submitting a blurb to the college court at least 48 hours before elections open.
  - c. Elections are conducted electronically. The college court must email candidate blurbs to the college with the link for voting.
  - d. The voting period lasts for five days. During this period, at least one member of the college court must be in the commons during lunch and dinner with a computer open to the voting page, encouraging voting and answering questions.
3. Election timeline
  - a. The first round of elections includes the president and chief justice. Elections should begin after winter break and conclude before the week of spring break of the spring semester
  - b. The second round of elections includes the vice president, prime minister, junior treasurer, and secretaries. This round should occur 1-2 weeks after the conclusion of the first round.
  - c. The third round of elections includes sophomore, junior, and senior class representatives, social committee chairs, University Court representative, Honor Council representative, Rice Program Council representative, and Student Association senator. This round should occur 1-2 weeks after the conclusion of the second round.
  - d. Beer Bike coordinators for the following academic year should be elected no sooner than two weeks following Beer Bike and no later than the last day of classes of the spring semester.
  - e. Freshman representatives are elected in the fall semester following their Orientation Week. They should be elected between the first and third week of classes.
4. Counting Votes
  - a. A quorum for election is defined as 20% of the general body of the college. If quorum is not reached, elections should be repeated.
  - b. All elected positions are selected by a majority of the popular vote.
  - c. All positions are elected in a preferential instant-runoff voting system.

- i. ie: If there is no majority after counting voters' first choices, the last place candidate is eliminated and his/her votes distributed to the other candidates. This is repeated until a candidate has a majority.
- 5. Changeover
  - a. With the exception of Beer Bike coordinators and freshman representatives, who are changed over instantly upon the close of elections, elected positions should be changed over after elections and no later than Beer Bike in a meeting of the Parliament open to the college.
- 6. Impeachment
  - a. A Parliament member may be impeached if (s)he fails to fulfill the duties of office to the satisfaction of the Parliament and/or his/her constituency. Grounds for impeachment include:
    - i. An individual becoming ineligible to hold the office, as defined either in this document or within the Rice University Student Code of Conduct,
      - 1. In such a situation, the individual is immediately impeached and the process goes directly to the replacement stage.
    - ii. The accumulation of 3 absences without a proxy or 5 total absences over the course of a semester
      - 1. In such a situation, the official is immediately impeached and the position is given to the candidate who had the next-most votes at the time of the election. If no such person exists, the president appoints a new individual with the approval of the executive council, except in the case of class representatives, where the position remains vacant for the remainder of the official's term.
    - iii. A petition signed by 30% of the official's constituency calling for the officer's impeachment.
  - b. Impeachment process:
    - i. If an official of Parliament satisfies one or more of the grounds for impeachment above, the Secretary must inform the president that the official is pending impeachment.
    - ii. Within one week of the president being informed, a closed meeting of the Parliament (not including the official) is called to discuss and vote on impeaching the official. A majority vote to impeach the official is sufficient to move impeachment to the next stage.
    - iii. A referendum is held within five class days of the closed Parliament meeting in which the constituents of the official cast ballots to impeach the official. The constituents consist of those who would be eligible to vote for the position should it become vacated.
    - iv. A two-thirds vote of the official's constituency to impeach removes the official from office.
  - c. Replacing an impeached individual:
    - i. The official is immediately removed from office following impeachment.
    - ii. If an official is removed from office, nominations and campaigning for the vacated position are conducted within one week.

- iii. The new official is elected by a popular vote of all constituents within two weeks of the previous official's removal.

## Article 4: The College Court

1. Court Membership
  - a. The members of the College Court are defined by the college Judicial Code. The College Court ensures that all University and College regulations are maintained and that a spirit of cooperation and coexistence is upheld throughout the college. The College Court handles disputes as outlined in the Judicial Code.
  - b. The chief justice selects associate justices for the following academic year in the spring semester through an application distributed to the whole college.
    - i. There are six associate justices, among them, both sexes as well as the sophomore, junior, and senior classes must be represented.
    - ii. In the event that not all associate justice positions are filled, the Chief Justice may appoint individuals to the remaining positions.
      1. When all else fails, the fastest chugger in the college will be appointed as a justice.
2. Court Procedures
  - a. The College Court has jurisdiction over any violation by college members as laid out in the Martel College Judicial Code.
  - b. The accused may appeal any decision by the College Court to the adult team. In such a situation, the decision made by the adult team overrides the Court's verdict.
  - c. The accused may submit themselves directly to the adult team instead of the College Court for trial. However, there is no appeal process for a verdict from the adult team.

## Article 5: Committees

1. Martel committees are divided into three groups: community outreach, events, and facilities. Each of these groups forms a super committee, led by a director which will report to either the Prime Minister (community outreach and events) or the Vice President (facilities).
  - a. Committees can be members of only one super committee; if a committee may fit in more than one super committee, the Prime Minister will assign it to one super committee.
  - b. Super committee directors will work with the Prime Minister to select committee heads through an application process.
  - c. Community Outreach
    - i. The community outreach super committee consists of all committees involving outreach towards the greater Houston and university communities.
  - d. Events
    - i. The events super committee consists of all committees that host Martel- and university-wide events.
  - e. Facilities

- i. The facilities super committee consists of all committees involved in improving and maintaining Martel's public spaces.
- ii. This super committee is overseen by the vice president of the college.
  1. The vice president should work with the prime minister to select the facilities super committee director.

## Article 6: Process of Amendment and Revision

1. Amendments.
  - a. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the College. The members of Parliament will review proposed changes in a closed meeting of Parliament. All changes must be made open to public view of all College members at least three days before being brought to an open meeting of the College.
  - b. Amendments to the bylaws are passed by a three-quarters majority of a quorum of voting members of Parliament.
  - c. Amendments to the Judicial Code are passed by a two-thirds vote of Parliament and a five-sevenths vote of the College Court.
  - d. Amendments to the Constitution must first pass a two-thirds vote of a quorum of the Parliament. They must subsequently pass a two-thirds vote of at least one-fifth of the College.
2. Revision
  - a. In order to ensure the maintenance of the Constitution and its alignment with the views of Martelians, the Constitution must be reviewed and revised at least once every five years.
    - i. This examination will be conducted through a Constitutional Committee of eight individuals, two from each class. The President will appoint a committee head.
      1. This committee should examine the constitution, take the opinions and suggestions of the college at large, and propose appropriate constitutional revisions.
    - ii. Bylaw revisions should occur the year after constitutional revisions, following the same rules for committee makeup and appointment.

## Article 7: Referendum

1. Petitions for referenda can be submitted in response to any action of Parliament.
  - a. Petitions for referenda must contain the precise wording of the ballot being demanded and the signatures of forty College members.
  - b. Petitions must be given to the President or a member of the Executive Council by midnight two days before the next Parliamentary meeting, with a vote being held within the next nine calendar days.
  - c. All members of Martel College are eligible, and encouraged, to vote in the referendum.
  - d. A majority of the votes cast in such a referendum will bind the Parliament to carry out its mandate.
2. A paid vacation for Elliot Baerman to the Bahamas shall be paid for by the college government every time referendum passes.

- a. Kidding... kind of.

## **Article 8: Bylaws**

1. All procedures and positions not outlined in the Constitution can be found in the college bylaws.
  - a. If they're not there, make up a rule or something.