# **Bennett House Constitution**

## **Preamble**

We, the members of Bennett House do establish and adopt this constitution in order to form an efficient house, ensure equal representation of each resident, and secure an environment that stimulates intellectual, social, recreational integration and interaction. Iowa State University and Bennett House do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, color, religion, national origin**,** physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or status as a U.S Veteran. In order to make ours a more efficient organization, this constitution will guide our actions and activities toward our best mutual interests.

## **Article I: Name and Affiliation**

The name of the organization shall be Bennett House, hereafter referred to as the House. The House shall be affiliated with Friley, IRHA, the Department of Residence, and Iowa State University of Science and Technology. At no time shall this constitution or the House make procedures that are contrary to an affiliated organization’s constitution/by-laws or are unsupportive of the Department of Residence Policy Handbook or Terms and Conditions.

## **Article II: Purpose**

**Section A:** It is the purpose of the House and constitution to create an atmosphere of fellowship among the members as well as to help improve the scholarly, social, cultural awareness, and personal development of each House member and the House as a unit. The House will provide the members with a positive living environment and studying environment that promotes and recognizes the needs of all its members.

**Section B:** The House abides by and supports established Iowa State University policies, State and Federal Laws and follows local ordinances and regulations. The House agrees to annually complete President’s Training, Treasurer’s Training and Advisor Training (if required).

## **Article III: Membership**

Active members: The House shall be composed of all the residents living within the physical limits as defined by the Department of Residence. Active members shall include all residents of the House. Anyone who is a member of the House for any semester or part thereof shall be bound by all sections of this constitution.

## **Article IV: Advisors**

The advisors of the House consist of both the Community Advisor (CA) who lives on the House and the Hall Director (HD) of the building that the House resides in. Although the HD serves as the official advisor to the House, the CA carries out many advisory roles including advising the Cabinet, meeting weekly with the House President, assisting with elections, etc. The HD is responsible for authorizing all purchases of the House through both the Voucher system and the Purchasing Card system.

## **Article V: Legislative Body**

**Section A: Members**The Legislative Body will be composed of all House members. All members attending an official House meeting have the right to vote, not including the House President**.**

**Section B: Procedures**

The House will provide opportunities during regularly scheduled House meetings for new legislation to be brought forward by any member of the House. Legislation may also be submitted to a member of the House Cabinet prior to a House Meeting.

**Section C: House Meetings**

Regularly scheduled meetings will be held at a time and place determined by a majority vote of the Parliamentary Body. Special meetings may be called by the Cabinet. Notice of all special meetings will be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting. During House meetings, if a member(s) are disrupting to others, he/she/they may be asked to leave by the president, vice president, or advisor.

**Section D: Voting**

The quorum necessary to conduct business at a house meeting shall be 50% of the current house membership. All house policies and election procedures must have a 67% house participation to be considered valid. During the house meetings, voting will be based on a majority poll. When the issue is brought to question, the voting members will raise their hands for, against, or abstaining from the vote. Non-student members, the CA-Advisor, the House President,and the HD Advisor cannot vote. A petition signed by 67% of the house will also be accepted as house legislation.

## **Article VI: House Cabinet**

**Section A: Positions**The House Cabinet will be comprised with a President and Treasurer, at minimum. The House Cabinet is fully comprised of the following offices: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, two Social Chairpersons, Intramural Chairperson, and Academic Chairperson. Other positions determined necessary may be created by a majority vote of the Legislative Body. All cabinet positions are elected positions and are subject to removal procedures as detailed below. All members of the House Cabinet, excluding the President, shall be voting members of the House. All members of the House Cabinet, including the President, shall be voting members of the House Cabinet Meetings. The Community Advisor is a non-official member of the cabinet and possesses no voting rights.

**Section B: Duties**

1. The Cabinet will consist of all elected Officers and the Community Advisor.
2. The Cabinet will serve as the official representatives of The House in any situation which pertains to The House.
3. The Cabinet will collectively discuss and execute any House business.
4. The Cabinet shall meet with 24 hours as needed prior to regular house meetings.
5. The Cabinet will design and supervise any programs desired by The House. Programs should effectively serve the needs and desires of The House.
6. All Cabinet members are expected to regularly attend House meetings. If The Cabinet feels it is necessary, an officer may be removed by a majority vote of the Parliamentary Body.

**Section C: Eligibility**The Cabinet Members of the House must meet the following requirements:

(a) Have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) as stated below and meet that minimum cumulative GPA in the semester immediately prior to the election/appointment, the semester of election/appointment and semesters during the term of office. For undergraduate students, the minimum GPA is 2.00. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration, provided that the student was enrolled in college during that semester.

(b) Be in good standing with the university and enrolled: at least half time (six or more credit hours), if an undergraduate student (unless fewer credits are required to graduate in the spring and fall semesters) during the term of office, and at least half time (four or more credits), if a graduate level student (unless fewer credits are required in the final stages of their degree as defined by the Continuous Registration Requirement) during their term of office.

(c) Be ineligible to hold an office should the student fail to maintain the requirements as prescribed in (a) and (b)."

**Section D: Terms of Office**

For the Presidency, the election is held during the second house meeting of the Fall semester. This election will also be for The Treasurer position.

During the last house meeting of the spring semester, The House will vote on a temporary President that will act as President until the Presidential election stated above. The temporary President must be living in The House next year.

All other Cabinet Positions are elected in the first four weeks of the Fall semester. The terms of office begin after election and ends on the last day of the spring semester, unless stated otherwise on this document.

**Section E: Offices and Responsibilities**

**President**

* Presides over the Cabinet and Cabinet Meetings.
* Presides over the House and House Meetings.
* Shall attend Friley Hall Council meetings, as determined by the Hall Directors or Hall Council. If The President cannot attend it is their responsibility to find a suitable replacement. Distributes the minutes of these meetings to the members of the house and brings relevant information to light at house meetings, as well as sharing relevant news from IRHA.
* Meets weekly with Resident Assistant/Community Adviser.
* Maintains House constitution and by-laws.
* Votes only to serve as tie-breaking vote in House proceedings.
* Shall call house meetings and post notification of house meetings twenty-four hours in advance of meetings.
* Shall be responsible for knowing all university and Department of Residence policies and procedures for House functions.
* Is responsible for knowing and presiding over House elections processes including ballot counting.

**Vice President**

* Presides over the Cabinet Meetings and House Meetings in the absence of the President.
* If President vacates his/her position, Vice-President assumes their responsibilities for the remainder of the term.
* Announces campus activities at house meetings (educational programs, leadership and involvement opportunities, etc.).
* Assists the President in his duties
* Picks up house mail and reports on its content at house meetings
* Hang *important* flyers in a public area of the house
* Will serve as the Risk Management Officer and will handle all of the risk management responsibilities

**Treasurer**

* Prepares and submits a proposed budget to the Cabinet and the House by the third week of each semester for approval.
* Maintains financial records for the House.
* Pays all house bills (upon approval of House President and CA)
* Collects project statements from the Campus Organizations Accounting Office
* Attends mandatory treasurer training session each year (provided by the Campus Organizations Accounting Office).
* Holds one of the house purchasing cards, and maintains records of house purchases

**Secretary**

* Keeps minutes of cabinet and house meetings.
* Posts and distributes meeting minutes to house members (usually within 24 hours of the meetings).
* Is responsible for all correspondence between the house and outside entities.
* Is responsible for tallying and presenting results of House voting.
* Has the option to maintain a house e-mail list and web page.
* Submits, maintains, and updates the House Student Organization database information through the Student Activities Center website.
* Shall keep records of cabinet members and committee chairpersons.
* Shall keep records of updates to the House Constitution.

**Social Chairperson(s)**

* Shall consist of up to two members.
* Plans and executes a social programming for the house that promotes interaction of house members.
* Plans and executive social events that promote interaction with other houses
* Plans events in accordance with university and Department of Residence policies.
* Informs house of other social events on campus, in tandem with the President or whoever attends Friley Senate
* Shall survey the interests of the house throughout the year as necessary, in order to offer interesting and relevant social events to the residents.
* Shall inform house members of events and shall work with the treasurer to purchase things for house events.

**Intramural Chairperson**

* Promotes and executes an intramural program within the house.
* Represents the house at intramural meetings on campus.
* Informs house of intramural opportunities on campus.
* Assists in registration of teams for intramural events.

**Recycling Chairperson**

* Shall be responsible for all recycling within the house, including emptying the house recycle bins and bringing the recycling to the recycling dumpster near Friley.
* In the event that the house collects and redeems redeemables, the Recycling Chairperson shall be responsible for holding any money earned, and for spending this money on a suitable house purchase, with the approval of the rest of the House Cabinet.
* Shall encourage residents to recycle and make residents aware of recycling events in Friley or elsewhere on campus

**Section F: Creating Cabinet Positions**

Other cabinet positions may be created at any time during the academic year if deemed necessary by the House. Procedure for this is to be in keeping with all Cabinet positions and will abide by the election procedures detailed in Article VIII.

**Section G: Resignation of Cabinet Members**

The officer shall give the house a two-week notice before resignation. A special election will be held within two weeks of this notice. This election will follow normal election procedures.

**Section H: Removal of Officers**

* Any elected House Cabinet Member may be impeached.
* Impeachment proceedings may be initiated by a majority vote of the House.
* A House meeting shall be called one week after the initiation of impeachment proceedings. At this time the Cabinet Member in question may present his/her defense to the House members. A secret ballot shall then be made. A vote of 75% of all the House members is required for removal from the office.
* The CA and Vice President shall conduct impeachment proceedings unless the Vice President is being impeached, than the President will assist the CA in the proceedings
* A special election will be held within two weeks of removal. This election will follow normal election procedures.

## **Article VII: Committees**

The House may create committees as necessary in order to facilitate the operation of the House. Committees may be formed through a simple majority vote at a house meeting. Committee members will be volunteers, unless interest exceeds the number of committee seats, in which case committee members will be voted upon by the House at the next House Meeting.

**Section A: Names**Possible committees include, but are not limited to: Social Committee, Education Committee, Philanthropy/Community Service Committee, Environmental Committee, and the House History and Traditions Committee.

## **Article VIII: Elections**

**Section A: Candidates**

* All members of the House are eligible for all positions given he/she/they meet the criteria in Article VI: House Cabinet, Section C: Eligibility.
* Nominations must be submitted at the house meeting one week prior to the election date.
* Nominations may be made by the individual candidate or can be initiated by other House members.
* Nominees may accept or decline nomination.

**Section B: Procedures**

* Every position will be elected at least once a year. During the last house meeting in the Spring, House members will vote on a temporary President that will act as President until after the elections in the Fall. They temporary President must also be a member of The House next year. The Presidential election will be held during the second house meeting of the Fall semester. This election will also consist of voting for The Treasurer position. All other positions will be elected within the first four weeks of the Fall semester.
* Campaigning is allowed, but must abide by ISU and Department of Residence policies, rules, and regulations.
* Nominees will be given an opportunity to present a brief (Two minutes or less) speech during a house meeting before voting commences.

**Section C: Selection of Officers**

* The President and CA will monitor election procedures.
* Special Elections, to fill new or vacant positions, may be held when necessary.
* Voting will be conducted via the heads-down, hands-up method, unless a resident voices displeasure with this policy before the meeting, in which case the vote will be conducted via write-in ballot. Residents may absentee vote by giving an absentee ballot to the House CA prior to the vote.
* The election will only be considered valid with a minimum of 50% house participation.
* The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast a vote to resolve the tie.
* For offices with more than one seat, House members will vote for one individual and the positions will be filled according to the highest number of votes.
* Should an office other than President be vacated, a special election shall be held consistent with the aforementioned procedures.
* A member may only hold one Cabinet position. If a person is elected to more than one Cabinet position they may choose which position they are going to fill.
* If a person is running for a position unopposed, a vote of confidence can be called to elect him or her to the position without the use of secret ballot.

## **Article IX: Finances**

**Section A: House Dues**The House collects dues through the mandatory student government dues each year. Of this, $10 per member is transferred into the House account. These dues contribute to programming and upkeep of house-owned equipment. All student government dues will be billed through the Accounts Receivable Office. These are mandatory dues. All monies belonging to this organization shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for this organization at the Campus Organizations Accounting Office and/or approved institution/office (must receive authorization via Campus Organizations Accounting Office). The Adviser to this organization must approve and sign each expenditure before payment.

**Section B: Budget**

* The Treasurer and volunteering members of the House will meet and propose the House budget for the academic year.
* This budget must be presented to the Cabinet.
* The budget must approved by the House Cabinet.
* Once approved, the budget must be posted. The budget shall be posted three days prior to discussion with the house.
* The budget will be voted on within one week after the discussion with a secret ballot.
* The budget must receive 67% on the vote in approval in order to pass. The house must have 67% participation.

**Section C: Expenditures**The Cabinet, when following the House approved budget, does not need any further approval of House members to spend House money. The Cabinet may make purchases under $25 with a unanimous Cabinet Vote. To reallocate House funds, a meeting must be held where the new budget must receive 67% on the vote in approval in order to pass. The house must have 67% participation.

## **Article X: House Policies**

* During the first House Meeting, the House will vote on House Policies. This at a minimum must include the incense policy, noise policy,andbudget policy.

## **Article XI: Amendments to the Constitution and Ratification**

**Section A: Proposal**

One or more members of the house may form an ad-hoc committee to draw up an amendment to this constitution at any time. The amendments must be presented to the House at an official meeting. Amendments must be posted immediately after presentation. Posting must detail current language, proposed language and purpose for the change or addition.

**Section B: Ratification**

Once in its final form, the amendment must be approved by 75% of all House members within two weeks of its proposal. The ratification can be done in a House meeting or by petition. The constitution shall become effective upon ratification and shall supersede and make void any previous constitutions The Secretary shall then be responsible for adding the amendment to the constitution and prompt submission of an updated constitution to the Student Activities Center.