

Merchant House Constitution

Preamble

We, the members of Merchant 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. In order to make ours a more efficient organization, this constitution will guide our actions and activities toward our best mutual interests.

Article 1: Name and Affiliation

The name of the organization shall be Merchant House, hereafter referred to as the House. The House shall be affiliated with Oak-Elm Hall Council, IRHA, the Department of Residence, and Iowa State University. 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, culture 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 need of all its members

Section B: The House abides by and supports established Iowa State University policies, State and Federal Laws.

Section C: Merchant 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. Iowa State University the Merchant 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.

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 B: Members

The Legislative Body will be composed of all House members. All members attending an official House meeting have the right to vote.

Section C: 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 D: 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. Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to interrupting others, having side conversations, or being disrespectful to another member attending the meeting.

Section E: 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 RA-Advisor, and the HD Advisor cannot vote.

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. 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 Resident 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.
7. If available, special parking permits will be assigned in the following order to cabinet members: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Academic Chairperson, Social Chairpersons, and Intramural Chairperson, followed by any other created cabinet position by chronological order of creation. House members with vehicles will be eligible to draw from the remaining permits.

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.
- (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

All Cabinet Positions are elected in the first six weeks of the Fall semester. The terms of office begin the first day of the fall semester (or election date) to the last day of the spring semester.

Section E: Offices and Responsibilities

President

- Presides over the Cabinet and Cabinet Meetings.
- Presides over the House and House Meetings.
- Shall attend House Presidents' meetings, as determined by Hall Director or Hall Council. If The President cannot attend it is their responsibility to find a suitable replacement
- Meets weekly with Community Advisor.
- Plans and executes a house and/or cabinet retreat (along with the CA).
- Maintains House constitution and by-laws.
- Picks up house mail and reports on their contents at house meeting
- 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/Risk Management Officer

- Presides over the Cabinet Meetings and House Meetings in the absence of the President.
- If President vacates their position, Vice-President assumes their responsibilities for the remainder of the term.
- Oversees house committee structure.
- Meets from time to time with house committee chairs.
- Announces campus activities at house meetings (educational programs, leadership and involvement opportunities, etc.).
- Become educated on ISU risk management procedures.
- The role of the risk management officer is [a] to recommend risk management policies or procedures to the Merchant House, [b] to submit documentation to ISU's Risk Management Office and [c] to ensure that Risk Mgt. procedures are implemented at all of the House events.
- Shall perform other duties, as the office requires.

Treasurer

- Maintains financial records for the House and keeps residents informed of the budget.
- Collects any additional social dues and any other payments as necessary.
- Pays all house bills (upon approval of House President and RA).
- Collects project statements from the Campus Organizations Accounting Office.
- Attends mandatory treasurer training session each year (provided by the Campus Organizations Accounting Office).

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.
- Keeps track of attendance at house meetings and events.
- Is responsible for tallying and presenting results of House voting.
- Maintains 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.

Academic Chairperson

- Designs and implements an academic success program for the house.
- Arranges for guest speakers to give presentations on academic success to the house.
- Arranges for guest speakers to give presentations on career planning to the house.
- Maintains a list of house members' classes, and helps to arrange study groups.
- Works with the cabinet and the house members to set a house GPA goal.
- Recognizes house members who achieve their academic goals.

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 (i.e., sister and brother houses).
- Plans events in accordance with university and Department of Residence policies.
- Develops a calendar of social events within first three weeks of each semester.
- Informs house of other social events on campus.
- Shall survey the interest of the house by the second house meeting of the term of office.
- Shall inform house members of events and purchase group tickets to events for the house.

Intramural Chairperson

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

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 their 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

Section A: Names

The House has created the following committees that may be activated or deactivated by a simple majority vote. They are the: Social Committee, Education Committee, Philanthropy/Community Service Committee, Environmental Committee, and the House History and Traditions Committee. A new committee may be instituted by a simple majority vote at a House Meeting.

Section B: Membership

All House Members are eligible for Committee Membership. The Vice President will determine the size of the committee based on the number of interested individuals. In the case of more interest than determined positions, the Vice President will conduct a secret ballot vote of the Cabinet Members during the next Cabinet Meeting.

Section C: Committees and Responsibilities

Social Committee:

- Plans social events for the house, such as house parties, activities with other houses, canoe trips, etc.
- Ensures that all house social events are in accordance with house, residence life, and university policies.

Education Committee:

- Plans the educational activities for the house, including programs on academics, diversity, leadership, and personal development.
- Invites guest speakers to house meetings.

Philanthropy/Community Service Committee:

- Plans service activities for the house.

Environmental Committee:

- Coordinates a house recycling program
- Discusses issues related to a clean and healthy house environment.

House History and Traditions Committee:

- Maintains historical house records, such as old yearbooks, scrapbooks, notes, pictures, etc.
- Records current house activities through words and pictures.

Section D: Offices and Responsibilities

Each committee will either self elect a Committee Chair or defer to the Vice President who will appoint one from the current members. The Chair will facilitate meetings of the committee on a schedule determined by the committee and the Vice President. Each Chair will communicate the committee's progress with the Vice President on a regular basis.

Article VIII: Elections

Section A: Candidates

- All members of the House are eligible for all positions given he/she has a GPA of 2.0 or higher.
- 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. All positions will be elected within the first three 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 speech during a house meeting before voting commences.

Section C: Selection of Officers

- The CA will monitor election procedures.
- Special Elections, to fill new or vacant positions, may be held when necessary.
- Vote will be conducted by write in ballot. Ballots will include space for write in candidates. Absentee ballots will be available three days prior to the election for House members unable to attend the meeting. Absentee ballots must be given to the CA prior to the House election meeting.
- 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. The House may collect social dues for House social functions. Social dues are not mandatory. The House will vote on the social due amount during the second or third House meeting, needing a simple majority to set the maximum collected amount. All social dues will be collected by the Treasurer. No refunds of House dues will be paid. 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). All funds must be deposited within 48 hours or two business days after collection. The Advisor 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 be 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 and the noise 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 two-thirds 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.