College House Constitution

Preamble

We, as residents and students of Bowdoin, empowered by the spirit and values of our learning community, committed to our mutual respect for diversity, and understanding of our own value as agents of change, do establish this College House Constitution.

The College Houses were established in the spring of 1997, leaving behind fraternities in favor of a new social system which intended to "promote intellectual and personal growth of individuals and encourage mutual understanding in the context of diversity," as noted in the Commission on Residential Life Report of 1997 and outlined in the Mission and Offer of the College. At that time, an Ad Hoc Implementation Committee created basic structural guidelines for this new system of residential life.

In the spring of 2008, a Committee on the College House Constitution was created by the Inter-House Council. It was formed to fill voids in and amend this constitution in order to more accurately reflect the commitment of students to the values of a learning community and the purpose of the College Houses. Notably, the Committee added Article V: The Inter-House Council and reorganized the house officer positions. In the years to come the system should adhere to this constitution and amend it to fit the changing needs of the College Houses.

The purpose of this Constitution is to strengthen the structure of the College Houses and to provide guidance to House members as they work to integrate the system into their lives as members of the Bowdoin College community.

Article I: Affiliation

A. Definitions

1. The brick residence hall College House affiliations are as follows:
   - Appleton Hall: Quinby House
   - Coleman Hall: MacMillan House
   - Hyde Hall: Howell House
   - Maine Hall: Helmreich House
   - Moore Hall: Reed House
   - Moore Hall: Reed House
   - Osher Hall: Ladd House
West Hall:  Baxter House
Winthrop Hall:  Burnett House

2. The above are the preferred affiliations and should be followed whenever possible. However, if necessary the College may change the affiliations while making every possible effort to involve the Inter-House Council and other students in the process.

3. College House affiliates are defined as all students who have lived or who currently live in a house's affiliated first year dorm during their first year or, as in the instance of transfer students, have been assigned to that house by the Office of Residential Life.

4. College House members are defined as contracted affiliates currently living in a particular House.

5. No one may hold affiliation in more than one house.

6. When a student becomes a contracted member of a house they renounce any former affiliation.

7. If a student wishes to be reassigned to a different House they may do so by a random process at the Office of Residential Life after their first semester on campus.

B. Rights of Affiliates

1. All house affiliates possess the following rights in their respective houses:

   a. The right to full access to the use of house facilities.
   b. The right to attend all house functions.
   c. The right to attend all house meetings.
   d. The right to vote at house meetings concerning house affairs.

C. Responsibilities of Affiliates

1. Inherent in the rights described in section B, all house affiliates are expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

   a. Represent the house in a positive manner.
b. Respect house property, affiliates, and neighbors.
c. Be responsible for the behavior of their guests.

D. Additional Responsibilities of Members

1. In keeping with the values of Residential Life, and in addition to all previously mentioned rights and responsibilities for affiliates, house members are expected to make further contributions to house affairs. House members are expected to:

a. Create a positive and welcoming environment with respect to the house.
b. Maintain connections with all affiliates.
c. Participate in the Orientation of the incoming first-year class.
d. Take an active role within the house and during house activities.
e. Assist in the basic housekeeping, maintenance and appearance of the house.

E. Elected Positions of Membership

1. The following house officers make up the house officer team.

a. President - Responsible for leading the house; organizing and facilitating weekly house meetings; acting as the official house representative at College functions and meetings; circulating an agenda to all affiliates prior to the weekly house meeting; attending regular meetings of all House Presidents and the IHC President. The President may not serve on the IHC Executive Committee. Full year position.

b. Vice President - Responsible for acting as the primary house leader in the absence of the President; facilitating all elections; initiating and maintaining contact with the house’s Faculty Advisor; ensuring that the other house officers are fulfilling their responsibilities; and serving as one of two representatives to the IHC. The Vice President may not serve on the IHC Executive Committee.

c. Programming Director - Responsible for collecting ideas and suggestions from house residents and affiliates regarding house-sponsored events; overseeing the planning and organizing of events including but not limited to community service, academic events, and affiliate and campus-wide social events; serving as a representative to the IHC. The Programming Director may not serve on the IHC Executive Committee.
d. Treasurer - Responsible for managing the house’s financial resources; allocating funds to house activities and student groups according to voting procedures outlined below.

e. Secretary - Responsible for recording minutes for each house meeting and generally keeping affiliates informed of things happening in the house; circulating weekly house meeting minutes to all affiliates; maintaining a master calendar of events and reservations of common space that shall be publicly accessible to all affiliates; making sure that all House practices are in keeping with the College House Constitution; ensuring that a record is kept of house highlights from the year, which is compiled with the other houses’ records and the IHC Secretary’s report and archived through the Office of Residential Life.

2. The following elected position serves in an advisory role.

a. Members Emeriti (1-2 former house members) – Responsible for assisting the new house residents during orientation; providing the house with past programming ideas and traditions of their specific College House; attending house meetings for at least the fall semester.

F. Other Positions

1. The following positions are also essential for a successful house. They may be filled by any house member, including elected house officers. A house member may fill multiple positions. The selection process for these positions will be determined by each individual house and must take place no later than the first House meeting.

a. Historian – Responsible for understanding the history of the House and upholding house traditions; documenting and recording house events; maintaining copies of documents relevant to the history of the House and the College House System.

b. Public Relations – Responsible for informing the campus of house events; managing official house correspondence; maintaining the house website.

G. Residential Life Position
1. The following position will be selected as part of the Residential Life hiring process.

a. *House Proctor* – Responsible for attending all house meetings; helping to mediate conflicts between house residents; serving as a resource for house residents in areas such as programming and dining for which information is provided during the fall Residential Life training; serving as a liaison to Facilities Management and as a contact person for all damage and vandalism; helping to maintain a clean living space and holding house residents accountable for any messes especially in common areas; running any mid-year housing lottery; serving as a liaison between the Office of Residential Life and the house residents; serving as a liaison between the proctors of the affiliated brick and the house members.

H. *Faculty Position*

1. The following position will be selected by the Office of Residential Life.

a. *Faculty Advisor* – Responsible for serving as a link between the house, faculty and intellectual life; assisting the house with planning events and maintaining traditions. The Faculty Advisor must also be consulted by the house when receiving extra funding for academic events. The primary contact in the house for the faculty advisor is the Vice President.

**Article II: Decision Making**

**A. General Decision Making**

1. In keeping with the inclusive spirit of the College Houses, all house affiliates have a right to participate in all decisions concerning the house.

2. Customarily, it is expected that decisions will be reached by general consensus at the regularly scheduled, designated, publicized meeting.

3. In the event that general consensus can not be met, affiliates have a right to hold a vote according to the process outlined here:

   a. It is expected that the right to vote will be exercised for the good of the house and in a manner consistent with the values of our learning community.

   b. Voting can only take place at designated and publicized meetings.
c. Affiliates may only vote while in attendance at said meeting.
d. Each house will adopt whatever voting procedure it sees fit except in the case of elections.
e. Any general vote will be decided by a simple majority except as outlined for special cases.
f. The President has the right to postpone a vote until the next designated and publicized meeting.
g. Any necessary, last minute decisions must be approved by the President. In his or her absence, the Vice President will assume that responsibility.

B. Individual House Constitutions

1. Each house may have its own constitution.

   a. The house constitution and subsequent amendments must not conflict with the IHC Constitution.
   b. All house constitutions must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the IHC at a regularly scheduled meeting in order to take effect.

C. Expenditures Exceeding $200

1. The following special procedures will apply to votes concerning single item expenditures or event budgets over $200:

   a. The expenditure must be proposed at a designated and publicized meeting.
   b. The President has the right to postpone a vote on an expenditure over $200 for a week from the meeting in which the original vote was scheduled to take place.
   c. In order to pass an expenditure over $200, a 2/3 majority of those present is required.

Article III: Elections

A. General Election Procedure

1. In the spring semester, elections for the offices of the President, Vice President, Programming Director, Treasurer, Secretary, and Members Emeriti will take place. All elected officers are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the House System Constitution and all other documents concerned with the creation and implementation of the College Houses.
2. Timeline for spring elections (subject to change depending on the College Calendar but should follow this general format).

   a. First two weeks of April: Selection Committees mail first and second rounds of decisions.
   b. Second week of April: Information sessions for presidential candidates.
   c. Third week of April: Presidential elections followed by room lotteries, information sessions for other officer positions.
   d. Fourth week of April: Elections for remaining house offices.
   e. First week of May: IHC Executive Committee elections.

3. A candidate may run for as many positions as he/she wishes, after attending a mandatory information session, until he/she is elected. Officers will be elected in the following order:

   a. President
   b. Vice President
   c. Programming Director
   d. Treasurer
   e. Secretary
   f. Members Emeriti

4. In order to be elected to one of the above offices the candidate:

   a. Must not have been selected as the house proctor.
   b. Must be residing in the house for the upcoming year and have signed the house contract (except Members Emeriti).
   c. Must announce candidacy prior to the publicized and designated voting time.
   d. Must accompany declaration of candidacy with a statement no longer than 150 words stating his/her reasons for running for office.
   e. Must attend a mandatory information session organized by the IHC.

5. Voting will take place at the designated and publicized voting time. All affiliates are eligible to vote. The procedure for voting is as follows:

   a. Voting will be done by secret ballot.
   b. In the case of a two person election, the candidate who receives the majority of the votes will be considered elected.
c. When there are more than two candidates, the single transferable voting method will be used to determine the winner.

   i. Each voter will place all of the candidates for each position in preferential order. For example, if there are five candidates for the position listed on the ballot, each voter will number the candidates from 1st choice to 5th choice.

   ii. The first choices are totaled and if a candidate has greater than 50% of the votes, he or she is elected. If no candidate has enough votes, the candidate in 5th place is dropped and his or her votes are transferred to their 2nd preference. The votes are totaled again and a candidate is elected if they now have greater than 50% of the vote. If not, the candidate in 4th place is dropped and his or her votes are transferred.

   iii. This process is continued until a candidate has greater than 50% of the vote and is therefore elected.

B. Position Vacancy Procedure

1. In the case of a position vacancy, the President will call for a special election to fill the vacant office.

   a. If the Presidency should become vacant, the Vice President will assume the office of President and a new Vice President will be elected.

2. Any current resident will be eligible to run for office.

3. Spring Election procedure will be followed.

C. Removal of a House Officer

1. In the case of a house officer not fulfilling his/her duties, the following procedure will be followed:

   a. Talk to the specific house officer whose performance has not met expectations.

   b. If a conversation with the house officer does not result in an improvement in performance, contact one of the professional staff members of the Office of Residential Life and the IHC President regarding to set up a mediated discussion and the impeachment process.

   c. Hold a mediated discussion run by professional staff of the Office of Residential Life with House members and the House officer in question, as
well as the IHC President if appropriate. This meeting should establish expectations for improvement and lay out a timeline for meeting those expectations.

d. If the expectations are not reached within the agreed upon timeline a house vote for the removal of the officer can be held. In order to remove an officer a 2/3 majority is required. This vote should take place at a weekly house meeting by secret ballot.

Article IV: Room Lottery

A. Each spring a room lottery will be held after House members have been selected:

1. The Office of Residential Life will assign a room to the House Proctor prior to the house lottery.
2. The President elect of the house is granted first choice of a room.
3. The remaining assignments will be determined by separate lotteries according to class year and in order of seniority within the house.

   a. For each individual lottery, a member of the Office of Residential Life office shall be present.

      i. That person will randomly assign each person a lottery number.
      ii. The individual receiving the lowest number in the lottery will have the first pick of any vacant room, followed by others in ascending order.

   b. In the case that two or more residents of different levels of seniority choose to room together, the pair will enter the lottery of the elder member.

B. In the case of vacated space at any point during the year before the spring lottery:

1. If a single room becomes open, all interested residents will enter a separate lottery to be run by the House Proctor. Should no resident choose to take advantage of the opportunity, the Office of Residential Life should seek to fill the room with an affiliate of the House.

2. If a space in a double or triple becomes open, the remaining occupant(s) should work with the Office of Residential Life to fill the space as necessary.

Article V: The Inter-House Council (IHC)
A. Description

1. The IHC is a forum for house leaders to design and coordinate events, share ideas and discuss issues affecting the College Houses as a whole.

2. The IHC is led by the Executive Committee and includes two members from each house, the Vice President and Programming Director. The two house members along with current house presidents may not serve on the Executive Committee.

B. The Executive Committee

1. President – Responsible for organizing and facilitating biweekly IHC meetings and biweekly Executive Committee meetings; acting as the official IHC representative at College functions and meetings; serving on the Bowdoin Student Government as a representative of the College Houses. Full year position.

2. Vice President – Responsible for working in concert with the President and acting as the primary IHC leader in the absence of the President; facilitating all elections; ensuring that all IHC and House practices are in keeping with the College House Constitution; serving on the Bowdoin Student Government as a representative of the individual houses. Position may be split into two half year terms between two individuals.

3. Events Coordinator – Responsible for overseeing the planning and organization of events that involve the College Houses as a whole; facilitating coordination between Houses; taking the lead role in the major events that the IHC puts on throughout the year. Position may be split into two half year terms between two individuals.

4. Treasurer – Responsible for managing the IHC’s financial resources; allocating funds to campus groups according to IHC voting procedures; obtaining budget reports from house treasurers monthly. Position may be split into two half year terms between two individuals.

5. Secretary – Responsible for recording minutes for each IHC and Executive Committee meeting and making those minutes available to all house residents electronically; maintaining a master calendar of College House events; creating a report at the end of each semester highlighting College House activities over the
semester which will be archived physically and electronically. Position may be split into two half year terms between two individuals.

Note: No one person may hold more than one Executive Committee office.

C. The House Representatives to the IHC

1. Voting Members
   a. House Vice President
   b. Programming Director

D. Meetings

1. IHC Meetings
   a. Meetings are held biweekly at the College houses on a rotating basis. Meetings are open to the public.

b. Decision Making
   i. If a consensus cannot be reached in order to make a decision, it will be decided by a majority vote. Voting may only take place at designated and publicized IHC meetings.
   ii. Only IHC members may vote and must be in attendance at said meeting in order to do so.

c. Funding requests
   i. Campus groups may notify the President with funding requests prior to the meeting. At the president’s discretion, the group may present their request to the IHC at a scheduled meeting.
   ii. Prior to attending the IHC meeting the group needs to fill out a designated form.
   iii. The person requesting funding may not be a member of the IHC and must leave the meeting when discussion and voting take place.

d. Calendar Coordination
   i. The secretary will keep a record of all house events.
ii. At the beginning of each semester each house has the right to reserve one weekend night during which all other houses must get approval from that house to have an event.

iii. At each IHC meeting houses will coordinate events for at least the upcoming two weeks. Houses may coordinate events at any scheduled IHC meeting. Only if an event is taking place before the next scheduled IHC meeting may the request be made outside of an IHC meeting.

E. Executive Committee Elections

1. In the spring semester, elections for the offices of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary will take place. All elected officers are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the College House Constitution and all other documents concerned with the creation and implementation of the College House System.

2. Any affiliate excluding House Presidents elected for the upcoming year may run for an Executive Committee position. Should the Vice President or Programming Director of a House be elected to an Executive Committee position, that person must step down from his/her position within the House. A candidate may run for as many positions as he/she wishes until he/she is elected. Officers will be elected in the following order:
   a. IHC President
   b. IHC Vice President
   c. IHC Events Coordinator
   d. IHC Treasurer
   e. IHC Secretary

3. In order to be elected to one of the above offices the candidate:
   a. Must announce candidacy for first choice position one week prior to the publicized and designated voting time.
   b. Must accompany declaration of candidacy with a statement no longer than 150 words stating his/her reasons for running for office.

2. Voting will take place at a designated and publicized voting time at a non-College House location. The procedure for voting is as follows:
   a. Only current and incoming IHC members are eligible to vote.
b. For a given position, each candidate will give their statement and then be asked to leave the room while voting is taking place.

c. Voting will be done by single secret ballot.

d. In the case of a two person election, the candidate who receives the majority of the votes will be considered elected.

e. When there are more than two candidates, the single transferable voting method will be used to determine the winner.

f. Each voter will place all of the candidates for each position in preferential order. For example, if there are five candidates for the position listed on the ballot, each voter will number the candidates from 1st choice to 5th choice.

g. The first choices are totaled and if a candidate has greater than 50% of the votes, he or she is elected. If no candidate has enough voters, the candidate in 5th place is dropped and his or her votes are transferred to their 2nd preference. The votes are totaled again and a candidate is elected if they now have greater than 50% of the vote. If not, the candidate in 4th place is dropped and his or her votes are transferred.

h. This process is continued until a candidate has greater than 50% of the vote and is therefore elected.

Article VI: Amending the Constitution

F. Procedure

1. Any affiliate may propose an amendment at his or her house's regularly scheduled, designated, publicized meeting.

2. The House affiliation may choose, by a majority vote, to recommend that said amendment receive further consideration by the other College Houses via the Inter-House Council.

3. The President of said house will bring the proposed amendment to the next regularly scheduled IHC meeting. Amendments may also originate in the Inter-House Council.

4. The House Presidents will then present the proposal to their general membership during a regularly scheduled meeting. The amendment vote must be sufficiently publicized to all affiliates.
5. In order for an amendment to be passed, it must receive a 2/3 vote of those present in each College House. The Vice Presidents will report the results at the next scheduled IHC meeting.

6. The IHC President may form a special committee to address major structural changes and amendments to the Constitution. The new constitution must be approved by the same procedure outlined above in 4-5.

We the undersigned, on this 15th day of March in the year of Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-Nine, hereby accept this as the constitution for the Bowdoin College Houses:

Craig Bradley, Dean of Student Affairs  
Steve Lee '99, Chair of the E9  
Matthew Boyd '01  
Jeff Favolise '01  
J. Brian Haley '01  
Caitlin MacDonald '01  
Michael Prendergast '00  
Papri Bhattacharya '01  
Lauren Fitch '01  
Eben Gilfenbaum '02  
Sue Lynn Lee '01  
Tiffany Mok '02  
Laurie Nelson '01  
Lindsey Pettingill '02  
Steve Rulison '02  
Tom Ryan '01  
Jon Staley '02  
Barbara Thurston '01  
Nathaniel Waters '00  
John Yost '00  
Zoe Zeichner '02

We the undersigned, as the 2008 Committee on the College House Constitution, on this 21st day of April in the year of Two Thousand and Eight, hereby accept this as the amended constitution for the Bowdoin College Houses:

Ingrid Anid '08
Robby Bitting '11
Lindsey Bruett '09
Rachel Eveleth ‘11
Keri Forbringer ‘10
Dan Hetherman ‘09
Margo Linton ‘08
Joshua Miller ‘08
Sean Morris ‘10
Simon Feng Ou ‘10
Zachary Rudick ‘10
Rebecca Schouvieller '10
Daniel A. Vicario '11