

# Residential College Board Constitution

## February 25, 2007 Revision

### **Section I**

#### *Statement of Purpose (Revised 3/8/06)*

The Residential College Board (hereafter "RCB" or "the Board") shall exist to serve all members of the Residential College community by upholding the tenets on which the Residential Colleges are founded: that the colleges provide a stimulating atmosphere for interaction between students and faculty; that the colleges develop programs that stress educational opportunities outside the classroom; and that the colleges increase awareness of and add to the quality of undergraduate life.

Accordingly, RCB will advance the academic, philanthropic, and social goals of the entire Residential College system. It will be a source of support, information, and advice for the colleges, and will serve as a formal means of communication between the colleges. RCB will aid individual colleges in reaching their common goals, and work to promote unity among all members of the system.

A residential college shall be defined as any living unit detailed in the Residential College Brochure, revised and published annually by Northwestern University. A residential college member shall be defined as any resident or non-resident member of a Residential College.

### **Section II**

#### *Membership (Revised 2/25/07)*

Voting members of the Board shall consist of the members of the executive board—President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Social Affairs, Vice President for Philanthropic Affairs, Vice President for Public Relations, Vice President for Financial Affairs, and Vice President for Inter-College Relations—and the Presidents of each of the Residential Colleges. Member colleges must submit a quarterly membership fee of five dollars per resident (a quarter is defined as an academic period at Northwestern University; for RCB purposes, the "quarters" are: Fall, Winter, Spring).

### **Section III**

#### *Duties of the Executive Board (Revised 3/8/06)*

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Board. The President shall be responsible for the following: Supervising all Board activities; Overseeing all other officers; Coordinating long-term planning for the Board; Acting as official representative of RCB to the University; Responsible, with the Treasurer, for all RCB funds; In charge of the routine affairs of the Board; Preparing an agenda for all Board meetings and presiding over them under Robert's Rules of Order.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall coordinate all Board sponsored events of an academic nature in order to foster the intellectual environment residential colleges aid to perpetuate. Such events shall include Board sponsored firesides, lectures and symposia. In the absence of the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall assume the President's duties.

The Vice President for Social Affairs shall coordinate all Board-sponsored social functions in order to foster inter-college unity.

The Vice President for Philanthropic Affairs shall coordinate the philanthropic efforts of the colleges and create all-residential college philanthropy events.

The Vice President for Public Relations shall be responsible for external communications, including publicity of Board sponsored events and public relations, and internal communication in the form of minutes.

The Vice President for Financial Affairs shall be responsible for coordinating the financial matters of the Board. Such matters shall include developing and maintaining a quarterly budget; transactions involving members and the Board, including cash advances, refund and quarterly dues payments. The Vice President for Financial Affairs, with the President, shall be responsible for all RCB funds.

The Vice President for Inter-College Relations shall be responsible for developing inter-college interaction through events and programs, in particular through the residential college intramurals league. In addition, the Vice President for Inter-College Relations shall help other Board members as appropriate to foster community.

#### **Section IV**

##### ***Election of the Executive Board (Revised 2/25/07)***

Election for the office of President shall occur at or before the second-to-last scheduled Board meeting of Winter Quarter. Elections for the other offices shall occur at or before the final scheduled Board meeting of Winter Quarter. Nominations for all offices shall close one week prior to the respective election date. At least two weeks notice must be provided prior to the election for any position.

Nominees for the office of President shall be drawn from the voting members of the Board. In the event that no former or present Board member has declared candidacy for the office of President by the close of nominations, nominations shall be open to all present members of the executive councils of the Residential Colleges and former such executive council members who are present members of a Residential College.

Nominees for the offices of the Vice Presidents shall be drawn from all present members of the executive councils of the Residential Colleges and former such executive council members who are present members of a Residential College. In the event that any of the positions of Vice President lack candidates by the close of nominations, nominations shall be open to all present members of the Residential Colleges.

If no one is nominated for a given office by the deadline, nominations for that office shall remain open until twenty four hours after a nomination is made. Elections shall be cast by secret ballot with the winner securing a majority of voting members.

When a vacancy of an office occurs, it shall be filled by an emergency election within two meetings of the announced vacancy. Residential College Presidents may not be expelled by the Board.

### Article 2 - Expulsion of Executive Board Officers

A member of the executive board may be expelled from their position by a three-fourths majority vote of the executive board, followed by a two-thirds majority of the Residential College Board. Criteria for such a recall may include, but are not limited to: failure to complete responsibilities, poor meeting attendance, acting in a manner that is detrimental or harmful to the Board or its interests, or failure to pay membership dues as per section VII. Inability to comply with this criteria shall be determined at the discretion of the Board. A motion to recall an officer may be submitted to the president by email. The motion shall be kept in confidence and will be presented by the president at the meeting immediately following the submission of the motion.

## **Section V**

### *Voting Standards (Revised 3/8/06)*

Unless otherwise instructed by this document, the Board shall act only when the majority of votes cast are in favor of a main motion put to question. Every voting member may move or call for the question only when a quorum is present. A quorum for all questions shall consist of three-fourths of the voting members of the Board. Every voting member, including a Residential College President serving on the executive board, shall cast one vote of equal weight or abstain. Abstentions shall not affect the outcome of a vote. Absent Board members may vote by proxy providing the identity of their proxy is revealed to the presiding officer before the relevant meeting. In the case of a tie, the President of the Board shall cast an additional vote to break the deadlock. In the case that any executive office is held by more than one person, those persons are considered as one voting member. No RCB member may have more than one vote on the Board. A majority of Residential College Presidents may veto any action approved by the Board. A group of Residential College Presidents, who collectively represent a majority of Residential College members, may veto any action approved by the board. Two-thirds of the executive board may veto any action approved by the Board. A group of Residential College Presidents, who collectively represent a majority of Residential College members, and two-thirds of the executive board may override any veto. A majority of Residential College Presidents and two-thirds of the executive board may override any veto. A majority of Residential College Presidents, who collectively represent a majority of Residential College members, may override any veto. Every voting member may move to veto an action or override a veto only when a quorum is present, before a new action has been approved, and before the relevant meeting has adjourned. The President shall rule such a motion in order at least once for every action. When a voting member has

moved to veto an action, and the motion has been ruled in order, voting members shall immediately vote to veto, override, or abstain. Abstentions shall not affect the outcome of a vote. A Residential College President who serves on the executive board shall vote twice, once in each capacity. In the case of a tie, the President of the Board shall cast an additional vote to break the deadlock. The number of Residential College members in each Residential College shall be determined by the Coordinator of the Residential College Program at the beginning of each quarter.

## **Section VI**

### *Amendment Procedures (Revised 3/8/06)*

Ratification of this document shall occur upon a unanimous vote of all Residential College Presidents. Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be brought to the Board by Residential College members who are not voting members of the Board only after petitioners have obtained signatures from ten percent of Residential College members requesting that the proposed amendment be considered. Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be brought to the Board by voting Board members requesting that the proposed amendment be considered. Amendments shall be considered ratified with a three-fourths vote of the Board members.

## **Section VII**

### *Bylaws (Revised 3/8/06)*

The Vice President for the Philanthropic, Academic, and Social Affairs shall have meetings at least once quarterly with their respective counterparts on the executive councils of the Residential Colleges.

The Residential Colleges do not have to account for Residential Assistants, Residential Housing Coordinators, or vacant spaces when transferring funds to RCB.

The Residential College Board will determine, at the beginning of each new administration, the criteria for RCB's sponsorship (monetarily or otherwise) of a Residential College or outside group [event] for that year.

All executive board members must pay residential college member dues, either as residents paying social and maintenance fees, or as non-residents paying non-resident fees. Non-resident fees must be paid within the first two academic weeks of no longer paying resident fees, or of election to the board. A simple majority of voting members may approve extensions or exceptions to this policy if the request is made before the two-week deadline.

## **Section VIII**

### *Absences and Fines (Revised 3/8/06)*

Any residential college not represented at a Residential College Board general assembly meeting will be fined 10 percent of the respective residential college's members in dollars.

The fine will increase by 5 percentage points for each subsequent absence per quarter. With each new quarter these fines will reset to the 10 percent figure for the second absence, and will continue to increase again as stated above. All of the money collected from this fee shall be put into the Residential College Board's budget.

The attendance will be documented in the minutes from each meeting.

The fee may be waived on an individual basis at the discretion of the executive board.

The first absence of each quarter will not be fined.

## **Section IX**

### ***ASG Senators (Adopted 9/20/06)***

#### **Article 1 - Senator Selection**

The Residential College Board shall select five residents to represent RCB and the interests of all Residential College residents in the Associated Student Government (ASG) as senators. Senator applicants must fill out and submit the RCB Senator Application and interview with RCB.

RCB will select senators every fall before ASG convenes for its first senate meeting. RCB must select a group of senators that satisfies the following criteria:

- 1 1. Two (2) senators must be selected from applicants from PARC, Shepard, and Willard.
- 2 2. One (1) senator must be selected from applicants from ACCI and Slivka.
- 3 3. One (1) senator must be selected from applicants from CRC, ISRC, and Jones.
- 4 4. One (1) senator must be selected from applicants from CCS, Chapin, and Hobart.

According to ASG mandate, no RC may have more than one (1) senator.

RCB will select senators through several rounds of voting. For each grouping (1-4 above) voting members will cast one (1) ballot for their choice candidate, or “no confidence”. After this round, the top two vote getters will be disclosed and the board will vote again between these two candidates. The top vote getter (greater than 50% of the vote) secures the senate seat. The second round of voting is not necessary if any one candidate achieves greater than 50% of the votes cast. The President will break any ties. Any board member can choose to request a veto vote as specified in Section V for the final vote for any senate seat. For category 1 this process will be done twice; once for each seat.

The voting body may vote “no confidence” in applicants from any of the aforementioned groups. In the event that all applications from a group are rejected by RCB, that senator

opening becomes a “wildcard” and may be selected from any of the remaining applications.

Each RC must submit the following number of RCB Senator Applications for RCB review:

- 1 1. PARC, Shepard, Willard: 2 per college
- 2 2. ACCI, Slivka: 2 per college
- 3 3. CRC, ISRC, and Jones: 1 per college
- 4 4. CCS, Chapin, and Hobart: 1 per college

Each RC must hold a direct election open to all of its residents, including the president of, to select its candidate(s). This direct election must be consistent with the procedures outlined by the ASG Senator Guidelines.

### Article 2 - Senator—Board Interaction

Senators elected to represent RCB in ASG under the guidelines specified in Section IX, Article 1 are expected to adhere to the following guidelines set forth by the Board under the authority granted to them by the Associated Student Government.

- 1 1. Senators may decide how they will vote in Senate based on their own judgment, the opinions of their constituency, and the Board. However, the Board reserves the right to pass a mandate (by the voting standards specified in section V) requiring the senators to appear before the board prior to their vote to explain their reasoning.
- 2 2. Rotating responsibility on a weekly basis, one senator per week must update the Vice President for Public Relations via email, the content of which must include but is not limited to:
  - a. A forwarded copy of the minutes for the week’s ASG meeting,
  - b. Summaries of important items discussed and to be discussed in the future,
  - c. A vote count for considered legislation when applicable
  - d. Bills to be considered in the upcoming week
  - e. Their perspectives on how legislation might effect RCB or RC residents
  - f. This must be done prior to the general Board meeting so the Vice President for Public Relations can update the board on ASG happenings, and so the Board can invite senators to speak in Board meetings if necessary. The Vice President for Public Relations shall forward this update to the RCB listserv.
- 3 3. Senators must inform the Vice President for Public Relations of their plans to keep in touch with the area the Board has assigned them to represent. At a minimum, each senator must send monthly updates to their RCs regarding ASG news, and they must meet with RC Presidents during both Fall and Spring Quarter to establish expectations for the year. These expectations must be reported to the Vice President for Public Relations.
- 4 4. Senators will only attend RCB meetings at the request of the President or Vice President for Public Relations. Senators may request time at meetings by communicating with either of the aforementioned executive board members.
- 5 5. Senators may appoint their own alternates if necessary for both ASG and committee meetings. The replacement must be a member of a residential college. The Vice President for Public Relations must be notified of the chosen alternate and whether or not they have the ability to vote in the senator’s place by noon of the day of the meeting for which the replacement is needed. The Vice President for Public

Relations will then forward the information to the ASG Rules Chair.

- 6 6. If necessary, the Board may vote to remove a Senator at any point during the year. Members will vote according to the voting standards specified in section V. Reasons for removal include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Inadequate communication with assigned region and/or RCB
  - b. Inadequate attendance at ASG Senate meetings or committee meetings
  - c. Consistently voting against the Board's interests

Concerns regarding these issues may be brought to the Board by Board members, RC residents, or other ASG Senators. Only the President or Vice President for Public Relations may officially call for a removal vote for a senator. The Vice President for Public Relations must inform any Senator the Board considers removing. Senators may be invited to speak with the Board regarding their potential removal however, the Board may vote without hearing testimony from the senator.

**The following appendices should not be considered part of the constitution:**

**Appendix A:**

**Web Standards (Adopted 4/19/05)**

Towards the goal of more effectively promoting the residential college system to prospective members and increasing the effectiveness of communication to current members, the following guidelines are enacted to govern the websites of the eleven residential colleges:

- 1 1. Required Components: Each college website must maintain the following up-to-date information:
  - a. List of college faculty fellows
  - b. Current version of the college constitution
  - c. Description of the college points system, including if possible a list of activities that merit points and the number of corresponding points
  - d. Descriptions of each position on the college executive board ("job descriptions") and a current list of the students holding those positions
  - e. Description of the college master staff, including the Master and if appropriate the Assistant Master or Associate Master
  - f. The date of the most recent update to the website ("Last updated...")
- 2 2. Recommended Components: The following are recommended but are not required components of the college websites:
  - a. Description of college facilities
  - b. Photos from recently held events
  - c. Description of main college events (for example, CCI might list the Business Symposium)
  - d. A "virtual tour" or similar presentation of the college for prospective students
  - e. A list of "recent college happenings" or updates on college events

- 3 3. Links: Links to the following sites should be included in some way on each college website:
  - a. The Office of Residential Colleges  
(<http://www.northwestern.edu/residentialcolleges>)
  - b. The Residential College Board (<http://groups.northwestern.edu/rcb>)

## **Appendix B:**

### **Points Recommendation (Adopted 3/8/06)**

The Residential College Board makes the following recommendations to the individual residential colleges. In some cases, adopting these recommendations may mean amending individual college constitutions:

- 1 1. Each residential college [A] should allow residents meeting the eligibility requirements of their respective residential college to transfer their eligibility to residential college [A] for the following year if space is available. In order for this system to work across all colleges, the following logistical requirements must be met:
  - a. Residents who wish to transfer their eligibility to another college must inform both the President for the college in which they currently reside and the President for the college to which they wish to move by midnight on the Friday of Reading Week, Winter Quarter.
  - b. Each college should institute a means for ranking Residential College residents who transfer from different colleges for housing selection purposes.
- 2 2. Each residential college should allow residential college members who are away from the university (on study abroad, TM, co-op, etc.) for one full academic year to defer their points and/or eligibility to the following year when they return to campus.
- 3 3. Each Residential College should review the points systems of other colleges and consider making adjustments to their own points systems accordingly.