



RICE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Bylaws of the Rice University Student Association

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1. Executive

a. Executive Committee

- i. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:
 1. Advise the President in facilitating the activities and projects of the Student Association, Senate, and Executive Branch in furtherance of the mission and purpose of the Student Association, and in creating innovative plans for the term.
 2. Guide and oversee the activities of the Executive Branch.
 3. Oversee registered student organizations in accordance with the SA Constitution and in collaboration with the Office of Student Activities.
 4. Coordinate and assume responsibility for any publication of the Student Association or Senate.
 5. Address any issues deemed necessary by the Senate.
- ii. *President*. The President shall:
 1. Be the primary spokesperson and representative for the Student Association and Senate to the Board of Trustees, the Rice University administration, the faculty, the alumni, and any other groups, organizations, or individuals.
 2. Work in cooperation with the Treasurer to set spending priorities, prepare the annual budget, and present the budget to Senate by the Biannual Report timeline in Section 4 (Blanket Tax).
 3. Chair the Executive Committee, helping set the mission and goals for the Committee's term.
 4. Be on campus during Orientation Week and Orientation Week Advisor Training in order to assist the External Vice-President in facilitating Student Association activities during Orientation Week.
 5. During the summer, update members of Senate at least once as to the activities of the Executive Committee.
- iii. *Internal Vice-President*. The Internal Vice-President shall:
 1. Coordinate and oversee the activities of the Student Association Standing Committees.
 2. Coordinate and oversee the New Student Representative program.
 3. Organize team-building and planning events, including Senate workshops and retreats as well as the changeover ceremony at the end of the Internal Vice-President's term.
- iv. *External Vice-President*. The External Vice-President shall:
 1. Assist the President and Senate in coordinating University-wide projects in a cohesive and strategic manner.
 2. Assist the President in corresponding with and representing the Student Association and Senate to external groups and organizations, including,

but not limited to, the University administration, departments, and offices.

3. Coordinate and foster relations with the various segments of the Rice community, including, but not limited to, the Faculty Senate, Rice University alumni, University Standing Committees, the Graduate Student Association, and the Jones Student Association.
 4. Coordinate relations and information-gathering efforts with the members of the Student Association through appropriate means.
 5. Coordinate and oversee the activities of the Senators.
 6. Be responsible for the recruitment and coordination of Student Association representatives to the University Standing Committees, and for their selection in conjunction with the Student Association President.
 7. Coordinate and foster programs of communication and cooperation with other universities throughout the nation and abroad, and with local, state, and national communities, as appropriate.
 8. Coordinate any philanthropic efforts of the Student Association.
 9. Be responsible for Student Association activities during Orientation Week.
 10. In conjunction with the Treasurer, coordinate the Hedgehopper program, including the arrangement of discounts for Rice students, faculty, and staff at local restaurants, shops, and other businesses.
- v. *Secretary*. The Secretary shall:
1. Keep complete minutes of all meetings of Senate and any other meetings of organizations and committees of the Student Association as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.
 2. Make public records as defined in the SA Constitution and Bylaws available by request of a member of the Student Association.
 3. Keep voting records of all members of Senate and make them available to members of the Student Association via the Student Association website or other appropriate media.
 4. Be responsible for the upkeep of the Student Association calendar.
 5. Be responsible for recruiting and, in conjunction with the President, selecting the Student Association Executive Council, along with overseeing the relevant reporting Appointed Officers.
 6. Post any and all appropriate announcements and updates to the Student Association's electronic mailing list.
 7. Be responsible for archiving records generated during her or his term in an appropriate form and location as determined by the Executive Committee, and for placing on file at the Woodson Research Center copies of appropriate records including, but not limited to, legislation passed by Senate, reports of Senate, and minutes of Senate meetings.
- vi. *Treasurer*. The Treasurer shall:
1. Be the Chair of the Blanket Tax Committee and officiate committee

duties.

2. Prepare a balanced operating budget in conjunction with the President for the Student Association for approval by Senate.
3. Present to Senate an updated budget in accordance with the Biannual Report timeline in Section 4 (Blanket Tax).
4. Be responsible for ensuring the compliance of the Student Association and its Blanket Tax organizations with procedures set forth by the University administration and the Student Association Constitution concerning the undergraduate Blanket Tax.
5. Have the right to inspect, in consultation with the Advisor, the financial records of any registered student organization at any time. The Treasurer shall report on this data to Senate or the Blanket Tax Committee as necessary.
6. In conjunction with the External Vice-President, coordinate the Hedgehopper program, including the arrangement of discounts for Rice students, faculty, and staff at local restaurants, shops, and other businesses.
7. Manage the collection, deposit, and disbursement of all funds of the Student Association with proper authorization.

b. Executive Council. This section provides for the positions, roles, and responsibilities of the Appointed Officers of the Executive Branch of the Student Association. No additional positions may be created without an amendment to this section.

i. *Parliamentarian.* The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for advising the President, Senate, and other organizations and members of the Student Association on this constitution and on any questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by the SA Constitution and bylaws, in which case the Parliamentarian shall provide advice according to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. The Parliamentarian will report to the President. Further, the Parliamentarian shall perform the following specific duties:

1. Maintain the consistency and organization of the Student Association constitution by reviewing constitutional amendments prior to their approval by Senate and by conducting an annual review of the Student Association constitution to determine whether further review by the Committee on Constitutional Revisions is appropriate.
2. Ensure that all legislation of Senate is in the proper form and does not conflict with any previous legislation or with the Constitution of the Student Association.
3. Ensure that the constitutions of the registered student organizations conform to the requirements in the SA Constitution.
4. Update the SA Constitution with any amendments approved by Senate and/or the Student Association.
5. Chair the Committee on Constitutional Revisions when convened.
6. Chair the Committee for Club Approvals and facilitate the processes for approval of new clubs and amendment of club constitutions.

7. Maintain an updated copy of each Blanket Tax organization's constitution.
 8. Assist members of the Student Association in writing legislation, understanding and using Senate's parliamentary procedure, making amendments to the constitutions of Blanket Tax or dependent organizations, and resolving inquiries regarding the Constitution of the Student Association.
- ii. *Director of External Affairs.* The Director of External Affairs shall be responsible for overseeing and furthering special initiatives that pertain to the holistic Rice experience. The Director of External Affairs will report to the President.
 - iii. *Director of Elections.* The Director of Elections shall be responsible for conducting all Student Association elections in accordance with this Constitution. The Director of Elections will report to the Secretary. Further, the Director of Elections shall perform the following specific duties:
 1. Prepare and present to Senate for approval any necessary regulations governing elections.
 2. Make all regulations governing Student Association elections available to members of the Student Association.
 3. Ensure the timely public announcement of the dates of all Student Association elections and any deadlines, including filing deadlines, associated with those elections.
 4. Be responsible for the production and distribution of all Student Association election ballots using an appropriate method, as well as for the counting of votes.
 5. Publish the complete results of all Student Association elections.
 - iv. *Director of Marketing.* The Director of Marketing shall be responsible for assisting the Student Association in marketing activities as requested by Senate or by any member of the Executive Committee, which includes designing and disseminating any marketing materials as necessary. The Director of Marketing will report to the Secretary.
 - v. *Director of Technology.* The Director of Technology shall be the technology consultant to the Executive Committee and Senate. The Director of Technology will report to the Secretary. Further, the Director of Technology shall perform the following specific duties:
 1. Attend to technological needs and provide technical support for meetings of Senate and meetings of other organizations and committees of the Student Association as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.
 2. Assist with electronic aspects of all Student Association elections.
 3. Maintain the Student Association website.
 4. Represent the Student Association on the Information Technology Advisory Committee.
 - vi. *Historian.* The Historian shall, in conjunction with the Secretary, be responsible for updating and maintaining the records of the Student Association. The

Historian shall make photographic and video records of any Student Association activities as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. The Historian will report to the Secretary.

- vii. *Associate Vice-President.* The Associate Vice-President shall act as a special assistant and advisor to the President to help further priorities of the Executive Committee and execute projects from the Student Association. The Associate Vice-President will report to the President.
- viii. *Director of Government Relations.* The Director of Government Relations shall track government initiatives at the local, state, and national level, and bring relevant initiatives to the attention of the External Vice President and President for consideration. The Director of Government Relations shall advise and brief Senate on relevant topics as deemed appropriate by the External Vice President and President. The Director of Government Relations will report to the External Vice President or President, as decided on by each Executive Committee.
 - 1. The appointed Director of Government Relations in collaboration with the SA Executive team shall lead a conversation in Senate or Spring Retreat prior to the end of the Spring semester each year to outline the particular process by which government initiatives that affect the student body are selected to be brought before the Senate and then acted upon by the SA. The process laid out shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and can subsequently be revised throughout the year if deemed necessary by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.
 - 2. If deemed necessary by a majority vote of the Senate, a temporary subcommittee shall be created to consider specific government initiatives and gauge campus-wide opinion, reporting back to Senate on their findings. The sub-committee shall be chaired by the Director of Government Relations and composed of two Senators, two college Presidents, and the SA President.
- ix. *Deputy Treasurer.* The Deputy Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer on financial tasks of the SA including, but not limited to, Blanket Tax, Initiative Fund, and the SA bookkeeping. This position may not be held by a senior. The Deputy Treasurer will report to the Treasurer.
 - 1. The Deputy Treasurer will serve as a nonvoting member on the Blanket Tax Committee.
- x. *Deputy Parliamentarian.* The Deputy Parliamentarian will be responsible for assisting the Parliamentarian in all aspects of their position, while gaining a thorough understanding of the SA Constitution, bylaws, and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. This position may not be held by a senior and priority will be given to applicants that are interested in becoming Parliamentarian in the future. The Deputy Parliamentarian will report to the Parliamentarian.

c. University Standing Committee Representatives

- i. *Selection.* Senate shall recommend students for positions on University Standing Committees to the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President of the University according to the following procedure:
 1. The positions available and the deadline for applying for each position shall be announced at a meeting of Senate. Applications for each position shall be made available on the Student Association website or in another appropriate location and format.
 2. The External Vice-President shall review all completed applications, select and conduct interviews of qualified applicants if necessary, and submit to the President for approval a nominee for each open committee position.
 3. The President shall review the list of nominees, make any necessary revisions, and present the list to Senate. Senate may approve the nominees by a majority vote. At its discretion, Senate may approve only part of the list. If Senate does not approve a nominee, the External Vice-President shall recommend a replacement.
 4. The list of approved nominees shall be submitted to the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President of the University. The final appointment for each position rests with the President of the University.
- ii. *Reports.* The University Standing Committee Representatives shall submit a written report to the External Vice-President following each meeting of their respective committees, describing the committee's activities and discussions. Where relevant, reports may make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the Student Association's response to any topics discussed or actions taken. Where relevant, reports may recommend changes in the committee's authority, duties, or procedure.
 1. In cases where more than one representative is on a committee, the representatives may choose whether to submit a joint report or individual reports.
 2. University Standing Committee Representatives are responsible for keeping the appropriate information confidential and for making public non-confidential topics relevant to students' interests.

2. Committees

a. Types of Committees

- i. Standing Committees
 1. *Purpose.* Student Association Standing Committees shall be permanent committees defined in this constitution in order to conduct continuing business of importance to the Student Association and in furtherance of the mission and purpose of the Student Association.
 2. *Creation, Amendment, and Removal.* Standing Committees may be created, amended, or removed only by amending the Bylaws to

include/remove committees. All relevant information regarding new committees, including purpose, responsibilities and powers, member criteria and procedures for selecting a chairman, and selection process for committee members must be outlined in the bylaws.

ii. Working Groups

1. *Purpose.* Student Association Working Groups shall be temporary committees created in order to conduct non-recurring business of the Student Association and/or to address issues of importance to the Student Association as the need arises.
2. *Creation, Amendment, and Removal.* Working Groups may be created, amended, or removed by Senate's passage of a Senate Bill or by an initiative of the Student Association.
3. The Senate Bill or initiative creating and defining a Working Group shall specify the following:
 - a. Purpose of the committee;
 - b. Responsibilities and powers of the committee;
 - c. Criteria and procedures for selection of committee members, including the process for selecting a chairperson;
 - d. Lifetime of the committee. Working Groups must have a defined lifetime and shall not be permanent;
 - e. If appropriate, a requirement that Senate approve members selected for the committee.
4. *Dissolution.* Working Groups shall dissolve at the end of the lifetime specified at creation unless renewed by the passage of a Senate Bill or by initiative amending that lifetime.

b. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be a standing committee of the Student Association. Its composition, purpose, responsibilities, and powers shall be as set forth in the Executive section of the SA Constitution and Bylaws.

c. Blanket Tax Committee. The Blanket Tax Committee shall be a standing committee of the Student Association. Its composition, purpose, responsibilities, and powers shall be set forth in the Blanket Tax section of the SA Constitution and Bylaws.

d. Election Committee

- i. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Election Committee shall be to conduct Student Association elections provided for in this constitution in a manner that ensures the fairness and integrity of the electoral process.
- ii. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Election Committee shall:
 1. Prepare any necessary regulations governing elections in accordance with the constitution, subject to approval by a majority vote of Senate.
 2. Produce and distribute the election ballots.
 3. Determine the results of each election.
 4. Verify the eligibility of all candidates and notify ineligible candidates, subject to appeal to the University Court.

5. Have original jurisdiction to hear complaints of violations of campaign rules and other election regulations, subject to appeal to the Court.
 6. Be responsible for publicizing all elections to the members of the Student Association.
- iii. **Membership**
1. *Composition.* The Election Committee shall be composed of the following members, along with additional members as deemed necessary by the Director of Elections:
 - a. The Director of Elections, who shall chair the committee;
 - b. The Parliamentarian;
 - c. The Director of Technology;
 - d. The Secretary; and
 - e. The Director of Marketing as a nonvoting member responsible for assisting the committee in publicizing elections.
 2. *Recusal.* No member of the Election Committee shall be a candidate for any office or a representative for any initiative or referendum in the current election or shall otherwise have a conflict of interest in conducting the election.
 - a. In case of a conflict of interest, the President shall appoint, by a majority vote of Senate, a replacement with similar qualifications to the recused committee member.
 - b. Appointments shall be temporary and last only until the conclusion of the election for which the designated member was replaced due to a conflict of interest.
- iv. *Meetings.* All meetings of the Election Committee shall be open.
- e. **Committee for Club Approvals**
- i. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Committee for Club Approvals shall be to review proposals to create new undergraduate student organizations or to revive defunct organizations.
 - ii. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Committee for Club Approvals shall:
 1. Review all applications that have met the constitutional requirements from new or reviving student organizations to become registered student organizations under the Student Association.
 2. Have the power, by a majority vote, to approve or deny a proposal, subject to appeal to Senate if denied, which may overrule the committee's decision and approve the organization by a majority vote.
 - iii. *Members.* The Committee for Club Approvals shall be composed of the following members:
 1. The Parliamentarian, who shall chair the committee and shall be a nonvoting member;
 2. The Secretary; and
 3. At least two other members of the Student Association appointed by the President.

4. The President shall appoint members with an aim toward creating a committee that is as representative of the various types of student organizations as possible.
 - iv. *Meetings.* The committee shall meet as necessary in closed meetings.
- f. Committee on Constitutional Revisions**
- i. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Committee on Constitutional Revisions shall be to review this constitution as directed by Senate and to recommend amendments to address any identified deficiencies or to otherwise improve this constitution.
 - ii. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Committee on Constitutional Revisions shall:
 1. Conduct a review of this constitution in accordance with its charge(s) and subsequently draft and introduce appropriate legislation to Senate.
 2. Communicate openly with Senate, the members of the Student Association, and those members of the Rice community and organizations with a particular interest in a topic under consideration regarding its progress.
 3. Solicit feedback from the members of the Student Association, Senate, and any organizations of the Student Association or other members of the Rice community potentially interested in issues under consideration.
 - iii. *Membership.* The Committee on Constitutional Revisions shall be composed of the following members:
 1. The Parliamentarian, who shall chair the committee;
 2. The Deputy Parliamentarian;
 3. At least one member of the Executive Committee;
 4. At least one College Senator or President;
 5. At least one officer of a Blanket Tax organization;
 6. Other members, such as at-large members, whose involvement or expertise would be helpful to the committee as deemed necessary by the Parliamentarian and President; and
 7. The Student Association Advisor.
 - iv. *Selection of Members.* The President and Parliamentarian shall select the committee's members subject to approval by a majority vote of Senate.
 - v. *Charges.* The committee may be charged with one or more of the following, by passage of a Senate Bill:
 1. *General Review.* Senate may charge this committee to conduct a general review of the Student Association Constitution. Such a charge shall last until the end of the legislative session, unless otherwise specified or renewed by Senate.
 2. *Specific Deficiency.* Senate may charge this committee to address a specific deficiency in the constitution/bylaws. Such a charge shall last until the deficiency has been addressed to the satisfaction of Senate, unless otherwise specified.
 3. *Revocation.* Senate may revoke a charge of this committee at its discretion.

- vi. *Meetings.* All meetings of the Committee on Constitutional Revisions shall be open. All documents produced by the committee shall be matters of public record.

g. Campus Life Committees

- i. *General Principles.* The following general principles apply to all Campus Life Committees, unless otherwise specified.
 - 1. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The responsibilities and powers shall be as follows, though committees may have additional responsibilities and powers:
 - a. Communicate with the University administration, faculty, staff, and other individuals or groups as appropriate in order to further their purpose.
 - b. Gather feedback from the members of the Student Association regarding topics relevant to the committees' purposes.
 - c. Meet regularly to discuss projects and topics related to their purpose.
 - 2. *Chairpersons.* Committees shall have either one Chair or two Co-Chairs, at the discretion of the Internal Vice-President.
 - a. *Selection.* Chair or Co-Chairs shall be selected by the Internal Vice-President through an application and interview process, subject to the approval of the President and a majority vote of Senate.
 - b. *Responsibilities.* The Chair or Co-Chairs shall facilitate projects and activities and preside over all meetings of their committee.
 - 3. *Meetings.* All meetings of Campus Life Committees shall be closed, unless otherwise specified.
 - 4. *Members.* All interested members of the Student Association may serve on the committee of their interest upon permission of the Internal Vice President, unless otherwise specified.
- ii. Student Life Committee
 - 1. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Student Life Committee shall be to enhance student life at Rice, to address undergraduate students' concerns regarding campus and student life beyond their residential colleges, and to increase Rice spirit and strengthen our collective Rice identity by unifying students from different colleges, organizations, and other subsets of Rice University.
- iii. Wellbeing Committee
 - 1. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Wellbeing Committee shall be to discuss issues, foster dialogue organizations, update organizations and students on events, plan or assist in planning campus wide initiatives, and to improve communication between students and the administration on matters of wellbeing.

2. *Additional Responsibilities and Powers.* In addition to the responsibilities and powers outlined in General Principles, the Wellbeing Committee shall collaborate with relevant organizations to promote health and wellbeing initiatives around campus. Relevant organizations include, but are not limited to, Rice Alliance for Mental Health Awareness, Rice Health Advisors, Healthy Grad, the Women’s Resource Center, Queers and Allies, Queer Resource Center, the Graduate Student Association, and the Transfer Student Association.
 - a. One staff member from the Wellbeing Office must also serve as an ex-officio advisor the Committee.
- iv. Environmental Committee
 1. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Environmental Committee shall be to serve as the liaison between the Student Association and the administration on matters relating to sustainability and to further efforts to improve sustainability at Rice.
 2. *Responsibilities of Chairpersons.* In addition to the responsibilities of the Chair or Co-Chairs outlined in General Principles, the Chair or Co-Chairs of the Environmental Committee shall serve on the Executive Board of the Rice Environmental Society as provided for in that organization’s constitution.
 - v. Academics Committee
 1. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Academics Committee shall be to initiate, facilitate, and follow up on academic initiatives across all academic departments and programs in order to further the interests of the Student Association and to keep Rice’s academics globally competitive.
 2. *Responsibilities of Chairpersons.* In addition to the responsibilities of the Chair or Co-Chairs outlined in General Principles, the Chair or Co-Chairs of the Academics Committee shall advise representatives to University Committees about topics relating to academics, such as curriculum and teaching.
 - vi. Diversity and Inclusion Committee
 1. *Purpose:* The purpose of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be to promote awareness on issues related to diversity and inclusion and work towards creating a more inclusive environment for all students, regardless of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender identification, citizenship, immigration status, sexual orientation, disability, or political beliefs.
 2. *Membership:* The Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be composed of the following members:
 - a. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair or Co-Chairs; and

- b. Additional interested members of the Student Association at the discretion of the Internal Vice-President

vii. Senior Committee

1. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Senior Committee shall be to foster relationships among the senior class, to increase Rice spirit, and to strengthen our collective Rice identity by unifying students from different colleges during their senior year.
2. *Additional Responsibilities and Powers.* In addition to the responsibilities and powers outlined in General Principles, the Senior Committee shall:
 - a. Plan and host the Senior Gala.
 - b. Host and fundraise for any committee events in conjunction with the Association of Rice Alumni, the Office of the President, and the Student Association.
3. *Members.* The Senior Committee shall be composed of the following members:
 - a. The Senior Committee Chair or Co-Chairs;
 - b. A representative from the senior class at each college recruited by the Senior Committee Chair, the College Presidents, the Student Association Internal Vice-President, and the Student Association President.

h. Awards Committees

i. Committee for the Rice University Service Award

1. *Purpose.* To consider eligible candidates for the Rice University Service Award and select recipients on the basis of the award criteria.
2. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Committee for the Rice University Service Award shall have the responsibility and power to select, by majority vote, up to four recipients of the Rice University Service Award per academic year.
3. *Members.* The Committee for the Rice University Service Award shall be composed of the following members:
 - a. The Internal Vice-President, who shall chair the committee;
 - b. Two graduate student representatives selected by the Graduate Student Association;
 - c. Two College Presidents selected by a committee of the College Presidents; and
 - d. The Student Association Advisor or his or her designee.
4. *Definition of Award.* The Rice University Service Award shall be presented annually in memory of Dean Hugh Scott Cameron to former or current members of the Student Association who have been most exemplary in their service to the student body.
5. *Eligibility for Award.* The committee may consider current and former members of the Student Association from any class for the award. Those receiving compensation for their service shall not be eligible unless their

work has been of a quality above and beyond that ordinarily required for the award.

6. *Criteria for Award.* The committee shall consider the following criteria in selecting recipients of the award:
 - a. Candidates shall have made a tangible contribution to improve student life at Rice, whether through participation in a variety of activities or through dedication in a particular area.
 - b. Special consideration shall be given to candidates who have not already been recognized for their contributions.
7. *Timeline.* The committee shall make and report its decision no later than the second to last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester.

ii. Committee for the Outstanding Senior Award

1. *Purpose.* To consider candidates nominated for the Outstanding Senior Award and select recipients on the basis of the award criteria.
2. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Committee for the Outstanding Senior Award shall:
 - a. Create and publicize a nomination form for the award.
 - b. Consider candidates nominated for the award and select recipients for the award by a majority vote. The committee shall aim, but is not bound, to select between seven and ten recipients.
 - c. At its discretion, interview the nominators and nominees and consult with college masters, faculty, and staff in order to facilitate the selection of award recipients.
3. *Members.* The Committee for the Outstanding Senior Award shall consist of the following members:
 - a. The incoming President, who shall chair the committee and shall not vote unless the vote will affect the outcome; and
 - b. One non-graduating student from each residential college, selected by the incoming President.
4. *Definition of Award.* The Outstanding Senior Award shall be presented annually to those graduating seniors who have contributed most to excellence at Rice University.
5. *Eligibility for Award.* Candidates must be graduating seniors nominated by another student.
6. *Criteria for Award.* The committee shall consider the following criteria in selecting recipients of the award:
 - a. Contributions to excellence may be exhibited in ways including, but not limited to, performance, service, dedication, and character. No form of excellence shall be given particular emphasis.
 - b. Special consideration shall be given to candidates who have not already been recognized for their contributions.

7. *Nomination of Candidates.* The committee shall make a nomination form available on the Student Association website or through other appropriate means. All nominations must be made through this form no later than the end of March. The committee shall inform nominees of their nomination and provide them with the opportunity to submit a resume and any other supporting documents with at least two weeks notice.
 8. *Timeline.* The committee shall make and report its decision no later than the second to last Senate meeting of the Spring Semester.
- iii. Committee for the Mentor Recognition Award
1. *Purpose.* To consider candidates nominated for the Mentor Recognition Award and select recipients on the basis of the award criteria.
 2. *Definition of Award.* The Mentor Recognition Award shall be an award presented to a current member of the faculty or staff in recognition and gratitude for extraordinary service to the student body as an advisor, counselor, teacher, or friend.
 3. *Members.* The Committee for the Mentor Recognition Award shall be made up of all Senate members.
 4. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Committee for the Mentor Recognition Award shall:
 - a. Create and publicize a nomination form for the award.
 - b. At its discretion, interview the nominators and nominees and consult with college masters, faculty, and staff in order to facilitate the selection of award recipients.
 - c. Convene in a closed meeting following the second-to-last Senate meeting prior to changeover to consider candidates nominated for the award and, by a majority vote, select one recipient of the award per academic year. The committee may decline to make an award in a given academic year.
 5. Procedure
 - a. All votes of the committee shall be conducted in secret by the Parliamentarian.
 - b. The Parliamentarian shall announce the results to the committee and deliver them to the Student Association Advisor.
 - c. The committee shall report its selection only to the Office of the President of the University. The committee shall otherwise keep its selection secret until it is presented at convocation by the outgoing Student Association President or his or her designee.
 6. *Eligibility for Award.* Any current member of the faculty or staff is eligible to receive the award, provided that no individual receives the award more than once in a period of seven years.

3. Legislative

a. Duties of the College Senators

- i. Create and enact legislation of Senate;
 - ii. Relay information, gather feedback, and publicize Student Association efforts to their constituencies about present and future topics discussed at meetings of Senate;
 - iii. Represented in Senate proceedings the best interests of their constituents;
 - iv. Select, in conjunction with their college presidents, New Student Representatives from their colleges.
- b. Absences from Senate Meetings**
- i. If a member of Senate misses three consecutive Senate meetings or four meetings in total within a single session, the member shall be automatically removed from office. An absent member who designates a proxy is still considered absent.
 - 1. In cases of uncertainty, the Parliamentarian shall determine whether a member is absent in regards to tardiness and other exceptions.
 - ii. *Exemptions.* The President and Parliamentarian may grant a specific member a temporary or permanent exemption from the attendance requirement if the situation warrants such. The Parliamentarian must inform the Senate of any such decision, and the Senate may overrule the judgement of the Parliamentarian by majority vote.
 - iii. *Vacancy and Reinstatement.* A member removed under this section may be reinstated by a majority vote of Senate unless the vacancy has already been filled. A vacancy will be filled according to procedures according to Elections (Section 6).
- c. New Student Representatives**
- i. *Eligibility.* New Student Representatives shall be members of the Student Association who are in their first year at Rice University.
 - ii. *Selection.* New Student Representatives shall be selected by the Senator and president of their college early in the fall semester. The number of New Student Representatives shall be determined each year by the Executive Committee.
 - iii. *Term.* New Student Representatives shall serve until the end of Senate's current session.
 - iv. *Attendance.* As nonvoting members of Senate, New Student Representatives shall be bound by the attendance requirements as enforced by the Internal Vice President.
 - v. *Responsibilities.* New Student Representatives shall:
 - 1. Serve on a project or effort of the Student Association as directed by the Internal Vice-President;
 - 2. Assist Senators in relaying information, gathering feedback, and publicizing Student Association efforts to their constituencies about present and future topics discussed at meetings of Senate; and
 - 3. Represent their constituents in Senate proceedings.

4. Blanket Tax

a. Blanket Tax Committee

- i. *Responsibilities and Powers.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall:
 - 1. Execute and oversee the Blanket Tax processes, including the Initiative Fund, Blanket Tax Access Applications, and Annual Appropriation.
 - 2. Prepare and present to Senate an annual written report on the state of the Blanket Tax system and the adequacy of its overall level of funding.
- ii. *Selection of Members.* The Treasurer shall select the Blanket Tax Committee's members, subject to approval by the President and a majority vote of Senate.
 - 1. Selection shall take place through an application process during the transition period.
 - 2. The Blanket Tax Committee's term shall be aligned with the Student Association changeover.
- iii. *Recusal.* Members of the Blanket Tax Committee, including the Treasurer, shall recuse themselves from the review of any organization in which they hold an officer position or from which they receive any form of monetary compensation. Recused members shall not participate in deliberations and shall not vote. In the event the Treasurer is recused, the Committee shall elect, by majority vote, another member to preside over the relevant portion of a meeting.

b. Biannual Report to Senate

- i. *Fall Report.* At the last meeting of the fall semester, the Treasurer shall present a report to Senate highlighting the following:
 - 1. The fall semester's Initiatives Fund application process;
 - 2. An updated SA budget;
 - 3. Discussion of any procedural issues the Blanket Tax Committee encountered;
 - 4. Areas for improvement and associated recommendations;
 - 5. A summary discussing the current level of funding to inform Senate if there is adequate, inadequate, or excessive funding; and
 - 6. Any other topics the Treasurer deems relevant.
- ii. *Spring Report.* At the last meeting of the spring semester, the Treasurer shall present a report to Senate highlighting the following:
 - 1. Spring semester's Initiative Fund application process;
 - 2. An updated SA budget;
 - 3. The upcoming fiscal year's SA budget;
 - 4. Blanket Tax Fund Appropriation review; and
 - 5. Any other topics the Treasurer deems relevant.

c. Student Association Budget

- i. *Preparation of Budget.* The Treasurer shall prepare an estimated itemized budget for the next fiscal year in coordination with the Student Association Advisor, and President.
- ii. *Approval.* The budget shall be approved by Senate with a two-thirds majority.
- iii. *Budget Report.* The treasurer shall draft a report to Senate at the end of each semester highlighting updated fiscal year spending.
- iv. *Amendments.* Any amendments to an approved budget or payments not

specifically provided for in the approved budget may be approved only by a two-thirds vote of Senate, given two weeks' prior notice.

d. Blanket Tax Fund Annual Appropriation and Review

- i. *Purpose.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct an annual budgeting process, using the standards detailed in Section 5 (Blanket Tax) of the Constitution, to evaluate if Blanket Tax organizations' properly utilized their budgets for the current fiscal year and allocate funds for the upcoming fiscal year.
- ii. *General.* As part of the annual budgeting process, the Blanket Tax Committee shall review Blanket Tax organization's' actual expenditures from the previous fiscal year to ensure Blanket Tax funds are utilized in accordance with Blanket Tax standards and approve next year's budget to be funded by Blanket Tax Funds.
- iii. **Conduct of Process**
 1. *Timeline.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct the process no later than the end of April.
 2. *Communication.* All communication during the review process shall be addressed to the organization's president (or equivalent), treasurer, and advisor.
 3. *Request for Documents.* The Student Association Treasurer shall make requests for necessary documents and any additional supporting information by the end of March.
- iv. *Request for Documents.* Treasurer's request for documentation shall include the following information in addition to the criteria mentioned in Section D.
 1. An up-to-date copy of the SA Constitution and Bylaws with highlights indicating governing portions of the annual budgeting process.
 2. A general timeline for the review process.
- v. **Documents Required for Evaluation**
 1. All organizations receiving Blanket Tax funds shall have at least one week from the Treasurer's request to prepare and submit the requested documents, which shall include:
 - a. Statement of organization's mission, purpose, and goals;
 - b. The organization's budget for the current fiscal year;
 - c. Organization's actual expenditures for the current fiscal year, through the date of the Treasurer's request, presented alongside the approved budget;
 - d. The organization's actual expenditures for the portion of the previous fiscal year after the previous year's annual budgeting process and before the end of that fiscal year;
 - e. A statement explaining any substantial discrepancies between the approved and actual expenditures; and
 - f. The organization's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, including a requested total amount, proposed category and/or line item expenses as appropriate, a proposed surplus (if

- applicable), and an explanation of the proposal.
2. *Savings.* The organization’s proposed budget may include line items for savings, which shall be treated as expenses if the organization specifies their intended use and an approximate timeframe for their use. Savings not allocated to a specific purpose shall be categorized as surpluses.
 3. Blanket Tax organizations can meet with the Blanket Tax Committee to discuss their submitted documents.
- vi. *Scope of Evaluation.* The scope of the annual budgeting process is limited to Blanket Tax monies and other student-funded sources (e.g., Student Activities President’s Programming funds). Only these sources must be considered in the information submitted by organizations receiving Blanket Tax funds.
- vii. Standards for Review
1. Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct a holistic review of each organization’s proposed budget, in consideration of the organization's mission, purpose, and objectives, and other applicable principles set forth in the Constitution and bylaws.
 2. The Committee shall have the discretion to prohibit certain specific proposed expenditures if and only if it finds they would violate the standards provided for in the bylaws
- viii. Review Process
1. *Initial Review.* Following the submission deadline, the Blanket Tax Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct an initial review of each organization’s submission to determine whether sufficient information has been submitted.
 - a. If organization fails to provide requested information the committee shall schedule a meeting with the organization to discuss the situation
 - b. If the organization fails to attend or a resolution is not obtained, the organization shall be referred to University Court for noncompliance with the review process
 2. *Expedited Approval or Review Meeting.* Following the Initial Review, the Committee shall determine whether the organization needs a review meeting or expedited approval with a majority vote.
 - a. Criteria for Review Meeting
 - i. The organization has requested a meeting;
 - ii. The organization’s actual prior expenditures for the period under consideration raise concerns that the organization’s use of funds might not be consistent with the standards set forth in the Bylaws;
 - iii. The organization’s actual surplus, defined as the total funding received less the organization’s actual expenses, exceeds 125 percent of the budgeted surplus approved; or

- iv. The organization’s proposed budget for the upcoming year requests a level of funding 110 percent greater than the prior year’s annual budgeting process.
- b. Criteria for Expedited Approval
 - i. The organization has submitted sufficient information;
 - ii. The organization doesn’t meet any of the criteria for review meeting;
 - iii. The organization’s proposed budget is reasonable and appropriate based on the standards for review and should be approved in full.
- 3. *Scheduling of Review Meeting.* The Review Meeting shall be scheduled and topics to be discussed decided with a minimum three days’ prior notice for the Blanket Tax organization, held in presence of a quorum.
- 4. Review Meeting Approval Process
 - a. *Deliberation.* Following the necessary review meetings and deliberations, the committee shall, by majority vote, elect one of the following outcomes for each component of the annual budgeting process:
 - i. Review of Actual Expenditures
 - 1. Good Blanket Tax
 - 2. Unapproved Surplus (detailed below)
 - 3. Unauthorized Expenditures (detailed below)
 - 4. Judicial Referral
 - ii. Review of Proposed Budget
 - 1. Approved in Full
 - 2. Reduced Amount Approved (detailed below)
 - 3. Specific Expenditures Prohibited (detailed below)
 - 4. Judicial Referral
 - b. *Unapproved Surplus.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds the organization’s surplus, defined as the total funding received less actual expenditures, exceeds the budgeted and approved surplus, it shall reach one of the following outcomes:
 - i. Appropriate Surplus
 - ii. *Inappropriate Surplus.* If the surplus exceeds 125 percent of the budgeted and approved surplus and the organization has not justified its retention of the portion of the surplus more than 125 percent
 - iii. *Special Case.* The committee can strongly agree that an organization’s surplus that exceeds the budgeted and approved surplus but does not exceed 125 percent of that amount, is inappropriate by a two-thirds vote.
 - 1. The committee can then instruct the organization

to return all or part of the excess by a two-thirds vote of the Blanket Tax committee.

- c. *Unauthorized Expenditures.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds the organization's actual expenditures significantly deviate from its approved budget, it shall reach one of the following outcomes:
 - i. Appropriate Expenditure
 - ii. Inappropriate Expenditure
 - 1. If the Blanket Tax Committee finds the deviations from the approved budget were of a nature and magnitude inappropriate under the standards set forth in the Bylaws.
 - 2. The committee can then instruct the organization to reimburse the Blanket Tax General Pool given that the amount to be reimbursed is not more than 10 percent of the organization's total funding.
 - a. If the committee strongly feels that a reimbursement more than ten percent is appropriate and the organization does not consent in the review meeting, the committee can refer the organization to the University Court.
- d. *Reduced Amount Approved.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds that the total amount of funding requested is unreasonable or inappropriate and that a lower amount should instead be granted, the Blanket Tax Committee shall:
 - i. Determine, by majority vote, an appropriate amount of funding, provided the amount is not less than 75 percent prior year's approved budget, and
 - ii. Instruct the organization to provide a revised budget within 10 class days based on the approved amount for approval.
- e. *Spending Expenditure Prohibited.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds that specific proposed expenditures, allocations, and/or surpluses would violate the standards for use of Blanket Tax funds in the bylaws, the Blanket Tax Committee shall:
 - i. Specify in a written report the prohibited expenditure and the reason(s) they are prohibited, and
 - ii. Instruct the organization to provide a revised budget within 10 class days excluding the prohibited expenditure for approval.

5. *Report.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall detail a report of the

outcome(s) and decision(s) reached and explain the committee's reasoning to the appropriate organizations and Senate.

- a. *Notice to Organization.* At least five class days prior to presentation to Senate, the Treasurer shall provide a copy of the report to the appropriate organization's advisor and officers.
 - b. *Response.* Each organization shall be given a chance to respond to the report which shall be included in the final publication.
6. *Disbursement.* Following the collection of Blanket Tax revenues each semester, half of the total amount approved for each organization's budget for the fiscal year shall be disbursed to the organization.
 7. *Mid-year Deviations.* In the event of a large-scale deviation from the approved budget, the Blanket Tax organization in question shall use their own discretion and in good faith submit a request to the Blanket Tax Committee for approval of that expenditure. The Blanket Tax committee shall authorize all planned deviations it finds justified and appropriate based on the standards for review.

e. Initiative Fund Review Process

- i. *Funding.* The Initiative Fund shall consist of the difference between the total Blanket Tax revenues for that semester and the funds disbursed to Blanket Tax organizations via the annual budgeting process. The fund shall also include any rollover from the prior semester and any revenues from reimbursements or returned funds. The available amount shall be publically announced.
- ii. *Minimum Balance.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall always seek to try maintain a balance of at least \$1,000 in the Initiatives Fund but may, though is not obligated to, disburse funds up to the total amount available at any given time.
- iii. *Timeline.* Each semester, the Blanket Tax Committee shall announce the schedule for the application period at least five class days prior to opening. The application period shall be open for at least 10 class days.
- iv. **Components of Application**
 1. A statement of the purpose of the Blanket Tax;
 2. A statement of the total amount of funding available for the application period;
 3. A statement of the informal priority framework;
 4. A statement to the effect that all organizations applying shall abide by the standards of use of Blanket Tax money as detailed in the Bylaws;
 5. A request for Statement of the organization's mission, purpose, and goals;
 6. Summary of the proposed initiative, including an explanation of how it will serve the interests of the student body and the Rice University community; and
 7. Proposed budget for the initiative, including the total amount requested, other projected or actual sources of revenue, a line-item breakdown of expenses, and the minimum amount with which the initiative could be

- carried out;
- v. Review of Application
 - 1. Documentation Review
 - a. Following the application deadline set by the Treasurer, the Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct an initial review of each organization's submission to determine whether sufficient information has been submitted.
 - b. If organization fails to provide requested information the committee shall deny the organization's request for Initiative Fund.
 - 2. Priority Review
 - a. Priority Review shall be granted to all Blanket Tax organizations.
 - b. The Blanket Tax Committee may defer a decision on any Blanket Tax organization application for consideration in general review. The Blanket Tax Committee shall seek to reserve sufficient funds to grant a reasonable number of proposals from non-Blanket Tax organizations.
 - 3. General Review
 - a. The Blanket Tax Committee shall review all applications, including those deferred from Priority Review.
 - b. The Blanket Tax Committee may decide to grant funding for applications at a total amount less than the amount of available funds. Any funds remaining shall be rolled over to the next semester's Initiative Fund.
 - vi. Decisions After Review
 - 1. *Approval in Full.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds all aspects of the proposal are reasonable and worthy of funding based on the applicable standards and should be approved as proposed, it shall enter a decision of Approved in Full.
 - 2. *Reduced Amount Approved.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds that the total amount of funding requested is unreasonable or inappropriate and that a lower amount should instead be granted, the Blanket Tax Committee shall
 - a. Determine, by majority vote, an appropriate amount of funding to grant the organization, and
 - b. Instruct the organization to provide a revised budget within 10 class days based on the approved amount for approval.
 - 3. *Spending Expenditure Prohibited.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds that specific proposed expenditures would violate the standards for use of Blanket Tax funds in the bylaws, the Blanket Tax Committee shall:
 - a. Specify in a written report the prohibited expenditure and the reason(s) they are prohibited, and

- b. Instruct the organization to provide a revised budget within 10 class days excluding the prohibited expenditure for approval.
 - 4. *Denied.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds that the proposal is not reasonable or worthy of funding based on the Initiative Fund standards, it shall enter a decision of Denied.
 - vii. *Report to Senate.* Following the completion of each semester's application and review process, the Blanket Tax Committee shall include in fall and spring report a summary of the applications received and the committee's decisions. This report, the committee's written decisions, and the approved budgets for all initiatives receiving funds shall be a matter of Public Record.
 - viii. *Disbursement.* Funds shall be disbursed to organizations as soon as possible following the Blanket Tax Committee's approval of their applications and, where applicable, revised budgets.
 - ix. Follow-Up by the Blanket Tax Committee
 - 1. *General.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct a follow-up review of all recipients of funding at a set date based on the proposal's timeline for spending the money to evaluate the organization's compliance with the Blanket Tax standards.
 - 2. *Documentation.* Organizations receiving funds shall be required to submit the following information for the follow-up review by the deadline determined by the Treasurer:
 - a. The organization's approved proposal and budget for the initiative;
 - b. The organization's actual expenditures for the initiative, presented alongside the approved budget;
 - c. A statement explaining any substantial discrepancies between the approved and actual expenditures.
 - 3. *Unspent Funds.* All extra or otherwise unspent funds shall automatically be returned to the Blanket Tax General Pool.
 - 4. *Resolution of Concerns.* If the Blanket Tax Committee finds the organization's actual expenditures significantly deviate from its approved budget or is concerned the organization's use of Blanket Tax funds might have violated the standards of use set forth in the Bylaws, the Blanket Tax Committee shall schedule a follow-up meeting with the organization.
 - a. Any organization that fails to attend the follow-up meeting shall be referred to University Court for noncompliance with standards of the Initiative Fund Process.
 - 5. *Resolution Decisions.* Following the meeting one of the decisions below is to be made:
 - a. *No Concern.* The information provided during the meeting alleviates any and all concerns.
 - b. *Reimbursement.* The organization agrees to reimburse the

Blanket Tax General Pool in an amount equal the amount of funds spent for unapproved or inappropriate purposes or in possible violation of the Blanket Tax standards, or any other amount satisfactory to the Blanket Tax Committee.

- c. *Judicial Referral.* If the follow-up meeting does not result in an informal resolution of the concerns, the Blanket Tax Committee shall refer the matter to the University Court.

f. Application for Blanket Tax Funds Access

- i. *Timeline.* The application shall be due no later than the end of October and open for at least two weeks.
- ii. *Criteria for Review.* Applications shall be evaluated based on the criteria established in Section 5 (Blanket Tax) of the Constitution.
- iii. **Application Components**
 - 1. A statement of the organization’s mission, purpose, and goals;
 - 2. A statement addressing why the organization believes it satisfies the criteria for priority access provided for in the Constitution;
 - 3. An explanation of current sources of funding and efforts to acquire sources of funding other than the Blanket Tax General Pool;
 - 4. An explanation of the contribution that Blanket Tax funding would give to the long-term sustainability of the organization;
 - 5. An explanation of how the organization currently uses its funds, including a detailed budget for the current fiscal year, the previous fiscal years, and any other financial records the organization deems relevant;
 - 6. An explanation and evidence of the organization’s financial practices, including budgeting and record-keeping;
 - 7. An explanation of how additional funds will serve the interests of the student body and/or the Rice University community;
 - 8. Proposed amendments to the organization’s constitution that would satisfy the requirements placed upon Blanket Tax organizations by the SA Constitution, including the requirement for elected leadership describe in Section 6 (Organization) of the SA Constitution;
 - 9. Any other information the Blanket Tax Committee deems necessary based on the review criteria as set forth in the SA Constitution.
- iv. *Communication.* All communication with each organization during the application review process shall be addressed to the organization’s president (or equivalent), treasurer, and advisor
- v. **Review of Application**
 - 1. *General.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall only recommend granting access to Blanket Tax Funds if it determines that all of criteria provided for in the Section 5 (Blanket Tax) of the SA Constitution are met.
 - 2. *Documentation Review.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall conduct an initial review of all documents submitted to determine whether sufficient information has been submitted.

- a. If sufficient information is not submitted, the Treasurer shall request the information before continuing with the application review process.
 - b. The organization shall have at least five class days to submit the information. If the organization fails to provide the requested information, the Blanket Tax Committee shall schedule a meeting with the organization to discuss the situation.
 - i. If the meeting does not resolve the lack of information or if the organization fails to attend, the organization's application shall be automatically withdrawn.
3. *Informational Meeting.* At this meeting, Blanket Tax Committee members shall ask any questions they have about the submitted documents and discuss any initial impressions of the organization's application with the president (or equivalent), treasurer, and advisor. Quorum is not required.
- a. By the end of the fall semester, the Blanket Tax Committee shall meet with the president (or equivalent), treasurer, and advisor of each organization applying.
 - b. The Blanket Tax Committee shall provide the organization with any questions it plans to ask at least three class days prior to the meeting to allow the organization to prepare responses.
 - c. If additional questions arise at the meeting that the organization, at its discretion, is uncomfortable answering, the organization shall have at least three class days to provide a response.
 - d. At the discretion of the organization under review, this meeting may be conducted in the absence of one or more of the president (or equivalent), treasurer, and advisor. The organization under review may waive its right to attend this meeting.
4. *Decisions.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall select, based on the review criteria, one of the following recommendations and prepare a written report indicating the recommendation and explaining the committee's reasoning:
- a. *Approve.* If the Blanket Tax Committee determines that all the review criteria are satisfied and that granting Blanket Tax Fund access is therefore advisable, the committee will make a recommendation in favor of the proposal.
 - b. *Neutral.* If the Blanket Tax Committee is unable to decide as to whether all the review criteria are satisfied and therefore determines that granting Blanket Tax Fund access is neither advisable nor inadvisable, the committee will make a recommendation neutral toward the proposal.
 - c. *Reject.* If the Blanket Tax Committee determines that the review criteria are not satisfied and that granting Blanket Tax Fund

access is therefore inadvisable, the committee will make a recommendation against the proposal.

5. *Report.* The Blanket Tax Committee shall submit the compiled report at least one week before voting on approval of the Student Association general election ballot.

a. The report shall include the following information:

- i. The organization's completed application and supporting documents;
- ii. Minutes of all relevant meetings of the Blanket Tax Committee;
- iii. The Blanket Tax Committee's recommendation; and
- iv. The Blanket Tax Committee's explanation for its recommendation

b. Advance Notice to Organization

- i. At least five class days prior to publishing its report, the Blanket Tax Committee shall make the report for each organization applying available to the advisor and officers of that organization. The advisor and officers may review the report and contact the SA Treasurer with any questions or concerns. The SA Treasurer shall take appropriate action to address the questions or concerns.
- ii. Each organization shall have the opportunity to submit a written statement concurring with or dissenting from the report and providing any desired clarifications and explanations. This statement shall be included in the final version of the report. Each organization may submit any additional supporting documents along with its statement.

vi. *Senate Approval.* The Committee shall submit a report to Senate indicating and explaining its recommendation(s) at least one week before voting on approval of the Student Association general election ballot.

1. Senate shall discuss the Committee's report and determine whether to place the organization on the general election ballot. Senate may vote on the committee's recommendation only by a two-thirds vote with at least one week's prior notice.

- a. *Approval.* If Senate approves organization's application for Blanket Tax Funds access, a proposal shall be placed on the ballot as a referendum.
- b. *Denied.* If Senate rejects an organization's application for Blanket Tax Fund Access, the organization may then choose to place a proposal on the General Election Ballot in the form of an Initiative.

g. Blanket Tax Appeal Process. A Blanket Tax organization may appeal any decision that

pertains to their annual budget review, initiative fund, or Blanket Tax fund application process. All appeals shall be submitted in writing to the University Court as judicial matters and follow the guidelines as listed in Section 8 (Judicial) of the bylaws. The complainant shall be the Blanket Tax organization, and the accused party shall be the Blanket Tax Committee.

- i. *Deference.* The University Court shall give reasonable deference to the Committee's discretion except where the Committee, by a standard of more likely than not, is determined to have violated this constitution. The Court's review of the Committee's decisions shall be based on whether the Committee's decision is permissible, not whether it constitutes good policy.
- ii. *Material Procedural Errors.* In deciding appeals, the University Court shall evaluate whether procedural errors are material, defined as an error that significantly impacts the outcome or integrity of the process. The Court may grant redress because of a procedural error only when it finds, by a standard of more likely than not, that the error was material.

h. Standards of Use of Blanket Tax Money. To ensure that student money is being spent in accordance with the interests of the student body and the Rice University community, all organizations receiving Blanket Tax funds shall be held only to the following standards:

- i. Organizations receiving Blanket Tax funds shall be good stewards of student money.
- ii. Blanket Tax funds shall be used in a manner consistent with the mission, purpose, and goals of the organization receiving the funds or of the initiative for which the funds were granted.
- iii. Blanket Tax funds shall be used only for organizational purposes or, in the case of initiatives, the specific purposes for which the funds were granted.
- iv. Organizations receiving Blanket Tax funds shall keep appropriately detailed financial records sufficient to facilitate informed oversight.
- v. Organizations receiving Blanket Tax funds shall adhere to their approved budgets and proposals and openly communicate with the Committee regarding any significant deviations.
- vi. Blanket Tax funds shall be used in a manner consistent with all Rice University rules and regulations.

i. Regulations and Policies

- i. *Financial Oversight.* All Blanket Tax organizations shall be required to maintain detailed financial records of expenditures. Financial records of all Blanket Tax and dependent organizations may be audited at any time by the Internal Auditor of the University, the Office of Student Activities, or the Treasurer, in consultation with the Student Association Advisor.
- ii. *Proper Detail of Documents.* All documents submitted shall contain a level of detail sufficient to facilitate the Blanket Tax Committee's review. The Blanket Tax Committee may, whenever necessary, make reasonable requests for additional documents or details and set a reasonable deadline for submission.

- iii. *Noncompliance.* The Committee shall refer any organization that, as determined by a majority vote, fails to adequately cooperate with a review meeting to the University Court for noncompliance with the annual budgeting process.
 - 1. For organizations that consistently fail to comply with the standards and policies of the Blanket Tax as detailed in the Constitution and bylaws refer to Section 6 (Removal of Blanket Tax Status) of the Constitution.

5. Organizations

a. Approval Process for Registered Student Organizations

- i. *Eligibility.* Any student organization at Rice University may apply to become a registered student organization if at least half of its members are currently registered students at Rice University.
- ii. Criteria for Approval of Organization
 - 1. Registered student organizations shall have a mission and purpose that contributes to the Rice community and, where applicable, to broader communities.
 - 2. Registered student organizations shall add depth and/or breadth to Rice University's offerings of student organizations.
- iii. Requirements Before Committee Review
 - 1. *Submission of Required Forms.* Organizations applying for registration ("candidate organizations") shall be required to submit the following forms to the Office of Student Activities before becoming eligible for consideration by the Committee for Club Approvals:
 - a. New club registration form, including officer information;
 - b. President's form, indicating that the candidate organization understands and will abide by the policies, rules, and regulations of Rice University;
 - c. Faculty/Staff Sponsor's form, including an agreement to serve as the organization's sponsor from someone who has completed Risk Management Training; and
 - d. Risk management plan, completion of which requires attending a Risk Management and Club Development training session by the Office of Student Activities.
 - 2. *Constitutional Review.* Candidate organizations shall submit a draft of their constitution to the Office of Student Activities, who shall provide it to the Parliamentarian. A candidate organization shall not be eligible for consideration by the Committee for Club Approvals until its constitution is approved by either the Parliamentarian or Senate.
 - a. *Criteria for Approval of Constitution.* The Parliamentarian shall review the constitution and approve it if and only if it meets the following criteria:

- i. The organization’s constitution meets all requirements for registered student organizations’ constitutions in these bylaws;
 - ii. The organization’s constitution does not contradict any of the provisions of the constitution or bylaws; and
 - iii. The organization’s constitution meets the basic standards for a functional governing document.
 - b. *Denial of Approval.* If the organization’s constitution does not meet the criteria provided above, the Parliamentarian shall deny the constitution and explain the reason(s) to the organization, providing an opportunity to submit a revised constitution. If the Parliamentarian denies the revised constitution, the organization may make further revisions and resubmit to the Parliamentarian or appeal to Senate, which may overturn the Parliamentarian’s decision by a majority vote if it determines the constitution meets the criteria for approval.
- iv. *Initial Review of Application.* Once an organization has completed the requirements above, it shall be eligible for a review of its application by the Committee for Club Approvals.
 - 1. The Parliamentarian shall schedule meetings of the Committee for Club Approvals as often as necessary to hear club approvals no later than 10 class days after the Office of Student Activities has notified the Parliamentarian of an organization’s eligibility.
 - 2. The Parliamentarian shall give access to the members of the Committee for Club Approvals of each organization’s constitution at least 24 hours prior to the review.
 - 3. At the meeting, the members of the Committee for Club Approvals shall review and discuss the organization’s application and consider whether the organization meets the criteria for approval, allowing for the appropriate input from outside the committee.
 - 4. The committee shall, by a majority vote, select one of the following outcomes of its initial review:
 - a. *Approval.* Upon meeting the criteria for approval, the committee shall approve the organization’s application.
 - b. *Deferral.* If the committee is unable to determine whether the organization meets the criteria for approval or determines the organization does not meet the criteria, it shall defer a decision pending a meeting with the organization’s president or his or her designee.
 - 5. The Parliamentarian shall keep a record of the vote and notify the organization and the Office of Student Activities of the outcome.
- v. *Further Review of Application If Deferred.* If the Committee for Club Approvals defers a decision on an organization’s application at the initial review, the

Parliamentarian shall schedule a meeting with the President of the organization, or his or her designee, and the committee. The organization may waive its right for its president or designee to attend.

1. At the meeting, the candidate organization's president or his or her designee shall be given the opportunity to make a one-minute presentation of the organization's mission and purpose and its contribution to the Rice community.
2. Following the organization's presentation, the members of the Committee for Club Approvals may ask questions of the president or other representative.
3. The committee will then adjourn to a closed session to deliberate and vote on the organization's application. The committee shall make its decision by a majority vote.
4. The Parliamentarian shall keep a record of the vote and notify the organization and the Office of Student Activities of the outcome.
5. If the committee denies an organization's application, that organization may appeal to Senate, which may, by a majority vote, overturn the committee's decision on the basis of the criteria for approval.

b. Renewal of Registration

- i. *Annual Renewal.* Each registered student organization shall be required to renew its registration for each academic year or dissolve.
- ii. *Deadline.* The deadline for registered student organizations to renew their registration shall be determined by the Office of Student Activities.
- iii. *Requirements for Renewal.* Each registered student organization shall submit all forms required by the Office of Student Activities for renewal, which may include, but is not limited to:
 1. Registration form, including information about officers;
 2. President's form, indicating that the organization understands and will abide by the policies, rules, and regulations of Rice University;
 3. Faculty/Staff Sponsor's form, including an agreement to serve as the organization's sponsor from someone who has completed Risk Management Training;
 4. Risk Management Plan, requiring attending a Risk Management and Club Development Training session provided by the Office of Student Activities; and
 5. The organization's constitution.
- iv. *Failure to Renew*
 1. *Dependent Organizations.* Dependent organizations that fail to renew their registration shall be dissolved.
 2. *Blanket Tax Organizations.* Blanket Tax organizations that fail to renew their registration shall be referred to the Blanket Tax Committee by the Office of Student Activities. The committee shall determine whether the organization has dissolved. If the committee finds that the organization

has dissolved or the organization refuses to renew its registration, the committee shall place a referendum proposing dissolution of the organization on the next general election ballot.

c. Constitutions of Registered Student Organizations

- i. *Required Components.* The constitution of each registered student organization must contain at least the following information:
 1. Name and purpose of the organization;
 2. Date of last revision;
 3. Requirements for membership in the organization;
 4. Definition of the officers of the organization and the method for selecting them;
 5. Statement of who has authority to spend the organization's funds and under what circumstances that authority is applicable;
 6. Method for selecting a faculty or staff sponsor;
 7. Nondiscrimination policy;
 8. Anti-hazing policy;
 9. Statement of the primacy of the Student Association as it applies to the organization (based on whether it is a Blanket Tax or dependent organization) ; and
 10. Method for amending the organization's constitution and bylaws, according to the Organizations section.
 - a. *Amendments of Dependent Organizations.* Each dependent organization's constitution must specify that amendments to their constitution must be approved by either the Parliamentarian or Senate, in addition to approval by the organization itself.
 - b. *Amendments of Blanket Tax Organizations.* Each Blanket Tax organization's constitution must specify that amendments to their constitution must be approved by Senate (by a two-thirds vote) or an initiative of the Student Association, in addition to approval by the organization itself.
- ii. *Chapters of National Organizations.* If a registered student organization is a chapter of a non-Rice organization, only the constitution or charter of the Rice University chapter must meet the requirements of this constitution.
 1. When a registered student organization's constitution required by the non-Rice organization violates this constitution, this constitution shall be binding, and the registered student organization's constitution shall not be approved.
 2. Adherence to rules, requirements, or policies of non-Rice organizations shall not constitute a defense against accusations of violations of this constitution.

- d. Privileges of Registered Student Organizations.** All registered student organizations shall have privileges including, but not limited to, those set forth in this section and those from the Office of Student Activities, subject to University regulations.

- i. Have their activities listed on the Student Association calendar;
 - ii. Use the name and logo of Rice University;
 - iii. Reserve and use facilities on campus; and
 - iv. Apply for funds from Rice University, including Blanket Tax funds and other sources.
- e. Contracts.** No organization or any representative of shall enter any contract or agreement that commits that organization beyond the current term unless they obtained permission as follows or an exception is provided for under this constitution:
- i. Dependent organizations and officers or representatives thereof shall be required to obtain permission from the Office of Student Activities.
 - ii. Blanket Tax organizations and officers or representatives thereof shall be required to obtain permission from their faculty or staff advisor and from the Office of Student Activities.
 - iii. Student Association, Senate, Student Association committees, and any officers or representatives thereof shall be required to obtain permission from the Student Association Advisor.
- f. Copyrights.** No student shall obtain or attempt to obtain a copyright in his or her own name for any publication or other enterprise sponsored in whole or in part by the Student Association or its funds.
- i. A Blanket Tax organization may obtain a copyright in the name of the Blanket Tax organization for publications or other enterprises sponsored in whole or in part by the Student Association or its funds.

6. Elections

- a. Types of Elections.** The Student Association shall conduct a General Election, and may conduct a Special Election if necessary.
- i. General Election
 - 1. *Purpose.* The Student Association shall hold a general election to:
 - a. Select the Student Association officers and other officers/representatives required to be elected by the Student Association, including that of Blanket Tax organizations and Honor Council members (as required by the Honor Council constitution and bylaws).
 - b. Decide any pending initiatives or referenda.
 - c. Decide other ballot items at the request of Blanket Tax organizations.
 - 2. *Date.* The general election shall close at least one week before Spring Break.
 - 3. *Announcement.* The Director of Elections shall announce the general election at a Senate meeting. The announcement shall contain all relevant information regarding timelines, positions to be elected, and any proposed regulations governing the election. The announcement shall occur at least three weeks prior to the date on which voting begins.

4. *Regulations.* The regulations shall take effect one week after their approval by a majority vote of Senate. The regulations may be amended only by a majority vote of Senate.
 5. *Changeover.* Changeover shall be no later than two weeks after Spring Break, on a date established by the outgoing Executive Committee and Director of Elections.
- ii. *Special Election.* The Student Association can hold special elections to fill any vacant or unfilled position(s), to decide any pending initiatives or referenda, and to decide other items requested by Blanket Tax organizations.
 1. *Announcement.* The Director of Elections or Senate shall call a special election at the first possible meeting of Senate for an initiative, referendum, or a vacant or unfilled position(s).
 2. *Scheduling.* The petition-filing deadline for a special election shall be one week after the election is announced. The election shall be held two weeks after it is announced.
 3. *Regulations.* The regulations binding the past General Election shall be applicable to the Special Election unless otherwise amended by a majority vote of Senate.
 4. *Transition.* Changeover or implementation shall occur immediately following the public announcement of the election results, unless otherwise specified.
- a. Eligibility for Candidacy**
- i. *General Eligibility.* All members of the Student Association, except those on disciplinary or academic probation, are eligible for candidacy, subject to additional requirements specific to the candidate's office.
 - ii. *Conflict of Interest.* No member of the Student Association shall run for multiple positions that would create a conflict of interest (including positions within Blanket Tax organizations), nor shall any member of the Student Association run for/hold more than one of the following offices for the same term:
 1. College President
 2. College Senator
 3. Executive Committee Member
 - iii. *Compliance with Regulations.* Candidates shall be required to comply with the Student Association constitution and any regulations governing elections approved by Senate, the election committee, or the University Court. Candidates found in violation of the constitution and/or any election regulations and who have exhausted any options to appeal shall be disqualified and removed from the ballot.
 - iv. *Blanket Tax Organization Positions.* Candidates for Blanket Tax organization positions must meet requirements for candidacy set forth in the constitution and/or in the Blanket Tax organization's constitution and bylaws.
 - v. *Additional Eligibility Requirements for Treasurer.* Candidates for Treasurer shall meet the following requirements for eligibility and throughout their term:

1. Candidates shall have successfully completed a course in accounting and/or have successfully completed an interview with the outgoing Treasurer and Student Association Advisor demonstrating qualifications for the position.
 2. Candidates shall neither hold any salaried employment of a registered student organization nor receive any monetary compensation for services rendered to organization(s).
- vi. *Determination of Eligibility.* The Election Committee shall meet within one week of the petition-filing deadline to verify the eligibility of each candidate. The committee shall immediately notify any candidates found ineligible with the reason for its finding.
1. Candidates ruled ineligible by the Election Committee may appeal to the University Court within 48 hours of the committee's notification. The Court shall hold a publically announced hearing to determine the eligibility of such candidates. The hearing shall be prior to Senate's last meeting before the election.
- b. Candidate Nomination Process.** Each candidate shall be required to complete a nominating petition signed by at least twenty-five members of the Student Association. The petition deadline shall be no less than fourteen days prior to the general election or seven days prior to special election.
- c. Approval of Ballot.** The Director of Elections shall present the ballot for each election to Senate at its last meeting before the election. After addressing any inaccuracies, Senate may approve the ballot by a majority vote.
- d. Campaign Rules and Regulations.** The following rules and regulations shall apply to all candidates and representatives of initiatives and/or referenda, in addition to any appropriate regulations approved by Senate:
- i. *Campaign Period.* Candidates and representatives of initiatives or referenda may not campaign outside of the period specified in the regulations for elections, as determined by the Director of Elections and approved by Senate.
 1. If a violation of the campaign period is claimed to have been made, the Election Committee will refer the matter to the University Court. If the University Court determines the claims to be true, the candidate will become ineligible for office and be removed from the ballot.
 2. If the election is already over and the candidate is in office, the elected officer will be removed and the position will be placed on a special election ballot. The elected officer who has been removed from office shall not be eligible to fill the position's vacancy.
 - ii. *Expenses.* The total campaign expenses of any candidate for the office of Student Association President shall not exceed 100 dollars. The total campaign expenses of any candidate for other offices shall not exceed 75 dollars. The total campaign expenses for any initiative or referendum (including opposition campaigning), which shall be the sum of the expenses of each representative and any other expenses on behalf of the initiative or referendum, shall not exceed 250 dollars.

Each candidate and representative shall be required to maintain an itemized list of all of his or her campaign expenses and expenses on his or her behalf, and submit this itemized list to the Director of Elections at the conclusion of the campaign for compliance and reimbursement.

- iii. *Campaign Statement.* Candidates may submit, as determined by the Director of Elections, a campaign statement to the Election Committee for publication on the Student Association website. A word-limit of 250 words shall be the only restriction on campaign statements. Campaign statements shall be submitted along with petitions. All campaign statements shall become a matter of public record, and the Director of Elections shall submit such statements to any media organizations that have requested a copy.
 - iv. *Online and Video Campaigning.* The Director of Elections shall include in the proposed election regulations rules and resources for online and video-based campaigning, subject to equal opportunity of use of all candidates and representatives of initiatives/referenda.
 - v. *Campaign Emails Prohibited.* Candidates and representatives of initiatives/referenda shall not send mass emails with campaign messages.
 - vi. *Blanket Tax Organization Positions.* Blanket Tax organizations may further stipulate reasonable restrictions on campaigning by their candidates, as included in their constitutions and bylaws. Blanket Tax organizations must notify the Director of Elections of such rules and regulations, and they must be approved by a majority vote of the Senate.
 - vii. *Circumvention of Rules on Candidate's Behalf.* Individuals or groups who campaign for a candidate, initiative, or referendum are subject to the same campaign rules, and any expenses shall be counted toward the candidate's expenses. A violation of the campaign rules by individuals or groups campaigning on behalf of a candidate, initiative, or referendum shall still be considered a violation on the part of the candidate or representative.
 - 1. If an organization or one or more of its officers in their capacity as officers of the organization is a representative of an initiative or referendum, violations of campaign rules by members of the organization shall be considered violations of campaign rules by a representative of the initiative or referendum.
- e. **Write-In Candidates.** Members of the Student Association who do not submit nominating petitions by the deadline may run as write-in candidates for any office for which they are eligible.
- i. *Campaign Rules.* Write-in candidates are subject to the same campaign rules as candidates who filed petitions.
 - ii. *Verification of Eligibility.* If a write-in candidate is elected to an office, the Election Committee shall notify the candidate at the time of the release of the election results. The candidate shall then have 48 hours to submit a signed statement that he or she has read and understands this constitution to the Election

Committee. Upon receipt of this statement, the Election Committee shall meet to verify the candidate's eligibility.

1. If the candidate is ruled eligible, the candidate shall be the winner.
2. If the candidate is ruled ineligible, the candidate shall have 48 hours to submit a written statement of appeal to the University Court, and the Court shall hold an open hearing within five class days to determine the eligibility of the candidate. The candidate and the Director of Elections shall be invited to this hearing. If the candidate is ruled ineligible by the Court, the Election Committee shall invalidate all votes for the candidate and shall determine the winner of the election according to the procedure for that election.

f. Polling Procedure

- i. *Electronic Ballots.* All Student Association elections shall be conducted electronically using anonymous online ballots produced and distributed by the Election Committee. The balloting system must be capable of verifying the eligibility of voters and of preventing voters from submitting multiple ballots.
- ii. *Electronic Records.* Electronic records of votes shall become a matter of public record.
- iii. *Preferential Voting for Single Winner.* In a single-winner election, the ballot shall be configured to allow voters either to rank all of the candidates in order of preference or to abstain.
- iv. *Multiple Winners.* In a multiple-winner election, the ballot shall be configured to allow voters to vote for as many candidates as positions to be elected. Voters shall not be permitted to cast multiple votes for the same candidate.
- v. *Abstention.* The ballot shall be configured to allow voters to abstain from voting on any position, initiative, referendum, or other item while still being able to vote on all other items.

g. Determination of Results

- i. *Counting Votes.* The Election Committee shall determine the results using an appropriate and accurate method of counting votes immediately after the close of the election.
- ii. *Determination of Single Winner.* In a single-winner election, the candidate receiving the majority of first-preference votes shall be declared the winner. If no single candidate receives a majority, the winner shall be determined by preferential voting procedures.
- iii. *Determination of Multiple Winners.* In a multiple-winner election, the candidates shall be ranked in order of the number of votes received, and the candidates receiving the most votes shall be declared the winners.
- iv. *Initiatives and Referenda.* An initiative or referendum shall pass according to the standards in Initiatives/Referenda (Section 8 of the Constitution).
- v. *Preferential Voting.* In any election using preferential ballots, the following procedure for determining the winner shall be used:

1. The first-preference votes for each candidate or option shall be counted. If a candidate or option receives a majority of the first-preference votes, that candidate or option is the winner.
2. If no candidate or option receives a majority of the first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes shall be eliminated. The ballots assigned to the eliminated candidate shall be distributed preferentially among the remaining candidates based on those voters' next preference.
3. This procedure shall be repeated until a single candidate receives a majority of the ballots distributed.

h. Publication of Results

- i. *Definition of Results.* The complete results of the election shall contain the total number and percentage of votes received by any and all candidates, and the total number and percentage of votes for each option on any and all initiatives, referenda, or other ballot items. The complete results shall indicate the winning candidate(s) or option(s) for each item.
- ii. *Notification of Candidates and Representatives.* The Election Committee shall inform candidates and representatives of initiatives and referenda of the results of the election immediately after the results have been determined.
- iii. *Publication of Results.* The Director of Elections shall publish the complete results of the election on the Student Association website immediately after the results have been determined, and all the candidates have been notified. The Director of Elections shall provide copies of the complete results to the President, the Student Association Advisor, the Office of Student Activities, all Blanket Tax organizations, and any other organizations or members of the Student Association that submitted a request for copies.

i. Contesting an Election

- i. *Challenge to University Court.* Challenges to election results may be filed with the University Court. The University Court shall inform the Election Committee of its findings according to the process in the Judicial section of the Constitution and Bylaws (Section 9 and 8, respectively).
- ii. *Rerunning an Election.* If the University Court finds that all or part of an election must be rerun, it shall provide instructions for rerunning the election and shall determine an appropriate timeline for doing so.

j. Completion of Election. No candidate shall take office and no initiative or referendum shall take effect until the candidate is declared the winner or the initiative or referendum is declared successful, any challenges to the election have been resolved by the University Court, and the 48-hour period for challenging the election has expired.

k. Lack of a Candidate

- i. *General Election.* If no valid petition is filed for an office in the general election, petitions will instead be accepted for that office in the a special election. The Director of Elections shall make an announcement by the last meeting of Senate prior to the start of voting in the general election. At the same time, the Director

of Elections shall also publish the announcement to the Student Association website.

- ii. *Special Election.* If no valid petition is filed for an office in the general election, the office shall be filled in accordance with Vacancies in Elected Positions.
- iii. *Lack of Candidate for both General and Special Election.* If no valid petition is filed for an office in either the general or the special election, Senate shall fill the position by Senate appointment (see Senate Appointment).
- iv. *Multiple Winners.* In an election for a position for which there shall be multiple winners or for multiple identical positions, if the number of valid petitions filed is less than the number of positions to be filled, the remaining offices shall be filled in the same manner as general election and special election.

I. Vacancies in Elected Positions

- i. *Early Vacancy.* If a vacancy is created in an elected position (previously filled in the current term) with more than two months remaining in the term, Senate shall, by a majority vote, call a special election at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- ii. *Late Vacancy.* If a vacancy is created in an elected position with two months or less remaining in the term, or where a special election is otherwise prohibited by this constitution, Senate shall fill the position by Senate appointment.
- iii. Senate Members
 - 1. *College Senators.* If a College Senator position becomes vacant, the college shall elect a new Senator to fill the vacancy. If the college does not elect a new Senator within three weeks, Senate may fill the position by Senate appointment.
 - 2. *College Presidents.* If a College President is constitutionally removed from membership in Senate, the college shall elect a representative to fill the vacancy. This representative shall assume the College President's responsibilities under this constitution but shall not necessarily assume its responsibilities for his or her college. If the college does not elect such a representative within three weeks, Senate may fill the position by Senate appointment.
- iv. *Blanket Tax Organization Positions.* If a Blanket Tax organization position becomes vacant or no valid petition is filed for either the general or the special election, the Blanket Tax organization shall fill the position according to its own constitution and bylaws.
 - 1. If the Blanket Tax organization's constitution and bylaws fail to specify a method for filling the position, Senate shall fill the position through one of the following methods:
 - a. Calling a special election if the vacancy is not due to a lack of a candidate or there are at least two months left in the term; or
 - b. By Senate appointment if the vacancy is due to lack of a candidate or there are two months or fewer left in the term.

m. Senate Appointment. In order to fill a position by Senate appointment, Senate shall open nominations for the office at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

- i. Procedure
 - 1. *Nominations.* Candidates may be nominated by any member of Senate. Senate shall close nominations at the next Senate Meeting (i.e within one week of opening nominations).
 - 2. *Election.* The election shall be held at the meeting at which nominations close. The candidate receiving a majority vote shall be declared the winner. If no candidate receives a majority vote, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be eliminated, and a new vote shall take place. This process shall be repeated until a single candidate receives a majority vote.
- ii. Candidates nominated for the Senate appointment process must meet all eligibility requirements for the position outlined in the constitution, bylaws, and applicable Blanket Tax organization constitutions and bylaws.

7. Initiative/Referenda

a. Process

- i. *Representative of Initiatives or referenda.* Any petition demanding an initiative/referendum vote shall indicate at least one Student Association member who shall represent the initiative/referendum in all matters under this constitution.
- ii. *Collection of Signatures.* Signatures of members of the Student Association must be easily verifiable.
- iii. *Submission of Petition.* The representative of the initiative/referendum shall submit the initiative/referendum (with the required number of signatures) to the President, the Parliamentarian, the Secretary and the Director of Elections for inclusion on the next election.
- iv. *Inclusion on Election Ballot.* Any initiative or referendum successfully proposed shall be placed on the ballot for the next Student Association election.
 - 1. *Text of Ballot Question for Initiatives/Referenda.* The Director of Elections shall draft a neutrally worded question for the initiative or referendum that clearly states the implications of selecting each option available, including the option to abstain. The Director of Elections shall submit this question to the representative(s) of the initiative or referendum and to Senate for a majority approval with one week prior notice.
 - 2. *Text of Ballot Question for Referenda of Senate Action.* In the case of a referendum on a contested action of Senate, the ballot question shall be framed as a question of whether to approve the action of Senate, such that a vote in favor of the resolution is a vote to uphold Senate's action and a vote against the resolution is a vote to overturn Senate's act.
- v. *Implementation of Successful Initiative or Referendum.* If an initiative or referendum is passed, the Student Association or any appropriate members, committees, or organizations shall take any necessary action or refrain from any

action in accordance with the initiative or referendum. The initiative or referendum shall take immediate effect unless otherwise provided for in the constitution or by the initiative/referendum itself.

8. Judicial

a. **Judicial Matters.** Judicial matters referred to the University Court by Senate and Student Association shall be categorized as follows:

i. Impeachment

1. *Impeachable Officers.* Senate shall have the power to impeach any of the following elected officers:
 - a. Elected officers of the Student Association;
 - b. Officers of the Blanket Tax organizations elected by the Student Association according to this constitution;
 - c. Members of Senate; and
 - d. The holder of any office elected by the Student Association or Senate according to this constitution.
2. *Reasons for Impeachment.* To be valid, articles of impeachment must contain one or more of the following reasons for impeachment:
 - a. Failure to satisfactorily fulfill the duties of the office;
 - b. Conduct injurious to the Student Association (or to a Blanket Tax organization),
 - c. Ineligibility for the office according to the eligibility requirements set forth by the Student Association, the Blanket Tax organization, and/or Rice University; and
 - d. Violation of Rice University rules or regulations, including the Code of Student Conduct and the Rice Alcohol Policy. The violation must be in the offender's capacity as officer of the Student Association. The offender must be found guilty by an appropriate judicial body or official.
3. *Referral for Hearing.* Upon approval of Articles of Impeachment (see the Legislation section), Senate shall refer the articles and supporting materials to the University Court for a hearing and binding decision.
 - a. If the impeached officer is the Chair of the University Court, Senate shall instead empanel the Chief Justices of the colleges to hear the impeachment and render a binding decision.
4. *Decision.* The Court shall conduct a formal investigation and hearing and enter a binding decision as follows:
 - a. *No Cause for Impeachment.* The Court shall enter a finding of No Cause for Impeachment if it finds the Articles of Impeachment approved by Senate do not state a valid reason for impeachment. The impeached officer shall continue to hold his or her office in good standing.

- b. *Removal Not Warranted.* The Court shall enter a finding of Removal Not Warranted if it determines, by a standard of more likely than not, that the impeached officer's conduct does not warrant removal on the basis of any reasons for impeachment specified. The impeached officer shall continue to hold his or her office in good standing.
 - c. *Removal Warranted.* The Court shall enter a finding of Removal Warranted if it determines, by a standard of more likely than not, that the impeached officer's conduct warrants removal on the basis of at least one of the reasons for impeachment. The impeached officer shall be immediately removed from office.
 - ii. Challenge to Election Results
 - 1. *Referral.* The Court shall hear challenges to elections referred in accordance with the following procedures:
 - a. *Challenge by Candidate.* Any candidate or representative of an initiative or referendum in an election may contest an election by submitting a written statement explaining the reason(s) for contesting the election to the University Court Chair within 48 hours of the publication of election results.
 - b. *Other Challenge.* An election may be contested by the submission of a petition explaining the reason(s) for contesting the election, signed by at least 50 members of the Student Association, to the University Court Chair within 48 hours of the posting of election results.
 - 2. *Decision.* The Court shall conduct a formal investigation and hearing in accordance with the procedures set forth in this article and enter a binding decision as follows:
 - a. *Valid.* The Court shall enter a finding of Valid if it finds the election was held in accordance with this constitution and any other regulations governing the election. The election results shall be upheld in full.
 - b. *Partially Invalid.* The Court shall enter a finding of Partially Invalid if it finds that only part of the election was not held in accordance with this constitution and any other regulations governing the election. The portions of the election deemed invalid shall be rerun by the Election Committee in accordance with the instructions of the Court. The remainder of the election results shall be upheld.
 - c. *Invalid.* The Court shall enter a finding of Invalid if it finds the entire election was not held in accordance with this constitution and any other regulations governing the election. The election shall be rerun in full by the Election Committee in accordance with the instructions of the Court.

- iii. Complaint of Impropriety or Violation of Student Association Constitution
 - 1. *Referral.* The Court shall hear complaints of violations of the Constitution of the Student Association or of impropriety in the conduct of members, organizations, or entities of the Student Association referred in accordance with the following procedures:
 - a. *Complaint by Senate.* Senate may, whether of its own volition or in response to concerns raised by a member of the Student Association, approve a written complaint by a majority vote. The President or his or her designee shall forward the complaint to the University Court Chair.
 - b. *Complaint by Individual.* Any member of the Student Association may submit a written complaint to the University Court Chair.
 - 2. *Procedure.* In response to a complaint by Senate or an individual, the Chair shall convene an Investigative Panel consisting of a presiding member, an Investigator, and two members of the Court. The Chair shall appoint ombudspersons for the accused and for the complainant to be present at all meetings of the Investigative Panel. The Panel shall review the written complaint and any information gathered by the Investigator. The Panel shall refer the case to the full Court for further proceedings unless the Panel, with the exception of the nonvoting Investigator and ombudspersons, unanimously agrees there is insufficient evidence to warrant further proceedings. The Panel's decision not to refer a case for further proceedings may be appealed to Senate, which may approve the complaint by a majority vote.
 - 3. *Decision.* The Court shall conduct a formal investigation and hearing in accordance with the procedures set forth in this article and enter a binding decision as follows:
 - a. *In Violation.* The Court shall enter a finding of In Violation if it finds, by a standard of more likely than not, that a violation or impropriety occurred. The Court shall prescribe appropriate corrective action(s) and/or sanction(s).
 - b. *Not In Violation.* The Court shall enter a finding of Not In Violation if it does not find, by a standard of more likely than not, that a violation or impropriety occurred. The Court shall dismiss the case.
- iv. Question of Interpretation
 - 1. *Referral.* The Court shall hear questions of interpretation of this constitution, of the constitutions of the Blanket Tax organizations (other than the Court), and of legislation passed by Senate referred in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. *Inquiry by Parliamentarian.* The Parliamentarian may, at his or her own discretion, refer a question of interpretation directly to the University Court Chair.
 - b. *Inquiry by Senate.* Senate may, by majority vote, refer a question of interpretation previously answered by the Parliamentarian to the University Court Chair.
 - c. *Inquiry by Individual.* Any member of the Student Association may submit a question of interpretation to the Parliamentarian. If the member submitting the question and/or any member or organization affected by the Parliamentarian's response disagrees with the Parliamentarian's response, the Parliamentarian shall refer the question of interpretation to the University Court Chair.
2. *Procedure.* In response to a question of interpretation, the University Court may instead gather all relevant information and determine its response in a closed deliberation.
 3. *Constitution of the University Court.* Questions of interpretation of the constitution of the University Court shall be resolved as follows:
 - a. *Questions Arising Under the Code of Student Conduct.* Questions of interpretation arising with regard to the Court's function under the Code of Student Conduct or under this constitution shall be resolved by a majority vote of the University Court.
 - b. *Other Disputes.* The Court shall hear other disputes according to the procedures outlined in this section.

b. Investigation

- i. *Investigator.* Following the referral of a judicial matter, the University Court Chair shall appoint a member of the Court to investigate the matter. The Investigator shall obtain all available relevant evidence, including all documentation known to contain information regarding the matter. When appropriate and with the approval of the Chair, the Investigator may request that another member of the Court aid in the formal investigation of a matter as a secondary Investigator. However, any member of the Court aiding in an investigation, including the primary Investigator, may not vote at the hearing.
- ii. *Witnesses.* The Investigator shall request a list of witnesses the parties involved wish to be present. The Investigator may add to this list any individuals s/he comes across during the investigation who may possess information relevant to the case. The Investigator will interview all witnesses. The Investigator shall present a written summary of this interview to the Court. The Investigator may also request a signed written statement to be read at the hearing, and/or request that such individuals act as witnesses at a hearing. Upon the Investigator's request for such lists of witnesses, each party involved shall have three class days, not including the date of request, to provide a list of witnesses. The list

must indicate for each witness whether the party requests that the witnesses testify in person in addition to providing a signed written statement.

- iii. *Public Record.* All parties divulging information about a matter will be informed that their statements and identity will be a matter of public record.
- iv. *Confidential Information.* All parties divulging information about a matter may choose to keep their identity confidential. However, by doing so, the party acknowledges that any information obtained from that party and unsubstantiated by other parties choosing to act as witnesses will not be considered before the Court.
- v. *Prohibition of Confidential Information.* Any information obtained from parties choosing not to act as witnesses will not be presented before the Court and may not be considered during the deliberation process of the formal hearing. Knowledge and use of such information by the Court will constitute grounds for appeal to Senate, which may grant a new hearing by a two-thirds vote.
- vi. *Expectation of Cooperation.* All members of the University community will be expected to cooperate with the Court during the investigation process.

c. Hearing

- i. *Publicity and Location.* Hearings shall be open. All members of the Student Association are eligible to attend hearings. Hearings shall be held in a suitable location selected based on the expected attendance.
- ii. *Quorum.* A quorum of the Chair (or other presiding member) and six voting members is necessary to conduct a hearing. The Investigator(s) and Ombudsperson(s) must also be present. At least one additional non-voting member must be present; this member will become a voting member only if a member recuses him- or herself during the hearing.
- iii. *Scheduling.* Upon referral of a judicial matter, the Court shall schedule a hearing no more than seven class days after receipt of the referral.
- iv. *Testimony.* The Chair shall determine the order in which the complainant, accused, and any witnesses are called to testify at the hearing.
- v. *Swearing In.* All individuals who testify during the hearing, including the complainant and the accused, shall be sworn in by the Chair as follows: “On my honor, I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”
- vi. *The Complainant.* The complainant shall be allowed to make an opening statement summarizing the events or other matters in question and the position of the complainant with regard to the outcome of the proceeding. The complainant shall be presented with all documents to be considered by the Court, wherein the names of all parties involved will be revealed. The Investigator shall question the complainant on behalf of the Court.
- vii. *The Accused.* Where applicable, the Chair shall read the Articles of Impeachment or charge of a violation of the Student Association Constitution or of impropriety and inform the accused of his or her rights in judicial proceedings. The accused shall be allowed to make an opening statement summarizing the events or other matters in question and the position of the accused with regard to the outcome of

- the proceeding. The accused shall be presented with all documents to be considered by the Court, wherein the names of all parties involved will be revealed. The Investigator shall question the accused on behalf of the Court.
- viii. *Witnesses.* The Investigator shall call any witnesses relevant to the matter, including those requested by the accused and those who request to provide testimony on the matter. The Investigator may, on behalf of the Court, question any witness. The Court may, by a two-thirds vote, prevent one or more witnesses from being present for the testimony of the accused, the complainant, and/or other witnesses if it determines that doing so would improve the veracity of the information elicited during the hearing.
 - ix. *Recall.* All individuals who testify, including the complainant and the accused, once excused, shall be subject to recall at any time during the hearing at the discretion of the Court. Individuals may remain present for the presentation of any further testimony and evidence.
 - x. *Presentation of Evidence to Court.* The Investigator shall present any relevant information learned during the investigation to the Court and shall produce any documentation or other evidence relevant to the matter. This shall include all documentation and other items entered as evidence by the complainant and accused, where applicable. The Court may ask the Investigator questions.
 - xi. *Closing Statements.* After all evidence and testimony have been received, the complainant and accused may each make a closing statement. Closing statements shall not be used to present new evidence. If any party introduces new evidence in a closing statement, all parties who have already made a closing statement shall be given an opportunity to respond (only the new evidence introduced). The determination of whether new evidence has been introduced shall be at the discretion of the Chair. After the complainant and accused each make or waive a closing statement, the Court shall enter a closed session to deliberate.
 - xii. *Decorum.* All hearing attendees, including members of Court, parties relevant to the complaint, and other attendees, are expected to maintain decorum at all times. Cross-talk between members of the Court, parties relevant to the complaint, and other attendees is prohibited. At the discretion of the Chair or other presiding member, any hearing attendee may be removed for failing to maintain decorum.
- d. Deliberation.** All deliberations shall be closed. Neither the accused nor the complainant shall be allowed to be present during the Court's deliberation. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the deliberations, which shall be maintained as part of the internal record of the case, but which shall not be part of the public record. No public record of the deliberations is to be made. All Court members present, both voting and nonvoting, shall be present for deliberations. In its deliberations, the Court shall evaluate all evidence and enter a decision on the question(s) before the Court. A majority of voting Court members present shall determine the Court's decision on each question before the Court, however, the Court shall strive to reach unanimity in its decision. In cases of dissension, the dissenting opinion(s) shall be written and noted in the abstract of the hearing. Voting members may abstain from preliminary votes and straw polls, but may not abstain from

the final decision. A decision shall not be considered final unless all voting members cast a vote.

- e. **Presentation of Decision.** The Court shall present its decision and an abstract of the hearing at the Senate meeting following the hearing. The abstract, all evidence considered by the Court, and any other files associated with the matter shall be part of the public record and therefore available to members of the Student Association. The abstract shall be made available to the Student Association Secretary and published on the Student Association website.
- f. **Rights of the Accused and Complainant.** The accused and complainant will have the following rights in the procedures outlined above:
 - i. *Postponement.* The accused and complainant may each receive a postponement of the hearing if the request for postponement is deemed reasonable by the University Court Chair.
 - ii. *Support of Position.* The accused and complainant may each ask that the Court summon witnesses or require presentation of relevant documents or other evidence, offer evidence, and argue in support of his or her position.
 - iii. *Presentation of Information.* The accused and complainant may each present relevant information and witnesses bearing on the matter.
 - iv. *Ombudsperson.* The accused and complainant may each have an ombudsperson present. No legal representation is allowed.
 - v. *Challenging Voting Members.* The accused and complainant may each challenge the fairness or objectivity of a voting member of the Court, if done before a hearing begins or any evidence is considered.
- g. **Ombudspersons.** The Chair shall appoint one member of the Court to serve as the ombudsperson for the accused, and another member of Court to serve as the ombudsperson for the complainant. In cases involving multiple parties accused and/or multiple complainants, at the discretion of the Chair, a member may simultaneously act as ombudsperson for multiple parties accused or for multiple complainants, but not for both a party accused and a complainant. The ombudspersons in a matter will be nonvoting.
 - i. *Duties and Responsibilities of the Ombudsperson.* The ombudsperson shall act as the main resource and point of contact for the accused or for the complainant, whichever is applicable, throughout the judicial process. The ombudsperson shall meet with the accused or the complainant, whichever is applicable, to answer any questions the accused or complainant may have. The ombudsperson shall attend the hearing. The ombudsperson shall indicate to the Court during the hearing if procedural errors occur. The ombudsperson shall be bound to indicate to the accused or complainant if the deliberative process is defective and presents any grounds for appeal to Senate, which may grant a new hearing by a two-thirds vote. In such cases, the ombudsperson shall initiate an appeal. The ombudsperson shall interrupt the deliberative process if a Court member shows undue and prejudicial bias on a matter and remind that member of the option to disqualify him- or herself.

h. Appeals

- i. *Grounds for Appeal.* Decisions by the University Court made under the authority of this constitution may be appealed only for a failure to follow the relevant procedures set forth in this constitution.
- ii. *Appeal Process.* The accused or complainant must notify the Court and Senate of the intent to appeal within five class days of the public announcement of the Court's decision. Within five class days of the receipt of the notification of intent to appeal, the Secretary, or other member designated to fulfill this duty at the discretion of the Chair, shall prepare an appeal packet. This packet shall contain all evidence considered by the Court, the abstract of the hearing conducted in the matter, any decision letters sent by the Court, and any other documentation deemed relevant by the Chair. The ombudsperson for the appealing party shall provide the appeal packet to the appealing party. The Chair shall immediately notify the appealing party that the packet is available. The appealing party shall have five class days after the date of the Chair's notification of the appeal packet's availability to submit an appeal in writing to Senate through the President. All appeals will be addressed to Senate and submitted to the President.
- iii. *Right to Respond.* The Court reserves the right to respond in writing and/or in person to a written appeal if the Chair so chooses or if Senate requests, by a majority vote, a response from the Court concerning the matter.
- iv. *Stay of Decision.* Decisions made by the Court are considered final, pending the appeal process, but may be set aside by a majority vote of Senate until the appeal process is resolved.
- v. *Evaluation of Appeal.* Senate shall evaluate the appeal and may, by a two-thirds vote, grant a new hearing to correct any procedural deficiencies. Senate may not grant a new hearing for any reason other than those provided for in this constitution, nor may it grant any remedy other than a new hearing.