

James A. Baker College Constitution

Last revised Spring 2017

I. NAME

The name of this College shall be James A. Baker in honor of Captain James Addison Baker and his services to the Rice Institute.

II. PURPOSE

It shall be the purpose of Baker College of Rice University and of the government thereof, empowered and created by this Constitution, to provide and maintain an atmosphere and environment which will encourage the social and intellectual growth of its members through the development of a sense of responsibility in all spheres of community action. This purpose shall be accomplished through group living and dining, through a development of satisfactory tradition of college life, through a strong and responsible college government, through the sharing of ideas and enthusiasm with faculty members in residence and association, through group social affairs, and through sports and academic competition at the highest level of sportsmanship.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Baker College is a lifetime privilege. Membership in Baker College is designated as follows:

- A. Active members include all Baker College members registered as undergraduate students of the University, and designated members of the College by the University at the time of enrollment. Undergraduates having completed one semester at Rice are considered lifetime members. Members of Baker College who do not reside in the College shall have the same rights, privileges, and duties as resident members. Baker College grants the rights and privileges of senior students to Rice undergraduates entering programs that are normally one-year terminal advanced degree programs.
- B. Graduate affiliates include all Baker College members registered as graduate students of the University, except as noted in section A above, and pay dues as assessed by the

Baker College Cabinet. Graduate students at the University are designated members of the College (a) if they were undergraduate members of the College and request the College Cabinet for graduate membership, (b) if the College Cabinet wishes to designate a graduate student as a member, or (c) if a graduate student is granted residence in the College for one semester or more; the College Cabinet or the graduate student requesting residence must petition the Committee of the Masters for membership designation.

- C. Alumni members include all former Baker College members not considered active members or graduate affiliates.
- D. Honorary members include those individuals whose friendship and sense of community with the College is considered a valuable asset. Membership shall be conferred upon such individuals by the College Cabinet with the approval of the Masters. Such membership shall be active for the first three years, and all active members shall be invited to participate in all College sponsored activities.
- E. References made in the following documents to "all members," "total membership," etc., shall refer, unless otherwise stated, to the combined active membership and graduate affiliates.
- F. All members shall have the right to participate in all College activities, including the right to hold office subject to the qualifications stated in this Constitution.
- G. College members are entitled to use Baker College facilities and to attend Baker College functions.
- H. College membership may be terminated at the request of the individual upon application to and approval by the Masters. College membership may be transferred to another college upon application to the Masters of Baker College and with the approval of the Committee of the Masters.

IV. ORGANIZATION

- A. Cabinet

The executive and legislative powers of this College shall be invested in the Cabinet. The judicial powers of the College shall be invested in the Baker College Court, which shall be regulated by the Bylaws of this Constitution. The Cabinet shall be composed of the following officers:

1) Executive Officers

- a. The executive committee of this College shall consist of the President, Executive Vice President, External Vice President, Educational Vice President, up to two Treasurers, and the Secretary. They shall be elected only from the incoming Sophomore, Junior, Senior, or Fifth Year class.
- b. Each officer shall be granted the right to vote, with co-treasurers sharing a single vote that cannot be split.
- c. The President and at least one Treasurer shall be resident members during the academic year following their spring election.
- d. The Treasurers shall serve two-year staggered terms, so that one treasurer is newly elected each spring.

2) Class Representatives

- a. Five representatives from the College to be selected by election as follows:
 - i. One representative elected by and from the combined incoming Senior and Fifth Year classes.
 - ii. One representative elected by and from each of the incoming Junior, Sophomore and Freshman classes.
 - iii. One representative elected by and from the present off-campus members of the College.
- b. These representatives shall be granted the right to vote.

3) Other Officers

- a. Three officers to be selected as follows:

- i. Two officers, one male and one female, to be elected as a team from the incoming Sophomore, Junior, Senior, and Fifth Year Classes of the college to serve as Baker Gentleman's Hedonist Society Internal and External Ministers.
 - ii. One officer to be elected from the incoming Sophomore, Junior, Senior and Fifth year classes to serve as Chief Justice to the College Court.
 - iii. Two officers to be elected as a team from the incoming Sophomore, Junior, Senior, and Fifth Year Classes of the college to serve as Socials Chairs.
 - iv. These officers shall not be granted the right to vote.
- 4) University Representatives to the Student Association, Rice Program Council, Honor Council, and University Court, and a Food Service representative shall be elected in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution.
 - a. The university representatives shall have the following special status as a Cabinet officer:
 - i. Participation in all business shall be the same as for other Cabinet members except there shall be no voting privileges and presence shall not be considered in determining outcome of voting.
 - ii. Requirements for Cabinet attendance shall be the same as for other Cabinet members.
 - b. The Food Services representative shall live on campus at the time of their election.
- 5) All representatives to the Cabinet shall be elected in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution, in the spring semester Cabinet election, except the Freshman, Off-Campus, and Food Services representatives who shall be elected in special, similar elections in the fall semester. All members of the Cabinet shall serve a one year term unless otherwise specified or in the case of impeachment.

- 6) The Masters of the College and the Resident Associates of the College shall serve in an advisory capacity.
- 7) All representatives to the Cabinet except the off-campus representative and the senior/5th year class representative shall serve until the Cabinet is replaced in the spring semester as outlined in the Bylaws of this Constitution, or until they are recalled from office. The off-campus representative and the senior/5th year class representative shall serve until the end of the spring semester. The election shall be conducted by the Election Committee in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution.
- 8) No person may, at any time, hold more than one position on the same Baker Cabinet.
- 9) An office may not be occupied by more than one person unless it is designated by this Constitution as one to be shared.
- 10) No elected member of Cabinet shall be on academic probation at the time of their election or during their term of office. This restriction may be selectively repealed if the Dean of Undergraduates grants an exemption. Any vacancy which occurs in these offices shall be filled in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution.

B. Committees

- 1) All committees shall report to the officers with whom they are associated.
- 2) Committee chairmen shall be selected according to the Bylaws of this Constitution. Each chairman may select the members of their committee, in consultation with their supervisory officer.
- 3) The standing committees of the College shall be those listed in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

V. POWERS AND DUTIES

A. Of the Cabinet

- 1) The Cabinet shall legislate and regulate on all proper College activities. It shall be responsible for room assignments, social and athletic events, the reception of visitors, and all activities and duties necessary in the realm and interest of college life. The Cabinet shall stimulate interest in College affairs and participation in College activities through continued examination and discussion of relevant subjects of broad general interest to the members of the College; shall examine past and current college trends and policies; consider possible future direction and policy changes; shall serve as the official polling service of the College, gathering, at Cabinet request, the opinions of the entire Baker community.
- 2) The Cabinet shall with sufficient reason have the power to impeach any official of Baker College, excluding the Chief Justice. The procedure for removal of the Chief Justice shall be provided in the Court Constitution. In all other cases, a written motion for impeachment with charges specified may be introduced by any Cabinet member at any Cabinet meeting. The matter shall then be automatically tabled until the next regular Cabinet meeting. At that time the case shall be freely discussed in open session with the accused being given every opportunity to answer each charge. When discussion is closed, a secret ballot shall be held. A unanimous vote of the remaining voting members of the Cabinet shall be required in order to remove the official. A two-thirds majority of the remaining voting members of the Cabinet shall be sufficient to order a recall election of that official. If the official is removed, the office shall be declared vacant immediately.

B. Of the Executive Officers

- 1) The President shall preside at the meetings of the College and College Cabinet. They shall act as the official representative of the College at all University, College, and Student Association functions. They shall serve as a representative to the Student Association. They shall be an expert on all reference documents. They shall have check-signing privileges. They shall be involved in all matters of the Baker College Endowment Fund. They shall coordinate and oversee the operation of all committees and all college business.

- 2) The Executive Vice President shall supervise those committees assigned to them in the Bylaws of this Constitution, and shall act temporarily as President in the event of the absence or incapacity of that officer. They shall have check-signing privileges.
- 3) The External Vice President shall supervise those committees assigned to them in the Bylaws of this Constitution.
- 4) The Educational Vice President supervise those committees assigned to them in the Bylaws of this Constitution.
- 5) The Treasurer(s) shall have charge of the finances of the College. By the final meeting of the Cabinet of the previous academic year, they shall have prepared the College budget and submit it for approval to the Cabinet. The Treasurer(s) shall keep an up-to-date record of all financial transactions of the College. They shall supervise all Baker College fund-raising activities. They shall negotiate all financial business of the College promptly. They shall be involved in all matters concerning the Baker College Endowment Fund. They shall be responsible for each of the committees assigned to them for supervision by the Bylaws of this Constitution. They shall have check-signing privileges.
- 6) The Secretary shall keep and publish the minutes of all Cabinet meetings. They shall attend to the official correspondence of the College. They shall keep on file all minutes, reference documents, and committee reports. They shall maintain the bulletin boards of the College in a neat manner. They shall be responsible for the committees assigned to them for supervision by the Bylaws of this Constitution. They shall be an expert on all reference documents and shall advise the Cabinet of appropriate rules and procedures.

C. Of Representatives to University bodies

- 1) The Student Association Representative shall attend all meetings of the Student Association and serve actively on appropriate committees as a contributing member of the schoolwide government. They shall represent the policies and interest of the College in all dealings with the school wide student government. It

shall be their duty to present to the College the policies and interests of the school wide student government and to keep the College informed on all SA matters affecting the members of the College.

- 2) The Food Representative shall work to represent the desires of the College in dealings with food service, attending meetings called by the administration for this purpose. They shall keep the College informed of all activities affecting the College.
- 3) The Rice Program Council Representative shall attend all meetings of that organization and shall work to represent the desires of the College in the RPC's activities. They shall keep the College informed on all activities affecting the College.
- 4) The Honor Council Representatives shall attend all meetings of the Honor Council and shall work to represent the desires of the College in the activities of the Honor Council. They shall keep the College informed on all activities affecting the College.
- 5) The University Court Representative shall attend all meetings of the University Court and shall work to represent the desires of the College in the activities of the University Court. They shall keep the College informed on all activities affecting the College.

VI. ASSOCIATES OF THE COLLEGE

A. Membership

The Associates of the College shall be selected by the Associates Committee, subject to approval by Cabinet and appointed by the University authorities and shall fall into the following categories:

- 1) The Masters, who shall be the highest ranking Faculty Associates.
- 2) Resident Associates, who shall be members of the Rice faculty or staff and shall reside within the College.

- 3) Non-Resident Associates, who shall be faculty members, Rice staff, or Rice Community members.

B. Duties

The duties of the Masters and of the Resident and Non-Resident Associates of the College shall be those determined by the proper authorities of the University.

1) Of the Masters

- a. The Masters shall make the recommendations to the President concerning the appointment of the Resident Associates and after consultation with the students Associates Committee, and approval by Cabinet shall invite faculty, community, and university members to become Non-Resident Associates of the College.
- b. The Masters shall be members of the Committee of Masters which will consider and, if warranted, make ultimate decisions on problems affecting the college system.
- c. The Masters shall act as advisory members of the College Cabinet and of College committees at their request.
- d. The Masters shall be available to students of this College for consultation.

2) Of the Resident and Non-Resident Associates

- a. The Resident and Non-Resident Associates shall promote and further the objectives of the college system in advising both the students and the Master on matters pertaining to the college system.
- b. Resident and Non-Resident Associates shall act as advisory members of student committees when requested to do so by these committees.
- c. The Resident and Non-Resident Associates shall be available to the students of this College for consultation.

VII. MEETINGS

A. Of the College

Meetings of this College shall be called by the President.

B. Of the Cabinet

The Cabinet shall meet not less than once each full academic week at a time and place determined by the Bylaws. All Cabinet meetings shall be open to all members of the College, except in special circumstances when sensitive issues must be discussed. In these cases, the Cabinet may meet in closed sessions, which only members of the Cabinet and guests determined by the President may attend.

VIII. PETITION

A. Any member of Baker College can petition to modify, nullify, or propose any act or legislation. The Elections Committee shall hold a referendum on such a petition if it is signed by at least one-quarter of the total membership of the College.

A two-thirds majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to sustain the petition in referendum. In the case of legislation pertaining solely to resident members of the College or solely to the non-resident members of the College, a petition signed by one-third of the members affected shall suffice to initiate a referendum. Only those members affected by the legislation shall vote in the referendum.

IX. INITIATIVE

A. The members of the College shall have the power of initiating legislation by petition. Said petition must bear the signatures of at least one-fourth of the total membership of the College. In cases of restricted pertinence as above, the signatures of one-fourth of the affected members shall suffice. Upon receipt of said petition, the Cabinet may choose to act favorably on the matter presented. If it does not do so, an election shall be held as with a referendum.

B. If the measure is not sustained by the balloting, the Cabinet may still reconsider it.

X. RECALL

- A. The members of the College shall have the power of recall for any elected official of the College. Proceedings shall be initiated by any member of the constituency of the official under question who feels they have sufficient cause.
- B. Initiation shall require, on a petition specifying charges, the signatures of at least one-third of the constituency of the official involved. Not more than one official may be named on any one petition. Their constituency shall be defined as those members of the College who would be eligible to vote for their office if it were to become vacant. Upon receipt of the said petition by any member of the Executive Committee, an election must be ordered. The Election Committee shall be charged with conducting this election within ten days, excluding University holidays and exam periods, of that date. The same rules as are applicable to a special election for the office in question shall be enforced. More than fifty per cent of the total constituency of that office must favor recall in order for it to be sustained. If recall is sustained, then the office shall be declared vacant immediately.

XI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by two-thirds of the voting members of the Cabinet or by a petition of one-fourth of the total active membership of the College. Ratification shall be by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, in a general referendum to be held within ten days, excluding holidays, of a successful proposal.

XII. RATIFICATION

This Constitution was initially ratified by three-fourths of the votes cast in the general election in the spring of 1959. It was revised and re-ratified in the spring of 2003 by three-fourths of the votes cast in the general election, and again in the spring of 2013 by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in the general election.