

Sample Constitution (includes officer and member oaths)

One of the most challenging aspects of getting a National Residence Hall Honorary Chapter off the ground is coming up with a constitution. It can seem like a very formidable task; most of us have never written a constitution before.

Writing a Constitution

Preamble

Not all constitutions have a preamble, but those that do read in this manner:

We, the members of the _____ Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary, in order to honor and recognize outstanding members of the residence hall system, and to promote a higher quality and standard of involvement and interaction in the residence hall community do hereby establish and uphold this constitution.

Other preambles mention social enrichment and academics as well.

Article I - Name

Some chapters have taken Greek letters (YNX are the initials for University of Northern Colorado); others have taken their schools mascot: Bobcat or Greyhound chapters, some have named them after people from their university and other have gone for just the name of their school. The constitution should state:

"The name of this organization shall be the _____ Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary at _____ (name of school).

Article II - Purpose

"The purpose of this organization shall be _____." Across the board, other schools include statements such as to "provide recognition for students who have provided outstanding service or exceptional leadership in promoting the residence hall system."

Article III - Membership

This is where things start to vary. The NRHH National Constitution states that the minimum requirements for induction are:

- 1) Individuals shall have lived in the residence halls during the year prior to induction;
- 2) Individuals shall have exhibited outstanding leadership and service to the residence hall system; and
- 3) Individuals shall have a grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Chapters also break membership down into four categories:

- a) Active members live in the residence halls and have fulfilled the above requirements.
- b) Alumni members have either moved off-campus or no longer attend the institution where they were inducted.
- c) Early alumni members have filled out the appropriate paperwork and have been confirmed by the regional AD-NRHH
- d) Honorary members may be an administrator or off-campus person who has done something outstanding for the residence halls. Even within this framework, there are some variations among chapters.

Under this article, there may also be some sections pertaining to the total number of active members in a chapter (which may not be greater than 1% of the capacity of your school's residence halls or 20 members, whichever is greater). Some schools have combined membership and selection of members into one Article (see below).

Article IV - Selection of Members

Basically, the ways people can be nominated are by themselves, or by others. Some schools distribute nomination sheets where candidates describe their own accomplishments and reasons for wanting to get involved with NRHH. Some schools have a selection committee, which reviews nominations. Others have an objective point scale that they use to rank involvement.

In your Constitution, you will probably want one section dealing with the ways in which potential inductees can be nominated, and another section dealing with the manner in which the potential inductees will be screened (i.e. a selection committee, point system, or consensus of active members).

Section I: Nominee Requirements

- A. Nominees must currently reside on campus.
- B. Nominees must have resided in Residence Halls for at least a two semesters (including the present semester).
- C. Nominees must have a cumulative G.P.A. of at least 2.5 on the UNT scale.
- D. Nomination must be given to the Vice President of Selection and Induction by the deadline set each semester.
- E. All NRHH members, housing staff and residents can make nominations. This includes self-nominations.

Section II: Voting Procedure

- A. Selection shall be by blind ballot, in which the names and all identifying features of a nominee have been removed.
- B. Nominees must receive 50 % plus one vote of those active members present with voting rights to be inducted.

Section III: Voting Members for the selection shall consist of active members with voting rights.

Section IV: Induction Oath

- A. The Induction Oath is as follows:
“I, (state your name), agree to uphold and honor all the principles, values, and beliefs of the Ovuke’ Emonina Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary at the University of North Dakota. I promise to continue the tradition of recognition and service. In my efforts to serve this chapter, I will uphold the NRHH constitution to the best of my abilities.”

Article V - Executive Structure

Chapters typically have a President/Chairperson. In addition, some chapters have other officers including a Vice-President, and/or a Secretary/Historian. In this article, you may also want to include the method of selection and timeline for selection of officers, the qualifications for a chapter advisor (if you have one), and the responsibilities of the officers.

Section I: The President shall:

- A. Preside over all chapter meetings.
- B. Preside over all Executive Board Meetings.
- C. Preside over all “Of the Month” selections.
- D. Create special committees, as needed.
- E. Maintain correspondence with the MACURH NRHH RAD.
- F. Maintain correspondence with the NACURH Services & Recognition Office.
- G. Assist with yearly affiliation process.
- H. Perform all other tasks normally associated with the position of the President as defined by *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

Section II: The Vice-President for Recognition shall:

- A. Be responsible for monthly recognition projects.

- B. Shall facilitate any programming events.
- C. Assume the President's duties in the absence of the President.
- D. Perform all other tasks normally associated with the position of the Vice President as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section III: The Vice-President for Selection and Induction shall:

- A. Be responsible for soliciting suggestions for membership candidates
- B. Send out membership applications.
- C. Receive and prepare applications to be unanimous for members to vote on.
- D. Send letters notifying candidates of membership status.
- E. Facilitate the overall selection and induction process.
- F. Plan and organize the Induction reception each semester.
- G. Perform all other tasks normally associated with the position of the Vice President as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section IV: The Secretary shall:

- A. Take minutes of all chapter or Executive Board meeting.
- B. Have presentable copies of minutes available by the next meeting.
- C. Maintain the "NRHH Chain Letter" newsletter.
- D. Send out the newsletter to member's bi-monthly.
- E. Perform all other tasks normally associated with the position of Secretary as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section V: The Treasurer shall:

- A. Prepare a budget request to be presented to the Coordinator for Residential and Judicial Affairs at the beginning of each semester.
- B. Keep accurate records of all moneys spent on a semesterly basis.
- C. Sign all NRHH Purchase Requests and keep copies of PO's.
- D. Be responsible for any fundraising events.
- E. Perform all other tasks normally associated with the position of Treasurer as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section VI: The Advisor shall:

- A. Act as a liaison to the Coordinator for Residential and Judicial Affairs.
- B. Attend all meetings, either of the Chapter as a whole or of the Executive Board.

Article VI: Removal of Officers

Section I: If an officer is not performing their designated duties or they do not meet all requirements in the constitution they may be removed from office.

Section II: Removal Procedures

- A. Any NRHH member must make a written complaint and turn it in to the NRHH advisor.
- B. The NRHH advisor will let the officer know of the formal complaint and allow the officer to file his or her own rebuttal.
- C. The NRHH advisor will then select a committee of 2 officers and 3 members to review the case.
- D. If there is not a majority vote from the committee to remove the officer, then the officer is excused of the charges and maintains their position.
- E. If there is a majority vote from the committee to remove the officer, then the NRHH chapter will be presented the situation by the committee.
- F. This presentation will take place at the next scheduled NRHH chapter meeting. The presentation will be five minutes followed by the officer making their presentation for five minutes.
- G. A three-minute question and answer period for both shall follow with no discussion afterwards.

- H. An officer shall be removed for office if two thirds of members present with voting rights vote in favor of removal.

Article VII: Election Code

Section I: Requirements for Candidacy

- A. All candidates must have been an Active member with voting rights for the semester prior to which they will hold office.
- B. All candidates must be an Active member for the year in which they intend to hold office.

Section II: Election Procedure

- A. Elections shall be held each spring at a regularly scheduled meeting before the selection of new members.
- B. Each candidate must declare intentions two weeks prior to elections by submitting a letter of intent to the President. If the President wishes to run for an office, they must submit their letter of intent to the Advisor.
- C. The day of elections, each candidate will receive five minutes in which to speak to the chapter.
- D. A three-minute question and answer period will follow each candidate's speech.
- E. Winners will receive 50% plus one of the votes cast in the election of the office.
- F. In the event of a tie, an immediate run-off election shall be held between the top two vote receivers.
- G. Each officer shall be elected to a one-year term.
- H. Officers shall take office immediately after induction.

Section III: Officer Oath

- A. The Officer Oath is as follows:
"I, (state your name), pledge to uphold and honor all the principles, values, and beliefs, of the Ovuke' Emonina Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary at the University of North Dakota. I solemnly swear, as an executive officer, to serve the Ovuke' Emonina Chapter to the best of my ability, to serve and protect all the guidelines and status of the constitution, NACURH, NRHH, as well as, the well-being of the chapter."

Article VIII: Vacancy of Office

Section I: Should the office of President become vacant, the Vice-President for Recognition shall assume the office of the President.

Section II: Presidential Appointments

- A. In the event that an Officer leaves office, the President shall appoint an Active member with voting rights to finish that office's term.
- B. This appointment shall be made at the meeting following the office's vacancy.
- C. Approval of this appointment shall be made by the membership, with a vote of 50% plus one of the members present with voting rights.
- D. In the event that the approval is not granted, the floor shall be opened for nominations, and an election shall be held.
- E. This election shall be governed by the election code in Article IV.

Article IX - Fees and Dues

This article may include a section regarding institutional chapter dues, if you are to have any.

Article XI: Meetings

Section I: This organization shall follow *Robert's Rules of Order* unless otherwise stipulated by

the Presiding Officer and/or the Executive Board.

Section II: Regular bi-monthly meetings shall be set by the Executive Board at the beginning of each semester.

Section III: Additional meetings shall be called by the Executive Board as necessary.

Article XII: General Voting

Section I: General voting is considered to be any voting except in new member selection voting.

Section II: Executive Board

- A. Each officer, excluding the President shall receive one vote in each voting matter.
- B. The advisor shall receive one vote in each voting matter.
- C. The President shall only vote to break a tie.

Section III: Chapter Members

- A. Each Active member shall receive one vote in each voting matter, unless they have lost their voting rights for the semester.
- B. Alumni members receive one vote except in new member selection matters, unless they have lost their voting rights for the semester.
- C. Honorary members do not vote.

Section IV: Voting Procedure

- A. All votes shall be a simple majority of the Active and Alumni members present with voting rights unless otherwise specified by the Executive Board.
- B. Tie Breaking Procedures:
 - 1. All tie ballots shall be immediately re-cast.
 - 2. In the event of a second tie, the President shall break the tie.

Article XIII: Absences

Section I: Excused/ Unexcused

- A. Absences may be excused by the President in the following manner:
 - 1. A reason for the absence must be submitted to the President 24 hours prior to the meeting.
 - 2. The President may then accept the statement and excuse the absence if the President believes the circumstances call for such an action.
- B. Absences may be considered unexcused by the President if the reason is not justifiable.
- C. The member may appeal the decision of the unexcused absence in writing to the Executive Board.

Article XIV: Affiliations

Section I: A representative shall:

- A. Be sent to the Residence Hall Association General Assemblies.
- B. Be sent to the Residence Life Advisory Council Meetings.
- C. Be sent to the Eagle's Nest Inter-Organizational Council Meetings

Section II: This chapter shall remain in good standing with NACURH and the National Residence Hall Honorary.

Article XV: Mascot

This chapter shall pick a mascot at the beginning of each year. This mascot should reflect the chapter's vision for the year.

Article XVI: Chapter Traditional Functions

Section I: This chapter shall continue its work with Adopt-a-spot. The chapter will maintain the Adopt-a-spot project by cleaning it at least six times a year.

Section II: This chapter shall give out Writer's Cramp Awards for those individuals who write OTMs and submit them to our chapter.

Section III: This chapter shall continue its monthly recognition of individuals, systems, or whatever they deem necessary that deserves to be appreciated. This recognition is inclusive to, but not limited to Housing.

Article XVII: Chapter Pin-Awarding Procedures

Section I: The requirement for the "diamond" pin is membership induction into the ____ chapter.

Section II: The requirement for the white "leadership" pin is a prominent display of leadership ability here at UND (as assessed by the current NRHH executive board) or placement on the NRHH executive board.

Section III: The requirements for the eight "bronze" pins are at the discretion of the NRHH and RHA President. These pins are to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to RHA, NRHH, MACURH and NACURH. UND can only give out eight bronze pins a year.

Article XVIII - Amendments and Bylaws

In this section, you may want to define what percentage of the active members it takes to amend or add to the Constitution.

Article XIX - Enactment

Typically, you need a majority (occasionally a 2/3) vote of the current active members to ratify a constitution. You may also want to present your constitution to your Residence Hall Association or Residence Life Department for their approval.

Revised by the NRHH assembly on 7/16/06

Writing Bylaws