Amendment 1: Table of Contents

- Reformatted the numbering and articles to make it easier to navigate for students. Limited subsequent sections so people can refer back to the document in a clearer fashion. Includes semantic changes and clarifications that makes the document more user-friendly.

Current:

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Proposed:

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ARTICLE I: ESTABLISHMENT
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ARTICLE IV UNIVERSITY COURT
Amendment 2: Article I, Section 2-G

- Amended to gives College Senators and President oversight in Student Association spending, especially in the area of contracts.

Current:

2. Membership and Policies

1. **Membership.** All currently enrolled undergraduate students of Rice University shall be members of the Student Association and, accordingly, shall be required to pay the undergraduate Blanket Tax.

2. **Senate.** Senate shall be the legislative body of the Student Association, speaking on behalf of the Student Association.

3. **University Court.** The University Court is a separate entity from the Student Association, but it shall perform the judicial functions of the Student Association that fall under this Constitution.

4. **Residential Colleges.** The Student Association is independent from the Residential Colleges. The Student Association and the Residential Colleges shall cooperate in matters of campus wide importance to further the interests of the undergraduate student body. The Student Association is not merely a council of Residential Colleges.

5. **Student Organizations.** Undergraduate student organizations shall be governed by the Student Association. The Student Association will facilitate the creation and administration of student organizations in collaboration with the Office of Student Activities.

6. **Policies**

6.1. **Nondiscrimination Policy.** The Student Association shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status.

6.2. **Anti-Hazing Policy.** The Student Association shall not engage in any form of hazing, as defined by the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable
Rice University rules and regulations.

6.3. **Conflict of Interest Policy.** Members of the Student Association shall not hold Student Association positions nor shall the business of the Student Association be conducted in such a manner that creates a conflict of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof. The President shall have the authority to determine whether an arrangement constitutes a conflict of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof unless overruled by a majority vote of Senate or by the University Court.

6.4. **Approval of Contracts.** No commitments or contracts shall be binding on the Student Association without the pre-approval of both the Office of Student Activities and a majority vote of either the Executive Committee or Senate.

**Proposed:**

**SECTION 2: MEMBERSHIP & POLICIES**

A. All currently enrolled undergraduate students of Rice University shall be members of the Student Association and, accordingly, shall be required to pay the undergraduate Blanket Tax.

B. The Student Association is independent from the Residential Colleges. The Student Association and the Residential Colleges shall cooperate in matters of campus wide importance to further the interests of the undergraduate student body. The Student Association is not merely a council of Residential Colleges.

C. Undergraduate student organizations shall be governed by the Student Association. The Student Association will facilitate the creation and administration of student organizations in collaboration with the Office of Student Activities.

D. **Nondiscrimination Policy.** The Student Association shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status.

E. **Anti-Hazing Policy.** The Student Association shall not engage in any form of hazing, as defined by the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable Rice University rules and regulations.

F. **Conflict of Interest Policy.** Members of the Student Association shall not hold Student Association positions nor shall the business of the Student Association be conducted in such a manner that creates a conflict of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof. The President shall have the authority to determine whether an arrangement constitutes a conflict of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof unless overruled by a majority vote of Senate or by the University Court.

G. **Approval of Contracts.** No commitments or contracts shall be binding on the Student Association without the pre-approval of both the Office of Student Activities and a majority vote of

i. **The Executive Committee when under $1,000**
ii. The Senate when over $1,000

H. Public Record. Matters of public record as expressed in this Constitution and Bylaws shall be maintained by the Secretary and be available to any member or organization of the Student Association and greater Rice University community upon their request. Matters of public record shall be held for at least five years.

Amendment 3: Article II, Section 7

- Clarifies succession order and what should happen if an executive committee position is vacant.

Current:

4.2. **Vacancy.** In the event of a vacancy, the affected Blanket Tax organization shall fill the vacancy with a temporary leader in accordance to its own Bylaws and Constitution.

4.2.1. The Blanket Tax organization shall, within five class days of the vacancy, submit to the Student Senate a written explanation of the reason for the vacancy, the method by which the vacancy was filled, and the person filling the vacancy for approval by 2/3s majority of Senate.

Proposed:

SECTION 7: VACANCIES & SUCCESSION ORDER

A. **In the event of a vacancy occurring in any executive officer positions before the end of the normal term, the vacancy shall be filled by the President by temporary appointment for a period no more than three weeks. The Senate shall consider such nominations, and shall, by a majority vote, appoint a replacement. The temporary appointment shall take effect immediately.**

B. **The Senate shall call a special election to be scheduled two weeks from the date it is called for the vacant position at its next regular meeting. If the general election or second-round election is less than three weeks away, the Senate shall not call a special election for any position.**

C. **If the office of President is vacant, the following officers shall assume the office of President in the order prescribed:**

1. **Internal Vice President, and**
2. **External Vice President.**
3. *If the above officers are unable to assume the office of President, the Senate shall call a special election for the position at its next regularly scheduled meeting to be scheduled two weeks from the date it is called.*

Amendment 4: Article III, Section 4

- Makes writing resolutions easier to understand and more accessible to students by amending Section 5: Legislation to remove distinction between redundant difference between resolutions and bills. The delineation made it confusing for senate members and average student.

Current:

5.4. *Senate Bills.* Senate Bills provide for an action to be taken by Senate, a committee of the Student Association, an officer of the Student Association, or any other group or individual over which Senate has authority under this Constitution. Senate Bills may only provide for actions that are demonstrably within the authority of Senate.

5.4.1. Approval. Senate Bills may be approved only by a majority vote of Senate, with one week prior notice.

5.5. Senate Resolution. Senate Resolutions formally express an opinion or policy of the Student Association or seek to exert the influence of Senate or the Student Association with regard to an issue.

5.5.1. Senate Resolutions may be approved only by a two-thirds vote of Senate, with one week prior notice.

Proposed:

SECTION 3: MEETINGS & QUORUM

[...]

A. *Unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution or Bylaws, the Senate shall take action by majority vote. A majority vote shall be defined as a simple majority of those voting in the affirmative or in the negative.*

B. *Unless otherwise qualified in the Constitution or Bylaws, a two-thirds vote shall be defined as a two-thirds vote of those voting in the affirmative or in the negative.*

SECTION 4: MAIN MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS
**A. All main motions & resolutions must be sponsored and introduced by at least one member of the Student Association who has contributed substantially to its text.**

Amendment 5: Article IV
- Section renamed from Judicial to University Court

**Current:**

9. Judicial

1. *University Court.* The University Court is a separate entity from the Student Association but shall be subject to the requirements of this Constitution. In addition to fulfilling its mission under the Rice University Code of Student Conduct, the University Court shall perform the judicial functions of the Student Association. The judicial authority of the Student Association shall be vested in the University Court, and the University Court shall have original jurisdiction over all Student Association matters. Hearings before the University Court shall be conducted without violating the rights of the parties involved or the integrity of the University Court and the Student Association. Hearings before the Court shall not be adversarial; The Court shall make determinations of fact based on a standard of more likely than not.

[...]

**Proposed:**

**ARTICLE IV: UNIVERSITY COURT**

**SECTION 1: ESTABLISHMENT**

A. The University Court shall be vested in the University Court, and the University Court shall have original jurisdiction over all Student Association matters.

B. The University Court shall be a separate entity from the Student Association and shall perform the judicial functions of the Student Association that fall under this Constitution.

C. Hearings before the University Court shall be conducted without violating the rights of the parties involved or the integrity of the University Court and the Student Association. Hearings before the Court shall not be adversarial; The Court shall make determinations of fact based on a standard of more likely than not.

**SECTION 2: MEMBERSHIP**
A. The University Court shall have a Chair elected by the Student Association, and shall have additional officers and members as provided for by its Constitution.

B. Members of the Court are expected to make decisions in a fair and unbiased manner.

C. Members shall recuse themselves from judicial proceedings arising under this Constitution if they feel unable to make a fair and unbiased decision in a matter.

D. Members are expected to use their discretion to determine whether they should recuse themselves. The Chair (or other presiding member) may compel a member to recuse themselves.

E. Reasons for recusal include, but are not limited to:
   1. Having a close personal relationship with any of the parties involved; and/or
   2. Having detailed prior knowledge of the matter in question not available to other members of the Court.

Amendment 5: Article V, Section 1-B
- Amended to establish a student fee to ensure editorial integrity and independence similar to the Daily Cal at UC Berkeley.

Amendment 6: Article V, Section 1-D
- Gives spending power of student fees back to elected college senators and presidents to provide input from the students they were elected to represent. Blanket Tax Committee still provides important oversight over spending and retains membership of representatives from Blanket Tax Organizations.

Amendment 7: Article V, Section 1-E
- Provides for regular consideration of reevaluating the Blanket Tax to ensure our Blanket Tax Organizations have the funding necessary to continue operating.

Current:

5. Blanket Tax

2. Blanket Tax Funds Collection
   2.1. A blanket tax of $85.00 per undergraduate student per year shall be collected and allocated to Blanket Tax Funds.
   2.2. Intramural Sports. An additional blanket tax of $25.00 shall be collected and allocated to support the Intramural Sports program. This program shall not be a subsidiary organization and shall not be subject to oversight by the Blanket Tax Committee or to the processes provided for in this article.
Proposed:

ARTICLE V: BLANKET TAX

SECTION 1: ESTABLISHMENT
A. A Blanket Tax of $85.00 per undergraduate student per year shall be collected and allocated to Blanket Tax Funds.
B. $14.50 of each student's Blanket Tax shall be allocated towards the Rice Thresher in order to maintain editorial integrity and independence. Any unused funds shall return to the Blanket Tax. If the Rice Thresher is dissolved this subsection shall be null and void.
C. An additional blanket tax of $25.00 shall be collected and allocated to support the Intramural Sports program. This program shall not be a subsidiary organization and shall not be subject to oversight by the Blanket Tax Committee or to the processes provided for in this article.
D. The Senate has the ultimate authority over the Student Association Budget, the Blanket Tax, and the budgets of Blanket Tax Organizations and shall consider the recommendations of the Blanket Tax Committee when making their decision.
E. At the start of every two Student Association fiscal years, alternating with the years that the Blanket Tax Committee reviews new potential Blanket Tax Organizations, the committee shall consider adjusting the Blanket Tax, including the amount allocated to the Rice Thresher, to accommodate inflation and other factors.

Amendment 8: Article V, Section 2-D-2
- Changes the composition of the Blanket Tax Committee to be three (3) senators elected to represent their colleges instead of 3 random people appointed by the Treasurer. Makes the Treasurer and Blanket Tax Committee for accountable to the student body.

Current:

3. Blanket Tax Committee
   3.1. Members
      3.1.1. The Treasurer;
      3.1.2. Three Student Association members who are not affiliated in a leadership role with Blanket Tax organizations;
      3.1.3. Two officers of Blanket Tax organizations who do not hold positions in the Student Association;
      3.1.4. Blanket Tax Committee Advisor who shall hold a five-year term; 5. The
Proposed:

A. Members of the Blanket Tax Committee shall include:
   1. The Treasurer;
   2. Three (3) Senators who are not affiliated in a leadership role with Blanket Tax organizations;
   3. Two (2) officers of Blanket Tax organizations who do not hold positions in the Student Association;
   4. Blanket Tax Committee Advisor who shall hold a five-year term;
   5. The Parliamentarian, as a non-voting member;
   6. The Student Association Advisor, as a non-voting member;
   7. The Deputy Treasurer, as a non-voting member; and
   8. Two (2) New Student Representatives, as non-voting members.

Amendment 9: Article VII, Section 2

- Makes it easier to bring up questions for a vote of the student body. Lays out a clearer and easier process for students to propose changes to the constitution by petition rather than needing to go through the Student Association Senate.

Current:

2. Process for Initiative or Referendum of the Student Association. Members of the Student Association may demand an initiative vote on any action by a signed petition, electronically or physically, of at least five percent of the Student Association.

2.1. Approval of Petition. A representative of an initiative/referendum must submit the petition to the Parliamentarian for approval prior to collecting signatures. The Parliamentarian shall approve all petitions that meet the requirements of this Constitution. The Parliamentarian’s denial of a petition may be overturned by a majority vote of Senate. Senate’s denial of a petition may be appealed to the University Court.

2.2. Requirements for Passage. An initiative or referendum of the members of the
Student Association shall pass if at least twenty percent of the members of the Student Association vote on the proposition and at least two-thirds of the total votes cast on the proposition are in favor of the proposition.

**Proposed:**

**SECTION 2: PROPOSITIONS**

A. A representative of a proposition must submit the petition to the Parliamentarian for approval prior to collecting signatures. The Parliamentarian shall approve all petitions that meet the requirements of this Constitution. The Parliamentarian’s denial of a petition may be overturned by a majority vote of the Senate. The Senate’s denial of a petition may be appealed to the University Court.

B. Upon the presentation to the Parliamentarian and Senate of a petition signed by members of the Association numbering at least five (5) percent of the student body or by a majority vote of the Senate, any proposition question, may be submitted to a vote of the membership of the Student Association. Constitutional amendments are governed by Article IX.

C. A representative of a proposition may, after properly submitting the petition and pending the results of the election, request that the University Court freeze the contested actions of the Senate.

D. A matter passed by vote of the membership may not be repealed or amended by the Senate for five years, unless the proposition language explicitly provides an exception. Such matters may be amended or repealed by a subsequent majority vote of the membership of the Association at any time.

E. In the case of two or more conflicting proposition questions passed concurrently, all non-conflicting parts shall be enacted and the conflicting parts which are part of the measure receiving the highest proportion of positive votes, excluding abstentions, shall be enacted.

F. If the filing deadline for the next general election or second-round election is more than three weeks after the date of submission of a valid petition with sufficient signatures or the date of Senate’s request for a vote on a proposition. A special election shall be announced and conducted if the proposition calls for the removal of an officer or Senate determines the proposition is time-sensitive by a majority vote. A representative of the proposition may appeal the decision of the Senate to the University Court.

Amendment 10: Article VIII, Section 1

- Clarifies what the Bylaws are in context of the Constitution.
Proposed:

ARTICLE VIII: BYLAWS

SECTION 1: PURPOSE
The Bylaws shall supplement this Constitution by establishing committees, and other subordinate organizations as the Senate deems necessary. The Bylaws shall enumerate powers, duties, and rules pertaining to these official organizations. The Bylaws shall also lay out procedures governing the functions of activities described in the Constitution and may assign additional duties to Executive Officers, Senators, and Appointed Officers.

Amendment 11: Article IX, Section 1
- Amends the threshold for amending the constitutions and makes it so a majority of students are able to adopt changes to the constitution. Also lays out clearer procedures regarding how a student can propose an amendment outside of proposing one in the Senate. Also provides clarifying procedure if two amendments are adopted that conflict.

Current:

5. Legislation

5.1. Amendments to the Constitution. Amendments to the Constitution seek to add to, remove from, or amend this Constitution.

5.2. Process. Each of the following methods shall be a valid way to introduce or approve legislation to the Student Association or Rice Student Body.

5.2.1. Senate Vote. Amendments to the Constitution introduced in Senate may only be approved by Senate by a two-thirds vote with at least two weeks’ prior notice.

5.2.2. Campus-wide Ballot. Amendments to the Constitution approved by Senate shall be placed on the ballot in the next Student Association election for approval by a referendum vote of the Student Association.

5.2.3. Initiative. Amendments to the Constitution may also be proposed as an initiative (see Initiatives and Referenda, Section 8). Approval of Senate shall not be required.

5.2.4. Implementation of Amendments. Unless otherwise stated in the initiative, referendum, or legislation, Constitutional amendments shall take effect at the conclusion of the election approving the initiative. The Parliamentarian shall
Proposed:

SECTION 1: AMENDMENTS

A. An amendment to this Constitution may be proposed by either a two-thirds vote of the Senate, by a convention, or by a petition signed by members of the Student Association numbering at least ten percent of the student body and presented to the Elections Committee and Senate, which shall then call a proposition vote on the amendment in accordance with Article VII.

B. A favorable vote of a majority of the votes cast for and against the amendment proposition shall be necessary for adoption of the amendment; if adopted, Unless otherwise stated, the amendment shall take effect on the date specified in the amendment, or if no date is specified, the conclusion of the election approving the amendment. The Parliamentarian shall update and publish the amended Constitution upon its approval.

C. If two or more conflicting amendments shall be passed simultaneously, all non-conflicting parts shall be enacted and the conflicting part or conflicting parts of the measure receiving the highest proportion of positive votes, excluding abstentions, shall be enacted.