

# CONSTITUTION OF THE HONOR SYSTEM OF RICE UNIVERSITY

We, the Student Body of Rice University, in order to conduct our academic work under high standards of individual responsibility, thereby promoting a high sense of personal honor and integrity, set forth this Constitution of the Honor System.

## THE HONOR SYSTEM

### Article I. Principles

*Section 1:* The purpose of the Honor System is to allow maximum freedom for students, undergraduate and graduate, in the completion of all academic work and to ensure the integrity of the work. When students accept this freedom and trust, they are placed on their honor by the group neither to cheat on any assignment nor to violate the trust placed in them in any way. Students demonstrate their responsibilities to their fellow students under the Honor System when they can pledge, in good conscience, that their work is their own and that they have neither witnessed nor suspect violations by others.

*Section 2:* All assignments submitted by undergraduates at the University are covered by the Honor System, as are all assignments submitted by graduate students relating to course work. The instructor can and should decide how the Honor System applies to each assignment in their course and to clearly communicate this expectation to the students. However, it is the student's responsibility to understand how the Honor System applies to each individual assignment and any questions should be raised with the instructor before submitting the assignment. The only limitations placed on the freedom in structuring academic work are those rules made through the Honor Council for the best interest of the group. It is the obligation of every student and faculty member to not violate the system, to not aid in any violation, and to report any violation seen or suspected.

*Section 3:* The Student Body is directly responsible for the effective working of the Honor System. In order to support the validity of academic credits under Rice's Honor System the Student Body shall elect a student Honor Council. The Honor Council shall be responsible to the President of Rice University through the senior Judicial Affairs officer.

### Article II. Pledge

*Section 1:* The following pledge shall be signed at the end of all assignments on which the pledge is required by the instructor: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this (examination, quiz or paper)."

*Section 2:* Each student upon entering Rice University must affirm through the matriculation pledge that he or she will support the Honor System. This pledge is set forth in the By-Laws and must be affirmed by each student every semester before registration can be completed.

### Article III. Examinations

*Section 1:* Examinations will be conducted in accordance with the procedure which is outlined in Conduct of Examinations.

*Section 2:* Students should report any violations of the examination rules to the Honor Council.

*Section 3:* Any violation involving advanced degree requirements other than course work (i.e., language exams, theses, etc.) will be referred to the proper departmental chair.

## **THE HONOR COUNCIL**

### **Article IV. Purpose**

The Honor Council, as provided for in Article I, shall be a representative body of students, elected annually by the Student Body. Its purpose shall be to administer and interpret the Honor System.

### **Article V. Composition**

The Composition of the Honor Council shall be defined in the By-Laws.

### **Article VI. Vacancies**

*Section 1:* Should a vacancy occur, that position shall be offered to the individual who in the preceding election finished highest of those not elected. Should the individual refuse, the position shall be offered to the next lower individual, etc., until the position can be filled. If the position cannot be thus filled an election shall be conducted within twenty (20) class days to fill the position.

*Section 2:* In the case of temporary vacancies, the Honor Council shall have the power to appoint alternate members to fill the position.

### **Article VII. Suspension**

At the discretion of the Council, a member may be suspended or retired. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the other members of the Council will be required to take such action. To fill a vacancy created by such a suspension or retirement, the Council will use the means described in Article VI.

### **Article VIII. Officers**

The Honor Council will elect from its members the following officers: Chair, Internal Vice-Chair, External Vice-Chair, and Secretary. A Council member may serve only one full term as Chair. These officers will be elected by a simple majority vote. Their duties are specified in the By-Laws. A vacancy created in the office shall result in a new election for the office.

## **VIOLATIONS**

### **Article IX. Definition**

Any breach of the Honor System, as defined in Article I, will constitute a violation of the Honor System.

### **Article X. Accusations**

In the event that a violation of the Honor System is observed or suspected by a member of the Student Body or a member of the faculty, that person should make a written, signed report to a member of the Honor Council as soon after the violation as is possible. This report will be forwarded to the Chair of the Council. The Chair and one other designated member of the Council, except in extraordinary cases, may make any necessary inquiry prior to the investigative meeting, which will determine whether a case should proceed to a hearing.

### **Article XI. Investigative Meeting**

There shall be an investigative meeting to present the accusation to the accused student and gather information. This meeting will be conducted according to the Honor Council Procedures.

### **Article XII. Hearing**

*Section 1:* Repealed (Spring 2014).

*Section 2:* The hearing will be held within ten class days, if possible, after the investigative meeting and conducted in accordance with the Honor Council Procedures.

#### **Article XIII. Plea**

At the hearing the rights of the accused student, as outlined in the Honor Council Procedures, will be explained and the accused student will enter a plea of "In Violation" or "Not In Violation."

#### **Article XIV. Decision**

Immediately after the hearing, the Honor Council will make a decision. A unanimous vote of the Honor Council members present is necessary for a decision of "In Violation."

#### **Article XV. Penalties**

Upon a decision of "In Violation," the Honor Council will recommend a penalty to the University, through the senior Judicial Affairs officer.

#### **Article XVI. Failure of the Accused Student to Attend**

If the accused student fails to attend his or her hearing, the Honor Council may recommend that he or she be suspended from Rice University.

#### **Article XVII. Records**

The Honor Council records shall be kept as outlined in the Honor Council Procedures.

#### **Article XVIII. Appeals**

*Section 1:* An appeal may be made in the form of a written request submitted to the Chair and to the senior Judicial Affairs officer within five business days of the Honor Council's determination of a violation. The first appeal is to an appeals panel consisting of the senior Judicial Affairs officer (or his or her designee) and two faculty members selected by Faculty Senate.

*Section 2:* An appeal may be made on the following grounds:

- a. demonstration of significant procedural unfairness that influenced the outcome of the case;
- b. excessive or unjust penalty;
- c. incorrect decision; or
- d. defective deliberation.

*Section 3:* After their decision, a second and final appeal may be made to the President of Rice University on the grounds outlined in Section 2.

#### **Article XIX. Reopening a Hearing**

A hearing may be re-opened at the direction of the President of Rice University (or his or her designee).

#### **Article XX. Ombuds**

There shall be Ombuds whose selection and functions are outlined in the Honor Council Procedures.

## **Article XXI. Limitations**

The Council may determine that a case cannot be heard based on the untimeliness of an accusation. The standards for this decision are described in the Honor Council Procedures.

## **Article XXII. Summer Proceedings**

Cases handled during the Summer Session shall be handled by the Honor Council in a manner as similar and as practically possible to those handled in the fall and spring terms. The presiding Chair shall discuss with the accused student any special provision proposed by the Honor Council for handling a case in the summer. The accused student may decline any special provisions proposed and instead choose to delay the case until the case can be handled under the usual procedure.

## **Article XXIII. Amendments**

*Section 1:* Students should at any time bring before the Honor Council any suggestions concerning the rules and operations of the Honor System. The Honor Council must consider such suggestions promptly.

*Section 2:* Proposed Honor System amendments originating from the Student Body must be placed on a petition and signed by twenty-five (25) students of eligible scholastic standing. Proposed amendments to the By-Laws, Conduct of Examinations, or Honor Council Procedures will be passed by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Honor Council. All amendments to this constitution must be approved by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Honor Council, a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Graduate Student Association Council, and the senior Judicial Affairs officer in turn before they are presented to the undergraduate student body for a vote. Upon such approval, the constitutional amendments will be voted on in the next general election. The amendments shall go into effect immediately if passed by three-fourths (3/4) of the students voting.

*Section 3:* In the case that the By-laws, Conduct of Examinations, or Honor Council Procedures conflict with this Constitution, this Constitution will be taken to be binding.

This Constitution was approved by the Faculty and Student Body of Rice University in May 1948. It replaced the original Constitution that was permanently adopted in 1913.

Revised, April  
1960  
February 1971  
February 1974  
March 1975  
March 1977  
April 1980  
May 1983  
March 1985  
July 1986  
February 1988  
March 1990  
May 1994  
May 1996  
May 2001  
April 2002  
April 2003  
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February 2007  
February 2011  
March 2014  
March 2017