

# **Martha Cook Student Organization 2025-2026 Constitution**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Martha Cook House Board, in order to develop an effective student organization and leaders through community building, training and education, do hereby establish this constitution for the 2025-2026 school year.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

- A. The official name of this organization shall be the Martha Cook Student Organization.

## **ARTICLE II: AFFILIATION WITH OTHER GROUPS**

- A. Martha Cook House Board is affiliated with the Residence Halls Association (RHA) of the University of Michigan, and is a Sponsored Student Organization of University Housing.

## **ARTICLE III: PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION, FUNCTION OF THE ORGANIZATION**

- A. The purpose of the Martha Cook Student Organization shall be:
  - a. To represent the residents to the Martha Cook, Hall Director, the Director of Alumnae Relations and Traditions, and/or designated representative, and the Board of Governors;
  - b. To create a sense of unity and fellowship among the residents through student-led programming.
  - c. The mission of the organization is to support residents by listening, assessing, and advocating for the needs of the hall residents. The organization is committed to meeting the needs of the residents by providing resources and events in an inclusive and equitable manner.
  - d. Martha Cook House Board understands and is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities of abiding by the University of Michigan policies and procedures.

## ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

- A. The officers shall be President, Vice President of Traditions, Vice President of Communications, Treasurer, Service Chair, Tea Chair, Community Relations Chair, 2 Multicultural Chairs, and 2 RHA Representatives

## ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Martha Cook Student Organization is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ability status, religion, height, weight, family structure or veteran status in its membership or activities unless permitted by university policy for gender specific organizations. Upon joining the organization, all members agree not to undermine the purpose or mission of the Martha Cook Student Organization.

## ARTICLE VI: HOUSE BOARD

- A. The officers of the Martha Cook Student Organization shall constitute the House Board. This Board shall have legislative and executive powers in consultation with the Hall Director, Director of Alumnae Relations and Traditions, and/or the Board of Governors.
- B. The House Board shall be made up of the following officers who shall have the responsibilities listed herein:
  - a. The **President** shall oversee all House Board functions in accordance with University Housing and Martha Cook Community Living at Michigan standards (the CLAM). These responsibilities include running elections, all-house meetings in conjunction with building administration, House Board meetings, recording attendance at meetings, reviewing the Constitution annually with the House Board advisor, and enforcing the policies of this Constitution. In absence of another House Board member, the President shall ensure the execution of the responsibilities of that position. The President shall represent residents and act as a liaison between residents and the Board of Governors, by attending Board of Governors meetings and maintaining communication. The President shall also act as a liaison with the Martha Cook Alumnae Association (MCAA) and attend MCAA meetings when student input is deemed necessary.

- b. The **Vice President of Traditions** shall be the Lead of the Welcome Week Planning Committee, the Fantasy Week (formerly known as Harry Potter Week) Committee, and the Resident's Gala Committee. The Vice President of Traditions shall update the House Board weekly at meetings on the progress of the committees as deemed necessary by the President. This position will also take photos of the events they are assigned to.
- c. The **Vice President of Communications** shall record the minutes at each House Board meeting, take and or collect pictures of all House Board events, update all physical and digital forms of the Martha Cook social calendar regularly to reflect the events of the building, with the Community Relations Chair, they shall manage the Martha Cook Building social media accounts in consultation with the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds, create the Annual in consultation with the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds, and create a monthly building newsletter. The Vice President of Communications shall also be the co-lead of the Dormal Committee.
- d. The **Treasurer** shall manage the financial accounts for the Martha Cook Student Organization, oversee the House Board budget for any House Board sponsored activity, coordinate finances with the Residence Hall Association and send the budget each month on the date outlined by the Vice President of Finances, present a budget update report at every House Board Meeting. With the Community Relations Chair, they shall plan, organize and execute the creation, purchasing, and sale of building merchandise, with assistance from the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds. The Treasurer will plan and lead the Tree Decorating-Caroling event and the Winter Brunch event with the General Dining Manager. The Treasurer shall be a co-lead of the Dormal Committee. This position will also take photos of the events they are assigned to.
- e. The **Service Chair** shall ensure that all residents sign up and complete their Tea Service requirements in the Martha Cook Building. The Service Chair is to coordinate with the Hall Director or Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds in the event that residents do not complete their service requirement for the semester. With agreement with the Tea Chair, the Service Chair and Tea Chair can choose to both be in attendance to help facilitate teas or decide to alternate weeks of lead service for Friday teas. This position will also take photos of tea for use on social media accounts.
- f. The **Tea Chair** shall plan, organize, and execute Friday afternoon teas in consultation with the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds and the Dining General Manager. With agreement with the Service Chair, the Tea Chair and Service Chair can choose to both be in attendance to help facilitate teas or decide to alternate weeks of lead

service for Friday teas. In the absence of the service chair, the tea chair will designate a substitute for the entirety of that day's tea. This position will also take photos of tea for use on social media accounts.

- g. The **Community Relations Chair** shall work as a liaison with the Board of Governors and the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds to assist with ideas and input for the Board of Governors' Handel's Messiah Dinner in December. They shall be responsible for planning and hosting an Alumni mentorship event/programming in the Fall and Winter semesters, in consultation with the Martha Cook Alumnae Association. The Community Relations Chair will help facilitate Welcome Week events with the Vice President of Traditions. With the Treasurer, they shall plan, organize and execute the creation, purchasing, and sale of building merchandise, with assistance from the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds. With the Vice President of Communications, they will manage the Martha Cook Building social media accounts in consultation with the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds. This position will also take photos of the events they are assigned to.
  - h. There shall be two (2) **Multicultural Chairs** (MCCs). The Multicultural Chairs shall organize events to promote diversity, inclusion, and social justice for the residents. They shall plan, organize, and execute events for Lunar New Year, Diwali, and any other events of their choosing in consultation with the Diversity Peer Educator. They shall also plan, organize, and execute International Tea in consultation with the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds, General Dining Manager, and the Diversity Peer Educator.
  - i. The two (2) **RHA Representatives** shall represent residents at weekly Residence Halls Association (RHA) meetings. The RHA Representatives will also present a weekly report back to the House Board about RHA proceedings. The RHA Representatives shall be members of the Resident's Gala Committee as well as the Fantasy Week (formerly known as Harry Potter Week) Committee. The RHA Representatives shall also plan, organize, and execute a Galentine's Day event.
- C. All House Board officers shall have the responsibilities listed herein:
- a. At least six members of the House Board must be present in order to constitute a quorum. A quorum is defined as the minimum number of members required to conduct business.
  - b. No business shall be conducted without a quorum.
  - c. Each officer will be required to attend all House Board meetings, pertinent sub-committee meetings, and mandatory House Board events. All members will be expected to attend Welcome Week and All-House meetings.
  - d. Each member is required to attend 4 events during fall semester and 4 events during the

winter semester. These events are up to the discretion of the President and will be established in the first meeting of each semester.

- D. The President is responsible for managing officer attendance and designating excused and unexcused absences. Each officer will be permitted two "excused absences" and two "unexcused absences" per semester of service. All excused absences must be approved by the President before a meeting, otherwise the absence will be marked as "unexcused" unless special circumstances need to be considered by the President. The officer must remain present for the entire meeting to be considered present. Late attendance to at least two House Board meetings without prior notification to the president will count as one unexcused absence. The president will define late attendance at the first house board meeting following winter turnover.
- E. Officers who refuse to comply by these rules will be subject to recall as stated in [Article VII-Section A](#) of the constitution.
- F. Board members will not be expected to complete tea service during the 2 semesters of their tenure.

## **ARTICLE VII: ADVISOR**

- A. The role and duties of the advisors shall include attending meetings, providing counsel to the executive committee, and advising the organization on policies, decision-making, and leadership development. Advisors are also responsible for helping the council grow into an inclusive organization by interrupting harmful behaviors. The Department of the University Housing will designate Hall Director(s) to serve as a professional staff advisor. In addition, Resstaff Coordinator(s) and/or Diversity Peer Educator(s) will be selected to serve as a student staff advisor. Student staff advisors will attend each council meeting. Professional staff advisors, while they either attend council meetings every other week (if they advise both Multicultural and Hall Council, or each week (if they only advise one council). Advisors shall not vote on official organization business.

## **ARTICLE VIII: ELECTED POSITIONS**

- A. The election of the following officers, who meet the qualification of having lived in the Building a minimum of one semester, shall be held in late Winter term of each academic year on a date set by the Hall Director and President.
  - a. President
    - i. Candidates for president must have served at least one year previously on House Board
  - b. Vice President of Traditions
  - c. Vice President of Communication
  - d. Tea Chair
  - e. Service Chair
  - f. Community Relations Chair

- B. The election of the following officers shall be held in early Fall term of each academic year on a date set by the Hall Director and President.
  - a. Treasurer
  - b. Multicultural Chairs
  - c. RHA Representatives
- C. Any resident intending to run for a position on House Board is encouraged to fulfill one or more of the following:
  - a. Attending a minimum of one (1) House Board meeting during the previous House Board season before they are eligible to run for a position on House Board. For fall elections, this includes meetings in late August or early September. This meeting attendance shall be completed prior to Town Hall.
  - b. Meeting with the current member of House Board in their position, or a resident who was in that position on House Board during a prior season. This inquiry should be completed prior to Town Hall.
- D. The newly elected officers shall take office at a date set by the President, surrounding the traditional Turnover Dinner.

## **ARTICLE IX: RECALL, RESIGNATION AND VACANCY OF ELECTED OFFICERS**

- A. Recall
  - a. By Petition
    - i. Any resident with a petition of at least 33 percent of the House may place a House Board officer up for recall.
    - ii. A 2/3 majority of those voting in the house shall be required to pass a recall.
    - iii. A House Board officer may be recalled if they exceed their limit of excused and unexcused absences unless special circumstances need consideration. The President shall announce the name of the officer in violation at a House Board Meeting after consultation with the Hall Director and the House Board Advisor to determine whether or not to have the House vote in a recall election.
    - iv. If a recall is successful, the President and House Board shall follow the procedure established under [Article VII-Section C](#) Vacancy Election or appoint a replacement after consultation with the board.
  - b. By Refusal to Comply with House Board Expectations
    - i. If a House Board officer who is not the President refuses to comply with the one of the rules established under [Article V](#): House Board, they will be required to

meet with the House Board President and the House Board Advisor and/or the Hall Director a total of two times for the same offense in a full year of service to try to find a solution and create expectations going forward. If the behavior continues the Hall Director, House Board Advisor and the House Board President will meet to determine if a resignation for the Board member is required.

- ii. If the President refuses to comply with one of the rules established under [Article V](#): House Board, they will be required to meet with the Hall Director and House Board Advisor a total of two times for the same offense in a full year of service to try to find a solution and create expectations going forward. If the behavior continues, the Hall Director, House Board Advisor and the House Board President will meet to determine if a resignation for the Board member is required.

#### B. Resignation

- a. Any elected officer must submit a written resignation to the House Board President with as much notice as possible. In the case of a resignation being requested for a Board member for not complying with [Article V](#): House Board, no written resignation notice is necessary.
- b. In the event of a resignation, the President shall have the power to appoint a temporary replacement, if necessary. In the case that an election is needed for the vacancy, the President shall follow the procedure outlined in Article VII: subpoint C
- c. In the event that the President leaves office, the Vice-President of Communications will automatically assume the office of the President. The new President shall have the full powers of the office.

#### C. Vacancy Election

- a. The President is responsible for ensuring that a special election is held within two weeks of a position being formally vacant either by recall or resignation.
- b. The procedure shall include the following:
  - i. Announcement of the forthcoming election.
  - ii. Opening of the nominations
  - iii. Submission of written platforms by the candidates
  - iv. Building vote by ballot

#### D. Temporary Vacancy of an Office

- a. Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the President, after consultation with the Hall Director, the House Board Advisor, and the other House Board members. If the President leaves office, the Vice-President of Communications shall assume their position and fill any vacancies by appointment.
- b. In the event that an officer must vacate their position for a medical, familial, or other reason, the legitimacy of which shall be determined by a majority of the present elected members of the House Board, they may resume their position upon their return, if they so

desire. If an appointed member has been filling in, they will then relinquish their position to the elected party. If the Vice President of Communications temporarily assumes the role of the President, the Vice President of Communications resumes their elected office and the appointed (non-elected) officer relinquishes their position to the elected officer.

## **ARTICLE X: RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. All residents are responsible for knowledge of the contents of this constitution and of all actions taken at any House Board meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI: RATIFICATION**

- A. This constitution must be ratified by two-thirds of all active members to take effect. It will be reviewed and renewed yearly during the Fall semester.

## **ARTICLE XII: STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

- A. Martha Cook House Board has read and agrees to fully comply with the University's policies. We understand that the organization's registration is contingent on acceptance of these policies



# MARTHA COOK BY-LAWS

## ARTICLE I: NOMINATIONS

- A. At least two weeks prior to Election Day, the residents of the Martha Cook Building shall be notified of a list of the elected offices to be filled.
- B. No one shall become a candidate for any office unless they have been nominated for that office. Nominations for all officers must be made according to the following guidelines:
  - a. By filling out a nomination form that includes the nominee's name and position being nominated for, as well as the nominee's room number and username.
  - b. Any resident may be nominated for more than one office, provided they comply with the requirement of Article I Section B Number 1, but no resident shall nominate a candidate unless they have received the consent of the proposed candidate.
  - c. Nominations shall last no less than one week.
  - d. Residents can self nominate or be nominated by another resident in the building.
  - e. Nominations may be withdrawn with the consent of the nominee.
  - f. Once nominations start, the President shall post a list of those accepted nominations daily. The list of candidates shall be posted until Election Day.

## ARTICLE II: CAMPAIGNING

- A. On a date designated by the President, each candidate shall present to the President, House Board Advisor, and the Hall Director, a written petition that is one 8 ½ x 11 page in length. The content of the petition must be reviewed and approved in consultation with the President. Petitions should include: which position the candidate is running for, why the candidate is qualified, why they are running, and other details at the discretion of the nominee.
- B. Candidates will not solicit residents' votes by going door-to-door throughout the Building.
- C. Campaign Signs
  - a. Campaign signs should not exceed an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper. Signs should clearly state the candidate's name and the position that they are running for.

- b. Campaign signs shall not include trademarks of the Building or the University of Michigan, such as, but not limited to, the Building Logo or the block 'M'.
- c. Candidates must receive resident's permission before they put campaign signs outside of that resident's door. Current House Board Members are not permitted to post signs supporting any candidate.

#### D. Speeches

- a. Before Election Day all candidates shall be introduced to the House assembled at Town Hall. Candidates for all offices shall give a speech at Town Hall.
  - i. Town Hall is to be planned and executed by the President.
- b. Speeches shall be limited to three minutes.
- c. Following the speeches, all candidates may be asked questions on their position. These questions and the responses to these questions should not exceed 5 minutes per candidate.

## ARTICLE III: ELECTIONS

A. The President shall create a ballot system for elections. This ballot system can be an online form.

B. The following procedure for counting the ballots shall be used:

- a. The winning candidates shall be determined by the highest number of votes for a candidate by percentage of votes cast.
- b. In the event of a tie, there shall be a run-off between the candidates in the deadlock. The run-off election shall be set up by the House President.
- c. In the event that one candidate was nominated for two positions and won both positions, the candidate shall win the position that had the largest percentage of voters between the two positions. The other position will go to the runner-up candidate.
  - i. If one of the positions was uncontested, there will be a second election of the two positions in order to recount the vote and fill both positions that were won by the same candidate.
- d. Candidates will be notified whether they were elected within 24 hours of the conclusion of the election by a chosen member of the Ballot Committee.

C. On the day of Elections:

- a. Candidates and House Board members may politely remind their fellow residents to vote, but must maintain neutrality throughout the election period. Candidates and House Board members may not solicit votes in-person or online.
- D. The Election will be considered null and void if less than one-half (<50%) of the current population of the Building votes.

## **ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES**

- A. Ad Hoc Committees shall be appointed by the President as necessary. Ad Hoc Committees are defined as temporary committees formed for a specific task or objective and dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.
- B. Permanent Committees are as follows:
  - a. Welcome Week Committee
  - b. Fantasy Week (formerly known as Harry Potter Week) Committee
  - c. Dormal Committee
  - d. Resident's Gala Committee
- C. Committees shall consist of the noted chair as referenced in Article V, House Board committee members as noted in Article V, other House Board members who volunteer at their discretion, and building residents if they wish to volunteer
  - a. Committees are encouraged to advertise themselves to residents so to have resident representatives participating in House Board planning and activities
- D. Committees shall meet at least biweekly beginning three months before their respective events under the guidance of the chair, further meetings are up to the committee chair's discretion

## **ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS**

- A. After consultation with the House Board Advisor and Hall Director the constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the Martha Cook Building.

## **ARTICLE VI: MISSED HOUSE SERVICE**

- A. If a resident fails to do their house service on the day they are scheduled, they must speak to the Service Chair within 5 days of the absence.
- B. The Service Chair is responsible for communicating with the Hall Director and the Director of the Martha Cook Building & Grounds who have not completed their community service each semester.