

## Osterweil Constitution

### Preamble

We, the members of the Harold Osterweil Cooperative House, associate ourselves in accordance with the spirit of the Rochdale Principles for the purpose of providing room and board cooperatively to students. The Rochdale Principles we adopt are as follows:

1. Open membership: There shall be no restriction on membership for any reason other than available room and ability and willingness to discharge duties and uphold responsibilities as house members.
2. Democracy: Each member has one and only one vote; each shares the house duties in as nearly an equitable manner as possible; and each shares equally in the benefits derived.
3. Education: The house will be a working example of cooperative living and will educate its members and others on campus in the principles of cooperatives.
4. Neutrality: The house will be a member of no organization other than cooperative societies.
5. Expansion: By supporting the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) the house will help the cooperative movement on campus. By its membership in other cooperative organizations, it will support the movement in general as much as possible without impairing the efficient functioning of the house.

### Constitution

#### Article I Organization

The name of the house which operates under this constitution is the Harold Osterweil Cooperative House.

#### Article II Duties of house members

- Sec. 1. House members are responsible for work assigned by the work manager.
- Sec. 2. House members are responsible for payment of bills as determined by the house and

the ICC.

Sec. 3. House members must abide by the rules passed at house meetings.

Sec. 4. House members may be required to serve on the ICC and house committees as determined by the house.

Sec. 5. House members should be aware of the statement of “Co-ops Rights and Responsibilities.”

### **Article III** House Meetings

Sec. 1. Attendance at house meetings is mandatory for residents. Members are excused only if they have irreconcilable conflicts and give notice a day in advance. Input can be provided in written form but proxies for decision making are not allowed.

Sec. 2. Boarders are encouraged to attend meetings. They may vote on matters pertaining to boarding.

Sec. 3. A quorum (see Article IX: Definitions) for a house meeting will be 2/3 the total number of residents.

Sec. 4. House meetings will be held at least every three weeks. The meetings shall be called by the president by posting a notice at least three days in advance of the meeting. Special House meetings may be called by a petition signed by five members and posted for 24 hours.

Sec. 5. Standing rules may be passed by a majority of members at a house meeting. They may be amended or removed by a majority of members.

### **Article IV** House Officers

Sec. 1. Permanent House officers shall be elected within 10 days after the beginning of the semester by a simple majority (see Article DC: Definitions) of the total membership of the house voting. All house officers serve for a term of one semester except President who shall serve for the full calendar year. President is elected in the previous winter term. If the president cannot serve the Sp & or Su then a president will be elected for those terms at the same meeting as the F/W President in the preceding winter term. There shall be a one month trial period for all officers whereupon at a subsequent house meeting a simple majority may approve the replacement of an officer. A new officer must be determined within one week, preferably within the same meeting. All house officers are required to attend the ICC sponsored training session.

Sec. 2. The House Officers shall be as follows:

*Suggested Credit of Labor    Job*

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| a. 2 of 5 Hours | Work Manager          |
| b. 2 of 5 Hours | President             |
| c. 1 of 5 Hours | Scribe/Mail Forwarder |
| d. 1 of 5 Hours | Treasurer-Accountant  |
| e. 5 of 5 Hours | Food Steward          |
| f. 3 of 5 Hours | Maintenance Manager   |
| g. 2 of 5 Hours | Kitchen Manager       |

### Sec. 3. Duties of Officers

- a. The Work Manager shall keep all records in connection with housework. Shall assign jobs on the regular work schedule and will train all house members about non-officer positions within two weeks of job assignment. It is his/her duty to bring to the attention of the house any defaults on work other than the Treasurer, whom the President oversees. Shall be responsible for maintaining supply of dishes, silverware, and equipment, completing and inventory of all items once per semester, reporting any necessary repairs, and relegating chaos to order. S/he is given authority to assign extra work or fines to members who flagrantly fail to do their jobs.
- b. The President shall facilitate house meetings and is the on-site representative of the house. S/he is an ex-officio member of all committees. S/he is a board member of the ICC. It is his/her duty to bring to the attention of the house any defects in duty of the Treasurer or Work Manager. The President is responsible to all the members and thus all members are urged to bring to the attention of the house any defect in duties of the President. If the house chooses, the position may be divided into two positions of Board Representative and In-House President with the labor allotment being 3.5 hours and 1.5 hours respectively. The same approval process as mentioned in Article IV Sec 1 applies to both positions.
- c. The Scribe/Mail Forwarder is responsible for keeping minutes at all house meetings; making copies available for revision within three days, and posting final minutes in bathrooms and delivering a copy to the ICC front office to be filed within seven days at the meeting. S/he is also responsible for forwarding mail to former house-members.
- d. The Treasurer-Accountant shall collect all the money for the house and pay all house bills. S/he shall prepare a budget, keep an account of house money and make mid and end of semester accounts of the financial condition of the house. S/he can charge members double for any phone call not signed for that is found to be theirs. It is his/her duty to bring to the attention of the house any problems members may have with payments. Shall facilitate, or choose facilitator, at House Meetings in case of unexpected absence of President.
- e. The Food Steward shall be in charge of the food supplies, gathering multiple recipes from cooks in advance of shopping and planning the menu a week in advance. Shall make periodic inventories of food and kitchen supplies as required by the Treasurer for budget purposes. Shall be responsible for the storeroom and freezer. This position may be divided among two members with one handling shopping and the other organizing and providing the lists.

f. The Maintenance Manager (*MM*) shall be responsible for making sure that repairs get done, and shall maintain the standards of fire and water safety in the house. The MM will also attend all Maintenance Projects meetings. If the MM has irreconcilable conflicts and can't attend a project meeting, it is his/her responsibility to find a housemate to attend the meeting to ensure representation of the house. Repairs that will cost the house substantial money shall be agreed upon by the house beforehand.

g. The Kitchen Manager (*KM*) shall be responsible for overseeing the cleanliness and organization of the kitchen.

Sec. 4. All officers are responsible for regularly educating members on matters pertaining to the officer's duties and are responsible for passing all relevant materials to the successor, including computer files.

Sec. 5. House officers are subject to recall for dereliction of duty in accordance with the following rules:

a. Posting of a petition containing the signatures of 1/3 of the total house membership will be sufficient to call an open house meeting at which time issues involved are discussed.

b. The officer will be recalled by a simple majority of all house members.

#### **Article V** Referrals and Expulsions

a. The house will consider all the recommendations for eviction brought by house members. They shall gather evidence from all interested parties including the member in question, and form an opinion at an open house meeting with the member to be judged and her/his accuser present, if possible. This meeting is to take place within one week of the accusation.

b. The House shall hear evidence from interested persons and a defense by the accused. An outside non-biased facilitator is recommended.

c. Whether the member is to keep his/her membership shall be voted on at another house meeting within one week after the meeting above and will be evicted by a simple majority of all members. Such meeting is to be at least one day after the first.

d. Grounds for referrals and expulsions shall include failure to perform house duties and obey house rules. Please see ICC bylaws for more detail on grounds for referrals and expulsions.

## **Article VI** House Policies

### Sec. 1. Room Pick Procedures

- a. A seniority system of room pick shall be used. The President is in charge of assigning any vacant rooms, either during the present semester or for the following one, in accordance with the rules below.
- b. Fall semester of the F/W contract shall count as one term towards seniority. Winter semester of the FIW contract shall count as one term towards seniority. The Spring and Summer shall count as one-half a term each towards seniority.
- c. The seniority list shall be based on the following order.
  1. Osterweil returning members by the number of terms in the house. For those having an equal number of terms, seniority shall be determined by the first contract signed.
  2. ICC members by the number of terms in the ICC. For those having an equal number of terms, seniority shall be determined by the first contract signed.
  3. NASCO recognized housing co-ops by the number of terms in their house. For those having an equal number of terms, seniority shall be determined by the first contract signed.
  4. New member by the date of the first contract signed.
- d. Members who leave Osterweil for more than two consecutive terms (Spring/Summer is one term) shall have their seniority considered in the ICC members category.
- e. No roomer shall be displaced from his/her room within a contract period by a returning member with more seniority. Nor shall any roomer be displaced from his/her room once rooms have been assigned at a room selection meeting.

### Sec. 2. Painting

- a. Painting over natural wood is not permitted.
- b. A members cost for supplies incurred in stripping already painted wood shall be compensated within reason as determined by the house.
- c. Members may paint their rooms any color subject to the following conditions:
  - The color chosen must have a rating of 60 or greater on the LRV (Light Reflective Value) scale or must be approved by all members.
  - All mural designs or other modifications to the basic paint job must be approved by the house beforehand.
  - Any damage to the windows, carpet, paint tools, or other parts of the room may be

assessed to the member as a fine up to the cost of having the damage repaired or items replaced. (House labor shall be assessed at \$6 per hour.)

- Oil based paints may never be used.
- Rooms may not be painted more than once in a year. The Maintenance Manager shall be responsible for keeping a log of when rooms have been painted.

### Sec. 3. No Television

Osterweil House will allow itself to have a television in its living room, if approved by house members by simple majority, for specific events. The TV must be removed within 48 hours of the event.

### Sec. 4. No Smoking

Smoking is not allowed within the house.

### Sec. 5. No Cats

Cats are not allowed within the house.

### Sec. 6. Non-students

Non-students shall be admitted by a consensus decision of the total members.

### Sec. 7. Boarders

Boarders shall be admitted for provisional membership by a consensus decision of the total members for a one month trial period, whereupon the provisional boarder must be approved for continuing membership by a consensus decision of the total members.

### Sec 8 Release from food charges

A member who is away from the house for 30 or more non-interim days may petition the house prior to their departure to be released from house food charges for said period.

## **Article VII** Amendments

Sec. 1. Amendments to this constitution shall be made in accordance with the following rules:

- a. An amendment shall be proposed in a house meeting by a simple majority of those voting.
- b. The proposer shall write up the proposed amendment and post it: it is subject to change by a simple majority of those voting.
- c. The amendment will be passed by a consensus of all house members after being posted not less than 7 days in its final form.

## Article VIII Ratification

Sec. 1. This constitution shall go into effect when it has been ratified by a consensus of all members of the house voting in a regular meeting.

## Article IX Definitions

### Sec 1. Simple Majority

Simple Majority is at least half the voting group. So with an even number of members exactly half is a simple majority.

### Sec 2. Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of members required to make official house decisions. At 2/3 majority with 13 members this number is 9. (12=8, 11=7, 10=7, 9=6, 8=5, 7=5, 6=4, 5=3)

### Sec. 3. Consensus

- a. In simple terms, consensus refers to agreement on some decision by all members of a group, rather than a majority or a select group of representatives. Consensus is based on the belief that each person has some part of the truth and no one has all of it (no matter how much we like to believe that we ourselves know it all.) It is also based on a respect for all persons involved in the decision being considered.
- b. A good deal of responsibility is necessary to work in consensus, but the rewards are great. Decisions are made by the group with care taken to listen to all sides and forge an agreement that all are satisfied with. Of course there will sometimes come a point where all are in agreement but one or two. There are three courses open at this point:

Standing Aside: See whether the individuals are willing to “stand aside.” This means that they do not agree with the decision but do not feel that it is wrong. They are willing to have the decision go forward, but do not want to take part in carrying it out. If the person(s) standing aside wishes to be released from the obligations inherent in the decision, the remainder of the group must consent to allow the person(s) standing aside to be exempt from the agreement. If more than two or three people stand aside the group should re-examine the quality of the decision.

Tabling the Issue: Another possibility is to lay aside the issue for another time. This is particularly useful in the case of a split camp of opposing views or when emotions have run too high. Although this alternative always seems to raise serious questions, we need to have some perspective on what we are doing. It is likely that the world will continue to revolve around the sun for another day, week, or year, whether we come to a decision at this moment or at another. The need to make a decision promptly is often not as important as the need to ultimately come to unity around a decision that has been well seasoned.

Blocking: The third possibility is that one or two people may stop the group or meeting from moving forward. At that time there are several key considerations. Most important, the group should see those who are withholding consensus as doing so out of their highest understanding and beliefs. Next, the individual(s) who are holding the group from making a decision should also examine themselves closely to assure that they are not withholding consensus out of self-interest, bias, vengeance, or any other such feeling. A refusal to consensus should be based on a very strong belief that the decision is wrong – and that the dissenter(s) would be doing the group a great disservice by allowing the decision to go forward. If a block occurs the spirit of consensus is that the process of discussion shall be used to work out a decision. It is an insult to the process to have a block cease discussion. (excerpted from Consensus Ingredients. by Caroline Estes, 1990-91 Directory of Intentional Communities.)

#### Sec 4 Silent Consensus

All actions that the house takes to represent itself to the public shall be decided on by consensus. A member who deems an issue controversial may call for the consensus to be reached anonymously.

#### Bonfiglian Standing Rules

(These are amended through a simple majority of Osterweil members.)

##### 1 Non-work (November 1, 2016)

A member who fails to complete house labor chores will be given an opportunity to make up the work in a reasonable period of time @ 1.5 hours for each hour missed. In addition, the member will be fined @ \$15.00 per hour of original work missed.

##### 2 Outdoor work (January 5, 2004)

Whoever is responsible for clearing the sidewalk snow or trimming the grass, and fails to do this despite city notices, is liable to pay 50% of the fine imposed by the city while the rest of the house shares the other 50%.

##### 3 Air conditioning charges (April 7, 2005)

The following fee will apply per month to every member using an air conditioner in the spring and summer terms. Fee: multiply the usage (what the air conditioner is rated at) by \$0.101 per kWatt-hour by 16 hours a day by 24 days a month. (Hours and days are estimates made by the house in April 2005 and are amenable to change. The charge \$0.101 per kWatt-hour was determined by the DTE charge for electricity usage above the first/ base 17 kWatt-hours per day + the surcharge)

##### 4 House keys (February 11, 2006)

Every member is eligible to receive a set of house keys. They are responsible for the safe return of the keys upon the final departure from the house. For every key that is not returned



to the house president or the interim manager, the member may be fined \$10.00 plus the actual cost of making the key. This amount will accrue to the house account.

#### 5 Interim fines (February 11, 2006)

If, prior to their final departure from the house, a member fails to clean their room to the standard stated in the ICC Standing Rules, they may be fined by the House President or the house-appointed Interim Manager @ \$20.00 per hour involved in cleaning the room. The house may decide to use this amount to reimburse the member who restores the room. All such fines shall be reported at the next house meeting.

#### 6 Guests (November 1, 2016)

Each member is permitted to have guests for no longer than 14 days. Members should notify the entire house in advance of overnight guests as much as possible. If a member has an impromptu guest, s/he must notify the house as soon as s/he is aware of having a guest. Members are responsible for damages caused by guests, and should be careful to be aware of their guests' locations within the house.

#### 7 Meeting fines (November 1, 2017)

A member who fails to attend a house meeting without giving written 24 hour notice to the House President may be fined \$15.00.

Last Revised November 1, 2017