

Constitution Of the Rice University Young Democrats

Date of Ratification October 9, 2017

Last Revised September 7th, 2020

Article I. Organization

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the Rice University Young Democrats.

Section 2. The recognized abbreviation for the Rice University Young Democrats shall be “RYD.”

Section 3. The Rice University Young Democrats shall exist to

- Facilitate political involvement of Rice Students, faculty and staff, and of the broader Houston community,
- Encourage awareness of relevant political issues,
- Promote the Democratic Party and its principles, and
- Stimulate participation in the political process, through coordination with campaigns and local issue-based organizations.

Article II. Membership

Section 1. All current Rice University undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff shall be eligible to be members of the Rice University Young Democrats.

Section 2. To be counted as a member, one must attend one event each semester and be on the club’s email list.

Article III. Officers

Section 1. The President shall preside at meetings, serve as leader for the organization, and coordinate with external Democratic and progressive organizations.

Section 2. The Vice President shall assist the President, execute the role of the President in his or her absence, and oversee the club’s committees. The Vice President, in consultation with the President, shall also be responsible for appointing officers if a vacancy opens.

Section 3. The Secretary shall maintain a roster of club members, track meeting minutes, maintain the constitution, and assist with communications.

Section 4. The External Director shall ensure the club’s compliance with university policies about campus political activity, communicate with Rice Public Affairs, and maintain relations with the Harris County Democratic Party.

Section 5. The Finance Director will organize fundraising efforts and manage the organization's funds. For the purpose of club registration requirements, the Finance Committee Director will serve as Treasurer of this organization.

Section 6. The Media Relations Director will be responsible for the organization's general media presence, including providing commentary to media outlets and authoring opinions.

Section 7. The Events Director will be responsible for the organization of monthly events including social hours, panels, and screenings. Their responsibilities in planning each event includes reserving a room, coordinating food, and whatever else is essential to the event's success.

Section 8. The Technology Director shall oversee the organization's website; they shall also be in charge of data aggregation and analysis as may be important to the organization's mission, such as Rice-specific election results or the number of students registered on campus.

Section 9. The Publicity Director shall oversee the publicizing of all events, social media upkeep, and graphic design duties.

Section 10. The Elections & Campaigns Director shall coordinate GOTV efforts and respond to campaign requests, like organizing phonebanks and blockwalks.

Section 11. The Diversity & Inclusion Director shall oversee outreach to affinity groups, ensure the organization is representing diverse perspectives, and coordinate reactive events to relevant issues.

Section 12. The College Representatives Director shall ensure that each residential college has a college representative from the organization and coordinate social media posts and other publicity in each residential college.

Section 13. *Removal of Officers.* Should an officer of the organization act in a manner unbecoming of the organization or fail to uphold their duties as outlined by this constitution, the President, sponsor, or majority of officers shall call a meeting to vote on removing the officer. Such a vote must pass by two-thirds of members present.

Article IV. Meetings

Section 1. Meetings of the Young Democrats shall be held periodically at the discretion of the officers of the Young Democrats, with an absolute minimum of one meeting per month. General meetings shall be publicized on the Rice University Young Democrats Facebook page.

Section 2. Officers of the Young Democrats shall pay special attention to hold meetings frequently in the weeks and months leading up to elections.

Article V. Amendments

Section 1. Sixty percent of the Officers must approve of amendments to this document and recommend its passage to the membership.

Section 2. All amendments must be submitted to the SA Parliamentarian and be approved by the Committee on Club Approvals or the Student Association Senate.

Article VI. Dispersal of Funds.

Section 1. The Finance Director shall oversee all disbursement of monies from the relevant accounts of the Young Democrats.

Section 2. The Finance Director shall make payments at his or her discretion and at the direction of the President.

Section 3. No disbursements shall be made by the Finance Director in contradiction of the expressed wishes of the membership.

Article VII. Elections

Section 1. An election for the President and Vice President shall be held by simple majority vote of members present in March or April annually.

Section 2. If left unfilled, the positions of President and Vice President may be filled by appointment through an open applications process after a majority vote by the incumbent officers or by election in May.

Section 3. Candidates for President or Vice President must announce their candidacy at least one week before the election date and meet in person with the sitting President or Vice President to discuss their candidacy.

Article VIII. Enactment and Ratification

Section 1. Approval by two-thirds of the officers of the Rice University Young Democrats shall ratify this document.

Section 2. This document shall be operative upon its ratification.

Article IX. Sponsor

Section 1. The Sponsor shall be a member of the faculty or staff of Rice University. **who will be at Rice for the full academic year.**

Section 2. They shall renew their commitment as Sponsor on an annual basis, in consultation with the leadership of Young Democrats. The Faculty/Staff Sponsor shall serve until a replacement is selected.

Section 3. The Executive Board has the right to designate a faculty/staff sponsor by a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting.

Section 4. The faculty/staff sponsor must meet the training criteria set by Student Activities. Any updates to the club Faculty/Staff sponsor must be made through the Office of Student Activities.

Article X. General Policies

Section 1. *Nondiscrimination Policy.* This organization 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.

Section 2. *Anti-Hazing Policy.* This organization 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.

Section 3. *National Organization Affiliation.* Rice University's policies and procedures will supersede all policies and procedures from our national organization.

Section 4. As defined in the Code of Student Conduct, students on disciplinary probation may not be a candidate for or hold elected or appointed office in any University organization during the term of the probation.

Article XI. Student Association Policies

Section 1. *Primacy of the SA.* As is mandated by the Student Activities office, this organization shall recognize the primacy of the Student Association Executive Committee, the Student Association Senate, and ultimately, the Student Association.

Section 2. This organization shall follow the Student Association Constitution and By-Laws and any associated rules and regulations.

Section 3. This constitution and any bylaws or policies adopted by this organization are subordinate to the Constitution of the Student Association.

Article XII. Committees

Section 1. *Committee Structure.* With the approval of the Vice President, Committee Directors may appoint a deputy and committee members as necessary to fully complete the tasks of the committee and develop future leaders of the Rice Democrats.

Article XIII. Endorsement and Support in Elections

Section 1. *Endorsement in General Elections.* By majority vote of the officers, the Rice University Young Democrats reserve the right to endorse the Democratic nominee in any contest as well as any candidate for a non-partisan office such as the Mayoralty of Houston, the Houston City Council, and the Houston Independent School District Board of Trustees.

Section 2. *Endorsement in Primary Elections.* The Rice University Young Democrats may endorse a candidate in the Democratic primary only by a two-thirds vote of members present at a meeting. These endorsements should be given only in a good faith effort to represent all members of the organization.

Section 3. *Endorsement in Party Leadership Elections.* Under no circumstances will this club endorse candidates in party elections such as an election for chair of the Harris County Democratic Party or Texas Democratic Party.

Section 4. *Tacit Support for the Aforementioned Candidates.* While the Rice University Young Democrats shall not endorse certain candidates under Sections 3 of this article, any officer may pass along opportunities for volunteering or interning on any Democratic or non-partisan campaign contingent on the candidate meeting the values of our organization to our members.

Section 5. *Endorsement in University Contests.* Being a political club, the Rice University Young Democrats will not endorse candidates for Student Association elected office except in the case where one or more candidates in a race either has strong association with a political organization or is campaigning on a platform including political issues relevant to the Rice University Young Democrats' mission. In this case, the Rice University Young Democrats may endorse or endorse against a candidate by two-thirds vote of members present at a meeting.