

# Constitution of the Association of Residents of Burton-Conner

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Burton-Conner House

December 5, 2002

## **Abstract**

The residents of Burton-Conner House, the undergraduate dormitory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology located at 410 Memorial Drive in Cambridge, Massachusetts, hereby re-declare and redefine their government in the interests of building a stronger community.

Jennifer C. Shih, President   Matthew F. Palmer, Vice President

Jason B. Alonso, Treasurer   Kathryn A. Luke, Secretary

## **Article I Name**

The name of this organization shall be The Association of Residents of Burton-Conner of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, hereinafter referred to as Burton-Conner. Massachusetts Institute of Technology is hereinafter referred to as MIT.

## **Article II Membership**

The members of Burton-Conner shall be all undergraduate students, and all graduate and faculty residents and their spouses, whose term address is 410 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## **Article III Authority**

Burton-Conner shall govern itself through the House Meeting of Burton-Conner (House Meeting) and the Executive Committee of Burton-Conner (Executive Committee). Together they shall have full governing authority in making legislative decisions for the members of Burton-Conner as granted by this Constitution. All acts and decisions of the House Meeting and the Executive Committee shall be considered to be acts and decisions of Burton-Conner. Execution of all acts and decisions shall be under the authority of the House Officers. Burton-Conner shall have sole authority to regulate the use of the names Burton, Conner, and Burton-Conner. This Constitution is the governing document for all current House policies and supercedes all previously written House policies.

## **Article IV House Meeting**

### **Section 1 Participation**

All members of Burton-Conner may attend any House Meeting and exercise one vote on each question. No other person may vote, and proxies are not allowed.

### **Section 2 Quorum**

A quorum to conduct business at the House Meeting shall be 35 members of Burton-Conner with a representation from at least 3 distinct floors. The presence of at least two residents of a floor shall constitute representation of said floor. House Officers may not count towards quorum. If a quorum is not present, a meeting may be held, but no business may be transacted. Any attendee of a House Meeting, in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, may call quorum. After twenty minutes following the announced starting time of the House Meeting, any member of the House may make a motion to adjourn the House Meeting for lack of quorum.

### **Section 3 Meetings**

A House Meeting shall be held at least twice during the regular academic terms of MIT. The first, the Budget Meeting, as described in Article IV, Section 9, shall be held during the first month of the term. The second shall include Coordinator elections. The Executive Committee may append any other items of business it wishes to place on the agenda. Additional House Meetings may be held if the Executive Committee establishes an agenda for another meeting or if any member of the Executive Committee is presented with a petition as specified in Article IV, Section 12. Then, the Executive Committee shall meet within seven days of that date and schedule a House Meeting to take place no later than 30 days of the date of scheduling, excluding those periods designated as academic vacations or the final exam period by MIT. No meetings may be held during a period so designated. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall govern the House Meeting in all cases to which they are applicable, and not inconsistent with this Constitution.

### **Section 4 Agenda**

The business that may be transacted at a House Meeting shall be those and only those items that have been placed on the agenda by the Executive Committee, including the exact wording of all voting items. Members of Burton-Conner may bring items to the Executive Committee without a petition for consideration to be put on the agenda for the next House Meeting. The Executive Committee must approve these items before they may appear on an agenda. The Executive Committee is under no obligation to approve or call a special House Meeting to address such requested items.

### **Section 5 Functions**

The members of Burton-Conner, through the House Meeting, shall make all legislative decisions concerning Burton-Conner, except as hereinafter provided. House Meetings may not: vote on items not placed on the agenda, elect House Officers, amend the Constitution, or allocate funds not approved for use by the Executive Committee. In all legislative and budgeting decisions, a simple majority at a House Meeting with quorum is required. A 2/3 majority at a regular House Meeting must approve all rules governing finable offences.

### **Section 6 Authority**

Decisions of the House Meeting shall be binding on all committees, officers, and members of Burton-Conner, with the exceptions of decisions that are inconsistent with this Constitution. All MIT policies, city, state, and federal laws supercedes all House decisions and, if necessary, provisions of this Constitution. The Judicial Committee has the authority to levy fines subject to rules established by the House. All House policies and the provisions of this Constitution supercede all decisions made by Floors.

### **Section 7 Removal from Office**

The members of Burton-Conner, through the House Meeting, may remove any Officer, Coordinator, or Judicial Committee Member from office by a vote of at least 3/4 of those members present, provided that at least 50 members of Burton-Conner are present. Proposals for removal from office must be announced to the House at least 72 hours in advance of the House Meeting but need not be approved by the Executive Committee.

### **Section 8 Closed Meetings**

A discussion of the merits of candidates for any position, which is filled by an election at a House Meeting, shall be closed.

## **Section 9 Budget Meeting**

The procedure by which persons, coordinators, or groups may request funds are described in Article V, Section 6. When a new budget is adopted, the old budget shall become void. The budget may be amended at subsequent House Meetings. Budgets and amendments to the budget are subject to the approval of the House Treasurer in all cases where total expenditures exceed incoming House taxes for that semester. Restrictions on the House Meeting in regards to budgeting are described in Article V, Section 6. Items unrelated to the budget may also appear on the agenda for the Budget Meeting.

## **Section 10 Governing Documents**

Any and all alterations to or introductions of governing documents of Burton-Conner must proceed as a voting item. This Constitution is not considered a governing document for this purpose.

## **Section 11 Publicity**

The Secretary shall publicize each House Meeting. The publicity shall be announced at least 5 days prior to the House Meeting to each member of Burton-Conner, and shall contain the date, time, place, and Agenda for the House Meeting, including wording of all voting items, as well as any other relevant information that the Executive Committee may wish to include.

## **Section 12 Petitions**

Petitions may be submitted by residents for purposes including but not limited to: changing house policies, making budget requests, and introducing general concerns to be discussed. Petitions to be brought before the Executive Committee must contain a written statement explaining the purpose of the petition and the signatures on a petition must represent a body that would constitute quorum for a House Meeting. Each person signing the petition must include his or her printed name, signature, floor affiliation, and date of signing. Petitions put before the Executive Committee must be put on the agenda of the next House Meeting. Any petition proposing voting items must also include exact wording of said items.

# **Article V Executive Committee**

## **Section 1 Membership**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the House Officers and Floor Representatives. Only the Floor Representatives or their proxies may vote, and only one vote per floor is allowed.

## **Section 2 Power of Appointment**

The Executive Committee is empowered to create positions who shall act as agents of the Officers. Said agents must be assigned to a particular Officer by the Executive Committee, and the powers belonging to said Officer assumed by said agent must be clearly specified by the Executive Committee. The House may then fill the position of the agent through a simple majority election, unless the position to be filled would be a paid position. Should the position of an agent be a paid position, the Executive Committee must nominate a person to hold the position, establish the rate of pay within the bounds of MIT policy, and approve such decisions by a 2/3 vote. The House must then approve or reject the proposed appointment. The Executive Committee shall then have the power to withhold payment or terminate appointment by a 2/3 vote. The Officer to which an agent is assigned shall have the sole discretion of overriding the decisions and actions of said agent in the interests of completing the appointed tasks of said Officer or agent, or in the interests of enforcing the decisions of Burton-Conner.

## **Section 3 Other Powers and Duties**

The Executive Committee shall call House Meetings as specified in Article V, Section 5 of this Constitution; and it shall set the Agenda for, all House Meetings as specified in Article IV, Section 4. The Executive Committee has the power to create and charge subcommittees to examine issues on behalf of the Executive Committee, and such subcommittees shall be recognized as agents of the President. The Executive Committee must review managerial post appointments and consider new applicants for each managerial post at least once a term. At the last Executive Committee meeting of each term the Executive Committee must verify that the deposit and expenditure records of the Treasurer are in order.

## **Section 4 Quorum**

A quorum for conducting business shall be two officers and six of the Floor Representatives or their proxies. If a quorum is not present, a meeting may be held but no business may be transacted. House Officers may not serve as proxies for Floor Representatives.

## **Section 5 Meetings**

All meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to all members of Burton-Conner; however, only the Floor Representatives or their proxies may vote, and only one vote per floor is allowed. Executive Committee meetings shall be held at least one week prior to each House Meeting during regular academic terms of MIT, at the President's discretion, or by petition in accordance with Article IV, Section 12. The Secretary shall give the members of Burton-Conner notice of an Executive Committee meeting at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall govern the Executive Committee Meeting in all cases in which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution or with any other rule governing its meetings that the Executive Committee may wish to establish.

## **Section 6 House Budget Recommendations**

The Executive Committee shall recommend a term budget for the House at the Executive Committee meeting prior to the Budget Meeting. Any person, coordinator, or group requesting funds shall submit to the Treasurer an itemized request for funds for that term, and such requests must be delivered to the Treasurer in a timeline at the Treasurer's discretion not to exceed one week prior to the Executive Committee meeting. Every item submitted to the Treasurer shall appear on the recommended budget, whether or not the Executive Committee proposes that funds be allocated to said item.

## **Article VI Officers**

### **Section 1 President**

The President shall represent Burton-Conner to MIT. He or she shall chair House Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings, and shall call Executive Committee Meetings as specified in Article V, Section 5. He or she shall supervise all Officers and oversee the general activity of Burton-Conner. In cases of conflict or disagreement arising from interpretation of House decisions, he or she shall have the power to interpret the meaning or intent therein. He or she shall be one of the co-signatories of all Burton-Conner financial accounts. In case of absence of an Officer or inability of an Officer to perform his or her duties, the President shall assume the role of that Officer until that Officer is again able to serve or until a new Officer is elected. Order of succession, should the President be unable to perform his or her duties, shall be Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer.

### **Section 2 Vice President**

The Vice-President shall be the principal Officer who shall assist the President in the execution of his or her duties and who shall assume the role of President in every capacity when the President is unavailable or otherwise unable to perform his or her duties. Should the Vice-President assume the role of the President, the assumed powers shall expire when the elected President becomes available again or when a new President is elected, whichever comes first.

### **Section 3 Secretary**

The Secretary shall be responsible for all records of Burton-Conner except those specifically assigned to others. He or she shall record minutes of all Executive Committee Meetings and of all House Meetings. Minutes shall be published to the respective bodies within 72 hours. He or she shall be responsible for the dissemination of any and all information concerning Burton-Conner, as directed by the Executive Committee or by the House. He or she shall be responsible for all bulletin boards of Burton-Conner. He or she shall keep an up-to-date ledger of all decisions of Burton-Conner, and the records there in shall be open to inspection to all members of Burton-Conner.

### **Section 4 Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be the principal Officer responsible for ensuring the financial integrity of the House while facilitating reasonable expenditures as authorized by its community. The Treasurer shall keep detailed financial records and make those records and reports on financial status available to any member of Burton-Conner. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for tracking and protecting all assets belonging to the House. The Treasurer must publicly announce and post policies and procedures for accessing funds and other assets belonging to the House. The Treasurer must present detailed financial records to the Executive Committee each term, in accordance with Article V, Section 3.

### **Section 5 Floor Representatives**

Each Floor Representative shall represent his or her floor in the Executive Committee. It shall be his or her responsibility to ensure that the residents of his floor have ample opportunity to be well-informed, active participants in all activities of Burton-Conner.

### **Section 6 Terms of Office**

House Officers shall take office at the beginning of the term following their election. Floor Representatives shall hold office for a period to be determined by their Floor not to exceed one year.

## **Article VII Judicial Committee**

### **Section 1 Membership**

The Judicial Committee shall consist of a Chairman, two representatives from Conner, and three from Burton.

### **Section 2 Duties**

The Judicial Committee shall make all judicial decisions for the members of Burton-Conner. It may formulate and enforce any rules and regulations for its own operation, provided that they do not conflict with any provision of this Constitution or decisions of the House. It shall conduct elections as specified in Article IX of this Constitution. It shall enforce all judicial regulations, as it deems appropriate. The Judicial Committee interprets the Constitution in cases of conflict. It must publish a list and description of all dorm rules approved by the House made available to all members of Burton-Conner. It must attend all Floor elections and report the results of these elections to the Secretary.

### **Section 3 Room Searches**

No Judicial Committee Member may, when on official business, enter a room or suite unless accompanied by a Dean of Student Affairs, a Campus Patrol Officer, the House Manager of Burton-Conner or a faculty resident of Burton-Conner except upon the invitation of one or more official residents of that room. If entrance on official business is not by invitation, the Judicial Committee Member must also be accompanied by another student resident of Burton-Conner, and the resident of the room entered must, within 48 hours of the time of entry, be notified in writing of the date, the time, and the purpose of the entry, as well as of the identities of the persons accompanying the Judicial Committee Member. A copy of the notification must be kept in the records of the Judicial Committee. No member of the Judicial Committee shall have any right of search or seizure except by written direction of a Dean for Student Affairs, a Campus Patrol Officer, the Manager of Burton-Conner, or faculty resident of Burton-Conner.

### **Section 4 Hearings**

The Judicial Committee shall be responsible for holding hearings concerning suspected breaches of the rules of Burton-Conner. It shall be responsible for investigating said suspicions, and for warning alleged participants that they are in violation of the rules either proactively or retroactively. Hearings must be held within one month of the complaint.

## **Article VIII Floor Government**

### **Section 1 Membership**

The members of each Floor shall be those members of Burton-Conner who reside on that floor.

### **Section 2 Authority**

Each Floor Government shall have authority over all matters that are solely the concern of that Floor Government and over all common areas of that Floor. Decisions of a Floor shall be binding on that Floor, with the exception of any decisions that are inconsistent with this Constitution and House policies.

### **Section 3 Officers**

Floors shall elect one or two persons to serve as representatives to the Executive Committee, but each floor will only have one vote. One member of each Floor shall also be designated as Floor Treasurer. Each Floor may also elect such officers as it deems necessary. The Floor Officers are agents of the House Treasurer and are managers of expenditures of House funds allotted to the floor by the House taxes. The members of a Floor may, at any time, remove their Floor Representative or any other Floor Officer from office by a petition signed by a majority of the members of that Floor. Vacancies in the office of Floor Representative shall be filled by an election at a Floor Meeting. This Meeting must be announced at least one week in advance, and must be attended by at least 2/3 of that Floor and by a Judicial Committee member who is a member of a different Floor.

### **Section 4 Floor Meetings**

All business of a Floor shall be conducted at a Floor Meeting. The Floor Representative(s) shall call Floor Meetings as often as necessary. Floor Meetings must be announced well in advance. All decisions shall be posted immediately after they are made. All members of a Floor may attend any Meeting of that Floor, and may exercise one vote on each question. No other person may vote, and proxies are not allowed. Any member of a Floor may place any item of business on the Agenda for a Floor Meeting.

## **Article IX Elections**

### **Section 1 General**

Only members of Burton-Conner may hold any position mentioned in this Constitution.

1. A person may hold more than one Coordinator position.
2. A Floor Representative may not hold any Coordinator position for which there is a salary.
3. Judicial Committee members may not hold a seat on the Executive Committee.

A person may run for more than one position during an election. If for a given election, a person may hold only one office on the ballot, the candidate must inform the Judicial Committee Chairman of his or her preference should he or she be elected to more than one position. The choice would not be made known before the election.

### **Section 2 Officers**

The elections for House Officers shall take place between November 1 and the last day of fall classes as specified by MIT. The Judicial Committee shall conduct these elections. Those wishing to run for a House Officer position must complete a candidacy form to be made available to all members of Burton-Conner. This form must require a statement from each candidate stating their reasons for running in the election and/or their goals for their term of office should they win the election. Statements should be delivered electronically to the Secretary. At an Executive Committee meeting with the Judicial Committee Chairman in attendance no later than November 15, each candidate must appear before the Executive Committee and announce his or her candidacy. Within 3 days of this meeting, the Secretary will publish the statements of all candidates to all members of Burton-Conner. The candidates must then appear at the subsequent House Meeting for an official introduction to the House. Election will take place after this House Meeting. Elections are to be conducted by referendum. In order to win an election, a candidate must receive more than fifty percent of the votes. In the case of no defined winner, another election is to be held within one week of the previous election, with the candidates in the subsequent election being the fewest number of leading candidates, taken in decreasing order of votes received in the previous election, such that their total percent of all votes is greater than fifty percent. The Judicial Committee is responsible for administering elections and tabulating results in a timely manner. Results of the election shall be given to the Secretary for publication to the House.

### **Section 3 Judicial Committee**

Nominations for the position of Judicial Committee Chair and the Judicial Committee shall be accepted from the floor at the House Meeting immediately preceding Officer elections. Following all nominations, there shall be a period during which all members of Burton-Conner may question all candidates. The election for Judicial Committee Chair shall take place concurrently with Officer elections. The Judicial Committee shall be elected at the first House Meeting of the Spring term. The Judicial Committee Chair may not fill one of the Judicial Committee positions. All Judicial Committee positions take effect immediately following the first House Meeting of the Spring term to serve a one year term.

### **Section 4 Coordinators**

The Executive Committee determines which coordinators to elect each term, typically at the last House Meeting of each term. Coordinators shall be elected by simple majority. The Coordinator office shall take effect the beginning of the next term with a maximum length of office of one year.

## **Section 5 Vacancies**

In the event of a vacancy in a Burton-Conner office, a special election shall be held. The President may appoint an interim officer. If the vacancy occurs in the office of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, or Secretary, the Judicial Committee shall conduct a special election in accordance with Section 1 of this Article. Vacancies in the office of Floor Representative shall be filled as specified in Article IIX, Section 3. The special elections for the positions of House Officers shall be held within two weeks of the determination by the Judicial Committee that such a vacancy exists. In the event of a vacancy on the Judicial Committee or in a Coordinator position, the Executive Committee shall place on the Agenda for the next House Meeting a special election to fill said vacancy. The Judicial Committee Chairman shall appoint an interim member to the Judicial Committee. The President shall appoint an interim Judicial Committee Chairman in case of Judicial Committee Chairman vacancy. No agent with an interim appointment may receive a salary. Interim Coordinators shall be elected by the Executive Committee by a simple majority.

## **Article X Amendments**

Amendments should be proposed in accordance with the method outlined for House Policies in Article IV, Section 3. Following House approval, the Judicial Committee conducts a referendum requiring 3/4 approval of votes cast, with a minimum of 100 votes cast.

## **Article XI Ratification**

This Constitution shall be published electronically to every member of Burton-Conner and posted in hard copy in varying places around the House. The Constitution must be approved by referendum by 3/4 approval of votes cast with a minimum of 1/2 of the members of Burton-Conner voting.