

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **of the University Student Apartments Resident Association at the University of Utah**

### **PREAMBLE**

We, the residents of University Student Apartments (USA) at the University of Utah, in order to form a community government that represents the interests and concerns of the residents, advocates for policies consistent with those interests, and acquires funding for resident life programming, do hereby establish this Constitution for the University Student Apartments Resident Association (USARA).

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

##### **Section 1 - Membership**

**1.1** Membership of USARA shall be limited to adult residents (ages 18 and older) of University Student Apartments at the University of Utah.

**1.2** This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, or status as an individual with disability, or as a protected veteran, and any other status protected by applicable state or federal law. (University of Utah, Policy 6-400, Section II-E)

##### **Section 2 - Governing Bodies**

**2.1** The governing bodies of USARA shall consist of the Resident Council, the Executive Members, and the USA Advisory Board.

**2.2** The four Resident Council members serve in a voting capacity and Executive members are non-voting. The Mayor casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

##### **Section 3 - Resident Council**

**3.1** The Resident Council shall consist of four resident members of USARA holding the positions of Mayor, Community Liaison, Communications Liaison, and Campus Liaison.

##### **Section 4 - Executive Members**

**4.1** The Executive Members shall consist of two USA staff members designated by the USA Director.

##### **Section 5 – USA Advisory Board**

**5.1** The USA Advisory Board shall consist of three appointed representatives of the University of Utah Administration appointed by the USA Director for a three (3) year term.

### **Section 6 – Statement of Compliance**

6.1 We agree to abide by all regulations described in the Guidelines for Recognized Student Organizations, all University policies, in addition to all federal, state, and local laws.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT**

#### **Section 1 – Involvement Guidelines**

1.1 The Resident Council meetings shall be open to residents of USA in a non-voting capacity. Residents may ask the Resident Council for time during the meeting to present issues of concern.

1.2 The Resident Council shall serve as advocates for the residents and bring resident concerns to the Executive Members, the Advisory Board, and USA Administration.

1.3 As designated by the USA Director, members of the Resident Council shall participate in appeals committee meetings in order to provide student representation in the appeals process.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **RESIDENT COUNCIL**

#### **Section 1 - Resident Council**

- 1.1 Each Resident Council member shall:
- (a) Represent the interests and concerns of all USA residents;
  - (b) Promote equity, diversity, and social justice and strive to create an inclusive community for all USA residents;
  - (c) Propose policies, changes to policy, or projects consistent with resident interests;
  - (d) Attend six (6) Resident Assistant (RA) court events per year;
  - (e) Assist with the Block Party and three (3) USA large-scale event(s);
  - (f) Attend a minimum of four (4) USA Advisory Board meetings per year;
  - (g) Hold a minimum of one (1) Resident Council meeting per month with at least one Executive Member present;
  - (h) Organize and facilitate two (2) resident forums per year and ongoing communication with USARA about resident questions and concerns;
  - (i) Complete four (4) village walkthroughs per year (2 during the day and 2 at night) and communicate infrastructure issues to USA staff;
  - (j) Assist with Special Appeals as appointed by the Director of USA;
  - (k) Oversee requests for extended use of the Community Centers;
  - (l) Organize and facilitate annual election process;
  - (m) Serve in responsibilities specific to your job description or as assigned by the Mayor.

#### **Section 2 - Mayor**

- 2.1 The Mayor shall:
- (a) Coordinate Resident Council activities;
  - (b) Facilitate Resident Council meeting schedules and establish meeting agendas;
  - (c) Distribute meeting minutes within two (2) business days of meeting;
  - (d) Appoint a member of the Resident Council to act as Chair in the Mayor's absence;
  - (e) Call special meetings of the Resident Council and Executive Members as needed;

- (f) Act as a liaison to the Resident Life staff;
- (g) Assist as necessary with regards to USA resident ideas and concerns.

### **Section 3 - Campus Liaison**

**3.1** The Campus Liaison shall:

- (a) Maintain active communication and updated membership with ASUU;
- (b) Prepare budgets as needed to be presented to the ASUU General Assembly;
- (c) Attend ASUU Sub-committee meetings in conjunction with proposed budgets;
- (d) Review resources available on campus and inform Communications Liaison about advertising relevant resources to USA residents;
- (e) Update and maintain USARA OrgSync page;
- (f) Assist as necessary with regards to USA resident ideas and concerns.

### **Section 4 – Communications Liaison**

**4.1** The Communications Liaison shall:

- (a) Update, maintain, and monitor USARA Facebook page;
- (b) Post information regarding USA sponsored events;
- (c) Provide USA residents with relevant University and community resources;
- (d) Respond to resident emails and Facebook private messages within 48 hours;
- (e) Direct resident concerns and ideas from social media to the Mayor;
- (f) Assist as necessary with regards to USA resident ideas and concerns.

### **Section 5 – Community Liaison**

**5.1** The Community Liaison shall:

- (a) Assist in supporting USA large scale events, Resident Assistant programming, and providing information about Resident Council at events;
- (b) Maintain consistent communication with USA Programs Coordinator, Community Club Coordinator, and Garden Coordinator;
- (c) Facilitate Resident Council involvement in Resident Life events;
- (d) Solicit suggestions for programming options from residents;
- (e) Assist as necessary with regards to USA resident ideas and concerns.

### **Section 6 - Vacancies**

**6.1** Should the position of Mayor become vacant, the Executive Members and Advisory Board shall use a majority vote to appoint a member of the Resident Council to fulfill the position for the remainder of the current term.

**6.2** All other Resident Council vacancies shall be filled either by:

- (a) special elections if there is more than six (6) months remaining in the current term; or,
- (b) appointment, if there are fewer than six (6) months remaining in the current term. Any member of the Resident Council may nominate a current resident for the position, after which the individual will be appointed by majority vote of the remaining members of the Resident Council.

### **Section 7 - Terms of Office**

**7.1** All members of the Resident Council shall be elected by eligible members of USARA for a term of one (1) year to begin on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of the month of June with a maximum of two (2) elected terms for any residents within the same household.

## **ARTICLE IV EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

### **Section 1 - Responsibilities**

- 1.1** At least one Executive Member shall attend all Resident Council meetings:
- (a) To review the interests and concerns of residents;
  - (b) To review and advise all Resident Council activities;
  - (c) To facilitate clear communication between Resident Council and USA Administration.

## **ARTICLE V ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Section 1 - Responsibilities**

- 1.1** The chief responsibility of the USA Advisory Board is to provide the opportunity for members of the Main Campus community to interact with USA staff and elected Resident Council leaders to learn about ongoing operations and to provide input into policy and programs for student families. The USA Advisory Board shall:
- (a) Assist in overseeing the annual Resident Council elections and may be required to attend Special Hearings as directed by the USA Director
  - (b) Assist with removal from office of a Resident Council member following the steps outlined in Article VI of the Constitution
  - (c) Validate Resident Council election results.

## **ARTICLE VI REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

### **Section 1 - Removal From Office**

- 1.1** Members of the Resident Council may be removed from office for any of the following offenses:
- (a) Inadequate fulfillment of aforementioned duties or the violation of regulations described by University policies or any federal, state, or local law;
  - (b) Actions deemed unbecoming of a Resident Council member;
  - (c) 3 consecutive unexcused absences from meetings

(d) Failure to comply with all provisions of the Rental Contract and Handbook of Terms and Conditions of Occupancy for University Student Apartments (the "Rental Contract") as it may be updated and revised from time to time.

**1.2** A request to remove a Resident Council member from office shall be brought by:

- (a) Any member of the Resident Council; or
- (b) Petition signed by a minimum of 50 USARA members.

**1.3** Petitions must specify the reasons for desiring the removal of the Resident Council member from office.

**1.4** Hearings to remove a Resident Council member from office shall be conducted by the USA Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will first meet with the initiator of the removal request (either the Resident Council member or the initiator of the petition) to hear their reasons for requesting a removal from office. Then the Advisory Board will meet with the Resident Council member in question. Next, the Advisory Board will make a decision regarding the removal from office. That decision will be communicated to the Executive Committee and to the residents (if any) who initiated the request.

**1.5** The details and timeline of removal from office shall be determined by the USA Advisory Board.

## **ARTICLE VII ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1 - Eligibility and Registration**

**1.1** Resident Council members shall be elected in a USARA general election to be held prior to the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of June in accordance with this Constitution and the Election Rules and Procedures.

**1.2** All eligible USARA members may vote during Resident Council elections.

**1.3** Candidates for the Resident Council must register by completing an election packet found on USA's web page and following the submission guidelines in that packet prior to the deadline set.

**1.4** Neither full-time staff members of Student Apartments nor current Resident Life Staff nor their family members shall serve on the Resident Council.

**1.5** No two members of the same household may be elected to Resident Council.

### **Section 2 - Votes and Election Results**

**2.1** The candidate receiving the most votes is the winner.

**2.2** In the event of a tie, a run-off election shall be held.

**2.3** If one of the two candidates in a run-off election withdraws, the other candidate shall be declared the winner.

**2.4** The USA Advisory Board shall confirm the election results. If there is a vacancy or unfilled position following the initial election results, there will be a special election wherein all unelected candidates can run to fill that vacancy.

**2.5** Election results shall be posted at the USA Main Office and communicated electronically to current residents upon confirmation by the USA Advisory Board.

**2.6** Candidates serving as members of the current Resident Council shall not participate in the administration of the election.

**2.7** Newly elected members of the Resident Council shall take office on June 1st of the new calendar year as set forth in Article III, Section 8.

### **Section 3**

**3.1** An Elections Committee shall be appointed by the USA Advisory Board to oversee and administer the elections, and shall be comprised of five members as follows:

- (a) USARA members or retiring Resident Council members; and,
- (b) one University of Utah Administration member of the USA Advisory Board to serve as Chair of the Elections Committee.

### **Section 4 - Protests**

**4.1** Any Election protest(s) not resolved by the Election Grievance Committee must be submitted in writing to the USA Advisory Board within forty-eight (48) hours after posting the election results.

**4.2** Written protest(s) submitted within forty-eight (48) hours after posting the election results shall be resolved by the USA Advisory Board.

## **ARTICLE VIII** **RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 1 - Ratification**

**1.1** This Constitution shall become effective upon the approval of:

- (a) the USA Advisory Board;
- (b) the USA Administration; and,
- (c) the Resident Council.

### **Section 2 - Amendments**

**2.1** Amendments may be proposed by:

- (a) at least two of the four Resident Council members;
- (b) both the USA Director and an Executive Member;
- (c) at least two of the three USA Advisory Board members; or,
- (d) a petition signed by at least 100 USARA and presented to the mayor.

**2.2** Amendments must be ratified by a 2/3 majority vote of the following nine people: The Resident Council, the USA Advisory Board, the USA Director, and an Executive Member.

**2.3** Amendments to the Constitution must be submitted to and approved by the Department of Student Leadership & Involvement before they become effective.

**2.4** Proposed amendments shall become a valid part of this Constitution upon ratification as set forth in Article VIII, Section 2.2 and 2.3.

### **Section 3 - By-Laws**

**3.1** By-laws not in conflict with this Constitution may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a majority vote of the Resident Council. By-laws adopted by the Resident Council will only be valid for one year—the length of that Council's term of office.