

## THE CONSTITUTION OF LA CASA

La Casa, hereafter referred to as "Spanish House" or "the House," is an official undergraduate cooperative living group of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, hereafter referred to as "MIT". The House celebrates Latin American culture through food, music, and dance. We also recognize and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of all our members throughout the year, including Mes Latino at MIT, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Black History Month. All members of the House shall be treated equally; we are a safe space and do not tolerate discrimination in any form, including but not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia, or transphobia. The primary responsibility of House membership is to be involved in all aspects of the meal plan (cleaning, cooking) and to be an active participant in house events such as meetings, retreat, CPW, and/or REX.

### I. Membership

#### Residential Membership:

- A. Residential Members are assigned to the House by MIT, and are assigned living spaces by the House. Residential Members are Full Voting Members of the house.
- B. All residential members must participate in the meal plan in one of the roles defined by the dining contract. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities may result in a fine of at least \$300 per semester as determined by the executive board.
- C. All residents of La Casa must be part of the meal plan and do the assigned chores. Failure to meet these requirements could lead to extra chores, a mandatory GRA meeting, fines, and/or removal from the house.
- D. Fluency in Spanish, nationality, or ethnicity shall not be factors when considering prospective members for membership, but they must demonstrate an interest in fulfilling the mission of the House.

#### Social Membership:

- A. Meal Plan Social Members are people who want to eat and/or cook on the La Casa Meal Plan. All social members will be accepted to the meal plan, up to the limit set by the executive team, and will be required to accept the meal plan contract. They will be added to our meal-plan mailing list.
- B. When someone wants to join the community as a social member, all members will be notified of a potential new addition. They will then be invited to dinner and/or social/cultural events so the house can meet them and get to know them. When a house member truly feels that they would be a strong fit for the house socially, they can sponsor their addition to the house as a full social member. The Co-Presidents will then notify the entire house of a potential full social member, and set a deadline of minimum 1 week for members to privately raise any concerns they may have with GRAs before the new member is completely brought into the community. No discussion of potential members will occur within the house or in a public space in order to preserve and respect the privacy of those interested in joining.

- a. Full social members will be on our mailing list for residential and social members. They will also be added onto our Slack workspace, which is for alumni, current members, and full social members.
- b. Social members who are still meeting the house and are not yet integrated into our community fully by joining Slack and other platforms will be added to our mailing list for residential and social members to be informed of events.
- C. All past Residential Members of Spanish House are Spanish House Alumni. Alumni are free to participate in all Spanish House activities, including meals. Local alumni shall be charged a non-cooking tax in addition to the cost for meals and the full cost of other items they consume in the House. All tax rates will be set by the current executive board.

## **II. Elected Positions**

### **Election of Officers**

Principal Elections shall be held by secret ballot twice each year, unless a special election is required. These elections shall be called the Fall Election and the Spring Election respectively. No person shall serve as more than one of the following officers at any one time: President, Treasurer, and Social Chairperson. No person shall hold more than one non-cooking position at the same time.

The elected positions shall be elected by a simple majority vote during Finals Dinner in the Fall semester, and during Finals Dinner in the Spring semester and those elected shall assume office immediately.

### **A. Co-Presidents (2)**

The Co-Presidents of the House are the chief executives of the House. The Co-Presidents shall be responsible for correspondence and relations with MIT. The Co-Presidents shall conduct House Meetings or shall appoint a House Member to be Co-President pro-tempore to conduct each House Meeting that the Co-President cannot attend. The Co-Presidents shall uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of the House, ensure that all other officers discharge their duties properly, count votes during elections, and represent the House in all matters deemed necessary. The Co-Presidents shall attend all dorm-wide meetings, or designate a representative if unable to attend. They handle communication with parties outside of the house except for those who are contacted for the purposes of social and/or cultural mixers. The Social Chairs and the Cultural Chair will handle those communications as necessary.

### **B. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the House. They shall keep records of all

House expenditures and accounts, and shall keep the House Treasury. By their sole authority, the Treasurer may approve in advance expenditures for the House within a limit specified in the Bylaws of the House; all expenditures beyond this limit by an individual must be approved by the House in advance if the individual is to be reimbursed. Expenditures enumerated in the Bylaws shall be automatically approved for reimbursement without a need to consult the Treasurer in advance. The treasurer shall charge all members for the meal plan on a monthly basis or as agreed by the current executive board.

### **C. Secretary**

The Secretary shall be present at all House Meetings and shall take, read minutes and record the results of the votes. The Secretary shall appoint a House Member to serve as Acting Secretary at all Meetings that the Secretary cannot attend. The Secretary shall post agenda, notices, and minutes, and shall maintain records of House Meetings and other House information deemed appropriate.

### **D. Social Chairpersons (2)**

There shall be two Social Chairpersons. A Social Fund shall be approved by the House at the beginning of each term. The Social Chairpersons shall plan all social expenditures, including those from the Social Fund and those approved directly by the House. The Social Chairpersons shall announce House social activities at least one (1) week in advance. If there are social events with outside parties involved, the Social Chairs are responsible for communicating with guests.

### **G. Cooking Chairs**

The two Cooking Chairs shall be responsible for maintenance of the kitchen, utensils, and appliances, and supplies (as defined in the Bylaws). They shall maintain a sufficient supply of utensils, cleaning supplies, and equipment. At the beginning of each semester, the Cooking Chairs will organize cooking partners, and for each month of the semester, they will send out a cooking schedule for the members. Cooking Chairs are also in charge of managing the Grocery Stewards, Kitchen Monster, and Lounge Monster. Cooking chairs will delegate cleaning tasks to members of the house and ensure that the kitchen is kept clean. Cooking chairs will determine all meal plan roles, responsibilities, and consequences at the beginning of the semester and send out a dining contract with these roles.

### **H. Housing Chairs (2)**

There shall be two housing chairs. The housing chairs are responsible for coordinating with the Housing team to place residents, and for organizing CPW and REX for La Casa. They will coordinate with the executive board to keep track of housing points, and inform members regularly of their standing within the house.

## **I. Cultural Chair**

The Cultural Chair is in charge of planning cultural events every month to celebrate world cultures with a minimum of three events per semester spaced at least 3 weeks apart. They are also the primary advocates of our cultural mission, and may hold events to celebrate significant dates and cultural celebrations. If any event planning requires communication with outside parties, the Cultural Chair is responsible for the communication.

## **J. Historian**

The historian shall keep a record of house events by taking pictures and storing them in the drive. They are responsible for updating La Casa's Instagram with a minimum of 5 posts per semester. The historian shall also lead the production of the I3 video; they may request help from other members. The Historian shall be assigned a year-long project to record the current history of the house. They shall report on their progress during each executive board. The project must be completed and presented by the end of the academic term to maintain good standing. The Historian shall reach out to alumni at the beginning of their term to donate outdated projects.

## **III. Non-Exec Positions**

### **Election of Officers**

Non-Exec officers shall be selected on a volunteer basis. They are not considered part of the executive board and will not be required to attend executive board meetings. Non-exec positions may be filled at any point during the semester.

### **Athletic Chairpersons:**

They shall organize athletic activities including MIT Intramural (IM) Sports and events with other parties outside organized Intramurals. The Athletic Chairpersons shall attend the IM affiliation meeting on the first Wednesday of the semester as well as other scheduled IM meetings or shall appoint a representative if unable to attend. The Athletic Chairpersons shall register the House for athletic activities and shall post the times and dates for all such activities. The Athletic Chairpersons, with the approval of the team members, shall appoint a captain to schedule team practices and meetings and ensure that all team obligations are fulfilled. The Athletic Chairpersons shall be responsible for the possession, maintenance, and purchase of all House sports equipment. The Athletic Chairpersons shall notify the Treasurer of any fine incurred by a team, and shall give the treasurer a list of all the members of said team.

**Birthday Baker:**

Birthday Baker(s) keep track of all of the house members' birthdays and add them to the house calendar. They will organize birthday celebrations as they see fit (i.e. a group cake/ birthday party for a specific month, organize a birthday card, or plan a serenade). This position is usually filled by a volunteer who enjoys baking, but that is not a requirement.

**Academic Chair:**

The academic chair shall keep the house updated on upcoming academic deadlines. They shall post announcements about due dates such as add date, drop date, holidays, and any other changes to the schedule. They may organize study breaks and other events to discuss academic and professional development opportunities.

**Webmasters:**

Webmasters shall update the house's website with the information of incoming members. They shall ensure that links function properly, maintain a working save system, and keep an updated description of the house that is representative of our community.

## IV. Meetings

**Executive Board Meetings:**

Executive Board Meetings will be held once a month before the monthly General Body Meeting within a week of each other. Attendance is mandatory for the executive board members, and optional for non-exec positions. Officers that can't make the meeting will have to send an update to the Co-Presidents. GRAs are invited to join, but it is also not mandatory for them.

**General Body Meetings:**

The first GBM of the fall semester will coincide with the first day of the meal plan. General Body Meetings after that will be held once a month on the first weekend of the month unless they conflict with another important, mandatory event such as retreat. Attendance is mandatory for all members, and any absences need to be excused by the Co-Presidents. Meeting attendance contributes to house points, which determines the order in which members get to choose their rooms within their class year.

## IV. Elections

In order to make decisions as a group, members shall be convened for a General Body Meeting. Members who are unable to attend the meeting shall submit their votes on Amendments and/or Bylaws in advance to the Co-Presidents. All votes shall be simple majority votes, unless otherwise indicated in the Constitution or Bylaws.:

In addition to the elections outlined in Section II, we want to note that officer elections can occur in the middle of the semester if someone steps down from a position, leaving it vacant.

### **Amendments to the Constitution:**

Amendments to this Constitution will require approval by two-thirds of the Full Voting Members. Any person desiring to amend the Constitution shall: (1) write up the proposed amendment, (2) present a petition for a vote to the Co-Presidents, and (3) distribute copies of the proposed amendment to all Full Voting Members. The Co-Presidents shall post the proposed amendment and call a vote on the proposed amendment within four weeks or, if the term will end in less than four weeks, before the fourth week of the following term.

### **Bylaws and Emergency Policies:**

Bylaws or Emergency Policies necessary for the governance of the House may be adopted or amended by a two-thirds vote of the House Members. Examples of bylaws include the housing points system and the dining contract proposed by the current cooking chairs. Examples of emergencies include pandemics, dorm renovations that split up the house, etc.

## **VI. Impeachment**

The House may impeach a House Officer for blatant neglect of his/her duties as an Officer. Impeachment of Officers requires approval of two-thirds of the Full Voting Members and shall take effect when a replacement officer is elected. Replacement Officers may be nominated immediately upon the vote to impeach and shall be elected by a Polled Ballot. A Polled Ballot is conducted by posting the names of the candidates and after one (1) week collecting and counting the votes. Votes may be collected and counted by the President, the Secretary, or a Member appointed by the President. If either co-president is being impeached, they shall not count the votes and the secretary will count them instead.

## **VII. Residence/Orientation Policies**

Because it is impossible to accurately judge a person's level of interest in the House or to predict a person's future involvement with the House after the few days of R/O, the House has decided that random selection is the fairest possible method of admitting new members into the House.

- A. The sole criterion for entrance into the House shall be an interest in the purpose and activities of the House. To show interest the prospective member must: (1) have visited the House at least once during R/O Week; and (2) be willing to assume the duties of a Full House Member and to participate in House activities. If one (1) Member present during R/O Week perceives that a prospective member is interested, that prospective member shall be considered for house membership.
- B. Those persons considered for house membership shall be chosen randomly given that they have met all the necessary requirements for joining the house.

### **VIII. Financing**

The House shall determine the amount of Institute House Tax at the last meeting of the spring term, and shall require payment from its Members for appropriate House expenses incurred throughout each term. A Late Payment Policy shall be followed as stated in the Bylaws.

The House is authorized to charge any outstanding balance to a student's bursar's account in case they fail to pay their account balance in full within three months of leaving the House.

### **XI. Interpretation of the Constitution**

The Co-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer shall jointly interpret the Constitution and Bylaws should any ambiguity arise.