

Preston Hall Government Constitution

(revised November 12, 2017)

Preamble

We, the Preston Hall Government members of Preston Residential College, in order to form a governing body which will promote the Pillars of Preston: Passion, Community, Responsibility, and Knowledge; allocate funds to various organizations and residents within Preston Residential College for the purpose of bettering our community; to advocate on behalf of our residents; and to plan and host community building events in an efficient, orderly, and systematic manner, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the Preston Residential College Preston Government.

Note

By law, the Board of Trustees is the governing board of the University and this Constitution in no way abrogates or limits the authority of the Board in matters of governance. All University policies, procedures, and codes of conduct take authority on all matters.

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section I

This Governing Body shall be named as Preston Government, but may also be identified as Preston Hall Government, PGov, and the Preston Government Body.

Section II

Preston Government is a government within Preston Residential College at the University of South Carolina – Columbia, that stands as a means for residents to collect as a governmental body that serves Preston Residential College. Preston Government is intended to deliberate over, allocate for, and accommodate the means to improve upon Preston Residential College and provide its residents with a transformative residential experience to the best of its abilities. Current residents of Preston Residential College shall be defined by the housing occupancy roster.

Section III

It is the job of Preston Government to promote Preston Residential College's mission to foster a dynamic living and learning environment that promotes intellectual exchange, leadership development, social interaction, and creative expression.

Article II Membership of Preston Government

Section I

Membership in Preston Government shall be limited to persons officially connected with the University of South Carolina – Columbia as faculty, staff, or students. Student members must be current residents of Preston Residential College and be enrolled in classes at the University of South

Carolina during their time of participation in Preston Government.

Section II

The University of South Carolina and Preston Government do not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities or decisions for qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Section III

The membership of Preston Government shall be limited to persons living within Preston Residential College, but shall not include Graduate Assistants or Resident Mentors. Preston Government members must also be in good standing with the requirements for living in Preston Residential College and their respective academic college.

Section IV

No member of Preston Government shall serve in more than one (1) elected/appointed position at any given time.

Article III: Structure of Preston Government

Section I

- The officers of Preston Government shall be elected from the active residents of Preston Residential College. Any student that is seeking to hold or is currently holding office must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5, as required by Preston Residential College, and remain in good standing in their respective academic college(s)
- All officers of Preston Government are required to attend Preston Hall Government and Residence Hall Association information sessions and training
- All officers must meet the requirements of the positions as outlined by the Residence Hall Association. The titles and the positions hereafter shall refer to the position's local recognition, not that of the Residence Hall Association
- The officers of Preston Government are also required to establish and maintain a working relationship with the Resident Mentors, Graduate Assistants, University Housing Building Supervisor, and Administrative staff

Section I-A: Moderator

- Organize and preside over all Preston Government meetings and have the authority to keep order while the meeting is in session
- At certain times, the Moderator may use their best judgment in deciding whether to suspend the rules of parliamentary procedure if such action would facilitate and expedite debate
- An additional responsibility of representing Preston Residential College to the Residential Hall Association
- Must attend weekly meetings of the Residence Hall Association Senate, without breaking the attendance policy
- Must remain in good standing with the Residence Hall Association
- Shall serve as the external head and liaison for Preston Residential College
- Shall only hold one (1) vote in the event of a tie

Section I-B: Pro Tempore

- Oversee non-standing committees of Preston Government unless they designate a chair
- Serve as a liaison to all established groups and committees in Preston
- Serve as a member of the Community Education Team or designated Living-Learning Community planning meeting(s)
- Serve as the Moderator's proxy in the event of their absence
 - In doing so, they will assume the duties and responsibilities of the Moderator, vacating and nullifying the position of the Pro Tempore until such a time as a new Moderator is elected or the current Moderator returns from their absence
- Shall have one (1) vote.

Section I-C: Treasurer

- Must inform Preston Government at each meeting of the status of the Preston Hall Government budget. This includes, but is not limited to, presenting the budget and current spending levels of Preston Government
- Shall work with the Business Manager and / or University Housing Supervisor to handle all financial transactions of the organization, including, but not restricted to; managing all Preston Government accounts and recording all transactions in the appropriate books, including but not limited to Preston Government systems and tracking documents
- Shall work with the Business Manager of the college in keeping the accounting books of Preston Government up to date
- It shall be the Treasurer's responsibility to hold a Treasurer's workshop(s) for the committees and residents of Preston Residential College and continually engage and educate the community
- Shall attend the RHA Treasurer's workshop at the beginning of each semester
- Shall have one (1) vote
- Shall serve as a non-voting member of Preston Government in the event of allocation or funding requests.

Section I-D: Clerk

- Keep a record of all business and correspondence, including, but not limited to: recording the minutes at all Preston Government meetings, taking special care to record the votes and money allocated for each committee, keeping an up-to-date file of membership and to report to the Preston College Body the activities of the Government meetings (the minutes, how much money was allocated for what, etc.)
- Give any reports on old business at every meeting
- Maintain electronic and historical documents for Preston
- Shall serve as a non-voting member of Preston Government

Section I-E: Senator

- There are to be two (2) Senators
- Responsible for writing legislation and advocating on the behalf of Preston to the Residence Hall Association Senate

- Senators must attend weekly meetings of the Residence Hall Association Senate and meet the required RHA attendance policy, acting as a positive representative of Preston Residential College at these meetings, and conveying information and needs between the two bodies
- Each Senator has the responsibility of seeking out additional funds from RHA when requested to do so by Preston Government
- Each Senator has one (1) vote
 - In the event that one (1) Senator is absent during a Preston Government meeting, the Senator present may not stand as two (2) votes, but as a single (1) vote.

Section I-F: Wing Representatives

- There are to be eight (8) Wing Representatives
- One person from each floor section shall be elected by the Preston Residential College residents of their respective section
- Responsible for communicating information to their respective residents of Preston Government issues
- Make themselves known to the other residents they represent
- Serve on at least one (1) committee
- Each individual residential section shall be represented by a single (1) Representative who has one (1) vote

Section I-F-I: Wing Representative Sections

- 1st floor
 - East room numbers: 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150
 - West room numbers: 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 121, 122, 123
- 2nd floor
 - East room numbers: 211, 212, 213, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 226, 227, 228
 - Center room numbers: 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237
 - West room numbers: 201, 202, 238, 239, 241, 242, 243, 244, 246, 247, 248, 249, 252, 253, 254
- 3rd floor
 - East room numbers: 311, 312, 313, 316, 317, 318, 319, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 328, 330, 331
 - Center room numbers: 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339
 - West room numbers: 301, 302, 341, 342, 343, 345, 346, 347, 348, 350, 351, 352, 353, 356, 357, 358

Section III: Appointed Positions

- The appointed officials of Preston Government are considered liaisons and not officers. The appointed positions shall coordinate with the Preston Government and perform their duties at the request of Preston Government.
- All appointments within Preston Government must first be proposed by an active, elected member of Preston Government and any current Preston Residential College resident is eligible

for appointment. The appointment must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote when quorum is met.

Article IV: Faculty/Staff Advisor

Section I

The faculty/staff advisor for Preston Government shall be the University Housing Building Supervisor and /or their designee.

Section II

The duties of the advisor are limited to advisory roles. The advisor holds no authority to veto or prohibit any actions of Preston Government that do not qualify as violations of Federal, State, or Local laws, University policies, and procedures and / or University codes of conduct.

Article V: Elections

Section I: Positions to be Elected

- All positions of Preston Government shall be elected by popular vote of the current Preston Residential College student body
- The Spring election shall be held to determine the Moderator and Treasurer for the following academic calendar year.
 - The Spring election shall be open to all current residents and accepted/approved upperclass residents of Preston Residential College. This election shall be held no later than three (3) weeks before the last day of classes.
- The general election shall be held to determine the Pro Tempore, Clerk, and two (2) Senators.
 - The election of these governmental positions shall be held in the fall of each academic calendar year no later than two (2) weeks after the first day of classes.
- The election of all Wing Representatives shall be held no later than two (2) weeks after the election of the Preston Government Pro Tempore, Clerk, Treasurer, and Two Senators.
- The general election and wing representative elections shall be open to all current residents of Preston Residential College.
- In the event that any elections conflict with the Residence Hall Association, the Residence Hall Association shall have supremacy.

Section II: Length of Term

- All terms of all positions within Preston Government will last no more than one (1) academic year. If members wish to return the following year, they must run for re-election.

Section III: Method of Elections

- The Residence Hall Association is responsible for recruiting new members for individual Preston Government. Residence Hall Association Executive Board members will do this through a variety of means, including hosting informational sessions in each hall. Elections will be held at the start of the fall semester and are set up for individual Preston Governments by the Residence Hall Association

- The elections will take place on Blackboard
- The Preston Government Moderator, Pro Tempore, Treasurer and two (2) Senators will outline the method to be used in Wing Representative elections on a yearly basis. The Advisor of the Preston Government will be responsible for monitoring and facilitating the election.
- The Preston Government will outline the method to be used in the spring election of Moderator on a yearly basis. The Advisor of the Preston Government will be responsible for monitoring and facilitating the election.

Section IV: Filling Empty Seats

The Preston Government may appoint an exemplary undergraduate Preston Residential College resident to fill any empty seat. These appointments shall last for the remainder of the term in which the person is filling. Should a vacancy become available at the start of the spring semester, the Preston Government shall have the option of holding a special election to fill the vacant seat. The Preston Government is exclusively responsible for making this decision.

Article VI: Removal from Office

Section I

- Any member that adversely affects the operations of the organization or is not fulfilling their duties, shall be subject to removal from office.
- A written request stating the reasons for dismissal and signed by at least three (3) elected members of the organization must be submitted to the Presidential Moderator.
 - Should the offending officer be the Presidential Moderator, the complaint will be submitted to the Advisor.
 - The Moderator can, their self, be one of the signatures on the request for dismissal of another member of Preston Government. However, the request must then supersede the Moderator and be submitted to the Advisor.
- Written notification of the request and the reasons for dismissal must have been given to the offending officer at least two (2) days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. The offending officer should then attend that regular meeting prepared to speak on their own behalf.
 - In the event of an emergency meeting being called to discuss the dismissal of the offending officer, if said officer is called to this meeting in order to submit to questioning and /or provide a defense, the said officer must be provided with written notification at least two (2) days prior to the emergency meeting.
- In a closed meeting, two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all the elected members, only including the Presidential Moderator in the case of a tie, is required to remove a member from office.

Article VII: Dues and Finance

Section I

No member will be charged dues. Funding is provided through the Housing Student Activity Fee. This funding should be budgeted and spent in accordance with policies and procedures set up by the University of South Carolina purchasing guidelines, departmental and RHA policies and procedures, and the individual government or organization budget and guidelines.

Article VIII: Financial Allocations of the Preston Government

Section I

Preston Government may allocate money to the committees after consideration of available funds. The Governmental Body is responsible for approving any guidelines that affect the general Preston Residential College over which it has jurisdiction. Preston Government also has the responsibility of approving guidelines for all committees formed within Preston Residential College. Members of Preston Government are ineligible to vote and debate in the event that there is a conflict of interest in relation to an allocation request.

Section II

A conflict of interest is defined as but not limited to involvement in the committee and / or organization that is requesting the allocation.

Section III

In order for an allocation request to be made, a clear outline must be presented prior to the vote which defines the estimated cost and number of each item used by the committee and a percentage of the total cost that will be used for non-specific (specific being defined as priced and numbered items in the allocation request) discretionary funding. This discretionary funding should include the estimated tax and non-sale prices of items. This discretionary funding is to make up no more than twenty-percent of the allocation request.

Section IV

- Committees may present an allocation request at Preston Government meetings. Following allocation requests, the Preston Government will take the amount requested under consideration and determine, in a closed meeting, whether to grant or deny funding requests.
- If either a Committee or Preston Government would like to request an amount greater than \$750, the Preston Government should first seek funding from the Residence Hall Association before allocating funding from the Preston Government budget.
- These allocations should require three (3) distinct price quotes.

Section V

- University faculty and / or staff members within Preston Residential College are prohibited from spending money from any Preston Government account without the approval of the elected Preston Government.
- The Preston Government account is not the same as, nor does it include, the funds that the Faculty Principal receives for Preston Residential College for their discretionary use.
- At the close of the school year, the Preston Government may release the remaining funds in the Preston Government account from that school year to the Preston Advisor or Administrative Staff to purchase items for Preston Residential College before the close of the fiscal year.
- This decision should be discussed between those elected government representatives and the Preston Advisor or Administrative Staff at Preston Residential College no later than the final government meeting of the school year and then voted on by the Government to approve the release of the funds.

Article IX: Meetings of the Preston Government

Section I: Attendance Policy

- All elected officers are required to attend regularly scheduled meetings, and are provided a maximum of three (3) unexcused absences. All persons who intend on missing a meeting are responsible for alerting the Preston Government and advisors through email no less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.
- Elected officers have the option of using a proxy to fill their seat in the event of an absence. After two (2) unexcused absences, without a proxy, an elected member of the Preston Governmental body shall be considered in dereliction of their duty. If an elected officer has more than three (3) unexcused absences, without proxy, that officer will be asked to resign, which will be followed by removal proceedings if the officer refuses.

Section I-A | Excused Absence

Preston Government shall determine what is to be considered an excused absence. The Moderator will address all unexcused/excused absences at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the meeting. Examples of excused absences include family emergencies, academic class commitments (not including homework), crises, etc.

Section I-B Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences include an officer not being present at a Preston Government meeting with no acceptable excuse or absence notification prior to the meeting.

Section II: Proxies

- Proxies must be current residents of Preston Residential College.
- A maximum of three (3) proxies per semester shall be allowed per Preston Government member.
- A proxy can only be used if Preston Government is aware of their appointment six (6) hours before the meeting through the aforementioned absence notification.

Section III: Quorum

- Quorum shall be defined as having half-plus-one of the total voting members. A complete count of every elected officer should add up to thirteen (13) voting members in all, not including the Clerk.
 - (1) Moderator, (1) Pro Tempore, (1) Treasurer, (2) Senators, (8) Wing Representatives
- In the case that the Wing Representatives are not elected, a quorum should be defined as the (1) Moderator, (1) Pro Tempore, (1) Treasurer, and (2) Senators. Proxies in this instance shall not count towards quorum.

Section IV: Frequency of meetings

Preston Government shall meet once a week. The time and place of the meetings must be determined by the Moderator and communicated to all Preston Residents by the clerk, and that communication must be received at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of any meeting. The Moderator retains the ability to suspend meetings at any time. Rescheduled or emergency

meetings should be organized at the discretion of the Moderator. All meeting times must be publicly communicated to the residential body of Preston. The default meeting time shall be at 7:30pm Sunday in the Preston Junior Common Room.

Section V: Basic Agenda (Minimum Requirements)

- Call to order
- Attendance
- Executive reports
- Officer reports
- Advisor report
- Old business
- New business
- Open Discussion
- Announcements
- Adjournment

Section VI: Meeting Status

All Preston Government meetings, excluding Fund Request and Budget Allocation meetings, shall be open to the Preston Residential College residents. A member of Preston Government may make a motion to request, at any period of time, that the meeting becomes a closed meeting. This can be in regard to such issues as: personnel issues, or outside conflicts.

Section VII: Appropriate Behavior

All members of Preston Government are expected to remain attentive and focused within Preston Government meetings. Electronic device use is expected to remain at a minimum unless required in the meeting. It is the responsibility of the Preston Government to clearly define and enforce these rules.

Section VIII: Voting

- Voting shall be conducted by roll unless otherwise stated in the motion.
- In order for a motion to pass it must receive the majority of eligible votes numbering at least three (3) affirmative votes.

Article X: Committees

Section I

Committees shall be defined into three (3) distinct categories: Standing, Non-Standing, and Organizational. Committees shall not consist of more than five (5) members of Preston Government. Preston Government committee members shall become non-voting members of Preston Government in the event of a request, made by their respective committees, allocations or otherwise. These non-voting members shall still count towards quorum.

Section I-A | Organizations

- Organizations are any recognized Preston organization within Preston Residential College.

- This includes any and all organizations that recur each year based on Preston traditions and resident interest. These committees have an indefinite status unless stated otherwise by Preston Government.
- In order to stay in good standing, these organizations are expected to have a liaison attend eighty-percent (80%) of all open Preston Government meetings. The liaison may also be a current member of the Preston Hall Government.
- The term organization does not refer to the Preston Government or the Senior Officer Committee, or organizations formed and controlled by the faculty and staff.
 - These organizations or teams may not request funding from Preston Government without meeting all the requirements of Preston Government Organizations.

Section I-B | Standing Committees

A standing committee is a committee that recurs each year unless otherwise decided by the Preston Government. Standing committees shall be chaired by a member of Preston Government, not limited to the Pro Tempore.

Section I-C | Non-Standing Committees

- A committee or organization that organizes by vote of Preston Government.
- Non-standing committees also define a single student or a group of students seeking aid from Preston Government for personal projects and ideas, and may organize by way of demand from students and faculty for a short-term goal and should be considered ad hoc in terms of status within Preston Government.

Section II: Funding

- Each Committee requesting funding shall submit a request to include, but not limited to, an explanation of their event as well as their budgetary needs and should follow the procedures as listed in Article VIII.
- Committees should seek out the Treasurer to obtain a funding allocation form, which must be submitted at least two (2) weeks ahead of the request being presented to Preston Government in order to ensure that the Treasurer has adequate time to file all requests.

Section III: Jurisdiction

Committees intending to establish guidelines, such as a Constitution or any other governing documents, to be applied to the committee members must submit these documents to Preston Government for approval. Lists of guidelines that must be approved include, but are not restricted to, those that deal with the use of any and all-common resources within Preston Residential College.

The Preston Government shall provide a document of support that includes their rationale for any changes or denials to guidelines or Constitutions of Organizations.

Section IV: Senior Officer Committee

It is the purpose of the Senior Officer Committee to effectively and efficiently advocate for, pursue, and ensure the purpose and vision of Preston Residential College and Preston Government is maintained and fulfilled.

Section IV-A: Name

This Committee shall be named the Preston Government Senior Officer Committee, but may also be identified as Senior Officer Committee, Senior Committee, and SOC

Section IV-B: Membership

The membership of the Senior Officer Committee shall be limited to the Moderator, Pro Tempore, Two Senators, Clerk, and Treasurer.

Section IV-C: Function

The SOC shall serve Preston Residential College and Preston Government by meeting independently of Preston Government for the purpose of creating the agenda for each Preston Government meeting, discussing bills, allocations, and other matters, and serve to represent Preston Residential College and / or Preston Government as needed outside of the Residential College.

Furthermore, it is not the role of the SOC to allocate funds, pass legislation, or amend the Constitution independently from Preston Government.

Article XI: Amendments

Section I

Amendments to this Constitution may be introduced by the Preston Government Body.

Section II

The residential body may propose an amendment to this Constitution with a document of support. Such document of support must have a list of signatures of a number no less than one-half plus one of the current residents in Preston Residential College at the time of the proposed amendment. Each page must contain a summary of the proposed amendment.

Section III

Any proposed amendment to this Constitution must be sent to Preston Government no less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Preston Government. These Amendments should be debated and voted on no less than one (1) week apart.

Section IV

For an amendment to be ratified, it must be voted in the affirmative by two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Preston Government Body.

Article XII: Constitution

Section I

This Constitution, and laws enacted under its Authority, shall take effect as the governing document of Preston Government when ratified by a majority of votes cast by members of Preston Government. All previous Constitutions of Preston Government shall be rendered null and void.

Section II

Robert's Rules of Order, unless superseded by this Constitution, are this association's parliamentary code of authority.

Section III

In case of no established precedent or authority, all decisions will be bound by common sense.

Section IV

This Constitution shall be considered null and void only when a new Constitution is ratified. The new Constitution shall have a two-thirds (2/3) majority affirmative vote of the full Preston Government. The new Constitution shall be available on the Preston website for a minimum of five (5) business days prior to its ratification.