

The Constitution of:  
**FIRST at Rice**

A student organization at Rice University chartered in Houston, Texas

*Date of Last Revision: October 15, 2019*

Article 1: Name

This organization shall be known as **FIRST at Rice** and shall be abbreviated as **FAR** when space or context dictate.

Article 2: Mission

For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) is an international youth organization and non-profit that is designed to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology, and to motivate them to pursue education and career opportunities in STEM fields. There are over 530,000 students between K-12 across 61,000 teams spread out over 95+ countries across the world that participate in one of the four FIRST programs (<https://www.firstinspires.org>).

The ultimate intent of the FIRST Alumni Chapter at Rice University is to maintain engagement with both technical and nontechnical alumni of FIRST who attend Rice. Recognizing that FIRST Robotics ingrains its students with skills and qualities which transcend technical expertise, including competencies in marketing, presentation, and Gracious Professionalism, FAR will act as an outlet for willing alumni to retribute the FIRST organization and its current members using the skills and qualities imparted while they were students of FIRST. General activity of FAR would include mentoring local FLL, FTC, and FRC teams in all aspects of their competitions, volunteering at local tournaments, specifically including the World Championship in downtown Houston, and garnering funding from local business and industry to support these activities.

Article 3: Members

All undergraduate students at Rice University are eligible for membership, with particular candidacy extended to alumni of FIRST Robotics. No dues shall be requisite from club members. The official roster shall be maintained on OwlNest.

Should a member act in a manner which does not resemble the intent of FIRST or Rice University, or should they willingly neglect or fail to commit to the responsibilities individually undertaken prior, the member may be called before the officers and sponsor of the organization to present his or her side of the story. After hearing this and obtaining the advice of the sponsor, the officers may vote to remove the member from the responsibility, or from the FAR organization entirely, by a majority vote. The member shall be notified of the officers' decision in writing within 48 hours.

Article 4: Non Discrimination

FAR shall not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status.

Article 5: Anti-Hazing

FAR shall not engage in any form of hazing, as defined by the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable Rice University rules or regulations.

## Article 6: Officers

Any member of FAR can become an officer given that they are currently registered students at Rice University, and that they have been on the official roster for one (1) complete academic semester. Officers shall be elected annually in the Spring semester by a vote outlined in Article 11, and shall take office thirty (30) days prior to the end of the semester.

The officers of this organization shall be:

### Internal Liaison:

Represents FAR in communication with all entities internal to Rice University  
Maintains organization in good standing with Rice University via communication with Student Activities and Facilities and/or other interested University entities  
Organizes general club meetings, including date and location  
Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law

### External Liaison:

Represents FAR in communication with all entities external to Rice University  
Maintains regular contact with the FIRST Alumni Director and other entities of FIRST as necessary  
Initiates and maintains contact with local FIRST mentors and volunteer coordinators to organize mentorship and volunteer opportunities for members of FAR  
Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law

### Treasurer:

Maintains accurate ledger and financial records  
Approves all expenditures from the organization financial account  
Approves (i.e., signs) all requests for allocations from third-party sources  
Delivers a financial report to the membership once a semester in Fall and Spring  
Reports entailments of fundraising from external entities to Student Activities  
Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law

### Historian:

Maintains the official roster and records the minutes of all official meetings of the organization through OwlNest  
Maintains official historical files for the organization (constitution, by-laws, minutes, rosters, financial records, risk management records, etc.) through OwlNest  
Posts relevant material on all social media platforms and organization website  
Advertises general club meetings and opportunities to club members through the organization's social media and website  
Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law

Should an officer act in a manner which does not resemble the intent of FIRST or Rice University, or fail to uphold his or her duties as outlined by this constitution and/or any applicable bylaws, the officer in question may be called before the other officers and the sponsor of the organization to present his or her side of the story. After hearing this and obtaining the advice of the sponsor, the remaining offices may vote to remove the officer by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) supermajority vote. The officer shall be notified of the decision in writing within twenty-four (24) hours.

### Article 7: Sponsor

A full-time faculty or staff member of Rice University shall serve as the FAR organization sponsor. The sponsor shall be selected at an executive board meeting by a majority vote of executive board members present. The sponsor shall be an ex-officio member of the organization and all of its committees.

Sponsor duties:

Interpret University policy for organization

Direct membership to appropriate campus resources to accomplish organization goals

Act as the official university contact in matters of policy violation

### Article 8: Executive Board

The executive board of FAR shall be composed of the organization officers and the advisor. The executive board shall generate and present recommendations to membership for approval that effect and promote the mission of the organization, as outlined by Article 2.

### Article 9: Meetings

Regular, general meetings of FAR shall be held at least monthly during the Fall and Spring academic semesters and at the discretion of the executive board at other times at an on-campus venue. Meeting agendas, crafted by the executive board, should provide opportunities which allow a diversity of the organization's members to further the mission of FAR, as outlined in Article 2. Procedures and rules of order shall be decided by the Historian per meeting. Quorum shall consist of at least three (3) members of the executive board and 50% of the general body.

Meetings of the executive board shall be held at a frequency deemed reasonable by the officers of FAR prior to a general meeting. Procedures and rules of order shall be decided by the Historian per meeting. Quorum shall consist of at least three (3) members of the executive board.

No punishment, nor restriction, shall be imposed on general members of FAR for matters relating to the attendance at general meetings. For officers, general and executive board meeting attendance may be a factor in consideration of removal, as detailed in Article 7.

### Article 10: By-laws

By-laws shall be created to dictate the structure and procedures of the organization. By-laws may be proposed by any member and must obtain a majority vote of the membership. No by-law, nor any of its amendments, shall infringe on the authority of the constitution. Required by-laws, which shall be ratified annually, include:

Organization Committees

Election of Officers

### Article 11: Voting

Only members on the official roster, as specified in Article 3, are eligible to vote on organization business. Quorum shall consist of at least three (3) members of the executive board and 50% of the general body.

High-level decision voting must include participation by general members, and must take place during the election of the organization's officers, during the process of amendment to this Constitution, or over other

decisions deemed high-level by a majority of the executive board. In the case of high-level decision voting, notice of at least two (2) weeks prior to the vote or voting deadline must be provided to eligible voting members including the matter to be decided, the method of the vote, and the vote's time and location, if applicable.

Voting over high-level decisions may be conducted either during a general meeting or via a digital poll which is restrictively distributed to all members eligible to vote. In the case that a digital poll does not receive a quorum of responses from eligible members, the vote shall occur at the next general meeting which possesses this quorum. A simple majority shall carry the vote for all organization business other than that specifically addressed in this constitution.

Voting over decisions that are not high-level may include, after a decision by a majority of the executive board, participation by all general members with a procedure identical to that of high-level decisions or participation by executive board members alone. In the latter case, again a simple majority shall carry the vote for all organization business other than that specifically addressed in this constitution, given a quorum of at least three (3) members of the executive board

#### Article 12: Financial Procedure

Only the Treasurer and Internal Liaison (if the Liaison has completed and passed the online Treasurer Training, as ruled by the Student Association) have the authority to spend the organization's funds, and only after discussion with and approval by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) supermajority vote of the executive board. (This vote may be subject to direction to general membership as a high-level decision, as outlined in Article 11.)

No dues, nor fees, will be imposed on general or executive board members of FAR. The budget, following an assessment of cumulative financial resources obtained from the Student Association, Rice club grants, and external entities - all of which being necessarily maintained through a Rice C-Fund - should be visited at executive board meetings with a frequency deemed appropriate by the Treasurer. At these times, the budget or its revision must be proposed by the Treasurer and approved by a majority vote of the executive board.

Solicitation of funding from local business or industry must only be conducted with an intent inherent to the mission of FAR. Initial letters or email used to solicit must be submitted to the Student Association prior to sending, as ruled by the Student Association. All funds collected by or on behalf of the organization must be deposited within one business day of receipt.

#### Article 13: Primacy Clause

FAR shall recognize the primacy of the Student Association Executive Committee, the Student Senate, and ultimately, the Student Association. This organization shall adhere to the Constitution of the Student Association and any associated rules and regulations. The constitution and bylaws of this organization shall be subordinate to the Constitution of the Student Association.

#### Article 14: Committees

Committees of the organization shall be created from time-to-time by the executive board in order to organize and distribute the workload of the organization. Committees shall be governed by by-laws and shall not have authority over the executive board or the general body.

### Article 15: Amendment Procedures

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any FAR executive board member and must obtain majority vote by eligible general members. All proposed amendments to this constitution are considered high-level decisions and are completely subject to the high-level decision voting procedure, along with its associated prior notice requirements, as described in Article 11. Amendments to this constitution which obtain general majority vote shall be submitted to the Student Association Parliamentarian for approval. Proposed amendments may only be approved by the Student Association Parliamentarian or the Student Senate in accordance with the Constitution of the Student Association and may not take effect prior to that approval. The Date of Last Revision on the title page of this constitution shall be updated to reflect the date of the Parliamentarian or Senate's approval.

Amendments to by-laws may be considered high-level decisions at the discretion of the executive board, though are not necessarily high-level decisions. In the case of high-level decision amendments to by-laws, voting must be conducted with a procedure identical to amendments to the constitution. In the case of by-law amendments that are not high-level decisions, these amendments may be instated by a majority vote of the executive board.