Constitution of the MIT Ashdown House Student Organization (As Amended - May 12, 2003)

I. Name
- The MIT Ashdown House Student Organization

II. Purpose
- To provide for the general welfare of the students residing in Ashdown House and to encourage a spirit of scholarship and fellowship.

III. Membership
- shall be of two kinds:
  1. Active members - All student residents of Ashdown House.
  2. Honorary members - Any individuals who have rendered distinguished service to Ashdown House, to be elected by the unanimous vote of the Executive Committee.

IV. Organization
- The representative governing body shall be an Executive Committee of six: five voting members elected from the House, plus the Housemaster, serving in an advisory capacity. All five voting members shall be regular students at MIT.

V. Duties and Powers
- The duties of the Executive Committee shall be:
  1. To represent the interests of the students living in Ashdown House.
  2. To promote educational, cultural, social, and athletic interests within the house.
  3. To control the disposition of the House Tax for the benefit of the House residents.
  4. To have an audit made of the Treasurer's books at the end of the Committee's term of office.
  5. To hold elections as prescribed by the Constitution.
  6. To call and publicize the Annual General Meeting at least one week before elections, at which nominations for the new Committee shall be called for.
  7. To inform the residents of all Ashdown House activities.
In addition, the Executive Committee shall be empowered:
  8. To appear before and petition any recognized authority on behalf of the House residents.
  9. To control and promote the use of House avocational and recreational facilities.

VI. Officers
The candidate with the most votes in the election has the option of being Chairperson. An option not exercised passes downward according to the order of finish in the election. All other positions shall be decided by the members of the Committee, decisions requiring at least three favorable votes. This method failing, preference shall be given according to the order of finish in the election. A subsequent decision to reconsider any of these assignments shall require a minimum of four favorable votes.

VII. Duties of Officers
1. The Chairperson shall set the agenda and preside at the Executive Committee meetings, coordinate and direct the activities of the Executive Committee, and act as the chief representative of the Ashdown House Student Organization.

2. A separate person shall coordinate, monitor and record the activities of all officers appointed by the Executive Committee, and submit a proposed list of officer appointments to the Executive Committee at the beginning of each term.

3. A third separate person shall receive and maintain responsibility for all money of the Organization, maintain the financial records of the organization, disburse funds as authorized by the Executive
Committee, present periodic reports of the financial status of the Organization, submit a budget proposal to the Executive Committee at the beginning of each term, and act as the financial representative of the Ashdown House Student Organization.

4. One person shall record, post and file the agenda and official minutes of every Executive Committee meeting, conduct all correspondence for the Committee, maintain the files of the Committee, and maintain responsibility for publicity.

5. One person, distinct from the Chairperson, shall serve as the Vice-Chairperson, assisting the Chairperson in his or her duties and acting in the Chairperson's place when he or she is absent.

6. Committees shall be formed when necessary by the Executive Committee, and their chairpeople shall be appointed by the Executive Committee.

VIII. Meetings
- Executive Committee meetings shall be held at least twice a month during the school year, open to all members of the Organization; and the decisions shall be made by a majority vote of Executive Committee members present, the Housemaster to vote only in the event of a tie. The agenda shall be posted at least one day before each meeting. Four members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum unless the Committee has fewer than four voting members. In this case, three members shall constitute a quorum.

IX. Elections
1. Elections by secret ballot shall be held in the spring term such that the new Committee shall take office on May 1. The election date shall be announced at least one month in advance.

2. Nominations shall be made from the floor at the Annual General Meeting held at least one week before the election. The names of any other members may be placed on the ballot upon submission of a petition signed by ten resident members, not later than two days before the election. Elections shall be supervised by an Election Committee appointed by the Executive Committee; no candidate for office shall be on the Election Committee. All candidates shall give notice in person or in writing to the Election Committee of their acceptance of the nominations. The election vote shall be made public.

3. Voting shall be by the system of equal representation described below. Each voter may vote for his choice of five candidates by placing one (and no more than one) mark “x” beside each name. There will be no ranking within the choice of candidates of a voter. The five AHEC members will be elected in order of total point score of all voters.

4. Impeachment proceedings may be brought against any elected member of the Executive Committee on petition of 20 members. This action must be posted for at least two weeks and must be voted upon by the members within three weeks of initiation of the action. Approval requires at least two-thirds of the vote cast with the favorable vote to equal at least one-third of the House membership.

X. Amendments
- Amendments may originate in the House on petition of 20 members, or in the Executive Committee. Any amendment must be posted for at least two weeks and must be voted on within three weeks of initiation of action. Approval shall require at least two-thirds of the vote cast, favorable vote to equal at least one-third of the House membership.

XI. Referenda
- A referendum may be initiated by a petition signed by 20 residents and must be voted on within one week of initiation of action. Approval shall require at least one-fourth of the House membership by a majority vote. The result shall be binding on the Executive Committee.

XII. Vacancies
1. Permanent vacancies in the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Executive Committee from unelected candidates in the order of rank on the ballot at the preceding election. This method failing, the Executive Committee may select a member to serve for a specified term.

2. Temporary Vacancies (less than a total of four months) shall be filled by the person to be gone for that time. If a member is absent for a particular meeting, he/she may give his proxy to another person if proper credentials (a letter from the absent member, for example) are presented to the Recording Secretary. The permanent Executive Committee may place constraints on the activities of any temporary Executive Committee member.

XIII. Adoption
- Adoption of this Constitution shall require approval of two-thirds of the vote cast, favorable vote equal to at least one-third of the House membership. If approved, it shall then replace the previous one.

XIV. ASA God Clause
- The MIT Ashdown House Student Organization agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the Association of Student Activities, and its executive board. This constitution, amendments to it, and the by-laws of this organization shall be subject to review by the ASA Executive Board to insure that they are in accordance with the aforementioned rules and regulations.
Summaries of Institute Rules

Ashdown residents are hereby notified of the existence of other Institute Rules. This section contains excerpted sections of some of the rules that apply to Ashdown residents. Full copies of MIT Policies and Procedures are available at the Information Office (7-121), and copies of the Basic Regulations of the Institute Houses are available from the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs/Residence and Campus Activities section (W20-549) and from the Housing Office (E32-200).

MIT Policies and Procedures

Quotes are from the March, 1990, edition.

Section 3.10:
All members of the MIT Community are expected to conduct themselves with proper respect for one another and for each other's property. The Institute fosters the proposition that every person brings unique qualities, talents, and dignity to the community and that every individual deserves to be treated, judged, and accorded both common decencies and all the benefits of society in an evenhanded and respectful manner.

Section 3.16:
Harassment of any kind is unacceptable at MIT and is in conflict with the policies and interests of the Institute, and in some circumstances, with civil laws.

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's educational and/or work performance at MIT, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education and work environment on or off campus.

Any member of the MIT community who believes that he or she has been harassed is encouraged to raise the issue, or lodge a complaint, in accordance with established complaint procedures of MIT (see Section 3.33).

Section 3.17:
MIT is committed to protecting the personal privacy of members of the MIT community.

Section 3.33:
Any person working or studying at MIT who believes that he or she has been unjustly treated or that the Institute's stated policy of nondiscrimination has been violated, is encouraged to seek to solve the problem or to seek redress through the procedures outlined below.

Section 3.33.2:
Students who believe they have been treated improperly for any reason are encouraged to raise their concerns. Students who have difficulty in their living groups should raise these problems within the living group and with graduate residents and housemasters, as appropriate.

If the complaint is against another student, and cannot be resolved otherwise, the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs may assist, or the case may be referred to the Committee on Discipline.

Section 3.33.3:
It is the Institute's policy that individuals will not be reprimanded or discriminated against for initiating an inquiry or complaint. It is also the Institute's policy to recognize and respect the rights of any individual against whom a complaint has been brought.
Once a complaint is presented or an inquiry begun, a determined effort should be made at each step, either to resolve the problem, or to refer it to the next step, within one week. If this time schedule cannot be met, as will sometimes realistically be the case, the status of the inquiry should be made known to the parties involved on a weekly basis. In cases where response or resolution is delayed more than two weeks, a complainant may, after informing the individual handling the complaint, elect to proceed to the next higher level.

Throughout the entire complaint process, the complainant is assured that the information provided will be kept confidential insofar as the individual wishes it or until such time as the individual agrees that a third party or parties must be informed to facilitate action. This assurance of confidentiality may be qualified; for example, by the duty placed by law on persons receiving complaints of particular types.

Section 3.41:
All members of the MIT community are expected to conduct themselves with proper respect for one another and for each other's property.

Problems and disputes that cannot be resolved at the local level are referred to the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs for advice, guidance, or resolution.

Basic Regulations of the Institute Houses

Regulations pertaining to confirmation cards, eligibility for housing, tenure, etc. are not listed here because they change often. Quotes are from the April, 1988, edition. Although every student is supposed to be given a copy of this document when signing confirmation cards, this does not always happen and hence some of the booklet is reproduced here.

14: The Institute reserves the right to inspect rooms and perform maintenance at reasonable times and to enter rooms at any time in the case of emergency. Residents are not permitted to change or add private locks or security devices to their rooms or any part of the building. Institute personnel are not to enter a room without knocking. Advance notice will be given to residents, whenever possible, to advise them of scheduled special services (such as window washing).

15: As a general rule students may not occupy doubles as singles, triples as doubles, and so forth. If extra rooms are available, students may occupy rooms at the Institute's discretion and with the understanding that new residents may be assigned to the room at any time. Attempts to dissuade prospective roommates from moving in may result in suspension from the dorm or additional rental charges to cover rent loss.

17: All students and their guests are expected to comply with city, state and federal laws, as well as MIT rules and regulations. All residents are expected to have consideration and respect for fellow residents, as well as for the physical property of the House. Residents are responsible and accountable for their behavior and the actions of their guests visiting the House. The Dean for Student Affairs Office particularly finds objectionable harassment, race and sex discrimination, and such behavior labeled “hacking” or “hazing,” such as “showering,” “rivering,” “pennying,” water fighting, etc.

18: Students are expected to maintain their living areas, including kitchens and bathrooms, in a safe and sanitary condition. Obstructions, fire hazards, and unsanitary conditions can affect not only your comfort and safety but that of other residents as well. Corridor doors that are considered fire doors are not to be "blocked" open. If these standards are not maintained, the House Manager may have the area cleaned. Any special cleaning required to maintain safety and health conditions will be billed to the appropriate resident(s) of the House or section of a House. In extreme conditions, the Manager may close a kitchen if unsanitary conditions continually prevail. The Cambridge Health Code prohibits cooking in student rooms (including the use of microwaves, toaster ovens, hot plates, etc.), and the City Inspectors have the authority to close a House for flagrant and continuous violations.
19: Setting fires, tampering with fire fighting equipment, fire alarm systems, or smoke detectors, turning in false alarms, making a bomb threat, or refusing to evacuate during a fire alarm are considered very serious offenses.

27: Firearms, air rifles, air pistols, and ammunition for them are not permitted in any Institute House.

34: No pets may be kept by residents or guests in an Institute House. The term “pets” includes mammals, birds, and reptiles.