

VESTA COOPERATIVE HOUSE CONSTITUTION

Article I: Name and Mission Statement

This organization shall be known as Vesta Cooperative House. The House shall aim to provide affordable housing to the Greater Lansing Community; additionally, the house shall aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all house members. In cooperation with the Spartan Housing Cooperative, Vesta shall participate in both mandated and social activities within the community. House members, including prospective ones, are expected to abide by and exemplify the following house values:

1. **1.** Consent
2. **2.** Respect
3. **3.** Open, direct, and honest communication
4. **4.** Environmental consciousness
5. **5.** Intentional community and inclusion

Article II: Membership

1. **1.** New members
 1. **a.** Vesta will promote an open membership policy; no person shall be turned away based on gender, race, religion, age, or sexual orientation.
 2. **b.** Prospective housemates are expected to abide by and exemplify house values at all times, including before they sign a housing contract; violating house values is grounds for membership denial.
 3. **c.** If additional information about a prospective housemate shall come to the attention of the house, after the prospective housemate is approved, but before the prospective housemate has signed a contract, and said information is contrary to the norms of the values held by Vesta house and/or the SHC, then the approval of said prospective housemate may be subject to re-evaluation and an eventual overturning vote.
 4. **d.** Prospective housemates are expected to pay their shares and dues in full upon signing a housing contract.
 5. **e.** Persons interested in living in Vesta must complete a tour, meal/house event and meeting before being granted permission to sign a housing contract.
2. **2.** Membership responsibilities and rights
 1. **a.** Members are expected to
 1. **i.** Pay their assessment and house charges in full and on time each month.
 2. **ii.** Complete work chores on a weekly basis.
 3. **iii.** Abide by both Vesta and Student Housing Cooperative policies/values.
 4. **iv.** Take an active role in the house and SHC community.
 5. **v.** Attend house meetings and regulated SHC trainings/events.
 6. **vi.** Abide by the Roommate Bill of Rights, as outlined further down.
 7. **vii.** For safety reasons, keep all exterior doors closed and locked at all times unless in active use.
 8. **viii.** Wash all dishes used by the member after each use (do not leave dishes in the sink for other people to clean).
 9. **ix.** Attend a Vesta orientation event within their first contract period hosted by the membership and/or education officer. If both the membership and education officer

are new members, the Vesta orientation event shall be hosted by a returning officer or senior member

2. **b.** Members have the rights to:
 1. **i.** Feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed in their home, free from harassment, ridicule, violence, and anything else that would make them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
 2. **ii.** Decide on a house budget for the year at the first meeting of the contract period; this must be confirmed through a majority vote in favor.
 3. **iii.** Propose, amend, and vote on new house policies.
 4. **iv.** Decide collectively and confirm (through a majority vote) the schedule and regularity of house meetings.
 5. **v.** Deny membership to prospective members so long as the reasoning complies with Fair Housing Laws and Student Housing Cooperative policies.
3. **c.** Roommate Bill of Rights
 1. **i.** Any persons sharing a bedroom have the rights to:
 1. **1.** Equal use and space of the bedroom.
 2. **2.** Sleep in the bedroom at any given time.
 3. **3.** Feel comfortable and safe in their bedrooms.
 2. **ii.** Any persons sharing a bedroom that would like to have an overnight guest must obtain explicit, clear and non-coerced permission from their roommate before making such arrangements; they must be honest and upfront about how many nights the guest will be there.
 3. **iii.** Any persons sharing a bedroom must obtain explicit, clear, and non-coerced permission from their roommate before smoking or participating in other related activities in the bedroom.
 4. **iv.** Any persons sharing a bedroom must agree to live cooperatively with their roommate and communicate directly and effectively should any issues arise.

Article III: Officer Positions

In order to maintain house order and upkeep, Vesta House will have a set of officer positions; persons taking on these roles shall be confirmed through a vote during the first house meeting of the semester. Vesta Cooperative House shall not have a house president.

1. **1.** Membership Officer (4 points)
 1. **a.** The membership officer shall be in charge of giving tours and arranging house events for prospective members and making sure they feel comfortable and welcome at said events.
 2. **b.** The membership officer shall mediate house conflict as needed, taking an objective and unbiased stance in order to find a resolution that appeases both sides as best as possible.
 3. **c.** The membership officer shall ensure general house wellness.
 4. **d.** The membership officer is expected to attend training sessions as needed, mandated by the Student Housing Cooperative.
 5. **e.** The membership officer shall attend biweekly meetings of the Membership Committee on behalf of the house or be subject to a fine.
 6. **f.** The membership officer shall organize and host a Vesta orientation event with the education officer at the beginning of a contract period for any new members."
2. **2.** Finance Officer (4 points)
 1. **a.** The finance officer shall be in charge of the house's finances in terms of monitoring

house financial activity, paying house bills and ensuring the house is within a predetermined budget regarding groceries and other essentials.

2. **b.** Submitting a House budget to the SHC by the end of the first month of each semester.
3. **c.** Submitting completed Member Account Charge Sheet to the SHC within three days of receiving it to inform the SHC what charges to post to Member accounts.
4. **d.** Post member charges in an accessible location for viewing by the house.
5. **e.** At the end of each month, the finance officer must submit to the SHC a copy of the prior month's bank statement with accompanying documentation for all transactions and a reconciliation of all bank accounts.
3. **3.** Facilities Officer (4 points)
 1. **a.** The facilities officer shall be in charge of general house maintenance.
 2. **b.** If the facilities officer is unable to repair something within the house, they are expected to fill out a maintenance request via the Student Housing Cooperative website.
 3. **c.** The facilities officer shall agree to facilitate house inspections as needed and ensure the house's readiness for said inspections.
 4. **d.** The facilities officer shall attend facilities committee meetings on behalf of the house or be subject to a fine.
 5. **e.** The facilities officer has a budget to use for house maintenance as necessary.
4. **4.** Education Officer (4 points)
 1. **a.** The education officer shall be in charge of ensuring house members are thoroughly educated on Vesta and Student Housing Cooperative policies, trainings, etc.
 1. **i.** The Education officer shall organize and facilitate a house norms workshop for all members of Vesta House by the end of the third month of the new contract period. It shall be a collaborative workshop revisiting standing norms and exploring the creation of new norms.
 2. **b.** The education officer is expected to be knowledgeable of Student Cooperative Housing policies.
 3. **c.** The education officer shall attend education committee meetings on behalf of the house or be subject to a fine.
 4. **d.** The education officer shall be keeper of the house constitution, responsible for maintaining an updated version to the benefit of the house and the education committee.
 5. **e.** The education officer shall organize and host a Vesta orientation event with the membership officer at the beginning of a contract period for any new members.
 6. **f.** Alongside the membership officer, the education officer shall mediate house conflict as needed, taking an objective and unbiased stance in order to find a resolution that appeases both sides as best as possible.
5. **5.** Board of Directors representative (4 points)
 1. **a.** The board representative shall agree to truthfully and accurately represent the house's opinions, concerns, etc. at board meetings.
 2. **b.** The board representative shall be expected to brief house members of any new decisions, policies, etc. voted by the Board of Directors.
 3. **c.** The Board of Directors representative shall attend biweekly meetings of the Board of Directors on behalf of the house or be subject to a fine.
6. **6.** House Shopper (4 points in the school year, 2 points in the summer)
 1. **a.** The house shopper shall keep track of levels of house food/dry goods and replenish when out.
 2. **b.** The house shopper shall coordinate with the house and finance officer on the house shopper budget.
 3. **c.** The House Shopper shall be responsible for purchasing cleaning supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, and pavement salt as needed.
7. **7.** Chore Checker/Secretary (Administration Officer, combined for 4 points)

1. **a.** The chore checker shall make chore lists every week, as well as pre- and post-party chores.
2. **b.** The chore checker shall check to ensure that chores have been completed thoroughly, and approach individuals as needed to talk about completing chores properly.
3. **c.** The secretary shall bring in all mail and put them in housemates' mailboxes.
4. **d.** The secretary shall keep meeting minutes and record outcome of votes during house meetings in meeting agendas.
5. **e.** The chore checker shall assign dish duty and kitchen counter cleaners every month (rotating schedule).
6. **f.** The chore checker shall add up chore and dish/kitchen fines at the end of each month and give the numbers to the house finance officer.
8. **8.** Trash/Recycling person (4 points)
 1. **a.** The trash/recycling person shall be in charge of taking the house's trash to the dumpster when full.
 2. **b.** The trash/recycling person shall be in charge of taking the recycling to the proper disposal area (if we run out of room in the bins, the recycling needs to be driven to the Recycling Center).
9. **9.** Groundskeeper (4 points)
 1. **a.** The groundskeeper shall be responsible for cleaning up debris outside the house (shoveling snow, raking leaves, collecting trash, salting the ice.)
 2. **b.** The groundskeeper shall monitor for notices from the City and prevent the house from being fined.
 3. **c.** The groundskeeper shall maintain the yard and garden.
 4. **d.** The groundskeeper shall fill up the gas tank for the mower when it runs out.
10. **10.** Office Labor (4 points in the school year, 2 points in the summer)
 1. **a.** During the school year, two persons elected as an "office laborer" shall spend six hours each per month helping out in the SHC office. During the summer, one person elected as an "office laborer" shall spend six hours each month helping out in the SHC office. (Vesta owes twelve total monthly hours of office labor in the school year and six total monthly hours in the summer.)
11. **11.** House Chef (4 points in the school year, not a role during the summer)
 1. **a.** Each meal shall be managed by a team of 2 chefs- no more no less.
 2. **b.** House chefs are responsible for notifying the house of meals 24 hours in advance.
 3. **c.** House chefs shall purchase their own ingredients for house meals with a budget decided on at the start of each semester.
 4. **d.** The house chef shall wash their dishes and do kitchen closing after meals
 5. **e.** The house chef shall package and label the date of preparation on meals and late plates.

Article IV: Chores/Dish Duty

All members of Vesta House are required to complete a total of 4 chore points per week. In the event of house membership dropping below 20, chore points will be raised to 5 per member, MEANING HOUSE OFFICERS MUST TAKE ON AN ADDITIONAL 1-point CHORE. This can include one 2-point chore and two 1-point chores. One point is equal to five dollars fine or credit. The amount of points a chore is worth is determined by the chore checker based on how long/difficult the chore is.

1. **1.** Officer positions are worth a predetermined amount of chore points. This is to be voted on at the first house meeting of the year
2. **2.** New chores are to be posted every week.

3. **3.** Chores are due 5 days after they are assigned. The chores are then steal-able for the next two days. (For example: Chores are posted Wednesday, due the following Sunday, and Steal-able through that Tuesday).
4. **4.** If a chore is not completed by the due date, the member assigned to that chore will be fined five dollars for each point the chore is worth.
5. **5.** Once a chore becomes steal-able, it becomes available for anyone to complete it. The person who completes it earns a credit equivalent to however many points the chore is worth.

In addition to the 4 chore points per week, each house member is expected to complete dish duty or kitchen cleaning on a rotating basis.

1. **1.** A calendar with the assigned dish duty dates will be posted in the kitchen.
 1. **a.** For fines and credits purposes, the month shall end on the 25th. The following days will be added to the next month cycle.
2. **2.** A member is expected to complete dish duty between 6 pm the day they are assigned and 12 noon the next day. After this point, if the dishes have not been completed, they are steal-able until the next person's dish duty kicks in at 6 pm.
3. **3.** There is a \$15 fine for failing to complete dish duty/kitchen closing, and a \$15 credit for stealing dish duty/kitchen closing
4. **4.** Dish duty and wiping kitchen counters is worth a total of 2 points
 1. **a.** 1 point is for washing the dirty dishes remaining in the kitchen and dining room and putting away all the dishes on the drying rack.
 2. **b.** 1 point is for wiping down all three counters completely in the kitchen.
 3. **c.** Members doing dish duty are also expected to wash hands before putting away clean dishes, change out towel when done, and spray any scrubs with sanitizer
 4. **d.** Only upon completion can the calendar be signed indicating completion of dish duty.

Article V: House Meetings

Vesta Cooperative shall have house meetings on a regular basis to ensure house wellness and to keep members thoroughly educated. Members shall decide regularity and meeting times during the first house meeting of the year. Guests, excluding prospective house members, should not be present at house meetings.

1. **1.** All house members are required to attend house meetings. Quorum shall be defined as half of the house's current total membership plus one member in attendance.
2. **2.** If unable to attend, the member must notify the facilitator in writing at least one hour prior to the meeting, with their reason for absence.
 1. **a.** Valid excuses for missing a meeting include work, other mandatory meetings, being out of town, emergency circumstances, family stuff, and contagious illnesses and/or hospitalization. Homework and not feeling like it is not a valid excuse for missing a meeting.
 2. **b.** If extenuating circumstances cause a member to miss a meeting and not be able to get in contact with the membership officer, they shall get in contact with the membership officer as soon as possible, and if the cause is excusable the fine shall be waived.
3. **3.** If unexcused, an absent member will be fined \$10 per unexcused missed meeting
4. **4.** House meetings shall be facilitated by the membership officer. In the case that the membership officer is unable to attend a meeting, they will appoint another member to facilitate
5. **5.** Should an urgent issue arise, that cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled house

meeting, any member shall be empowered to call for an emergency house meeting to take place at 6pm on a night 48 hours after the announcement is made. It shall be facilitated by whomever called for the meeting unless they choose someone else. If any decisions are voted on at an emergency house meeting, normal quorum (half plus one) must be observed.

6. **6.** House meetings will have a cutoff time of an hour and a half (90 minutes) after they begin. Anything being discussed at the cutoff time must be the final topic of the meeting, anything left over will be discussed at the following meeting
 1. **a.** If a meeting is deemed severe, the cap can be removed for the meeting.
7. **7.** During meetings, members are expected to:
 1. **a.** Pay attention.
 2. **b.** Listen and be considerate to whomever is speaking. Avoid unrelated cellphone and laptop usage.
 3. **c.** Avoid unnecessary chatter so the meeting may be as efficient and effective as possible.
 4. **d.** Be respectful should a disagreement arise between members.
 5. **e.** Participate in votes and discussions pertaining to matters of the house.

Article VI: House Parties

1. **1.** A party shall be defined as an official house gathering that is voted on by the house members and as defined in the SHC Party Policy in the SHC Code of Operations. This status requires that house members recognize and follow the specific traits and responsibilities described in this section of the house constitution as well as those of the SHC Party Policy in the SHC Code of Operations.
2. **2.** Approval:
 1. **a.** All house parties must be proposed at a house meeting and voted on and approved in writing by at least a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority.
3. **3.** Participation:
 1. **a.** A house member voting yes shall enjoy full privileges enjoyed as a host of the party as well as shared responsibility of any damages, fines, legal action, or any other negative ramifications resulting from the party. Confirmed party members have until 5 days or the day of the party meeting days before the party to back out of attendance, or be fined due to late notice for the total amount of their party chores! (\$120)
 2. **b.** A member voting no for the party will be expected not to attend; if the member does choose to attend, they will be assigned chores and will share in all responsibility for the party.
 3. **c.** A house member abstaining from the vote will be exempt from any shared responsibility unless they participate in the party. In the event of a dispute, the members' participation will be decided with a vote at a House meeting.
 4. **d.** If housemate participation reaches less than half either due to abstaining housemates deciding no, or housemates dropping out of attendance, the party will be cancelled/rescheduled IMMEDIATELY. Performers and the Co-op community should be promptly notified.
4. **4.** A party is subject to being stopped or cancelled at any moment due to medical, legal, or any other situations where the welfare or safety of the house or its members is at risk.
 1. **a.** A party is not subject to being stopped or cancelled due to personal reasons that lie outside of the reasons listed above.
5. **5.** The house members who participate in the party must also participate in the setup, clean up, and security of the party.
 1. **a.** The chore checker will complete the pre- and post-party chore lists
 2. **b.** These chores will be worth a certain number of points (depending on time expected to

complete the chore).

3. **c.** Members who do not complete their assigned chores will be fined double - 10 dollars per point.

Article VII: Culture of Consent

1. **1.** Vesta is a house that appreciates and values consent. Consent is defined as gaining permission for something to happen or agreement to do something through open, honest, and transparent communication with all parties involved. Members and guests that violate consent to the point that a house member feels unsafe will be subject to the processes outlined in the SHC Code of Operations under "9.03 Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies" as supported by "Appendix A: Guidelines for Investigating Harassment and Discrimination Complaints" which may be found in the Code of Operations at wiki.msu.coop.
2. **1.1a.** Harassment is any kind of behavior towards a person which impairs their full enjoyment of the benefits, climate or opportunities of the Vesta Cooperative House and the SHC. This definition includes sexual harassment. Harassment may include (but is not limited to):

1. Malicious remarks or behavior toward another person. This could include:
 - a. Discriminatory Behavior i. For Example, harassment in forms such as pinching, caressing, touching, vandalism, etc.
 - b. Discriminatory Verbal or Written Insults including, but not limited to, discriminatory, offensive, or obscene remarks. i. For example, the writing or speaking of derogatory names or comments that refer to an individual's race, creed, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, etc, as well as using slurs.
2. Explicit verbal threats where an individual's personal safety is put in jeopardy by the language of another.
 - a. For example, "I will hit you if..." "You had better... or else..." "If you do not do what I say, I will hurt you".
3. Physical intimidation, including manipulative or otherwise inappropriate behavior.
 - a. Intimidation includes offensive advances (e.g. sexual proposition) or inappropriate behavior (e.g. touching, kissing, caressing). i. This includes action with or without threat of punishment for non-compliance and with or without the promise of reward for compliance.
4. Unreasonable invasion of a person's privacy, including taking photos, recording video or audio, or otherwise gathering personal information without warning or consent with full disclosure.
5. Any act of vandalism towards a person or their property.
6. Assault, including any type of physical violence.

Article VIII: Seniority Privileges (Room Picks & Parking)

1. **1.** The Vesta Cooperative House has a parking lot with 18 spaces.
 1. **a.** Vesta Cooperative is guaranteed 15 spots a year, regardless of how many members have cars.
 2. **b.** Two spaces are given to Orion and one to Bower* every year (unless either of these houses deems that they are not in need of the spots that year). Vesta members and their guests are not allowed to park in those spots.
 3. **c.** Members who have guests parking in the lot should notify the house via the house group chat and give details to identify their car(s) and how long it will be there
2. **2.** Rooms for Fall/Spring semesters will be chosen during the preceding Spring semester.
 1. **a.** Room picks shall be based on seniority as determined by a point system. Members will receive one point for each semester lived in an SHC house, and two points for each semester lived in Vesta; In the event of a tie, seniority will be based on the signing date of the member's initial contract with the SHC.
 2. **b.** The membership officer shall be responsible for organizing room picks.
3. **3.** Room assignments and right to a parking space in Vesta House Cooperative will be decided

based on seniority, with the following factors determining seniority:

1. **a.** At the time of room picks, a member may lay claim to the room that member occupies at the time of the room picks meeting for the following contract period. Any member who decides to remain in the same room may do so, regardless of seniority, and that room shall not be available to any other member during the room picks proceedings. This policy shall be known as **squatter's rights**.
 1. **i.** A member may not lay claim to a room that the member will begin to occupy following the room picks meeting (i.e., for the summer months).
2. **b.** A signed release request transfers the right of the released room to the new member unless there is an agreement between two current members of the house. Such an agreement must be ratified and noted during a meeting. Seniority regarding parking spaces, or other house matters, does not transfer with a release request.
3. **c.** A member who has lived in Vesta Cooperative for one or fewer semesters (semester is defined as 4 months or 120 days) at the time of room picks does not hold **squatter's rights** over the room that they are occupying and will select their new room at the time of room picks based on seniority.
4. **4.** Seniority will be determined by semesters lived in Vesta House Cooperative and other Houses in the past three years at the time of the room picks meeting. No future semesters shall be considered in the room picks procedure. No member who has not lived in Vesta House Cooperative can attain a higher room pick than a member who has lived in Vesta House Cooperative within the past three years. Semesters lived in Vesta House Cooperative more than three years ago do not count toward seniority.
5. **5.** For members who have lived in Vesta House Cooperative for the same number of semesters, contract signing date for the upcoming term's contract will be used to determine seniority—not semesters lived in other MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses.
6. **6.** For members who have not lived in Vesta House Cooperative, but have lived in other MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses, seniority is determined by the number of semesters lived in the MSU Student Housing Cooperative at the time of the room picks meeting. No future semesters shall be considered in the room picks procedure.
7. **7.** For members who have lived in MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses other than Vesta House Cooperative for the same number of semesters, contract signing date for the upcoming term's contract will be used to determine seniority.
8. **8.** Contract Releases
 1. **a.** If a member obtains a contract release for the entire contract period after room picks have taken place but before the beginning of the contract period, the room that member chose may be re-picked by the remaining members in order of seniority. The person who fills the release does not keep the former member's seniority or get the former member's chosen room.
 2. **b.** If a member obtains a contract release for part of the contract period or after the beginning of the contract period, the room that member has chosen will stand, and they may offer it to the person who fills the release. The person who fills the release does not keep the former member's seniority.

*While it seems odd that we give Bower one of our parking spots, (considering we do not live close to Bower) it's because each house is required to have a certain number of parking spots.

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