



Students' Senate (2018-19) Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur Students' Gymkhana



Proposal to draft model Hall constitution

Motivation

- ❖ It had been realized by the Senate (Academic) in 2nd 1986-1987, that Halls will need Hall Constitution to function and have referred aspects of Hall Administration directly to this Constitution, highlighting how basic a need it is.
“Each Hall shall have a constitution duly approved by the Senate. The constitution will incorporate among other things, the procedure for the election of office bearers, constitution of the mess committee and the functional aspects of H.E.C.”
The same is reflected in Ordinance 11.
- ❖ CoSHA itself had directed the halls to take up the issue on a priority basis, however, this has not been done for all hostels. There is also a question of credibility of some of Hall Constitutions as the Institute demands Hall Constitutions to be accepted by the Academic Senate and some Constitutions lack details of the drafting and approving bodies, while their authority is ambiguous in others.
- ❖ The model constitution shall be presented to Academic Senate/HMC/CoW and if accepted, shall serve as the temporary Constitution for the Halls which yet do not have a Constitution and shall serve as a reference in cases of ambiguity or absence of clauses in existing Hall Constitution as and when required.
- ❖ If accepted, this would ensure that the Halls formally recognize and are answerable to the Students' Senate and that the decisions taken in a Senate (CoSHA) meeting and accepted by Halls are implemented in practice (transparency in accounts, mess prices, general body meetings, decision making, elections & appointments etc). Major decisions by CoSHA could be incorporated as amendments to this Constitution. This has been the first recommendation of at least last two President's end-term reports.



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- ❖ It shall eliminate the basic issues faced due to lack of rules/policy, as brought to the notice of CoSHA recently in cases of Hall-6, Hall-4, Hall-11 and case of Canteen tendering process. It shall provide a detailed and uniform election procedure, ensuring free & fair elections and appropriate representation. It shall also mention in detail, the duties of various functionaries and decision-making procedures.
- ❖ It shall resolve doubts/ambiguities regarding day to day policies common to all Halls with all related documents be available at a single junction, such as purchase procedure, HDF/DCF guidelines, HMC guidelines, etc. Updates & changes could be ensured by CoSHA and be directly accessible to all halls.
- ❖ Currently, rules regarding Halls date back to 80s and have not been revised with time - with some of them turning impractical. If accepted by Academic Senate, this shall supersede them and serve as their updated version. The strength back then was small enough that issues could be addressed by the Senate which is definitely not the case at present.
- ❖ In an informal discussion with DoSA, he seemed more inclined towards getting a common model constitution accepted by the Senate (Academic) rather than individual Constitutions as decided in an earlier meeting of the Senate.

Issues with the current model Constitution - Constitution of Hall-5

- ❖ The Constitution is not easily accessible and not even legible at some points.
- ❖ The Hall-5 Constitution was approved in March '83 and the overall system has changed drastically since then. Therefore, while some sections are completely out of practice, others are unaddressed.
- ❖ The administrative structure has stark differences from the current models in practice. It mentions bridge secretary (a sport) and photo club secretary but does not have HEC members for Maintenance or common rooms.
- ❖ It does not cater to the needs of other halls in terms of both infrastructure and academic programmes.
- ❖ It lacks the details of handling finances, records and decision making and aspects of election procedure.

References

[IITB Common Constitution](#)

[IITD Common Constitution](#)



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[IITM Common Constitution](#)

[IITKGP Common Rules](#)

Proposed Plan of Action

- ❖ A 5-membered subcommittee of CoSHA shall be constituted and be composed of members with prior experience at Hall administration. The committee shall constitute at least one PG & UG student each, 1 male and female student, and one Senate nominee.
- ❖ The committee shall present convene and present drafts of the model Constitution at each meeting where the chapters/appendices shall be discussed. The meetings of the subcommittee shall be open and informed to all members of the CoSHA.
- ❖ As the complete process may take some time and it might be difficult to review/implement everything together, chapters shall come into effect by consensus in CoSHA. The mandate of a subcommittee formed under CoSHA meeting 18-19/1st (Spl)/Ag-7 could be merged into its mandate.
- ❖ The first clause of this Constitution shall read - "The Hall Constitution of any Hall or Residence shall supersede this Model Constitution."
- ❖ The model Constitution shall not be in direct conflict in any of the existing Constitution.
- ❖ The model Constitution should be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of individual halls, i.e. it shall mention the basic rules, general guidelines and possible options for each Hall to freely choose from as per their need. It shall also include non-binding supplementary details for advisory purposes.
- ❖ The constitution shall clearly define the role and functions of the CoSHA in the functioning of individual Halls. Similarly, it shall lay the guidelines for Hall elections and define the extent of the role of Election Commission, Students' Gymkhana in it.
- ❖ The model Constitution shall be publically available on the Senate website and be added as an appendix of the CoSHA/Gymkhana Constitution.
- ❖ Once accepted by the CoSHA and Students' Senate, the President Students' Gymkhana shall present this model Constitution to appropriate administrative bodies for their approval, after which this Constitution shall serve as by default Hall Constitution for all Halls without a Constitution and a reference on various policies for others.