

Risley Theatre Charter

I. Establishment

- a. **Name.** The name of this organization will be "Risley Theatre".
- b. **Purpose.** The purpose of Risley Theatre is to give anyone in Cornell University or the greater Ithaca community a chance to create, attend, and participate in theatre.
- c. **Decision-making.** Decisions about the policies and resources of Risley Theatre will be made by the Risley Theatre Subcommittee ("the Subcommittee").
- d. **Structure.** Risley Theatre Subcommittee is empowered by the Risley Kommittee ("Kommittee"), the student government body of Risley Residential College ("Risley") to run Risley Theatre, as outlined in the Risley Kommittee Charter ("Kommittee Charter") and in this document. Decisions made by Kommittee always supersede those of the Subcommittee.

II. Membership and Composition

- a. Meetings of the Subcommittee are open to anyone with an interest in theatre.
- b. Membership in the Subcommittee is conferred if any of the following conditions are met:
 - i. Being theatre Staff.
 - ii. Being the designated Show Representative for a production in the current semester.
 - iii. Attaining "endurance". A person gains endurance by attending three consecutive meetings of the Subcommittee or two meetings of the Subcommittee if one is a member of Kommittee as defined in the Kommittee Charter.
 1. Persons who are neither Staff nor a Show Representative in the current semester must declare their intention to the Secretary to gain endurance.
 2. Members who have gained endurance who are not Staff or Show Representatives are "endured members".
 3. Endurance will be lost after two unexcused absences.
 4. Any person may become endured.
 5. Endurance can be revoked by the Subcommittee by a 3/4 vote.
 6. Cornell regulations stipulate that groups may never be less than 51% undergraduate students of Cornell University ("undergraduate(s)"). If a person who is not an undergraduate were to become endured but would leave the Subcommittee to less than 51% undergraduates, then that person does not become endured.
 - iv. Being the Theatre Advisor (Residence Hall Director of Risley).

III. Staff

- a. **The Two Headed Monster Rule.** All Staff positions may be held jointly by a team of two people provided that those two people ran as a team for the position. Such a team will have two votes, and each person will be counted separately in establishing a quorum.
- b. All Staff will answer inquiries about their duties in a timely manner.
- c. **Administrative Staff.** The Subcommittee will have elected "Administrative Staff" positions as outlined below. (Administrative Staff are Staff.)
 - i. No one person may hold more than one Administrative Staff position.
 - ii. **General Manager.** The Subcommittee will have an elected "General Manager". The role of the General Manager is to encourage the flourishing of Risley Theatre and facilitate the effective functioning of all theatre business.
 1. The General Manager will be the representative of Risley Theatre to all other parties, including Risley, Kommittee, and Cornell University.
 2. The General Manager will be responsible for directing communications with other parties.
 3. The General Manager will supervise Risley Theatre operations as well as all other Staff.
 4. The General Manager will be responsible for chairing all Subcommittee meetings, making clear meeting and voting procedures, and posting and setting the agenda.
 5. The General Manager may grant up to two excused absences per person at her discretion per semester.
 - a. Any member of the Subcommittee, or any person seeking endurance may request an excused absence.
 - b. If granted, a single missed meeting will not count for the purposes of gaining or maintaining endurance.
 6. The General Manager will be jointly responsible with the Risley Residential Hall Director ("RHD") for issuing and reclaiming keys to theatre space.
 7. The General Manager will meet regularly with the Theatre Advisor.
 8. The General Manager will ensure all production paperwork is completed in a timely fashion.
 9. The General Manager will assume or delegate all duties not specified elsewhere in this document.
 10. For the purposes of paperwork, the General Manager will be considered the group's "President".
 - iii. **Financial Manager.** The Subcommittee will have an elected "Financial Manager". The role of the Financial Manager is to track the finances of Risley Theatre.
 1. The Financial Manager will keep records of all receipts, spending and allocations.

2. The Financial Manager will keep an accurate summary of the theatre's finances.
 3. The Financial Manager will meet regularly with the Theatre Advisor and/or RHD.
 4. For the purposes of paperwork, the Financial Manager will be considered the group's "Treasurer".
- iv. **Technical Director.** The Subcommittee will have an elected "Technical Director". The role of the Technical Director is to oversee the location and state of repair of all Risley Theatre equipment, tools, and other property.
1. The Technical Director will maintain an inventory of all Risley Theatre equipment, tools and other property.
 2. The Technical Director will regularly assess the condition of theatre infrastructure and property, and keep the Subcommittee apprised of its condition.
 3. The Technical Director will coordinate and plan for upgrades and maintenance to the equipment and infrastructure of Risley Theatre.
 4. The Technical Director will be responsible for keeping a sufficient stock of theatre consumables.
- v. **Secretary.** The Subcommittee will have an elected "Secretary". The role of the Secretary is to record minutes during meetings of the Subcommittee.
1. The Secretary will keep attendance and endurance records for every meeting of the Subcommittee.
 2. The Secretary will send the minutes to the Risley Theatre email list after every meeting of the Subcommittee.
- vi. **Publicity Manager.** The Publicity Manager will engage in general theatre publicity, including Play Proposals, and Season Announcements.
1. The Publicity Manager will be responsible for advertising Play Selection as broadly as possible at least three weeks in advance of the proposal deadline.
 2. The Publicity Manager will keep updated publicity information files.
 3. The Publicity Manager will assist each production in planning adequate, accurate, and timely publicity (if the production requests assistance).
- vii. **Production Liaison.** The Subcommittee will have an elected "Production Liaison". The role of the Production Liaison is to act as a resource to Productions.
1. The Production Liaison will be available to Productions to assist them in utilizing the resources of Risley Theatre and its community and staff to best realize the goals of the production - for example, finding necessary technical assistance.

2. The Production Liaison will be available as a resource to give advice and to assist playwrights, directors, or producers in developing new productions or adaptations for Risley Theatre.
 3. For the purposes of paperwork, the Production Liaison will be considered the group's "Vice President".
- d. **Managerial Staff.** Each elected Administrative Staff position may have "Managerial Staff" to assist them in their duties as outlined below. Each Managerial Staff position will be open to election only at the discretion of Administrative Staff member it would assist. (Managerial Staff are Staff.)
- i. Managerial Staff may be added or removed by under the "Special Election" procedure outlined below.
 - ii. At the beginning of each semester, each Administrative Staff member will decide whether the Managerial Staff positions under her office are available for elections. The first elections of the semester for Managerial Staff will be held no later than the third Subcommittee meeting.
 - iii. If a Managerial Staff position is vacant or if a Managerial Staff member otherwise fails to perform her duties, those duties fall upon the assisted Administrative Staff member to be performed or delegated as soon as it is reasonable.
 - iv. Managerial Staff assisting the General Manager may include the following:
 1. A **Volunteer Coordinator** who will seek volunteers interested in any aspect of theater, will keep updated volunteer contact lists, and will help connect staff and productions with interested volunteers for Risley Theatre events.
 2. An **Outreach Coordinator** who will contact other local theater spaces and theater groups, with the intent of establishing relationships, sharing knowledge, and expanding publicity for local theater.
 - v. Managerial Staff assisting the Financial Manager may include the following:
 1. A **Box Office Manager** who will recruit appropriate people to sell and collect tickets for Risley Theatre productions, as well as:
 - a. Ensure the cashbox is ready for each production;
 - b. Keep an accurate record of attendance, sales, and receipts;
 - c. Ensure the return of the cashbox and all proceeds to the Financial Manager or RHD, and who will advise any pre-sale of tickets.
 - vi. Managerial Staff assisting the Technical Director may include the following:

1. A **Props and Sets Manager** who will be responsible for upkeep and inventory of the Theatre's prop supplies and set pieces, and will provide for their proper use.
 2. A **Costume Manager** who, working in conjunction with the Risley sewing shop manager, will be responsible for upkeep and inventory of the Theatre's costuming supplies, and will provide for their proper use.
- vii. Managerial Staff assisting the Publicity Manager may include the following:
1. A **Graphic Designer** who will create Risley Theatre posters, logos, and other images as the need arises, and will collect images of Risley Theatre for future use.
- e. A **Webmaster** may be hired to maintain Risley Theatre's website. She will update the site and documents as necessary, and may also work with the Archivist to digitize historical records. The webmaster is not responsible for creating content, only facilitating the changes desired by the Subcommittee. The Webmaster position is not a staff position (does not explicitly get a vote and does not count towards quorum).

IV. Meetings and Procedures

- a. **Regular Meetings.** Meetings of the Subcommittee will be held at 6pm in the Central Living Room of Risley on each Sunday in which there are regular classes on the following Monday.
- b. **Agenda.** The agenda for each meeting should be posted by the General Manager at least 24 hours prior to a meeting.
- c. **Quorum.** No allocation of space, funds, equipment or any other theatre business (including matters of attendance and endurance) may be conducted without a "quorum" present.
 - i. A quorum will be defined as a number of persons equal to half the number of Staff.
 - ii. Any and only members of the Subcommittee counts toward achieving quorum.
 - iii. A quorum must contain at least three Administrative Staff members.
 - iv. In the event that the Subcommittee fails to obtain quorum for consecutive two meetings, that matter and the theatre business that remains outstanding will be referred to Kommittee.
- d. **Voting.** All decisions will be made by majority vote, unless otherwise specified.
 - i. Each person who is a "member" of the Subcommittee will have exactly one vote.
 - ii. The Subcommittee may set its own policies in the case where that policy is not governed by this document.
 - iii. **Voting Rules.** Subcommittee business will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised unless otherwise specified or is inconsistent with this document. While it is the duty of every member who has an opinion on the question to express it by her

vote, she cannot be compelled to do so. She may prefer to abstain from voting, though she knows the effect is the same as if she voted on the prevailing side.

1. A motion to overturn a decision is subject to the same rules as was the motion to make the decision unless otherwise specified. (Ex. A 3/4 vote is required to consider an issue Important House Business. A 3/4 vote would be required to overturn that decision.)
2. If a vote is taken, a member has the following options:
 - a. Affirmative Vote, which counts towards passing the motion at hand.
 - b. Negative Vote, which counts against passing the motion at hand.
 - c. Abstention, which is neither counted for or against the motion at hand.
 - i. An Abstention indicates that the member is comfortable ceding her decision-making power to the rest of the body in this instance.
 - ii. An Abstention is not a vote. For example, in a majority vote, if 9 members vote "Affirmative", 6 vote "Negative" and 10 Abstain, the motion passes, as $9/15 > 50\%$.
3. **Dividing the House.** After the vote on a primary motion is taken, a member of the Subcommittee may immediately motion to divide house (secondary motion). If the secondary motion is seconded and passes by a majority, a vote is taken in which all members who voted yes or no on the primary motion are required to vote in the same manner. Those who abstained in the original vote now must vote for or against the motion. No abstentions are permitted during a division of the house. A division of the house may change the original outcome of the vote from passage to failure, or vice versa.
4. **Calling the Question.** During any discussion of a primary motion, any person in the room may motion to call the question (secondary motion). If the secondary motion is seconded, a vote will be taken on the secondary motion. The secondary motion must be passed by a 2/3 vote. Any person in the room may vote on the secondary motion. If the secondary motion passes, the primary motion being discussed will be voted on immediately, without further discussion.
5. **Tabling.** During any discussion of a primary motion, any person in the room may motion table the motion (secondary motion). All motions to table a primary motion must be passed by a 2/3 vote. If the secondary motion passes, the

primary motion will be tabled, and re-addressed at the next Subcommittee meeting.

- iv. A Show Representative will gain voting privileges two weeks prior to her shows time in the theatre and lose her voting privileges the second week after her show closes.
- v. **The Switzerland Clause.** The Theatre Advisor may always abstain, even in the case of a divided house.
- vi. **Important House Business.** Prior to any vote, a Subcommittee member who is also a House Member of Risley as specified by the Kommittee Charter ("House Member") may move to consider the matter under discussion "Important House Business" if she feels the matter at hand can only properly be decided by Risley members and that the issue being decided partially by non-Risley members would be severely detrimental to the theatre or Risley.
 1. If the motion is seconded, a vote will be held. Only members of the Subcommittee who are also House Members may vote.
 2. If the motion passes by 3/4, the matter under discussion will be considered Important House Business, and only Subcommittee members who are also House Members will be eligible to vote on the matter at hand.
- e. **Space.** Subsequent to completion of Play Selection for a given period, requests for use of unallocated theatre space in that period can be submitted and granted at any time with a majority vote of the staff. A 3/4 vote will be needed to revoke space that has been allocated to a production without their approval.
 - i. Prior to Play Selection for a given period, space within that period may only be allocated by a 3/4 vote. This may not occur more than twelve months in advance.
 - ii. A group other than the production to whom the space was allocated may use allocated space only with the permission of Administrative Staff and the consent of the group to whom the space was allocated.
 - iii. **Prime Theatre Weeks.** The last five performance weeks of each semester will be defined as "prime weeks" in Risley Theatre.
 1. No production will be allowed more than one of these weeks, nor may these weeks be allocated prior to Play Selection.
 2. Exceptions to these limits may be made by a unanimous vote of the Administrative Staff at the Play Selection meeting.
- f. **Rent.** The standard rental rate for use of the theatre is \$300 per week. A 2/3 vote will be required to charge a different price.
- g. **Show Representatives.** One representative from each production for the current season will be designated as the "Show Representative" for that production.
 - i. Each Show Representative will be designated in writing by the production it represents.

- ii. The Show Representative will submit weekly reports via email or other mutually agreed upon means to the General Manager before the meeting if the Show Representative will not be in attendance at a regular meeting.
 - iii. Each Show Representative may be required to attend one introductory meeting as scheduled by the Subcommittee, and must attend each meeting during the two weeks before their production and one week after.
- h. **Interim Decisions.** Administrative Staff may make decisions between regular meetings by majority vote of all Administrative Staff as appropriate and in the best interest of the continued running of Risley Theatre. Interim decisions must be publicized as quickly as possible. These decisions will be reviewed at the beginning of the next regular Subcommittee meeting.

V. Elections and Installation of Officers

- a. **Preferential Balloting.** In some circumstances the Subcommittee will conduct votes via "Preferential Balloting" as follows:
 - i. All candidates or options (henceforth "options") are enumerated on the ballot, and a vote is cast by ranking all options from best ("one") to worst;
 - ii. To determine the winning candidate or option:
 - 1. Tally the number of ones for each option;
 - 2. If an option has a majority of ones, that candidate or option is the winner;
 - 3. If no option has a majority, the option with the fewest ones is removed. On each ballot, advance all rankings below the removed option by one rank.
 - 4. Repeat this process until an option has a majority; that option wins;
 - 5. In the event of a tie between two options, the option which had the most ones in the initial election will win; if there is still a tie, a victor will be selected by paper-rock-scissors.
- b. **Elections.** Elections will be held for all the Administrative Staff positions.
 - i. **Eligibility.** Each Administrative Staff candidate must plan to be an enrolled student at Cornell University for the semester in which she would hold office.
 - ii. Elections will be facilitated by the Theatre Advisor and/or her designee (who should be a neutral party who is not running for an office).
 - iii. Elections will be held two weeks before the last meeting of each semester for the subsequent semester.
 - iv. A nomination sheet will be posted two weeks in advance of elections.
 - v. Elections will be publicized for at least two weeks in advance.

- vi. The vote will be held by secret ballot using Preferential Balloting. Each person who is a Risley member and/or a member of the Subcommittee will have one vote.
- vii. All eligible persons will be able to vote any time from the beginning of the Subcommittee meeting (6pm) to the beginning of the Kommittee meeting that night (9pm).
- viii. The meeting of the vote will have a discussion period, and the candidates will be allowed to make a statement, answer questions, and otherwise make clear their qualifications and vision. It is strongly suggested the candidates write a statement and send it to the Risley Hall and Risley Theatre email lists.
- ix. Votes will be counted by the Theatre Advisor and her designees.
- c. **Vacancy.** In the event an Administrative Staff position is vacant, the Subcommittee will appoint a qualified individual to fill it. This process will proceed under the rules for a Special Election.
 - i. The responsibilities of a vacant Administrative Staff position will be undertaken by the remaining Administrative Staff or a designee chosen by the Administrative Staff.
- d. **Special Elections.** In the event of the need for a "Special Election" (such as appointing a Managerial Staff position or filling a Vacancy), the following procedure will be followed.
 - i. Openings will be publicized for two weeks prior to the vote.
 - ii. The Subcommittee will solicit nominations for at least a week beforehand.
 - iii. The meeting of the vote will have a discussion period, and the candidates will be allowed to make a statement, answer questions, and otherwise make clear their qualifications and vision.
 - iv. The vote will be conducted via secret ballot using Preferential Balloting among members of the Subcommittee.
 - v. Votes will be counted by the Administrative Staff.
- e. **Transition.** Administrative Staff will hold their offices from end of the last show of the semester in which the vote was held until the end of the last show of the next semester.
- f. **No Confidence.** In the event a Staff member is negligent, incompetent, or otherwise a serious impediment to the proper functioning of Risley Theatre, a Subcommittee member may move to hold a Vote of No Confidence.
 - i. 1. A motion for a Vote of No Confidence regarding any Staff member will cause a 3/4 vote to be taken among the Subcommittee. If this vote passes, the Subcommittee member in question is removed from her Staff position. A person who feels she was unfairly removed may appeal her case to Kommittee.

VI. Play Selection Procedure

a. Seasons

- i. Proposals will be grouped into two "Seasons" (Fall and Spring), as divided by the Cornell semesters. During each Season, proposals will be accepted for the subsequent Season.
- b. **Advertising**
 - i. Play Selection will be advertised beginning at least three weeks before the Play Selection meeting each semester. The meeting will be held at least two weeks before the end of each semester.
 - ii. Proposal Applications shall be accepted for consideration and feedback as soon as Play Selection is announced.
- c. **Proposal Applications**
 - i. Any individual, student organization, or community organization is eligible to submit a play proposal to Risley Theatre.
 - ii. The Theatre Subcommittee will set a deadline for all applications.
 - iii. Proposals will be submitted electronically through the Risley Theatre Website (www.risleytheatre.org).
 - iv. Proposals are required to include a separate paragraph summary ("Abstract") that does not exceed 150 words and correctly describes the proposed play in as much detail as space permits.
 - v. Proposals can be submitted prior to the deadline for Staff feedback. Feedback may address, but is not limited to: feasibility, logistics, and comprehensiveness.
 1. To request feedback for an application: A separate email should be sent to the General Manager (risleytheatre@cornell.edu) indicating that feedback is requested for the attached application. The Staff will return the applications in no more than three days time. Feedback requests submitted with less than three days to the Play Proposal deadline will not receive feedback.
 2. Upon receiving feedback, Final proposals will still need to be submitted through the Risley Theatre website for final consideration. Suggested staff edits to the Proposal are the responsibility of the author(s); if none are submitted, the original proposal will be considered.
- d. **Selection Process**
 - i. The participants in the Play Selection Meeting include: Administrative Staff, Managerial Staff, and the Advisor. If one of these staff members is proposing a play, they cannot participate in the play selection meeting due to conflicting interests.
 - ii. The Play Selection Meeting will be held within a week of the deadline. Following this meeting, the season will be presented at the next Theatre Subcommittee meeting.
 - iii. The General Manager will facilitate the Play Selection Meeting
 - iv. Once a Season Schedule has been reached it must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Administrative and Managerial Staff.

- v. The schedule will be communicated to the Subcommittee and to all those who submitted a proposal within 48 hours of the Play Selection Meeting.
- vi. The schedule will be presented to Theatre Subcommittee at the next meeting after the Play Selection Meeting. The membership is welcome to give feedback. The Administrative and Managerial Staff will take feedback into consideration and may make changes accordingly, if they see fit.
- vii. The final schedule will be communicated to the Subcommittee and to all those who submitted a proposal. Any changes are done through the process stated in section IV, subsection e.
- viii. Appeals may be made to Kommittee.

VII. Use of Theatre Space and Property

- a. The Subcommittee retains the power to designate the terms of use for its space, equipment and other property. Any production using the space must respect the rules of Risley Theatre, Risley Hall and Cornell University.
- b. Unless theatre space is actively in use by a production, Administrative Staff and their designees will have discretionary use over the space for maintenance activities, training, or other theatre business.
- c. **General Guidelines.**
 - i. **Agreements.** All productions must adhere to all agreements specified by the Subcommittee, including but not limited to the following.
 - 1. All productions must complete the theatre contract prior to use of the Theatre.
 - 2. A "Key Agreement" will be signed by the key-holder for each production group prior to receiving theatre keys.
 - ii. Risley Theatre and all its productions are subject to courtesy and quiet hours.
 - 1. The permission of Kommittee must be obtained in advance to delay quiet hours (this may cause long meetings and grinding and gnashing of teeth).
 - iii. The physical structure of the theatre may not be altered including moving the seats, painting the theatre with anything other than flat black latex paint, nailing into the walls, floors, or ceiling without the permission of the Subcommittee.
 - iv. No hazardous materials may be brought into the Theatre including but not limited to: oil based paints, spray paints, and highly flammable/explosive materials.
- d. **Production Guidelines.**
 - i. Prior to any production's opening, the production group must contact Environmental Health and Safety to inspect the completed set.
 - 1. The production group will complete and submit a Cornell Use of University Property form at least 15 days in advance of the first show.

- ii. The production group will give a "Fire Safety Speech" before each show.
 - iii. Productions will adhere to set dates to move into and out of theatre space, designated by the Subcommittee.
- e. **Fines.** The Subcommittee retains the power to levee fines when necessary on productions using the theatre.
 - i. Fines may only be imposed by a 2/3 vote. Only Staff are eligible to vote.
 - ii. Fines will not exceed the total revenue of a production or the cost of the damage done to the theatre and necessary replacement costs, whichever is most.

VIII. Revisions

- a. Only Kommittee has jurisdiction over reviewing this document, though the Subcommittee is encouraged to provide input in the review process.
- b. Kommittee will review this document once per year with adequate publicity beforehand.

Updated November 2009

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