Carleton College, Office of Intercultural Life

Charter for the Cultural Houses 2026-'27

Mission of the Cultural Houses

The Cultural Houses strive to provide support and foster community for students who have shared interests, and/or students who are passionate about advocating and educating around issues and topics connected to the Cultural House's mission. Cultural Houses are an extension of the Office of Intercultural Life, therefore part of the mission is to create purposeful programming that fosters belonging, builds community, supports academic success, and raises awareness of issues impacting communities our students represent. All Carleton community members are invited to participate in Cultural House programs.

Goals

1. Provide a common space for ongoing discussion and support around issues specifically related to the Cultural House
2. Maintain an inclusive and respectful cultural safe-space for students, faculty, staff and alumni.
3. Provide a shared living experience through which residents of the house learn from one another and build varying perspectives surrounding the House's Culture.
4. Develop educational opportunities and social programming that address a variety of issues relating specifically to Cultural House topics
5. Support the overall mission of the Office of Intercultural Life

OIL House Resident Expectations

Cultural House residents are selected for their commitment to building an inclusive community, promoting the values and culture represented by the House, and maintaining a safe space for students on campus. These qualities form the foundation for fulfilling the mission of the Houses. Residents serve as bridge-builders and educators, and live out this mission by providing intentional programming to the campus.

OIL offers four House communities; Neil House, the Cultural House for Asian Interests (CHAI), La Casa del Sol, and Khéya Kiŋ Ihdúwitayapi. Success within these communities heavily relies upon residents' commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and accountable environment. In addition to the expectations outlined here in this document by OIL and on behalf of Residential Life, the Houses are encouraged to establish their own expectations to nurture and maintain a positive living environment.

Programming Expectations

Cultural House residents are expected to develop programs to help promote and fulfill the Cultural House mission and the mission of OIL. These programs are educational and social opportunities for the campus to explore important themes and topics relating to the House interests as determined by House residents. Houses are required to complete each of the following events, at a minimum, once per term:

- One social event, open to the entire campus community - these are encouraged to be collaborative with another office (besides OIL), academic department, student organization, or other interest house
- One additional event during the year that fits into OIL's Heritage Month programming, the month of choice will reflect the House's interests
- One in-house event for residents only dedicated to community building

Cultural Houses may also be asked to plan, participate in, or support OIL's campuswide programming.

Funding

All houses will have access to a maximum budget of $400 per term to fuel the programming expectations and other activities outlined in the charter. The OIL Supervisor will approve purchase requests and track budget expenditures and balances. The HPM can access funds by submitting a detailed "Purchase & Reimbursement Request" on OIL's webpage. Please begin the conversation about purchase requests at least one week prior to the event, or farther in advance should the items require shipping time. Personal reimbursements must be approved by the OIL Supervisor in advance, and you will need to keep a copy of the transaction receipt to complete an "Expense Report" in Workday.

All purchase and reimbursement requests must be approved by OIL and are not guaranteed. Purchases must adhere to the College's Purchasing Policy. Additionally, OIL will not use these funds for extensive prepared food requests such as restaurant food for community building events or take-out for programs. Funding that goes toward food should be used to support local, Northfield area businesses and not exceed $10-12 per person.

House Program Managers

The House Program Manager (HPM) will help to arrange relevant programming that strives to connect students to the houses and to each other. The HPM will also serve as a liaison between OIL, house residents, and related student and campus groups/offices for the purpose of programming efforts. HPMs are responsible for being leaders within the house, coordinating programming efforts, upholding OIL and Residential Life policies, and helping establish positive routines within the house related to cleanliness and other house ground rules. College policy

cannot be overruled by HPMs or community consensus and will always be enforced as with any other residential living space. The HPM position can be a paid position. More details about the position (compensation, time commitment, duties, etc.) can be found in the Position Description. There will only be *one* HPM assigned per Cultural House Community.

Note: HPMs are not a replacement for Residential Assistants (RA) living in and supporting the houses, and should consider themselves working toward many of the same goals as RAs within these spaces, including programming and community building efforts.

House Program Manager Meetings w/ Staff

The House Program Manager is required to meet weekly or bi-weekly as needed with the designated Supervisor from OIL. These meetings will be determined by the Supervisor from OIL and communicated to the HPMs. If the HPM is unable to attend, another resident will attend on their behalf.

House Community Meetings

House meetings are essential in order to continually update and check in with all house residents. There will be a minimum of **4** house meetings per term. House meetings will be facilitated by the House Program Manager and include any additional information that may need to be provided by the Residential Assistant in the area. These meetings are required by all residents to attend unless a medical, family, or academic obligation occurs. Attendance will be recorded by the House Program Manager, and repeat absences without clear, preemptive communication can be considered as grounds for removal from the house. These meetings should address:

- Programming ideas
- Programming updates: Delegating duties and planning
- Housing concerns: Maintenance, upkeep or social
- Updates from OIL
- Updates from Residential Life

Social Gatherings

Social events outside of programming expectations may be held in the cultural houses so long as the rights of residents and neighbors are respected. All House Communities either exist alongside shared walls with other House Communities, or with communal gathering spaces such as the Multicultural Center or Neil Center Commons. The Multicultural Center and Neil

Center Commons are available to all students during hours of operation and should not be negatively impacted by house gatherings.

Although social events may be held, these Communities should not become known for parties or inappropriate behavior. The residents of the House hosting the event are responsible for the behavior of their guests and for ensuring that all applicable College regulations, OIL expectations outlined here in the charter, and Residential Life policies are respected. House residents will be considered responsible for any damages or policy violations that occur on house property unless a specific offender or offenders are identified and take responsibility.

Residential Life and the Dean of Students Offices are responsible for managing policy and conduct violations from an adjudication standpoint as they do with all campus-wide residential infractions. The OIL Supervisor does have the authority to request that a House be designated as substance-free for the remainder of the term and/or academic year should there be substantial or repeated evidence of substance use violations. *House members may be considered for removal should they violate the substance use policy in a House that has been designated as substance-free.*

Each house should have a conversation about if or how they intend to open their space to the public. This consensus will be developed by the House as part of the “Community Standards” form completed by each House. Consider how you want to use the public, community-accessible spaces in your house and what restrictions are best for all residents. **Prioritizing community and safety within the house should supersede your own social interests.**

Responsibility to OIL

Students living within a Cultural House commit to creating inclusive, accountable, and respectful spaces in and outside of the house environment. Students represent OIL, which requires that they understand and adhere to campus policies and community standards. Residents are expected to participate in house programming and make intentional efforts towards advancing OIL’s mission.

Responsibility to Maintaining the House

Living within a small interest community requires frequent communication regarding how certain spaces are used. House members should create their own systems that allow equitable use and treatment of shared spaces such as the kitchen, bathrooms, living room, and lounge spaces. **At times, this may require individual compromise to ensure the establishment of practices and rules that best serve the entire community.**

The Houses are all serviced by Carleton's Custodial Staff on a weekly basis, but that should not be the only time cleanliness is considered. All shared spaces should be cleaned and maintained regularly - especially the kitchen sinks and refrigerator. Students should communicate with their House Program Manager or RA to learn how to complete a Facilities Work Request if there are larger maintenance or custodial concerns that require attention. When Custodial Staff enter to do their cleaning, all personal items on kitchen counters, within the sinks, inside of the showers, and on the bathroom counters must be removed to allow the staff to clean fully. Custodial staff will not move personal items, so if these spaces are cluttered it will result in an inability to have those spaces cleaned. For all other residential policies and expectations, please explore the Housing and Residential Living Policies and Guidelines page.

Selection Process

The Office of Intercultural Life facilitates the application and selection process of house residents. Students interested in living in a cultural house, including returning residents, must complete an online application in the Spring term prior to the academic year in which they wish to live in the house. OIL staff and HPMs collaboratively select residents and if necessary, implement a waitlist. In the event of a vacancy during the academic year, OIL will offer placement to students on the waitlist. Selection and placement of residents into cultural houses is subject to policies of the Office of Residential Life and Housing.

Procedures for Removal

Carleton College policy violations will be handled as they would if you were in any other location on campus or in any other residential living space. Residential Life and the Dean of Students Office will oversee their existing processes for fact finding and adjudication - OIL will not be involved in those procedures. Should there be a situation that requires removal of a resident - as determined through the Carleton College conduct system - OIL will respect that decision but does not have influence over the decision itself.

In situations where the Carleton College conduct system does not conclude a need to remove a resident, but their behavior is in violation of the mission and goals of both the House and OIL as outlined here in the charter, then OIL may make the motion for removal. These communities must remain safe for all residents, committed to building spaces where all feel welcome, and engage in programming developed by the House - if these principles are not being upheld by a resident then the OIL Supervisor will initiate the following steps.

1. A conversation with the resident about their behavior or lack of engagement. The OIL Supervisor and resident will work together to create a development plan with tangible steps to guide the student going forward.

2. Should the resident continue to exhibit negative or disruptive behaviors, or is unable to follow through with the development plan, then the OIL Supervisor will meet with the student again to work through the situation and revise the development plan if need be.

3. If there is not demonstrable change in accordance with the revised development plan then the OIL Supervisor will begin conversations with the student about removal.

These steps are a formal outline so that students have an understanding of what the process may look like. Professional staff will always attempt to prioritize development opportunities and encourage positive participation within the given community - removal should be considered a last resort but a possibility nevertheless.

Cultural House Institutional House Agreement

As a Cultural House resident, I agree to adhere to the rules and expectations described in this charter. I understand that in order to maintain residency in a Cultural House, I am required to contribute to the common goals of the community. Failure to function within the set of guidelines listed here in the House Charter, those established by the community, or College policy could result in the loss of Institutional Housing or reassignment into other, available college housing.

_____
Resident Name (Please print)

_____ _____
Resident Name (Signature) Date