

*Charter introduced and voted upon by the Board on Tuesday, September 6, 2022*

*9/6/22 Vote: 7-0-1 in favor with one abstention (VPG Dressler)*

### **Student Government Board Renters First Task Force**

#### **Vision:**

To make Pitt a premier university for student renters.

#### **Mission Statement:**

By listening to and acting upon students' concerns, ensuring every renter has the best support available, and partnering with city and community officials to guarantee that all renting practices adhere to applicable laws and regulations, the Renters First Task Force strives to better all aspects of off-campus living.

#### **Membership:**

1. This Task Force shall be composed of no more than 12 members.
2. Each member has equal voting rights and can cast one vote.
3. In case of a tie vote, the Chair will cast the tie-breaking vote.

#### **SGB Representatives:**

1. Vice President of Governance
  - Will serve as the Chair of the task force
  - Should the chair choose to, they may delegate this role to a Vice-Chair.
    - i. This role includes: scheduling and leading meetings, sharing information during public meetings, directing issues to the correct person(s)/organizations, and keeping the website up to date on all work being done.
2. Community and Governmental Relations Chair
  - Will serve as the Vice-Chair of the task force

#### **Interested Students:**

1. Any student currently, previously, or potentially renting.

**Relevant Student Organizations:** *An all-call email will be sent to any relevant SORC registered organizations. The below organizations have a mission consistent with the goal of this task force.*

1. Panhellenic Society (Panhel)
2. Interfraternity Council (IFC)
3. American Civil Liberties Union Club (ACLU)

#### 4. Speckless South Oakland

#### **Defining Membership:**

1. Student:
  - a. Any student who is now, previously, or potentially renting.
  - b. Must attend at least three meetings per semester unless the Chair grants a specific exception.
2. Organization
  - a. Any organization that represents students who rent or has a vested interest in the mission or vision of this Task Force.
  - b. Must attend at least three meetings per semester unless the Chair grants a specific exception.
  - c. Must have at least 1 representative at each meeting.
  - d. Must be SORC recognized unless otherwise granted by the Chair.

#### **How to join:**

1. For relevant groups, please email [rentersfirsttaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:rentersfirsttaskforce@gmail.com) with the following information:
  - Name/Organization
  - Reason of interest for joining
  - Personal goals/Goals within the organization
  - Current living status, renting, on-campus, etc.
2. The Chair will decide on admittance into the Task Force in collaboration with the Vice Chair.

#### **Suggested Timeline:**

##### **Within a semester:**

- Set up a system of communication among community organizations and local officials with the goal of creating a working network to make actionable change.

##### **Within a designated amount of time specified through task force voting:**

- Create action items for the University, initiated by this task force with input from the student body at large via surveys or other methods.

#### **General Goals:** *Additional goals shall be made during the meeting process*

1. Safety
  - a. As with any location housing student renters, safety is a top concern. This task force will focus on partnering with city officials, Pitt admin, the Pitt Police, and community members to proactively ensure safety for all students at all times of the day. Everyone has the right to feel secure when walking to and from campus.

2. Communication
  - a. This task force will function as a point of contact to collect, relay, and address student concerns. By compiling concerns - some of which may be unique but many of which will be repetitive in nature - we will increase the efficiency and clarity of discrete problems, which will, in turn, help our partners (including SGB, Pitt administration, city officials, student organizations, and community members) implement powerful solutions.
3. Advocacy
  - a. Currently, Oakland ranks among the worst places to rent in Pittsburgh. By actively listening to all student concerns and working to improve conditions, including landlord response times, fair renting practices, and more engaged public works proactivity, we aim to make off-campus life an exceptional experience for all Panthers.
4. Awareness
  - a. Many student renters are unaware of their rights and protections when renting. Additionally, many do not know what to look for when signing a lease or what landlords have historically good or bad reputations - based on data. Because of this, this task force aims to implement regular town halls, post flyers, and share recommendations to safeguard students from any predatory or retaliatory practices.
5. Community
  - a. According to 2020 census data, 75% of renters in Oakland are students. As such, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of the neighborhood and good neighbors to long-term residents. We intend to host cleanups, 'Oakland Walks,' and community talks to facilitate an improvement in the relationship within the greater community.
6. Enforcement
  - a. One of the key issues with landlords in Oakland is a lack of compliance with essential health, safety, and sanitation practices. It is essential that we partner with local enforcement agencies to ensure that all regulations are followed in order to provide the highest quality living conditions for student renters.

**Expiration:**

This charter shall go into effect on September 7, 2022, and shall expire on April 21, 2023, with the potential to renew at the final SGB Public Meeting. Any further work set out by the task force will be fully transitioned to the incoming Board and President.