

RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

PREAMBLE

We, the resident students of the University of Maryland, in order to give representative voice to our interests and concerns within the University community, do hereby form our Residence Hall Association, as the governing body of all on-campus students under the following articles:

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

Section 1: Role and Purpose

(1) The Residence Hall Association (hereafter referred to as RHA) shall undertake and serve the following purposes and roles on behalf of all students who reside on the University of Maryland, College Park campus:

- A) Best serve and reflect the interests of resident students and allow them to convey their concerns, ideas, and opinions regarding resident issues.
- B) Guide and advocate for policy revision, initiation, and implementation within the Departments of Resident Life, Residential Facilities, Dining Services, Transportation Services, and all other departments that affect on-campus students on a proactive and reactive basis.
- C) Provide leadership, a unified voice, and a venue for common concerns among the various residential communities to be communicated to the leadership of other student communities, University administration, and other appropriate parties.
- D) Provide opportunities for leadership skill development for all members.
- E) Promote community development on the local community level.

ARTICLE II: ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Section 1: Authority

(1) The RHA fully claims all privileges, all prerogatives, and priority influence over matters that affect the residents of the University of Maryland campus residence halls, especially matters affected by the Departments of Dining Services, Resident Life, Residential Facilities, and Transportation Services.

- A) The RHA has the responsibility to advocate for or oppose policies of the aforementioned departments through the writing and passing of resolutions.
- B) The RHA shall receive budgetary/policy presentations from the aforementioned departments.

Section 2: Affiliations

- (1) The RHA shall maintain recognition by an affiliation with the Student Government Association (SGA) of the University of Maryland through the Stamp Student Union Center for Campus Life's OrgSync.
- (2) The RHA shall maintain affiliation with the following regional and national organizations:
 - A) The National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH)
 - B) The Central Atlantic Association of College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH)
 - C) The National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH)

Section 3: Non-Discrimination

- (1) The RHA shall not discriminate among its membership on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, or on the basis of the exercise of rights secured by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Section 4: Divisions of RHA

- (1) There shall be five types of membership in the RHA:
 - A) General constituency, or all undergraduate students who reside on the University of Maryland, College Park campus
 - B) Hall and area council, otherwise known as Resident Councils (see Article VI, Section 2)
 - C) General Senate (see Article IV, Section 3)
 - D) Senator-at-large (see Article IV, Section 4)
 - E) Executive board (see Article III, Section 2)
- (2) The RHA shall have four bodies:
 - A) The executive board (see Article III)
 - B) The Senate (see Article IV)
 - C) Committees of the Senate (see Article V)
 - D) Hall and area councils (see Article VI)

ARTICLE III: EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1: Purpose

- (1) The executive board shall exist to guide the organization and serve all members by fulfilling the following purposes:
 - A) Exercise carefully considered and inclusive leadership and guidance.
 - B) Work with the committees of the Senate to uphold, enforce, and act upon the resolutions passed by the Senate.

- C) Effectively execute the specific capacities of individual executive board members in accordance with the Bylaws to this Constitution.
- D) Represent opinions adopted by the Senate via resolution in all professional and public conversations.

Section 2: Executive Board Members

- (1) The executive board shall consist of eight members; one in each of the following positions:
 - A) President
 - B) Vice President
 - C) Student Groups and Organizations Liaison (SGOL)
 - D) Marketing and Technology Officer (MTO)
 - E) Programming and Community Development Coordinator (PCDC)
 - F) Student Fees Coordinator (SFC)
 - G) National Communications Coordinator (NCC)
 - H) Chief of Internal Affairs (CIA)

(2) The president and vice president shall be the only elected representatives on the executive board (see Article X, Section 1); all other members shall be appointed by the president and vice president.

ARTICLE IV: SENATE

Section 1: Purpose

(1) The RHA Senate shall have legislative power and shall dictate RHA policy through the passing of resolutions.

Section 2: Senate Membership

- (1) Senate members shall be as follows:
 - A) President
 - B) Vice President
 - C) General Senate members (otherwise known as Senators)
 - D) Senators-at-Large

(2) All Senate members maintain the ability to vote on matters arising in the Senate, excepting in specific instances as outlined in the RHA Standard Operating Procedure.

Section 3: Senators

(1) Senators represent students living in the individual residence halls and communities on the University campus.

- (2) Senators shall be elected before the first Senate meeting of fall semester by their constituents (see Article X, Section 2).
- (3) Representation in the Senate will be established annually according to the process outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.
- (4) Senators shall serve as liaisons between their Resident Councils and the Senate.

Section 4: Senators-At-Large

- (1) Four Senators-at-large shall be appointed by the vice president in accordance with the process in the Bylaws to this Constitution.
- (2) Senators-at-large shall each represent all on-campus students.
- (3) Specific responsibilities of senators-at-large are outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.

Section 5: Senate Operating Procedure

- (1) The operating procedure for Senate meetings shall be outlined in the RHA Standard Operating Procedure; this procedure shall be divided into two parts:
 - A) General Senate Operations
 - B) Standards of Attendance and Debate Protocol

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

Section 1: Purpose

- (1) The RHA standing committees exist to foster discussion on University policies and services and allow for exploration of methods for improving campus life.
- (2) Standing committee members shall join with university administrators in the careful analysis, in-depth consideration, and formulation of recommendations for improvements to, issues with, and ideas for new policies and services.
- (3) Committees may submit recommendations to the Senate in the form of resolutions.

Section 2: Types of Committees

- (1) There shall be two types of committees serving within and reporting to the Senate:
 - A) Standing, or permanent committees
 - B) Ad hoc committees

- (2) An ad hoc committee may be created through resolution on an as-needed basis; ad hoc committees may become eligible for standing committee status as outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.
- (3) There shall be at least six standing committees:
 - A) The Dining Services Advisory Board (DSAB)
 - B) The Resident Life Advisory Team (ReLATE)
 - C) The Residential Facilities Advisory Board (ReFAB)
 - D) The Sustainability Committee of Maryland (SCOM)
 - E) The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - F) The Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (DIACom)

Section 3: Committee Membership

- (1) All senators and senators-at-large shall serve on a standing committee as outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.
- (2) Each standing committee, with the exception of SCOM and DIACom for which there is no established corresponding department, shall have a department representative who is the director of the department with which the committee will work:
 - A) DSAB shall meet with the Director of Dining Services
 - B) ReLATE shall meet with the Director of Resident Life
 - C) ReFAB shall meet with the Director of Residential Facilities
 - D) TAC shall meet with the Director of Transportation Services
- (3) Committees shall be led by a chairperson and vice chairperson as outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.

ARTICLE VI: HALL AND AREA COUNCILS

Section 1: Purpose

- (1) Resident Councils represent the voice of their individual constituencies.
- (2) Resident Councils shall be the primary governing bodies in the hall or area they represent.
- (3) Resident Councils shall carry out the following tasks in order to promote community development:
 - A) Planning and implementing local community programming
 - B) Advocating for community based policy initiatives

Section 2: Resident Council Membership

(1) Each Resident Council shall include the following positions, elected at the beginning of each academic year, with responsibilities outlined in the Bylaws:

- A) President
- B) Senator(s), with the number determined by the process outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution
- C) Vice President of Communications
- D) Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion
- E) Vice President of Programming and Community Development
- F) Vice President of Sustainability

If any of the positions A-F are vacant after the elections process, these positions may be appointed by the council.

(2) Resident Councils may choose to elect or appoint Floor Representatives or Building Representatives.

(3) Resident Councils may create and appoint additional positions for that academic year. These positions may only be created and filled after positions A-F in Article VI, Section 2, Clause 1 are filled.

(4) Members may be appointed to hold more than one position after elections have taken place.

(5) Each Resident Council shall have an advisor; specific responsibilities shall be outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.

ARTICLE VII: ADVISOR

Section 1: Appointment

(1) The advisor to RHA for the Department of Resident Life shall be the Associate Director of Resident Life for Student and Staff Development or a designee within the Department of Resident Life.

Section 2: Role of Advisor

(1) The advisor shall serve as the primary liaison between RHA and senior administrators of the Department of Resident Life.

(2) Specific responsibilities for the advisor are laid out in the Bylaws to this Constitution; however, the advisor shall not serve as, or assume the roles or tasks of, any executive board member nor have any formal vote or veto.

ARTICLE VIII: ACCOUNTABILITY

Section 1: "Member in Good Standing" Policy

- (1) All executive board members, senators-at-large, and Resident Council members must meet the requirements of the "Member in Good Standing" policy.
- (2) The "Member in Good Standing" policy contains the following stipulations:
 - A) Members must be in current compliance with:
 - i. The University of Maryland Code of Student Conduct
 - ii. The University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity
 - iii. The Department of Resident Life Residence Hall Rules
 - B) Under no current sanction of:
 - i. Disciplinary Probation from the Judicial Programs Office
 - ii. Residence Hall Probation by the Rights and Responsibilities Office
 - C) Members must not be convicted of felony offenses during their tenures in office
 - D) Members must be currently registered and enrolled undergraduate students living on-campus at the University of Maryland, College Park
 - E) Members must meet the minimum standards of attendance as outlined in the RHA Standard Operating Procedure
- (3) Any member who fails to meet these requirements must either resign or face impeachment proceedings.
- (4) Any Senate member who fails to meet these standards will be denied voting rights in the Senate.

Section 2: Impeachment

- (1) RHA members may face impeachment, according to the process outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution, for:
 - A) Failing to maintain Member in Good Standing status
 - B) Conduct unbecoming to the organization

Section 3: Dereliction of Duties

- (1) An executive board member or standing committee chairperson may face removal from office by a vote of no confidence, according to the process outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution, for:
 - A) Gross failure to carry out the duties of their office
 - B) Failure to comply with minimum attendance standards as outlined in the RHA Standard Operating Procedure

ARTICLE IX: FINANCE

Section 1: Funding

- (1) The RHA shall be funded annually through student room fees paid to the Department of Resident Life.
- (2) The RHA shall have the option of obtaining outside funding for additional initiatives approved by the Department of Resident Life.
- (3) The RHA shall not require any dues from its members.

Section 2: Executive Board Budget

- (1) The executive board budget shall be used for the basic purposes of office supplies, operating expenses, conference travel, and communications.
- (2) The executive board shall compose and establish a primary budget in accordance with annual goals and objectives.
- (3) The executive board shall determine all allocations in the budget.
- (4) The budget shall be made available to the Senate at the first meeting of each semester.

Section 3: Resident Council Budgets

- (1) Resident Councils shall each receive a proportional fraction of the RHA budget to use for community development. The proportion of funding each council will receive shall be equal per capita
- (2) Resident Councils shall have discretion over the use of these funds in accordance with University procurement policies and their own respective Constitutions.

ARTICLE X: ELECTIONS

Section 1: Election of RHA President and Vice President

- (1) Election of the president and vice president shall occur during an April Senate meeting.
- (2) Election procedures shall be outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.
- (3) In the event that the position of either president or vice president becomes vacant, a special election shall be held according to the process outlined in the Bylaws to this Constitution.

Section 2: Election of Resident Council Members

- (1) Resident Council members are elected by the residents in their respective hall or area.
- (2) Resident Council elections shall occur by the third week of every fall semester at a time selected by the executive board in conjunction with the RHA advisor.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

- (1) Amendments to this Constitution may be presented in resolution form to the Senate and must be approved by a four-fifths majority of Senate voting members.
- (2) Amendments to the RHA Bylaws may be presented in resolution form to the Senate and must be approved by a three-fourths majority of all voting members.
- (3) Amendments to the RHA Standard Operating Procedure may be presented in resolution form to the Senate and must adhere to the following stipulations:
 - A) Amendments to Part I: General Senate Operations must be approved by a three-fourths majority of all voting members.
 - B) Amendments to Part II: Standards of Attendance and Debate Protocol may only be proposed at the first Senate meeting of the fall semester and must be approved by a two-thirds majority of all voting members.
 - i. Exceptions to this rule are outlined in Part II.

ARTICLE II: EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- (1) In the event of the changing of University of Maryland policies and other external circumstances that affect RHA's ability to perform any provision of the Constitution or Bylaws while RHA does not have an elected Senate body, the Constitution and Bylaws are able to be amended on a temporary basis according to the following stipulations:
 - A) Any organizational changes that are required by the University must be implemented immediately.
 - B) Additional organizational changes that must be considered to maintain the effectiveness of the organization can be made by the President, in consultation with the Advisor and Vice President.
 - C) Any change that is made must be reported to the Senate at the first Senate meeting following the change and summarized in a document that is distributed to the body.
 - D) These changes remain in effect for a duration decided by the President, in consultation with the Vice President and Advisor, and are not to exceed the length of the President's term.
 - E) When the Senate is back in session, resolutions regarding the implemented changes may be brought to the Senate, so long as the stipulations of these resolutions do not require the violation of university policy.

Residence Hall Association Constitution, as amended:

October 14, 2003
September 30, 2008
October 14, 2008
October 28, 2008
November 11, 2008
December 2, 2008
February 3, 2009
February 17, 2009
April 22, 2012
April 23, 2013
April 19, 2016
May 8, 2018
August 31, 2019
August 22, 2020
June 30, 2021