

RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION

The Voice of On-Campus Students

Designed and Compiled by Vivian Flanagan, Marketing and Technology Officer



PRESIDENTIAL LETTER

Scott Cronin

Hello everyone,

I hope your semester has ended gracefully. Finals can be very taxing, mentally and physically, so you should all be taking advantage of your ability to rest now. For some that may be easier said than done but I promise you will thank yourself. So – here we are. Our first fully in-person semester came and went much quicker than I anticipated. What happened? As a community, our attention was pulled in so many different directions. Whether it be the Guilford Woods project or the questionable sacrifices to Testudo, there was always something to talk about. This poses a very important question: what was RHA focused on this semester?

The first thing that we had to do was recruit a body! Going into the semester, we only had the executive team, and even with that, we had some vacancies. We did not allow that to keep us from building an extremely strong set of councils all over campus. We hosted multiple events, attended the First Look Fair, and even drove around on a golf cart giving out RHA merch and freezy pops. That was definitely my

favorite part of recruitment. Golf cart antics aside, after we recruited our body and held council elections, we jumped right into the work. Within the first two weeks of having a body, we elected a new vice president. When I say the work did not stop, I mean it did not stop. It was amazing. We had meetings with all of the wonderful directors we work with, scheduled committee times, and then sent our senators to work. And work they did.

At Senate, we had some amazing guest speakers, participated in long and constructive debates, and passed several inventive resolutions. Whether it be student fees, trash cans on the Washington Quad, or the Terp to Terp program, RHA has worked on many important initiatives on campus. Even though there is a lot of work left to do, I am very proud of what we have accomplished thus far. Even more than that, I know that next semester will be even better. We will continue to build community, we will continue to advocate for students, and most of all, we will continue to lead selflessly.

Thank you all for a wonderful semester and I look forward to what we will accomplish – together.



VICE PRESIDENTIAL LETTER

Jason Spizuoco

This Fall RHA was excited to hold its first in-person Senate since March of 2020. While the campus community did its part to allow us to return to a sense of normalcy, the RHA Senate was put in a bit of a difficult situation. Nearly every single member of the voting body had no experience with in-person procedures. With that in mind, I was a bit nervous upon my election for the Vice President role early this fall. I knew I was surrounded by an incredible executive team, but barely any of us knew how to hold an in-person Senate. I myself only had a semester and a half under my belt.

But none of that worry ever came to fruition. The very first Senate I chaired I knew we had an amazing group of senators willing to take the time out of their day to help improve the campus around them. With multiple resolutions originating outside the executive board, I have been more than impressed with the body's willingness to prepare their own legislation. I was also impressed with the depth of participation our senators showed. I've often witnessed RHA Senates dominated by a few outspoken senators while some don't speak for weeks on end. This year that is not the case. Week in and week out I see near complete participation from the senators, both in debate and committee/council reports. As such, we hear the widest set of opinions and viewpoints possible to ensure RHA acts in the best interest of the campus as a whole.

I am proud of RHA's commitment to sustainability, something that was central to my Vice Presidential platform. The Senate was pleased to work with Lisa Alexander, the Coordinator of Sustainability Programs in ResLife on promoting the Terp to Terp program. I know there are a few more sustainability projects in the works that I will personally ensure are completed by the end of the year, as they are important to me personally, not just as the Vice President.

Shoutout to all of the senators, the executive team, our advisor Aaron Hood, and our DBK reporter, Victoria Stavish. They have all done a tremendous job assisting me in running a smooth Senate, and I couldn't do it without them! Here's to a restful winter break and a successful Spring Semester!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** Presidential Letter
Scott Cronin
- 2** Vice Presidential Letter
Jason Spizuoco
- 3** About RHA
Student Fees Update
Aiden Wechsler
- 4** Senate
Legislation
- 5** Senate
Committees
- 6** Senate
Committees (Continued)
- 7** Programming
Sarah Dresh
ACE Competition
Winners
- 8** Organizational
Collaborations
Alexandra Figaro
Regional Report
Hannah Klein
- 9** Executive Board
- 10** Executive Board
Thank You

“
We hear the widest set of opinions and viewpoints possible to ensure RHA acts in the best interest of the campus as a whole.

ABOUT RHA

RHA is the primary student-governing body that represents the interests of the over 12,500 resident students at the University of Maryland. Each of **RHA's 15 hall and area councils** works to represent the interests of their hall or area's residents and to build community through fun and engaging events. Representatives from each council, called **Senators**, convene biweekly at **RHA Senate meetings** to **debate and vote on campus-level legislation**. RHA prides itself on its ability to effectively communicate student concerns to university administrators. **RHA regularly serves the Departments of Resident Life, Residential Facilities, Dining Services, Transportation Services, and the Office of Sustainability in an advisory capacity**. The organization also advocates for resident-driven policies and priorities on behalf of students living on campus. RHA is committed to empowering its student leaders to work to facilitate community development and campus engagement. It hopes to nurture a generation of leaders, ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

STUDENT FEES

RHA is grateful to every department for their dedication to transparency and giving students the opportunity to provide feedback on the student fee process. As Student Fees Coordinator, I have two goals whenever I am meeting with directors: making sure that any fee increases are in the best interests of students, and focusing on the long-term fiscal health of the departments to make sure that they don't raise fees every year. By coordinating with Student Government Association (SGA) and Graduate Student Government (GSG), RHA has created a united front to deal with the most significant issues revolving around mandatory student fees.

Thank you and have a great winter break,
Aiden Wechsler
Student Fees Coordinator

Athletics

RHA has partnered with SGA and GSG to unite in addressing the Athletics Student Fee, which continues to be the highest paid by all students. Proposed solutions include student opt-out, modeled after other Big 10 school's optional fee program.

Transportation

RHA is encouraging the Department of Transportation Services to raise revenue from other sources besides student fees to improve Shuttle Bus services and avoid constant fee increases year after year. As those who attended Senate know, our efforts resulted in DOTS presenting RHA, SGA, and GSG with a list of initiatives it hopes will raise revenue in the future and lower costs. RHA is extremely grateful for the initiatives and supports their implementation. These challenges are not easy and won't be solved by the end of the year, but having these conversations with the directors alerts them to students' desire for change.

STAMP Student Union

As part of the Committee to Review Student Fees, President Scott Cronin voiced RHA's support for a requested increase in the STAMP Student Union Fee. The requested increase will be used to support 80% of the salaries for the Coordinator for Immigrant and Undocumented Students and Coordinator for Latinx Student Involvement and Advocacy in addition to a budget for their positions

University Health Center

RHA chose to support the University Health Center's request for a higher fee in order to add more staff and STI testing, as the need for these essential services has dramatically increased this semester amidst the enduring COVID-19 pandemic.

SENATE

JMS001F A Resolution to Approve the Standard Operating Procedures for the 2021-2022 Academic Year (14-0-0)

RHA's Standard Operating Procedures, or SOPs, are a compilation of logistic and technical rules that dictate how each senate meeting is run; every year the Vice President of RHA must review and, if necessary, propose changes to the document. At this meeting of the Senate, newly elected vice president, Jason Spizuoco, presented the following major changes to the SOPs: in order to begin voting procedures, the Senate would need a three-fourths majority rather than two-thirds. Changes were made to distinguish the difference between in-person and online procedures in case a COVID outbreak required a return to virtual Senate. The new SOPs included the option to yield to redundancy or present individuals during speaking time and to rescind amendments after they were introduced.

NWM001F A Resolution to Encourage Wearing Masks on Public Transportation (17-3-1)

NWM001F is a bill authored by senator Nicholas Marks of the Cumberland Hall Council. The bill pertains to the DOTS voicing RHA's support for mask wearing while riding on UMD buses. As such, the bill supports pre-existing rules to wear a face covering while riding UMD bus transportation and does not establish a new initiative. Debate mostly consisted of concerns raised for the necessity of having the campus vaccination rate in the bill. It was eventually decided that the campus vaccination rate statistic helps to provide context for the false sense of immunity vaccinated students may feel and thus the need to remind UMD affiliates to wear a mask on transportation services. Furthermore, the addition of a study regarding mask efficiency was placed into NWM001F stating that masks can be "79% effective in protecting against COVID-19."

AYS001F A Resolution Supporting Department of Resident Life's Terp to Terp Program (20-0-2)

This resolution, authored by Senator-at-Large Alexa Stimpson, President Scott Cronin, and Vice President Jason Spizuoco, voices RHA support of the Terp to Terp program's bid to the Sustainability fund that would provide funding for employee wages and expansion of program services. RHA will also promote the collection program and storefront periodically at the request of the director. Since 2003, the Department of Resident Life (DRL) had run the "Trash to Treasure" initiative which would collect and redistribute discarded student donations at the end of each year. This program allowed for 10,000-16,000 pounds of electronics, appliances, décor, and more to be redistributed throughout the Washington DC area preventing excess waste from reaching landfills. During the summer of 2021, the Trash to Treasure program was transitioned into the Terp to Terp program with the goal of evolving the program to redistribute goods within the university community to students in need. The Terp to Terp program would allow students to donate items throughout the year instead of just at the end of the academic year.

NWM002F A Resolution Discouraging the Department of Transportation from Raising the Mandatory Shuttle Bus Fee (9-6-1)

The resolution saw Senators take hard stances on the subject of raising the Mandatory Student Fee from the Department of Transportation (DOTS). Fees are always a hotly debated topic in the Senate, but seeing such great debate outside our regularly scheduled fee presentations is always a positive. Debate had to be extended twice in order to fully hear everyone's stances and arguments, a rare Senate occurrence. Nearly every senator spoke at one point, giving RHA confidence that all voices are being represented here on campus. In the end, the resolution passed by a margin of just one vote, signaling the closest vote in several years.

SENATE



Dining

Chair: Amal Verma

Vice Chair: Nikki Hamidi

Dining Services Advisory Board's (DSAB) focus is to improve the dining experience with the **Department of Dining Services** at all three of their current dining halls, as well as the convenience stores. Over this past semester, there was an original ingredient shortage with some of the menu items, so the committee increased the signage to alert residents of this issue. We also increased communication with students through social media platforms. Furthermore, towards the end of the semester, the DSAB team began talks to launch a social initiative promoting campus social involvement. Our plan was to section off an area in each of the dining halls where people could go to socialize with others while having their meals.

Diversity and Inclusion

Co-Chairs: Jack Doggett, Quentin Hogland

The **Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (DIACom)** is centered around inclusivity and appreciating diversity, thus the committee sought out to execute campaigns that would respect this focus alongside **Ben Beltran, Coordinator of the Common Ground Multicultural Dialogue Program**. First, the committee discussed the No Hate In Our Home campaign which aims at preventing hateful speech or images from being displayed in various areas of the university. Next, DIACom offered assistance to the Inclusive Language campaign which educates against biased speech. The committee plans on holding tabling events for this campaign in the spring semester. Finally, DIACom started a sexual assault awareness campaign and challenged every hall council to hold some sort of event for this campaign. For example, Elkton Hall posted flyers and QR codes with resources for reporting instances of sexual assault. While some Residence Hall councils have yet to do such events, DIACom plans to continue this campaign into the spring as well.

Police

Chair: Arav Patel

Vice Chair: Aquib Mokaddem

The **Resident and Police Committee (RPC)** is a joint partnership between RHA and the **University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD)**. Our goal is to facilitate clear lines of communication between students and UMPD in order to cultivate a safer campus community. This semester, RPC organized outreach events, like the Doggies and Donuts Meet and Greet at Easton Hall, in order to spread the word of UMPD's goals, and educate others on ideals of safety and safe choices.

Residential Facilities

Chair: Reese Artero

Vice Chair: Crystal Niu

The **Residential Facilities Advisory Board (ReFAB)**, overseen by **Director of Residential Facilities Andrea Crabb**, has worked diligently this semester to develop projects improving the quality of Resident Life. Firstly, ReFAB has worked to develop a stronger foundation for the laundry contract which would allow students to pay a one-time fee at the beginning of the semester rather than \$3 per load. In addition to the laundry contract, the ReFAB team has also worked to develop more ideas for sustainable green roofs on more residence halls throughout campus as well as more "hammock havens" as seen in the Cambridge Community. We are also working to provide more amenities for those in the South Hill Area, creating more cohesive spaces for promoting student socialization and leisure.

SENATE

Resident Life

Chair: Devorah Sklute

Vice Chair: Natalie Yeager

The **Resident Life Advisory Team (ReLATE)** focuses on students' wellbeing and happiness in the Residence Halls, constantly searching for ways to make Terps' experiences in dorms better. This past semester, ReLATE worked alongside **Valronica Scales, the Director of Resident Life**. With Valronica, the committee was able to discuss future renovations, like a new South Hill lounge in Caroline Hall. Additionally, the ReLATE team considered campus issues that were affecting students' mental health, such as October's jarring anti-abortion demonstration in Hornbake Plaza. Continuing past RHA initiatives, Valronica provided updates regarding the writing of laundry costs into students' tuition to end payments made each time laundry machines were used. This initiative greatly plays into ReLATE's mission of making dorm living to be as enjoyable as possible for students. Finally, the ReLATE team discussed recent incidents of destruction of Residence Halls and theft from the dining halls and brainstormed possible mitigation efforts.

Sustainability

Chair: Sam Briggs

Vice Chair: Ben Goforth

The **Sustainability Committee of Maryland (SCOM)** discusses and creates initiatives to promote sustainability on campus in collaboration with **Lisa Alexander, Coordinator of Sustainability Programs**. The SCOM team promoted sustaining initiatives, such as Tailgate Ambassadors and volunteering with the Sustainable Ocean Alliance. Finally, SCOM suggests how to maintain sustainability in planning events, purchasing supplies, and continuing sustainable initiatives.



Transportation

Chair: Nicholas Marks

Vice Chair: Reese Artero

The **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** liaises to UMD'S **Department of Transportation Services (DOTS)** through our partnership with **DOTS Director, David Allen**. This semester has been quite productive: TAC passed two resolutions! The first piece of legislation encouraged the continued wearing of masks on public transit. The second resolution demanded that DOTS abstain from raising the mandatory shuttle bus student fee. This semester, we also held a discount U-Lock Sale in front of STAMP Student Union. Additionally, we launched social media campaigns regarding bike safety and proper scooter parking. Our biggest goal for next semester is to work with the bike advocacy groups to continue to look into passing legislation that contributes to the construction of bike lanes on campus.



PROGRAMMING

This semester, RHA welcomed back in-person programming after a year of representing their constituents virtually. Despite this change, our councils successfully planned numerous events and helped strengthen their respective communities through programming.

Throughout the semester, our councils kept the interests of their constituents in mind by hosting numerous events designed at receiving resident feedback. These events included a "Cookies with the Council " program hosted by NHAC and a town hall planned by Cumberland Hall.

Several councils held Halloween and fall-themed events. Centreville Hall and Pyon-Chen Hall hosted a successful "Hallofest" party that featured dancing, snacks, and a Halloween movie. La Plata and Elkton Halls implemented fun door decorating competitions, and Cumberland Hall hosted a Thanksgiving canned food drive.

As winter neared, councils shifted to planning events for the holidays and finals. SHAC, La Plata, and Ellicott Halls planned de-stress and mental wellbeing events for their residents, complete with hot chocolate, gingerbread houses, and therapy dogs!

This semester, RHA also continued its ACE Competition program to encourage engagement and accountability among members. Here are this semesters' winners!

ACE COMPETITION WINNERS

Overall Member

Aquib Mokaddem, La Plata

Council

South Hill Area Council (SHAC)

President

Livi Carey, SHAC

VP of Communications

Nora Mirarabshahi, SHAC

VP of D&I

Jack Doggett, Elkton

VP of Programming

Lily Fleischmann, Cumberland

VP of Sustainability

Shayna Kieley, Cumberland

Senator

Aquib Mokaddem, La Plata;
Quentin Hoglund, Ellicott



COLLABORATIONS

This semester, the RHA successfully collaborated with the **Student Government Association (SGA)**. On September 14, of this year, **RHA sponsored SGA's annual Safety Walk** which was created to help identify possible safety hazards in and around campus. An estimated 50 people attended the event from members of SGA, campus organizations like RHA, officials from the university's administration and **University of Maryland Police (UMPD)**. Attendees split into three groups and found on-campus hazards like areas with minimal lighting, inaccessible areas, and litter, in hopes to improve the health and safety of those areas as UMPD catalogued safety recommendations.

On November 17, SGA passed a resolution to **create a committee chaired by the Speaker Pro Tempore**, consisting of **members of GSG and RHA to compile university evaluations of departments and administration** to determine what improvements can be made to better the student experience. This committee has not yet been executed, but will meet sometime next semester.

On December 16, SGA passed a resolution **condemning the university's decision to continue in-person final exams despite the rising COVID-19 cases**. RHA avidly supported this resolution and, along with the Graduate Student Association, sent a letter to President Pines asking for all finals to be moved online for the health and well-being of the students.

REGIONAL REPORT

The **University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) RHA** is a member of regional and national level organizations. The **National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH)** is at the national level. The **Central Atlantic Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH)** is the regional level and a part of NACURH. Affiliations with CAACURH and NACURH allow UMD to communicate with other universities, gaining a new perspective on programming and other initiatives to be executed back at UMD.

National Communications Coordinator (NCC) Hannah Klein and **RHA President Scott Cronin** each attend a bi-weekly regional meeting with other NCC's and presidents to maintain consistent communication. This year, the annual **CAACURH Regional Leadership Conference (RLC)** was held online from November 5-6. In preparation for RLC, NCC Hannah Klein developed a bid for the **Student Award for Leadership Training (SALT)** on behalf of UMD. The bid can be viewed here: ter.ps/saltbid21.

At the conference, voting representatives from **UMD RHA** and the **Jim Henson Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH)** were in attendance. This included NCC Hannah Klein, RHA President Scott Cronin, and NRHH **Director of National Affairs (DNA) Abbey Warns**. In addition to voting representatives, RHA **Student Fees Coordinator (SFC) Aiden Wechsler** and **Ellicott Hall Senator Quentin Hoglelund** were in attendance. At the conference, **UMD and NCC Hannah Klein** were recognized for their contributions in the joint boardroom (a joint voting space) and received a pin during the closing ceremony.



EXECUTIVE BOARD



Scott Cronin, *President*
 Year: Sophomore
 Major: Government and Politics



Jason Spizuoco, *Vice President*
 Year: Senior
 Major: Aerospace Engineering



Michael Purdie, *Chief of Internal Affairs*
 Year: Senior
 Major: Journalism



Vivian Flanagan, *Marketing and
 Technology Officer*
 Year: Junior
 Major: Public Health Science



Sarah Dresh, *Programming and Community
 Development Coordinator*
 Year: Sophomore
 Major: Government and Politics



Alexandra Figaro, *Student Groups
 and Organizations Liaison*
 Year: Senior
 Major: Public Policy

EXECUTIVE BOARD



Hannah Klein, *National Communications Coordinator*
Year: Sophomore
Major: Government and Politics



Aiden Wechsler, *Student Fees Coordinator*
Year: Sophomore
Major: Government and Politics



Alexa Stimpson, *Senator-at-Large*
Year: Sophomore
Major: Finance



Devorah Sklute, *Senator-at-Large*
Year: Sophomore
Major: Government and Politics



Kylee Robertson, *Senator-at-Large*
Year: Junior
Major: Psychology

THANK YOU!

RHA Advisor: Aaron Hood

Senate Committee Directors: Lisa Alexander, David Allen, Andrea Crabb, Valronica Scales, Colleen-Wright Riva. Ben Beltran, Chief Mitchell & Sgt. Hoas

Hall/Area Council Advisors: Evan Kiser, Aspen Shackleford, Amanda Bogdan, Chris Carter, Katie Wilhelm, Tori Eichenlaub, Kayla Hudson, Nikki Charleston, Markell Saunder, Tiffany Harris, Jorge Almonte-Florimon, Gabriela Cabrera, Charmayne Wyche, Ray Ward, Olivia Murphy, Karlana Walker

Shared Governance Partners: Student Government Association, Graduate Student Government
 All Departments of Resident Life Staff