

University of Michigan

Residence Halls Association Constitution



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# **Article 1. Purpose**

## **Section 1. Vision**

1. To successfully create an environment where all University of Michigan Students have a decent place to live where they feel safe and welcome. In doing so, we hope to remove some of the stress of college and promote a productive and happy college experience.

## **Section 2. Mission**

1. To create an enjoyable living experience for all residents at the University of Michigan through programming, representation, and promotion of personal, educational, and financial support programs.

## **Section 3. Commitment to Inclusion**

1. The Residence Halls Association is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in its membership or activities.
2. Upon joining the organization, all members agree not to undermine the purpose or mission of The Residence Halls Association.

# **Article 2. Student Government in University Residence Halls**

## **Section 1. University Standing**

1. The Residence Halls Association operates as a Sponsored Student Organization. RHA is sponsored by the Housing Department of the University of Michigan.

## **Section 2. The Residence Hall Association**

1. The Residence Halls Association, hereinafter RHA, shall consist of the RHA Assembly, the RHA Executive Board, RHA Committees, and registered Hall Councils, or Conjoined Hall Councils. RHA shall be the sole student government in the residence halls.

## **Section 3. Source of Power**

1. All power under this constitution is derived directly from non- residence staff students living in university residence halls, hereinafter, residents. These students are the constituents of RHA. Residence halls shall be defined as both those buildings that automatically levy RHA dues, and those University-owned buildings that choose to affiliate with RHA by having all residents pay RHA dues.

## **Section 4. Governments**

1. There shall be one democratically elected governing hall council in university residence halls. The residents of each residence hall (or by mutual agreement, the residents of

multiple independent residence halls with a combined population of under 350 residents) shall have power to democratically elect one hall council to represent and benefit residents of their residence hall(s), in accordance with their and RHA's constitution. Each Hall Council or Conjoined Hall and Multicultural Council, hereinafter referred to synonymously, shall be governed by its own constitution voted upon by the residents of their residence halls and shall democratically elect its own leaders. Each Hall must register with the RHA Executive Board annually to be recognized. The RHA Assembly shall serve as the central student government in the residence halls and the actions of the RHA Assembly are binding on all residents and other components of the Residence Halls Association.

## **Article 3. RHA Executive Board**

The RHA Executive Board shall be composed of those individuals who are democratically elected by the RHA Assembly and the administrative advisors. The President shall be a dues paying constituent of RHA. Elected Executive Board members who are not due paying constituents of RHA are not eligible for any form of compensation.

### **Section 1. President**

1. The President is the elected chief executive officer of RHA and President of the student body in the residence halls.
2. The President speaks with authority of the organization and all students of the residence halls.
3. The President is head of the RHA Executive Board and oversees all Executive Officers.
4. The President serves as chair of the RHA Assembly.
5. The President shall serve as Chair of the Rates Special Committee Ex-Officio.
6. The President shall fulfill any other duties assigned by the Assembly.

### **Section 2. Executive Vice President**

1. The Executive Vice President is the elected chief operating officer of RHA.
2. The EVP shall oversee the operation of the RHA Assembly including overseeing all Assembly Representatives by maintaining their credentials, responsibilities, and attendance.
3. The EVP shall serve as parliamentarian of the RHA Assembly and Executive Board.
4. The EVP shall serve as chair ex-officio of the Board of Committee Chairs.
5. The EVP shall fulfill the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
6. The EVP shall fulfill any other duties assigned by the President or Assembly.

### **Section 3. Vice President for Finance**

1. The Vice President for Finance is the elected financial officer of RHA.
2. The VPF shall, with the President and Executive Vice President, develop a balanced budget for RHA to present to the Assembly.

3. The VPF shall maintain the budget and accounts of the RHA Assembly, Executive Board, and Committees.
4. The VPF shall present the general budget of RHA to the RHA Assembly monthly.
5. The VPF shall serve as chair ex-officio of the Allocations and Budget Committee.
6. The VPF shall fulfill any other duties assigned by the President, Executive Vice President, or Assembly.

#### **Section 4. Vice President for Internal Relations**

1. The Vice President for Internal Relations is the elected internal communications officer of RHA.
2. The VPIR shall work to ensure clear lines of communication and information sharing between all components of the Residence Halls Association.
3. The VPIR shall be the official liaison to Councils.
4. The VPIR shall coordinate and execute a method of communication to check in on the hall councils throughout the academic year.
5. The VPIR shall serve as chair ex-officio on the Programming and Service Committee and is therefore responsible for the planning and execution of all RHA events.
6. The VPIR shall fulfill any other duties assigned by the President, Executive Vice President, or Assembly.

#### **Section 5. Vice President for Outreach Initiatives**

1. Develops and approves external communications responsible for all marketing projects (unless otherwise determined by the Executive Board).
2. The VPOI shall serve as chair ex-officio on the Marketing Committee
3. The VPOI shall collect and manage council interest and produce council marketing (only for elections, hall councils will still create their own marketing): including but not limited to interest forms, Festifall outreach, and coordinate council formation at the beginning of the year and shall work with the Executive Vice President to coordinate council registration (creation of elections marketing).
4. The VPIR shall handle all media relations for the organization including the active maintenance of the RHA social media accounts and the Website.
5. The VPIR shall fulfill any other duties assigned by the President, Executive Vice President, or Assembly.

#### **Section 5. Vice President for National Relations**

1. The Vice President for National Relations is the elected national relations officer of the Residence Halls Association.
2. The VPNR shall represent the University of Michigan RHA by attending all business meetings and conferences of the local, state, regional, and national residence hall affiliates, including but not limited to, Great Lakes Affiliate of College and University

- Residence Halls (GLACURH), and National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) and other conferences that RHA may be affiliated with.
3. The VPNR shall select, prepare, and lead delegations to the annual GLACURH and NACURH conferences, and any other conferences, delegation must include the other Executive Board.
  4. The VPNR shall serve as member ex-officio on the Conference Arrangements and Bidding (CAB).
  5. The VPNR is the elected records officer, historian, and clerical officer of RHA.
  6. The VPNR shall coordinate all correspondence for the organization, as delegated by other Executive Board officers and the Assembly.
  7. The VPNR shall fulfill any other duties assigned by the President, Executive Vice President, or Assembly.

### **Section 6. Administrative Advisor**

1. The Administrative Advisor(s) (hereinafter Advisors) are appointed by University Housing to work closely with the RHA Executive Board.
2. Advisors shall advise the Assembly and Executive Board on pertinent matters and provide general support to RHA.
3. Advisors shall speak to university and housing policies.
4. Advisors shall fulfill additional responsibilities as outlined in the Bylaws.

## **Article 4. RHA Assembly**

The RHA Assembly, hereafter “the Assembly”, shall be the central component of student government in the residence halls. The Assembly shall be composed of representatives democratically elected by the residents of each residence hall (or by mutual agreement, multiple residence halls). Assembly representatives shall be residents of the hall(s) from which they are elected with the exception of Returning Representatives. The actions of the RHA Assembly shall be binding on all residents and any other components of the RHA.

### **Section 1. RHA Assembly Representatives**

1. **Allocation of Seats.** Seats shall be allocated such that each residence hall has 2 representatives.
2. **Election of Representatives.** Representatives of each building are elected by the residents of the building they represent, with the exception of returning representatives elected through the process outlined in Bylaws (Article 3, Section 4). Any resident of a building may serve as a representative of that building to the RHA Assembly. All Assembly Representatives must have a valid credential form, as well as complete the other responsibilities outlined in Bylaws (Article 3, Section 2), giving them power to speak and vote for their building.

3. **Returning Representatives.** When a returning representative is selected and they have completed the credential form, they are considered a full RHA Assembly Representative for the following session, once they take the Oath of Assembly Representatives. Between the time they are elected to be a returning representative, and their swearing in the following session, they are considered a RHA Assembly Representative for the current session, with all the responsibilities, requirements, and privileges, except for voting rights. Once a Returner Representative is selected to their position, they may not run for a different position in their Hall Council. In the event that there are vacant spots on the Hall Council post-election day, the Returner Representative may take on a second role, in addition to their responsibilities as a Returner Representative.
4. **Recall of Representatives.** A representative may be removed either by the RHA Executive Board for not meeting representative responsibilities or by the building of the representative through written notice to the RHA Executive Board. A removed representative is expected to be replaced by the council of the representative pending removal in a timeline outlined in the Hall Council constitutions as indicated by the bylaws.
5. **Responsibilities of Representatives.** Additional responsibilities of representatives shall be established in the Bylaws of RHA to be agreed upon becoming a credentialed representative by each RHA assembly member.
6. **Appointment of Temporary Representatives.** Procedures for temporarily filling representative vacancies shall be established in the bylaws of RHA.

## **Section 2. Powers of the Assembly**

1. Pursuant to limitations imposed in other sections of this constitution, the powers and functions of the RHA Assembly shall be as follows:
  - 1.1. **Rules.** To make and sanction rules governing residents.
  - 1.2. **Dues.** To assess and set dues for all residents.
  - 1.3. **Appropriations.** To appropriate the student dues and all other funds of the organization.
  - 1.4. **Lobbying.** To lobby on behalf of residents.
  - 1.5. **Projects.** To originate projects of concern to residents.
  - 1.6. **Elections.** To hold elections for the Executive Board.
  - 1.7. **Appointments.** To make appointments of representatives of the residence halls to the University of Michigan, Housing, and other groups as necessary.
  - 1.8. **Maintain Affiliations.** To remain registered with our regional and national affiliates.
  - 1.9. **Compiled Code.** To make and maintain a compiled code of legislation, including this constitution, the RHA bylaws, resolutions, and other legislation governing this organization and its actions.



### **Section 3. Speaking and Voting Rights**

1. **Definition of Speaking and Voting Rights.** Speaking rights shall be defined as being able to speak to the assembly during any resolution, motion, debate, and any work brought in front of the assembly. Voting Rights shall be defined as being able to vote on any issue brought through the assembly and the right to make motions as seen fit.
2. **Rights of Representatives.** Credentialed representatives for each building exercise full speaking and voting rights on the RHA Assembly. Each representative has an equal vote.
3. **RHA Executive Board.** The RHA Executive Board exercises speaking rights on the RHA Assembly but does not exercise voting rights. In case of a tie, the chair shall have the duty to cast the tie-breaking vote. In the case of Executive Board elections or impeachment/removal votes, all elected members of the Executive Board shall exercise voting rights, in addition to their speaking rights, with the exception of the member acting as chair.
4. **Non-Voting Representation.**
  - 4.1. **Student Residence Staff.** There shall be seats allocated such that each building may elect one student residence staff member of that building to exercise speaking but not voting rights on the RHA Assembly on behalf of that building.
  - 4.2. **Other Non-Voting Representation.** All residents of University-owned housing shall be given the ability to address the RHA Assembly at each meeting. Residents of University-owned housing may only address the Assembly outside of designated residents' times by being yielded to by credentialed representatives.

### **Section 4. Procedures**

1. **Quorum.** A quorum must be present for each meeting. Quorum is defined as a majority of the voting seats in the Assembly, excluding vacancies, as well as at least one representative from a majority of member residence halls.
2. **Open Meetings.** Meetings of the RHA Assembly shall be open and a means for constituents to address the Assembly shall be provided. However, by decision of the chair or by majority vote of the Assembly, the meeting may be closed to non- Assembly members.
3. **Notice of Meetings.** Meetings of the RHA Assembly shall be publicly announced and held on a regular schedule. The first meeting of each session shall be held no later than the first Thursday of October.
4. **Rule of Order.** RHA Assembly meetings shall be governed by the rules of the most recent copy of Robert's Rules of Order except where otherwise provided for in the compiled code of RHA or when special rules of order are adopted. The Executive Vice President shall serve as parliamentarian during Assembly meetings and enforce these rules.

## **Section 5. Senior Regalia**

1. Graduating seniors that have served in RHA as a representative and/or an Eboard member for 2 or more years shall receive (by request) one graduation stole or graduation cord, in addition to an item of merchandise selected by the Programming and Services Committee.

## **Article 5. RHA Committees**

RHA shall maintain standing committees and appoint special committees to accomplish specific interests of residents or pursue actions of the organization.

### **Section 1. Standing Committees**

1. The powers, function, and membership of standing committees shall be established in the Bylaws. Standing committees are overseen by the Executive Vice President. The following shall be standing committees of the Residence Halls Association.
  - 1.1. Board of Committee Chairs
  - 1.2. Allocations and Budget Committee
  - 1.3. Conferences and Bidding Committee
  - 1.4. Marketing Committee
  - 1.5. Sustainability, Housing Advocacy, and Dining Efforts Committee
  - 1.6. Programming and Services Committee

### **Section 2. Special Committees**

1. Special committees may be established by a majority vote of the RHA Assembly or by executive appointment from the RHA President or Executive Vice President. Special committees shall have a defined objective. The powers, functions, creation, discharge, and membership of special committees shall be established in the Bylaws.

## **Article 6. Hall Councils**

Each residence hall, or by mutual agreement multiple residence halls, shall have one student government of the building(s) to represent and work on behalf of the residents of that building(s).

### **Section 1. Sovereignty and Jurisdiction.**

1. One Hall Council of each residence hall (or by mutual agreement multiple residence halls) shall be recognized as the sovereign student government in that residence hall. Hall Councils have jurisdiction over affairs limited to their particular building(s). Hall Councils are subject to acts and rules of the Assembly.

### **Section 2. Recognition**

1. Hall Councils must register annually with the RHA Executive Board to be recognized pursuant to the bylaws' rules. Upon recognition, Hall Councils receive all benefits due to

them, including dues and representation. Once recognized, Councils must remain as they registered until the end of the academic year. Under no circumstance are Councils permitted to combine/separate before the end of the current session.

### **Section 3. Requirements.**

1. Hall Councils must operate under a constitution approved by residents of the building and the RHA President or EVP and have a democratically elected executive board. Hall Councils must sign an agreement of responsibility annually before being officially recognized. This agreement will be distributed to councils by the EVP to be returned and submitted to the EVP by the first RHA Assembly meeting.

## **Article 7. Initiative, Referendum, Recall**

### **Section 1. Initiative and Referendum**

1. Any action within the authority of the Residence Halls Association may be taken directly by residents through the initiative and any act of the Assembly may be put to vote of all residents through referendum.
  - 1.1. **Petition.** The exact legislation or act desired for both initiative and referendum shall be clearly stated in a petition signed by at least 500 residents.
  - 1.2. **RHA Action.** In case of initiative, a petition from the residents to the Assembly must be filed with the RHA Assembly through the petition section of the RHA website, and has garnered at least the minimum number of signatures, the Assembly may either adopt the proposed legislation or submit the question to the residents in a referendum. The Assembly may choose to propose alternate legislation in a referendum. In case of referendum, the petition must be filed with the RHA Assembly by way of the RHA President or Executive Vice President, the matter is put directly to a referendum vote of residents.
  - 1.3. **Binding.** The results of the referendum shall be binding, and the Assembly shall make no decisions contrary to the referendum for the duration of the session.
  - 1.4. **Timeline and Resubmission Process.** Upon creating a petition, residents will also submit a proposed timeline for how long their petition will remain active on the RHA website. The EVP will decide on a case-by-case basis how long the petition will be available for signatures based on the proposed timeline and the petition itself. In order to submit a petition, the petition must be significantly altered by the resident, enough so that it is essentially a new proposition. Otherwise, identical petitions can only be reconsidered when a new session of RHA has begun.

### **Section 2. Recall**

1. **RHA Assembly Representatives.** An Assembly Representative may be recalled by written notice from the President of the Hall Council of the building(s) of the

Representative, by petition signed by a majority of the representative's Hall council members, or through any process established in the constitution of the Hall Council of the building(s) of the Representative, or by the RHA Executive Board.

2. **RHA Executive Board Member.** Procedures for recall and removal of Executive Board Members shall be outlined in the Bylaws.
3. **Hall Council Members.** Hall Councils shall establish procedures for recall of their members in their own constitutions.

## **Article 8. Amendments**

### **Section 1. Amendment by Assembly**

1. **Assembly Representative.** Any credentialed representative may initiate amendments in the form of legislation to be put before the Assembly. The proposed amendments in the form of legislation must be first reviewed by the Executive Vice President (EVP). The EVP may choose to endorse the proposed amendments, to not endorse the amendments, and/or submit an alternate proposal with the original amendments. The proposed amendments are put before the Assembly for vote and may be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Assembly Representatives present.

### **Section 2. Amendment by Executive Board**

1. Any elected Executive Board member may initiate amendments in the form of legislation to be put before the Assembly. The proposed amendments in the form of legislation must be first reviewed by the Executive Vice President (EVP). The EVP may choose to endorse the proposed amendments, to not endorse the amendments, and/or submit an alternate proposal with the original amendments. The proposed amendments are put before the Assembly for vote and may be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Assembly Representatives present.

### **Section 3. Amendment by Initiative**

1. Amendments may be proposed by a petition signed by at least 3/4 of an affiliated Hall, Multicultural, or Conjoined Council stating the exact proposed amendments and submitted to the RHA Assembly through the RHA President or Executive Vice President. The proposed amendments are adopted by 2/3 vote of the Assembly present.

### **Section 4. Effective Date**

1. Upon passage by the Assembly or referendum, amendments are effective immediately unless stated otherwise in the approved legislation.

### **Section 5. Center for Campus Involvement**

1. The EVP must submit any changes to the constitution within 24 hours of the change being approved by the assembly.

## **Article 9. Ratification**

1. The Constitution and Bylaws must be ratified at the beginning of each session of the Residence Halls Association. This shall be done by a voice vote and shall require a two thirds supermajority.