

# **RHA CONSTITUTION**

## **PREAMBLE**

### **Charter**

We, the residents of the Michigan State University Residence Halls, in order to promote communication and cooperation between the various living units; to provide maximum representation for the residents of the various halls to the university community; to formulate, recommend, maintain and review policies and regulations within the Residence Halls; and to promote services and activities on campus, hereby establish this organization known as the Residence Halls Association (herein, RHA) and do ordain and establish this constitution.

### **Non-Discrimination Clause**

The Residence Halls Association shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, ethnicity, country of origin, religion, color, disability status, socioeconomic status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/characteristics/expression, size, or veteran status and shall seek to provide fair and equitable service and representation to all members of RHA and the MSU community.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Residence Halls Association is to represent the residents of Michigan State University objectively, protect the rights of residents and to provide a voice for the concerns of our residents. We strive to achieve this by assisting hall organizations with publicity, legislation, and funding, and by providing valuable services and opportunities through our programs. Through these initiatives, RHA is committed to continuously improving the on-campus experience at Michigan State University.

Last updated: 2/21/18

## **ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. A person shall be considered a member of RHA and be accorded all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of membership, as defined by the RHA By-Laws, if that person is living in one of the residence halls, as recognized by Residential Education and Hospitality Services (herein, REHS), and has paid and not received a refund of that semester's RHA fee.
- Section 2. The RHA General Assembly shall be empowered to assess a \$25.00 fee each semester, to be collected from students living in the residence halls, as recognized by REHS, in accordance with university financial procedures. Refunds of this fee may be obtained in a manner prescribed by the university regulations regarding fee collection by student organizations.
- Section 3. Every representative, executive, and employee, except contracted individuals must be a member of RHA, for the purpose of accessibility and interaction with the membership, during Fall and Spring semesters or unless otherwise designated by this Constitution or RHA By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE II - LEGISLATIVE**

- Section 1. Each residence hall, as recognized by REHS, and its corresponding hall government shall be entitled to one voting seat in the RHA General Assembly.
- Section 1.1 A hall government shall be recognized and take its seat in the General Assembly only after it has met the structural requirements for hall governments outlined in Article VI.
- Section 1.2 RHA shall recognize five neighborhoods with the assistance of the Residence Education and Housing Services. Those regions shall be North, East, South, Brody, and River Trail.
- Section 2. Each neighborhood will be entitled one Black Caucus Voting Seat and one Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender\*, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and Ally+ Caucus (herein LGBT\*QQIAA+) Voting Seat.
- Section 2.1 Each Council of Racial and Ethnic Student Group (herein, CORES) and Council of Progressive Students (herein COPS) group will be entitled to one voting seat.
- Section 2.2 A Caucus/CORES/COPS group shall be recognized and take its seat in the General Assembly only after it has met the structural requirements for constituent groups outlined in Article VI.

- Section 3. At-Large Voting Seats may be assigned to the General Assembly based on the requirements outlined in the RHA By-Laws.
- Section 4. The voting seats shall make up the General Assembly, which possesses the legislative authority of the Residence Halls Association.
- Section 4.1 The General Assembly shall have jurisdiction over the constitution and By-Laws, which includes all departments, programs, allocation, expenditures, appointments, contracts, and elections, as defined by the RHA By-Laws.
- Section 4.2 The General Assembly shall, through election, mandate the executive authority to the RHA president, as defined in Article III.
- Section 4.3 Any formal resolution of the General Assembly, providing it does not conflict with this constitution, shall be enforced, upheld, and recognized as RHA policy until such time that it is amended or repealed by the General Assembly.
- Section 5. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern meetings of the General Assembly.
- Section 5.1 The RHA General Assembly shall conduct regular weekly meetings during Fall and Spring Semesters.
- Section 5.2 Quorum shall be defined as a majority of the General Assembly in good standing. Vacant seats or seats with suspended voting rights shall not be used to calculate quorum.

### **ARTICLE III – EXECUTIVE**

- Section 1. By election, the executive authority of RHA shall be vested in the position of RHA President for the purpose of administration and organization of the Association, and the execution of RHA policy set forth by the General Assembly.
- Section 1.1 The president shall be the official spokesperson for all activities, resolutions, and policies of the General Assembly and RHA, as defined by the RHA By-Laws.
- Section 1.2 The president shall be the designated signee on all RHA contracts, accounts, and resolutions on behalf of the General Assembly, unless signing power is delegated.
- Section 1.3 The president, failing to maintain good membership and confidence, or failing to execute the duties, requirements, and responsibilities of RHA President, as defined by the RHA By-Laws, may be impeached by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. A president may be removed by a second two-thirds vote of the General Assembly one week after their impeachment.
- Section 2. By election, there shall be the position of RHA Vice-President (VP) for the purpose of assisting the president in the administration and organization of RHA, and the execution of RHA policy set forth by the General Assembly. The Vice-President shall share the Executive Authority with the President.
- Section 2.1 The RHA Vice-President shall be the "president-in-waiting" assuming the presidency in the case of temporary or permanent absence of the president. Powers of the presidency shall be transferred to the VP upon written notification by the President or if the President is physically incapable, by the RHA Advisor. In the case of temporary absence, the length of the absence must be specified. All General Assembly and Executive Board members must be notified within twenty-four hours of the transfer of power.
- Section 2.2 The Vice-President shall be charged with the function of the General Assembly, the formation and operation of committees, the dispersion of information to members, and the other responsibilities as defined in the RHA By-Laws. The VP shall be charged with the duties of making sure that recognized hall governments and in-hall caucuses operate within the rules set forth in the RHA By-Laws and Constitution, supervising the operation of the General Assembly, the maintenance of the legislative affairs of RHA, maintaining relations between and within all residence hall organizations, running Leadership Roundtables, and acting as a

liaison between residence hall organizations and RHA, according to the executive authority invested in them by the president, as defined by the RHA By-Laws.

- Section 2.3 The Vice-President, failing to maintain good membership and confidence, or failing to execute the duties, requirements, and responsibilities of RHA Vice-President as defined by the RHA By-Laws, may be impeached by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. A vice-president may be removed by a second two-thirds vote of the General Assembly one week after their impeachment.
- Section 3. By election, there shall be the position of Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) for the purpose of being the liaison between all CORES/COPS/Caucuses. The CDIO shall share the Executive Authority with the President.
- Section 3.1 The CDIO shall be charged with putting on diversity/sensitivity training sessions to the General Assembly. The CDIO must also advise all CORES/COPS/Caucuses, help them maintain active status with RHA, and advertise all events pertaining to their groups.
- Section 3.2 The CDIO, failing to maintain good membership and confidence, or failing to execute the duties, requirements, and responsibilities of RHA CDIO, as defined by the RHA Bylaws, may be impeached by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. A CDIO may be removed by a second two-thirds vote of the General Assembly one week after their impeachment.
- Section 3.3 If the CDIO position becomes vacant, the President must assume their duties until the position is filled.
- Section 4. By appointment there shall be the position of Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff shall be charged with hiring, supervising, managing payroll, and shall oversee training of all non-elected staff according to the executive authority invested in them by the President, as defined by the RHA By-Laws. The Chief of Staff shall share the Executive Authority with the President.
- Section 4.1 The RHA Chief of Staff, failing to execute the duties, requirements, and responsibilities of RHA Chief of Staff, as defined by the RHA By-Laws, may receive a vote of no confidence by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. A Chief of Staff may be removed by a second two-thirds vote of the General Assembly at the next scheduled meeting after their vote of no confidence.

- Section 5. By appointment, there shall be the position of RHA Chief Financial Officer for the purpose of assisting the president in the administration and organization of the Association, and the execution of RHA policy set forth by the General Assembly.
- Section 5.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall be charged with the function of the Association's taxation, allocation, and expenditure procedures, the operation and monitoring of all RHA accounts, and the completion of RHA budgets, according to the executive authority invested in them by the president, as defined by the RHA By-Laws. The Chief Financial Officer shall share the Executive Authority with the President.
- Section 5.2 The RHA Chief Financial Officer shall be the designated signee on all RHA, government, and caucus accounts on behalf of the General Assembly in the event RHA is selected to host a conference (such as, but not limited to, NACURH or GLACURH). The conference chair/co-chairs and their financial officer shall have exclusive signatory power on that account, upon approval of 2/3 of General Assembly. The Chief Financial Officer shall sign transfers from any RHA account into the Conference Account.
- Section 5.3 The RHA Chief Financial Officer, failing to execute the duties, requirements, and responsibilities of RHA Chief Financial Officer, as defined by the RHA By-Laws, may receive a vote of no confidence by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. A Chief Financial Officer may be removed by a second two-thirds vote of the General Assembly one-week after their vote of no confidence.
- Section 6. By appointment, there shall be the positions of executive assistant for the purpose of assisting the executives in the administration and organization of RHA, and the execution of RHA policy set forth by the General Assembly.
- Section 7. The President shall have the authority to make an Executive Decision regarding official positions of RHA, temporary appointments, expenditures, or positions of the RHA Executive Board.
- Section 7.1 In order to make an executive decision, the president must consult at least two other executives having tried to contact all the executives before making the decision.
- Section 7.2 Decisions involving official positions and expenditures shall be made only in the case that the General Assembly cannot address the issue in a timely manner, and shall be open for General Assembly Executive Decision Review.

## **ARTICLE IV - ADVISORS**

Section 1. RHA shall have an advisor from REHS who shall aid and guide the General Assembly in the fulfillment of RHA's mission. The REHS Advisor shall be selected by, and serve a term of office designated by the Director of REHS.

Section 1.1 RHA may have assistant advisors from REHS, who shall aid and guide the operations of specific RHA programs and departments. The assistant advisors shall be selected by, and serve a term of office designated by the REHS Advisor with the approval of the RHA president, and operate under the supervision of the General Assembly's REHS Advisor.

## **ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES**

Section 1. Standing Committees shall be established by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly and perform functions delegated to them by the General Assembly.

Section 1.1 Standing Committees shall be defined in the RHA By-Laws, which shall outline the committee's jurisdiction and govern its operation.

Section 2. Special Committees shall be created by a two-thirds approval of the assembly, and shall perform functions prescribed to them by the General Assembly.

Section 2.1 Special Committees shall be defined in the RHA By-Laws, which shall outline the committee's jurisdiction and govern its operation.

Section 2.2 Special Committees may be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

Section 3. Ad-Hoc Committees shall be created by a motion from the General Assembly or by an Executive Decision, and shall perform functions prescribed to it by guidelines approved by a motion of the General Assembly.

Section 4. All Committee members shall be appointed by the Vice-President. The President, Vice-President, and RHA Advisors shall be ex-officio members of all committees.

Section 5. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern meetings.

## **ARTICLE VI -HALL GOVERNMENT AND CAUCUSES**

- Section 1. RHA shall recognize one hall government for every residence hall, as defined by REHS, unless otherwise designated in the RHA By-Laws.
- Section 1.1 To be recognized, a hall government must have a constitution outlining officers and their selection, legislative and executive operations, allocation procedures, and a non-discrimination clause, which has been ratified by a simple majority of that hall's residents participating in an open ballot.
- Section 1.2 To be recognized, a hall government must have a designated contact person, RHA Representative, financial officer, and any other officers to meet other requirements outlined in the RHA By-Laws and within their own constitution.
- Section 2. A recognized hall government shall receive an allocation from RHA for the purpose of operation of the hall government and groups, and for programming for the residents of that hall.
- Section 2.1 To enable a recognized hall government to receive its allocation from RHA, the hall must file the appropriate accounting documents, as defined by the RHA By-Laws, to RHA.
- Section 2.2 For a recognized hall government to receive its allocation from RHA, the hall government must adhere to the Attendance Policy as outlined in the Standing Rules of Order Rule 4.
- Section 3. RHA shall recognize the neighborhood caucuses with the assistance of the REHS.
- Section 3.1 To be recognized, a neighborhood caucus must have a constitution outlining officers and their selection, function and operations, allocation procedures, and a non-discrimination clause, which has been ratified by a simple majority of that neighborhood's residents participating in an open ballot.
- Section 3.2 To be recognized, a neighborhood caucus must have a President, Treasurer, RHA Representative and an advisor.
- Section 4. A recognized neighborhood caucus shall receive an allocation from RHA for the purpose of operation, and for programming for the residents of that neighborhood.
- Section 4.1 To enable a recognized neighborhood caucus to receive its allocation from RHA, the in-hall caucus must file the appropriate accounting documents, as defined by the RHA By-Laws, to RHA.



Section 4.2 For a recognized neighborhood caucus to receive its allocation from RHA, the in-hall caucus must adhere to the Attendance Policy as outlined in the Standing Rules of Order Rule 4.

Section 5 No hall government or neighborhood caucus shall schedule General Assembly or Executive Board meeting times after 7:00 pm on Wednesdays so as not to interfere with regularly scheduled RHA General Assembly meetings. Constituencies must comply to receive their allocation.

### **ARTICLE VII - DECISION REVIEW**

Section 1. The RHA membership may veto any act or decision, except for elections and hiring decisions, of the RHA General Assembly enacted during the previous three weeks upon the collection and presentation to the General Assembly of signatures of 15% of the RHA membership.

Section 2. The individual or group who wishes to contest a decision of the RHA General Assembly has three weeks from the date of the decision to present, in writing, a declaration to overturn the said decision by petition to the President or Vice President.

Section 2.1 The individual or group has three weeks from the date of declaration to present a petition with 15% of valid signatories from the RHA membership to the President or Vice President.

Section 3. The RHA General Assembly may not rescind such a veto during the academic year.

Section 4. The RHA General Assembly may veto any executive decision made by the President during the three school weeks following the decision with a 2/3rds majority vote.

### **ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS AND RATIFICATION**

Section 1. This Constitution shall be ratified upon approval by a simple majority of votes cast by the RHA membership in an open-ballot referendum, and presented to the MSU Board of Trustees for recognition.

Section 2. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by either a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly, or upon presentation of a petition bearing the signatures of 15% of the RHA membership to the RHA General Assembly.

- Section 3. A proposed amendment must be placed on a referendum for fifteen class days after presentation, and shall be effected either by a simple majority of those votes cast by the RHA membership in an open-ballot referendum, or by approval of two-thirds of the individual hall governments. If a proposed amendment is approved through the referendum it shall become an amendment to this Constitution.
- Section 4. This Constitution shall be reviewed and resubmitted for membership approval every three years from the time of adoption, in accordance with University Policies governing student organizations.
- Section 4.1 In the year prior to Constitutional reviews, the necessity and duties of all RHA positions will be examined.
- Section 5. All necessary bylaws must be changed accordingly in order to govern any additions or deletions to the constitution.