Constitution & By-Laws

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University of California, Merced
Resident Housing Government
Constitution

Preamble
We, the residents of the University of California, Merced residence halls, in order to represent and advocate for the needs and desires of students regarding housing issues and the general campus, to serve as the governing student body for all residence halls, to create and maintain communication and unity among residents, to initiate, coordinate, and fund a variety of programs for residents, and to work in conjunction with departments on campus to ensure resident needs are met, do ordain and establish this constitution of the Resident Housing Government at the University of California, Merced.

Article I: Name

1.1 The Resident Housing Government
The name of this organization shall be the Resident Housing Government at the University of California, Merced, hereinafter referred to as RHG.

Article II: Membership

2.1 RHG Members
All current residents of Student Housing, who pay association fees, at the University of California, Merced, with the exceptions of the Residence Life Coordinators, shall be members of the RHG.

2.2 RHG Dues
Each member of the RHG is a member of the Student Housing Association and agrees to pay annual membership dues. The funds are used by RHG to directly benefit the residents.

Article III: Officers

3.1 RHG Officers
1.) The RHG Officers shall include the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Director, Historian and Resident Representatives. All RHG Officers shall serve as elected voting members and retain one (1) vote per person. Only current members of RHG can hold an office. An individual cannot serve as both Executive Board member and Resident Representative.

2.) The Executive Board of RHG shall include the President, Vice President,
Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Director and Historian. The Executive Board of RHG shall be elected by on-campus residents. In the event of the President’s absence, the presiding officer of the Executive Board shall be the Vice President.

3.) The RHG Officers shall have the power:
   a. To develop and review all policies pertaining to the RHG
   b. To adopt the RHG budget and to appropriate funds from the RHG Treasury
   c. To approve or disapprove all presidential appointments
   d. To support, plan, and organize events and programs for residents
   e. To advocate on behalf of residents
   f. To act as liaison between residents and various University departments

4.) Each building in the Valley Terraces will have (1) Resident Representative. The Sierra Terraces will have one (1) Resident Representative assigned on each floor, for a total of two (2). Each Resident Representative must reside in the wing/building he/she represents. The Summits shall have one (1) resident representative on each floor for a total of four (4) resident representatives for Cathedral and three (3) for Teynaya. Each Resident Representative shall be elected by RHG. Each Resident Representative must reside in the wing/building he/she represents. Each Resident Representative shall have one (1) vote per person.

5.) A minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the currently serving Executive Board, which must include the President and/o Vice President, must be present to conduct the Executive Board meeting. Quorum (50% + 1; as stipulated in section 7.2: Meeting Attendance) and a minimum of 2/3 of the RHG Executive Board must be present at the General Meeting in order to conduct business.

6.) The Residence Life Coordinators and/or a representative designated by Housing, shall act as the advisors to RHG.

7.) RHG Officers and proxies must maintain a GPA above 2.0 each semester in order to remain a voting member. A RHG Advisor will meet bi-weekly with a RHG Officer that is on university academic probation in order to develop a structured plan for reaching good academic standing, and to ensure that such a plan is maintained until the RHG Officer in question reaches good academic standing. The RHG Advisor(s) will perform a monthly academic evaluation on a RHG Officer if he/she is placed on academic probation. The student will consent to and work with faculty to provide the RHG Advisor with a monthly academic evaluation.

RHG Officers who do not meet the minimum 2.0 GPA will have their voting rights suspended. If a Resident Representative has his/her voting rights suspended, the Resident Assistant from the affected wing/building will suggest a temporary proxy, to be appointed by the President. If a RHG Officer whom is under academic probation does not agree to meet with a RHG Advisor in order to develop a plan for reaching good academic standing, or misses more than three (3) pre-agreed bi-weekly meetings, he or she shall be removed from office. If the member in question is a Resident Representative, Resident Assistants of the affected Hall/Floor will appoint a temporary proxy for appropriate representation.
8.) All RHG officers should be in good judicial and financial standing with Student Housing and the University.

3.2 Office Term Lengths

All Executive Board members and Resident Representatives shall hold office for one (1) academic year. Only members of the UCM RHG may hold an office. No individual shall hold more than one (1) elective office in the RHG simultaneously. The office of Resident Representatives shall be appointed by the RHG executive board.

3.3 Minutes

The RHG Officers shall keep a record of its proceedings, to be under the care of the Secretary, which will be approved at the beginning of the next meeting. All members shall be responsible for reading the minutes and suggesting any changes to the Secretary.

3.4 Meetings

All RHG Officers shall meet weekly for an open General meeting during the academic year, except during academic breaks and final examination periods. Executive Board members shall meet weekly for a closed Executive Board meeting during the academic year, except during academic breaks and final examination periods.

Article IV: RHG Officer Responsibilities

4.1 President

The executive power of the RHG shall be vested in the RHG President. The President shall be the official representative of the RHG; direct the RHG Officers; serve as liaison with the RHG Advisor(s); have the power to appoint, with the approval of the RHG Officers, special executive committees and their chairpersons; have the power to call and administer all RHG elections; prepare and present an annual budget, together with the RHG Treasurer, to the RHG Officers for its approval within two (2) weeks after receiving the budget from the housing office at the beginning of the Fall Semester, set the agenda and direct RHG meetings; write a transition report at the end of his/her term; and keep the RHG focused on its annual goals. President candidates should have at least two semesters (including the current semester) of active work in RHG at the time of the election.

4.2 Vice President

The RHG Vice President shall carry out the necessary correspondence of the RHG; preside over the Executive Board in the event of the President’s absence; keep record of Executive Board members and Resident Representatives’ participation in Housing and internal committees; improve communication within the RHG Officers; organize and oversee internal committees; manage the Fall Semester Elections; and write a transition report at the end of his/her term.

4.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall take attendance and keep accurate records of all meetings of the RHG Officers and Executive Board; publish and provide copies of RHG minutes; maintain and update RHG communications (i.e. email, phone roster, etc.); and organize documents and maintain records. Vice-president candidates should have at least one semester (including the current semester) of active work in RHG at the time of the election.
4.4 Treasurer
The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of RHG; prepare and present an annual budget, together with the RHG President, to the RHG Officers for its approval within two (2) weeks after receiving the budget from the Housing office at the beginning of the Fall Semester; present to the RHG Officers a bi-monthly financial report; work closely with advisors to ensure proper University accounting policies are being adhered to; plan, execute, and review all fundraisers; supervise the collection, distribution, and reimbursement of RHG funds in accordance with the RHG Constitution and By-Laws; and write a transition report at the end of his/her term.

4.5 Publicity Director
The Publicity Director shall be responsible for creating resident awareness of and publicity for RHG and its programs; work with the Executive Vice President in the publicizing of RHG Elections; act as a liaison between RHG and housing to maintain and update the RHG website; improve member attendance at RHG General meetings by posting signs and publicizing, and write a transition report at the end of his/her term. All publicity must be approved by the appropriate University departments.

4.6 Historian
The Historian shall coordinate and accurately record, a visual account of RHG programs and activities; plan and organize the annual year-end event; maintain accurate records of program planning and resources used; conduct meetings to gain feedback and improvement strategies; and write a transition report at the end of his/her term.

4.7 Resident Representatives
Resident Representatives shall be responsible for creating awareness of and addressing residence wide issues within their hall/floor; participate and assist with planning RHG events/programs; participate in Housing and internal committees; and serve as a liaison between RHG and their constituents.

Article V: Committees

5.1 Standing Committees
Standing committees perform a continuing function, and remain in existence permanently and are to be used as the need arises, by being voted on by the Executive Officers. Standing committees are overseen by the president. Each chair person is assigned by the president. The chair person has to be part of the executive board. Members of the committee consist of RHG officers and members of RHG.

There are (5) standing committees:
1. Policy Committee: The Policy Committee is responsible for communicating information between RHG members and Housing, regarding housing policies. The Policy Committee is also responsible for creating awareness among residents for any changes in Housing policies.
2. Newsletter Committee: The Newsletter Committee is responsible for creating a newsletter that informs residents about information and activities pertinent to them. The Newsletter Committee is also responsible for getting the newsletter available for residents.
3. Food Committee: The Food Committee is responsible for working with the dining Commons (DC) on resident services; making any resident food concerns known to the DC and helping the DC understand what residents’ needs are, as well as providing positive feedback for dining.

4. Programming Committee: The Programming Committee is responsible for planning and implementing programs for residents, which includes Battle of the Halls.

5. End of the Year Event Committee: The End of the Year Event Committee is responsible for planning and implementing an end of the Year Event for all residents.

5.2 Special (ad hoc) committee
Special committees are appointed by the President, as the need arises, to carry out a specified task. A special committee may not be appointed to perform a task that falls within the assigned function of an existing standing committee.

Article VI: Elections

6.1 General Elections
In general elections, the candidate receiving a majority of the votes shall be inaugurated into office. In the event of a tie, an immediate run-off election shall be held between the top two vote receivers. The President and Executive Vice President shall be elected in elections held in the second week of April preceding their term of office. The newly elected Executive Vice President shall manage the elections for the following academic year to determine the other Officers of the RHG.

6.2 Officer Impeachment
Any Officer of the RHG may be subject to impeachment when written charges are brought forward by four (4) Officers of the RHG. Specific charges shall be stated, and the accused shall have the right to be informed of the nature and causes of the accusation and the opportunity to defend himself or herself. A two thirds (2/3) secret ballot vote by RHG Officers shall constitute impeachment. An Officer whom becomes a non-resident is no longer eligible to serve.

6.3 Elected Officer Recall
Any Officer of the RHG may be subject to recall by presentation to the RHG Officers of a petition signed by ten percent (10%) of the current student residents. Within fifteen (15) days after the receipt of the petition, the RHG President shall hold a recall election to be held in the same manner prescribed for regular elections except in the case of the RHG President being recalled, in which the RHG Executive Vice President shall run the recall election. A majority of all votes shall constitute a recall.

Article VII: Legislation
7.1 RHG Officer-proposed Legislation
Regarding all legislation: “Legislation must be in compliance with all University of California and University of California, Merced policy, as well as State, Federal, and local law.” RHG Officers shall have the power to initiate legislation by presentation of a bill. Any legislation must be approved by a majority vote by the RHG Officers before going to the RHG President for approval before it becomes RHG legislation. If the RHG President signs the bill, the bill shall become RHG law. If the President vetoes the bill, the President shall either return the bill to the RHG Officers with objections for reconsideration or with written justifications for the veto. The RHG Officers shall either take the President’s objections into consideration and return a revised bill to the RHG President for further reconsideration or, by a two thirds (2/3) vote of RHG Officers, pass the measure again and make it RHG law. The RHG President may not vote or present bills.

7.2 Resident-proposed Legislation
Members of the RHG shall have the power to initiate legislation by means of a petition signed by ten percent (10%) of its members. Upon receipt of such a petition, the RHG Officers shall vote to enact the proposed legislation with an affirmative majority vote. The RHG President shall have the power to veto the legislation within five (5) business days. If the legislation is not vetoed within five (5) business days, the legislation is passed. The RHG Officers may override this veto with a two-thirds (2/3) vote. The RHG President shall not have a vote in legislative matters.

7.3 Legislation Repeal
Any policies developed by the RHG Officers, except financial commitment, maybe considered for repeal by the members of RHG. Upon receipt of a petition signed by ten percent (10%) of the members of RHG, the RHG Officers shall either vote to discard the petition with two-thirds (2/3) vote or to revise the legislation in question with a majority vote.

7.4 Legislation Revision
Any revised bills shall be proposed by a RHG Officer to the RHG. Any bill that is brought to the RHG for reconsideration shall be considered a revised bill.

Article VIII: Meeting Structure

8.1 Open Meetings
All general meetings of the RHG Officers shall be open and adequately publicized by the Publicity Director.

8.2 Meeting Attendance
Attendance of RHG meetings shall be considered of utmost importance, and quorum must be present to do business. A majority of the RHG Officers (50% +1) shall constitute a quorum to do business. RHG Officers are required to attend RHG meetings for their whole duration. Informed and capable proxies may be sent to the RHG meetings with approval from the Executive Vice President at least an hour prior to the meeting. Any proxies must be representatives from the same residence hall that the absent member represents or resides in. In the event that a RHG Officer fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings or procure a proxy for those meetings, he/she shall be removed from office. In the event that a RHG Officer fails to attend five (5) meetings in total, he/she shall be removed from office. An excused absence includes illness, an academic exam, illness/death in the family, or other emergencies. A RHG Officer whom is
fifteen minutes late is considered absent. The RHG President shall determine if an absence is excused. Reinstatement can occur through a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the RHG Officers.

**Article IX: Amendments**

9.1 Amendments to the Constitution
Any Executive Board member may present amendments to this constitution. Any member of RHG may propose amendments to Executive Board members to present to the RHG Officers. All amendments shall be presented in writing to the Executive Board. Proposed amendments must either be approved by a two-third (2/3) vote of the RHG Officers or be endorsed by a petition signed by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the members of the RHG in order to be presented in an amendment vote.

9.2 Election for Amendments
The RHG President shall arrange for an amendment vote, restricted to members of RHG, within ten (10) RHG business days to pass the amendments after the amendments have either been approved by a two-third (2/3) vote of the RHG Officers or been endorsed by a petition signed by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the members of the RHG. The RHG Officers must post copies of the proposed amendments and make the constitution easily accessible to the public. The RHG Officers are responsible for vigorously publicizing the election.

9.3 Voting on Amendments
Voting on amendments shall be by secret ballot. Amendments shall be considered ratified upon the affirmative majority vote of all votes cast.

**Article X: Precedence**

10.1 Order of Precedence
The order of precedence shall be:
   a. The RHG Constitution
   b. The RHG By-Laws
   c. The RHG Legislature

**Article XI: Ratification**

11.1 Constitution Ratification
This constitution shall become the official governing document of RHG upon ratification by an affirmative two-third vote of all votes cast by RHG members.