

# **University of California, Merced**

## **Housing & Residence Life**

### **Residence Hall Association (RHA)**

### **Constitution and Bylaws**

**Residence Hall Association Constitution & By-Laws**

## Table of Contents

### **Article I: Name**

1.1: Residence Hall Association  
Constitution (RHA)

### **Article II: Purpose**

### **Article III: Organizational Authority**

### **Article IV: Membership**

3.1: RHA Membership

### **Article V: Affiliation**

### **Article VI: Organization and Government**

### **Article VII: Housing Office Adviser**

7.1: RHA Adviser  
7.2 RHA Adviser Responsibilities

### **Article VIII: Executive Board**

8.1 Requirements  
8.2: Executive Board Positions and  
Responsibilities  
8.3 Officer Restrictions  
8.4: Office Term Lengths  
8.5: Executive Board Officer Term Limits  
8.6: Executive Board Meetings

### **Article VII: Community Councils and RHA Representatives**

9.1: Organizations of Community Councils  
9.2: Residence Hall Representatives  
9.3: RHA Representative Seats  
9.4: RHA Representatives Restrictions

### **Article X: General Body**

10.1: General Body  
10.2: Powers  
10.3: RHA General Meetings  
10.4: Meeting Attendance  
10.5: Minutes  
10.6: Voting and Proposal  
10.7: Parliamentary Authority

### **Article XI: Committees**

11.1: Special (ad hoc) committees

### **Article XII: External Chairs**

12.1: Chairs of External Boards

### **Article XIII: Elections**

13.1: General Elections  
13.2: RHA Elections Regulations  
13.3: RHA Re-elections

### **Article XIV: Resignations and Removal of Officers**

14.1: Resignation  
14.2: Officer Removal  
14.3: Meeting Structure

### **Article XV: Amendments**

15.1: Amendments to the Constitution  
15.2: Election for Amendments  
15.3: Voting on Amendments

### **Article XVI: Ratification**

16.1: Constitution Ratification

**Section 1.1:** The name of this organization shall be **Residence Hall Association** at the University of California, Merced, hereinafter referred to as RHA.

**Section 1.2:** This constitution and its bylaws recognize the following words and its definitions

- A. University refers specifically to the University of California, Merced.
- B. Residence Hall should be defined as a residential community operated by Housing and Residence Life (HRL) at the University of California, Merced.
- C. The Association is the entire organization of RHA including its officers, advisers and members.
- D. The General Body is made up of the voting representatives from each hall and the Executive Board.
- E. Community refers to a specific area of residence hall(s) as follows:
  - a. Cathedral/Tenaya
  - b. Valley Terraces
  - c. Sierra Terraces
  - d. Half Dome

## **Article II: Purpose**

**Section 2.1:** The purpose of this organization shall include but not be limited to, matters that directly concern the students of the University living in the Residence Halls.

**Section 2.2:** RHA shall be responsible for reviewing and making recommendation regarding Residence Life procedures, and policies for the betterment of the residence hall system.

**Section 2.3:** RHA shall organize, implement and promote quality activities, educational programs, and services for all residents living in the residence halls.

## **Article III: Organizational Authority**

### **Section 18.1: Constitutional Authority**

This constitution of the Residence Hall Association at the University of California, Merced shall be the governing document of the organization. Community Council with constitutions are authorized as sub-organizations of RHA and will have their own governing policies and procedures that in no way should conflict with this Constitution.

### **Section 18.2: Points of Conflict**

If any point, policy, or procedure from the Community Council governing policies are in conflict with the policies and procedures governing RHA, those point shall be nulled. Likewise, if any point, policy, or procedure of the RHA constitution is in conflict with Housing and Residence Life and the University of California, Merced, policies, and state or federal laws, those points are nulled.

## **Article IV: Membership**

### **Section 4.1: RHA Membership**

All current students who live in the Residence Halls at the University of California, Merced, shall be considered official members of RHA and are eligible to be RHA Representatives or Executive Board Officers.

### **Section 4.2: Restrictions**

- A. Student Staff is able to hold executive officer positions except when there is a conflict of interest.
- B. Hall representative positions shall be held for non-student staff residents. In the event that no hall representatives are chosen then student staff may serve as hall representative.

## **Article V: Affiliation**

**Section 5.1:** RHA shall be the means by which the University Residence Hall population affiliates itself with the National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) and the Pacific Affiliate of College and Residence Halls (PACURH).

## **Article VI: Organization of Government**

**Section 6.1:** There shall be three levels of government within the RHA. These levels are the Executive Board, General Body and Community Councils.

## **Article VII: Housing Office Adviser**

### **Section 7.1: RHA Adviser**

A representative designated by the Department of Housing and Residence Life shall act as the adviser to RHA.

### **Section 7.2: RHA Adviser Responsibilities**

- A. Is required to attend all Executive Board and General Body meetings.
- B. Conduct one-on-one meetings with all Executive Board members.
- C. Act as the Parliamentarian when the Vice President is not present.
- D. Serve as a liaison between campus administrators, professional Housing and Residence Life Staff and RHA.
- E. Coordinate training for Community Council Advisers.
- F. If funding allows and with department approval attend all NACURH affiliated conferences.
- G. Support RHA events.
- H. Shall act as a resource and shall uphold and enforce University and Residence Hall Policies.

- I. The adviser will not have voting rights.

## **Article VIII: Executive Board**

### **Section 8.1: Executive Board Requirements and Responsibilities**

1. Should be in good academic, financial, and disciplinary standing with UC Merced Judicial Affairs and Housing & Residence Life.
2. Executive Board members must maintain a grade point average no lower than a cumulative 2.5 during their term as an Executive Board.
3. If one falls below the 2.5, they will be put on academic probation by Adviser for one semester. They must raise GPA by the next.
4. Must be a resident during their term.
5. Attend fall and spring training.
6. Attend all required Housing and Residence Life team meetings.
7. Attend council meetings in their respective communities at least twice a semester.
8. Write a transition report at the end of their term.
9. Chair at least one committee for RHA.
10. Establish one-on-one meetings with an RHA advisor at least bi-monthly.

### **Section 8.2: Executive Board Positions and Responsibilities**

#### **1. President**

- A. Serve as the chief executive officer.
- B. Hold all officers and members responsible for their duties and expectations.
- C. The President shall be the official representative of the RHA to all campus functions. Serve as the liaison with the Housing and Residence Life staff.
- D. Have the power to appoint, with the approval of the RHA, special executive and ad hoc committees and their chairpersons.
- E. Have the power to call and administer RHA special elections.
- F. Prepare and present an annual budget, together with the Vice President of Operations and Advisor for the following academic year. The General Body must approve budget by the end of the previous academic year.
- G. Set the agenda and direct RHA General and Executive meetings.
- H. Attend each Community Council meeting once a semester (class schedule permitting).
- I. Meet with the Advisor each week to discuss agendas for Executive and General Body meetings and other topics deemed necessary.
- J. Serve on or appoint a representative for the Think Tank Committee for Housing and Residence Life.
- K. Co-chair the end of the year Leadership Banquet with the NRHH President.
- L. Maintain and facilitate constitutional amendments and uphold the constitution and bylaws.
- M. If funding allows and with departmental approval, attend all NACURH affiliated conferences.

- N. Plan the Fall Housing Leadership Retreat in collaboration with the Executive Board
- O. Vote only to break a tie during an RHA meeting
- P. President candidates must have at least two semesters (including the current semester) of active work in RHA at the time of the election. In the event that there is no candidate with the two-semester requirement the position is open to all RHA members who have experience.

## **2. Vice President of Operations**

- A. Preside over the Executive Board and RHA in the event of the President's absence. Should the President position be vacated, the Vice President of Operations would become President.
- B. Maintain the financial records of RHA. Present a regular financial reports to the RHA General Body. Work closely with adviser to ensure proper University accounting policies are being adhered.
- C. Prepare and present an annual budget, together with the RHA President and Adviser for the following academic year. The General Body must approve budget by the end of the previous academic year.
- D. Plan the Fall Housing Leadership Retreat in collaboration with the Executive Board
- E. Meet with Adviser bi-weekly to reconcile budget balances and address specific financial concerns.
- F. Serve as the parliamentarian for RHA General Body meetings.
- G. Coordinate all regular (fall/spring) elections.

## **3. Vice President of Communications**

- A. Fulfill the duties of the National Communications Coordinator (NCC), in representing RHA with the international organization, NACURH; and share regular updates with the General Body
- B. Record the proceedings and attendance of all RHA general meetings and distribute minutes to the appropriate parties within 3 days of the meeting for approval.
- C. Design and implement a fall recruitment campaign for RHA General Body, Executive (if needed) and Community Councils.
- D. Be responsible for creating resident awareness of and publicity for RHA and its programs.
- E. Plan the Fall Housing Leadership Retreat in collaboration with the Executive Board
- F. Act as a liaison between RHA and housing to maintain and update the RHA website.
- G. Coordinate and distribute roster of General Body members as needed.
- H. Work with the Vice President of Operations in the publicizing of RHA Elections.
- I. Maintain all RHA social media accounts and update them regularly and as needed for events, elections, and recruitment.
- J. Create a weekly update for In the House due Thursday at noon to the Adviser.
- K. Create and maintain the RHA bulletin boards on campus. Must be changed monthly. Due by the first of each month.
- L. If funding allows and is in good academic standing attend all NACURH affiliated conferences as the NCC.

#### **4. Vice President of Programming**

- A. Plan and implement a minimum of two (2) housing-wide programs and/or activities per semester.
- B. Support Community Council Activity Chairs initiatives.
- C. Collaborate with Community Council programmers.
- D. Coordinate at least one RHA council social event per year.
- E. Keep a Calendar of RHA programs and all Community Council programs and distribute.
- F. Plan the Fall Housing Leadership Retreat in collaboration with the Executive Board

#### **Section 8.3: President and Vice President Officer Restrictions**

- A. Resident Assistants are allowed to run for any position in the Executive Board except for Vice-President and President Positions.
- B. In the event that no one runs for the top two positions, the application process is to remain open to membership, including Resident Assistants.

#### **Section 8.4: Executive Board Term Lengths**

- A. All Executive Board members shall hold office for one (1) academic year beginning in the fall semester
- B. Only members of the UCM RHA may be elected and serve in an Executive Board position.
- C. No individual shall hold more than one (1) elected position in the RHA simultaneously.

#### **Section 8.5: Executive Board Officer Term Limits**

- A. Members of RHA can only hold the Presidential office for a maximum of two terms.
- B. All other Executive Board positions are limited to three term limits. In the event that no other candidate in RHA wishes to run for any of the positions, the term restrictions are disregarded.

#### **Section 8.6: RHA Executive Meetings**

- A. Executive Board members shall meet weekly for closed meetings during the academic year, except during academic breaks and final examination periods.
- B. Executive Board meeting must be held at minimum 24 hours before the general meetings.
- C. A majority (51%) of the Executive Board including the President and/or Vice President must be present to conduct Executive Board meetings.
- D. Meeting times will be decided at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters.

### **Article IX: Community Councils and RHA Representatives**

#### **Section 9.1: Organization of Community Councils**

- A. Community Councils will be organized by the RLC/Lead RA of the community. Each Community Council is required to have:

- a. An adviser
- b. 4 RHA representatives
- c. A President
- d. Director of Activities
- e. Director of Operations (Secretary and Treasurer)

### **Section 9.2: RHA Representative**

- A. Shall represent the ideas and opinions of their community.
- B. Attend all weekly RHA and Community Council meetings.
- C. Serve as a liaison between their respective Community Council and RHA.
- D. Sit on at least one internal committee.
- E. Help plan and implement programs for the benefit of all residents.
- F. Address resident issues within their hall.
- G. Should be in good academic, financial, and disciplinary standing with UC Merced Judicial Affairs, Housing & Residence Life.

### **Section 9.3: RHA Representative Seats**

- A. Each community associated with UC Merced Housing will have 4 representatives elected to act as a voice of their community. Each RHA Representative will be elected by the student population of their designated community.
- B. Each RHA Representative must reside in the community they represent.
- C. Each RHA Representative will have one (1) vote.
- D. In the event that no resident representative is elected for a designated community, residents from the community must be informed that there is no representation for them in RHA and encouraged to elect a representative.

### **Section 9.4: RHA Representative Restrictions**

- A. Resident Assistants are not permitted to run for Hall Representative Positions within their hall.
- B. It is only permissible for Resident Assistants to serve as the Representative seat of his/her hall in the event that no other resident in the hall/wing wishes to run for the position.

## **Article X: General Body**

### **Section 10.1: General Body**

- A. RHA General Body is elected by residents on campus.
- B. Are the voting members of RHA.
- C. One (1) vote per person excluding the President which acts as a tie breaker.
- D. Only current residents of can hold a position.
- E. General Body consists of Executive Board and all the RHA representatives who are then called officers.
- F. Should be in good academic, financial, and disciplinary standing with UC Merced Judicial Affairs, Housing & Residence Life.



### **Section 10.2: Powers**

The General Body shall have the power:

- A. To develop and review all policies pertaining to the RHA.
- B. To adopt and to appropriate funds from the RHA budget.
- 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.
- G. Recommend policy changes to Housing Administration.

### **Section 10.3: RHA General Body Meetings**

- A. General Body shall meet weekly for an open general meeting during the academic year, except during academic breaks and final examination periods.
- B. Meetings must be adequately advertised to residents by the CCC.
- C. In order to conduct general meetings a minimum of 2/3 of the RHA Executive Board, including the President and/or Vice President, and a majority (51%) of RHA Reps must be present to establish quorum, which is required to conduct business.
- D. The General Meetings will be held every Wednesday from 6pm-7pm in a room that is determined each year.

### **Section 10.4: Meeting Attendance**

- A. Attendance at RHA meetings is of the utmost importance.
- B. RHA Executive Board members and RHA Representatives are required to attend RHA meetings for their whole duration. Informed and capable proxies may be sent to the RHA meetings communicated to the Vice President at least 24 hours prior to the general meeting.
- C. Any proxies must be representatives from the same Community that the absent member represents.
- D. In the event that an Officer fails to attend three (3) unexcused consecutive meetings in the academic year or procure a proxy for those meetings, he/she may be removed from office.
- E. In the event that an Officer fails to attend five (5) unexcused meetings in the academic school year, he/she may be removed from office. Reinstatement can occur through a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the RHA Officers.
- F. An Officer who is fifteen minutes late is considered absent.
- G. An excused absence includes illness, an academic exam, faculty sanction academic event, illness/death in the family, or other emergencies.
- H. All absences must be reported to the Vice President 24 hours prior to the general meeting if possible (i.e. academics).
- I. The RHA Adviser shall determine if an absence is excused.
- J. The Vice President must then inform the Secretary and President of the absent Officer.

### **Section 10.5: Minutes**

- A. A record of meeting proceedings must always be kept by the Secretary.
- B. The secretary shall email/distribute the minutes for review 24 hours after the general meeting.
- C. The secretary will then present the minutes during the following meeting for approval by the officers.
- D. All Officers shall be responsible for reading and notifying the Secretary of any necessary changes.

#### **Section 10.6: Voting and Proposals**

- A. A quorum must be present to approve a budget, elect and executive officer, vote on allocations, vote on constitutional changes or any other type of proposal or action.
- B. All proposal or motions must be seconded by another voting RHA Officer.
- C. Elections and motions for Removal of Office shall be cast by secret ballot. All other voting shall be cast by a show of placards, unless a voting representative in attendance requests a secret ballot.
- D. In matters not specified in this constitution, a simple majority of all those in attendance shall be required to pass or defeat a motion.

#### **Section 10.7: Parliamentary Authority**

- A. General meetings of the RHA will be guided by Robert's Rules of Orders Newly Revised as deemed appropriate by the presiding officer.

### **Article XI: Committees**

#### **Section 11.1: Special (ad hoc) committees**

- A. Special committees are temporary committees assembled to carry out specific tasks.
- B. These committees are created by the President and are formed as the need arises.
- C. The Executive Board will consult the procedure document for previously formed committees to be used as a reference.

### **Article XII: External Chairs**

#### **Section 12.1: Chairs of External Boards**

- A. External Chairs are RHA Officers who act as liaisons between RHA and external organizations.
- B. External Chairs are elected by the RHA Executive Board to meet the necessary correspondence between RHA and external organizations.

### **Article XIII: Elections**

#### **Section 13.1: General Elections**

- A. For general elections, the candidate receiving a majority (51%) of the votes shall be inaugurated into office. In the event of a tie or a lack of majority votes, an immediate run-off election shall be held between the top two vote recipients.
- B. The Vice President shall manage the Spring Elections to determine the Executive Board Positions. The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, CCC, and Programming Coordinator shall be elected in elections held between the third week of March and the second week of April preceding their term of office. If the Vice President is running again then they should appoint someone in consultation with the adviser.
- C. The newly elected Vice President shall manage the Fall Elections for the following academic year if needed.
- D. All rules will be in policy guide.

### **Section 13.2: RHA Election Regulations**

- A. All candidates must follow the RHA rules for campaigning when running for RHA office.
- B. Failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification from RHA elections.
- C. Campaign rules will be set and available for all candidates before each campaigning period.

### **Section 13.3: RHA Reelections**

- A. In the event that an RHA Officer resigns or is removed from office, during the academic year, an election must be held to fill the position.
- B. In the event that a candidate is to drop before or within the first month of the next Academic semester, the current Executive Board will decide if they want the runner up from the election in the Spring. The Executive Board will vote to offer the runner up the position.
- C. The Executive Board will either offer or deny the person to be on the board.
- D. In the event that they offer the position and the runner up does not accept, then the next person who ran will be asked if agreed upon by the Executive Board.
- E. If the Executive Board decides to not allow the runner to proceed then they will run another election in the fall.

## **Article XIV: Resignations and Removal of Officers**

### **Section 14.1: Executive Officer Resignation**

- A. In the event that an executive officer desires to resign, they will submit a two week notice to the President or highest-ranking Officer, and Adviser, which will then notify the Executive Board of the resignation.
- B. RHA Representatives shall have the opportunity to replace the resigned executive board officer. If more than one resident representative desires to fill the position, an election within RHA officers shall take place.
- C. If a RHA Representative fulfills an Executive Board position, they must resign as an RHA Representative
- D. If no RHA Representative desires the position, an election will be held, open to all residents, in order to fill the executive position.

- E. Once appointed, the newly elected Executive Officer shall fulfill the remaining term of the resigned Executive Officer.
- F. In the event that either the President or Vice President accepts a position as a Resident Assistant and Programming Assistant the officer must get approval from the Adviser and their Residence Life supervisor to continue as an Officer.

#### **Section 14.2: Officer Removal Procedure**

- A. Any Officer holding a position in RHA may be subject to Officer Removal. Specific charges shall be stated, and the accused shall have the right to be informed of the nature and causes of the accusation. Grounds for removal of office shall be, but are not limited by: the failure to meet Office eligibility requirements as noted in this Constitution based on position, the inability to fulfill the responsibilities of their position, or if they are found responsible for impropriety, wrongdoing, or misconduct
- B. The steps for the Office Removal Process are as follows
  - 1. An initial letter stating the violations and allegations of the charged officer shall be submitted by four (4) Officers or RHA Representatives.
  - 2. The letter shall be submitted to the Adviser.
  - 3. The Adviser shall present the letter of allegations to the President or next highest-ranking officer not involved in alleged charges.
  - 4. The highest ranking officer not involved in the allegations and Adviser shall meet with the charged officer.
  - 5. Voting on the removal of office will commence at the second scheduled RHA General Meeting following the presentation of the letter stating the charges to accused officer. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by secret ballot is needed to removal an RHA Executive Board Officer or Representative from their position.
  - 6. The due process protection of the officer in question shall be:
    - i. The officer in question shall temporarily be suspended from his or her position pending completion of the removal of office process.
    - ii. The officer has the right to rebut any charges and/or any questionable conduct to the RHA General Body, and to bring outside witnesses to testify should it be deemed necessary.
    - iii. Upon removal from the office, the officer in question shall not serve in their officer position and shall cease all RHA related communication.

#### **Section 14.3: Officer Removal Motion Meeting Structure**

- A. An Officer Removal action shall be conducted during a RHA General Meeting by motion.
- B. The Adviser must be present and preside over all meetings and hearings that pertain to the removal of officer.
- C. A quorum of two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Board and General Body, including the accused Officer, must be present before the removal of office motion can begin.
- D. Any Executive Officer or Appointed Officer named in a removal of office motion shall not be permitted to vote on the motion, but may reserve the right to speak on their own

behalf during the discussion, as well as to be present during the vote on the motion.

1. The person making the motion will have three minutes to speak and then will yield to the floor for two minutes of questions from the General Body.
  2. The Executive Officer or Appointed Officer whom the motion regards will have three minutes to speak and then will yield to the floor for two minutes of questions from the General Body.
- b. The General Body will then vote on the removal of office motion that will require a three-fourths majority decision.

If the motion carries in favor of the removal of Any Executive Officer or Appointed Officer an election will take place at the following RHA General Meeting. If the position vacant is for a RHA Representative, the respected Community Council will be notified and given instruction to appoint a replacement Representative

## **Article XV: Amendments**

### **Section 15.1: Amendments to the Constitution**

- A. Any Executive Board member may present amendments to this constitution.
- B. Any Officer may propose amendments to the Executive Board members to present to the RHA Officers.
- C. 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 RHA Officers or be endorsed by a petition signed by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the members of the RHA in order to be presented in an amendment vote.

### **Section 15.2: Voting on Amendments**

- A. The RHA President shall arrange for an amendment vote, restricted to Officer or Representatives of RHA, within ten (10) business days to pass the amendments after the amendments have either been approved by a two-third (2/3) vote of the RHA Executive Board Officers or been endorsed by a petition signed by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the members of the RHA.
- B. The RHA Officers must post copies of the proposed amendments and make the constitution easily accessible to the public.
- C. The RHA CCC is responsible for publicizing the election.

### **Section 15.3: Voting for Amendments**

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

## **Article XVI: Ratification**

### **Section 16.1: Constitution Ratification**

- A. This constitution shall become the official governing document of RHA upon ratification by an affirmative two-third (2/3) vote of all votes cast by RHA Officers.