

Constitution and Bylaws for the

Residence Hall Association (RHA)
of the University of Southern Mississippi

Revised: September 2008

Article I: Structure

The name of this organization shall be the Residence Hall Association, hereafter referred to as RHA.

Article II: Purpose & Slogan

Section 1: The purpose of RHA shall be to review and make recommendations in regard to residence life policies and procedures, and serve as a liaison between residence and the administration. RHA shall also be charged to provide and encourage programs and services for students living on campus, evaluate the needs and opinions of residence hall students, and to develop student leaders.

Section 2: The slogan of RHA shall be: *Living. Learning. Leading.*

Article III: Membership

Section 1: All students living on-campus shall be members of RHA and shall be represented through their elected RHA Representatives. The number of RHA Representative shall be based on the size of the residence hall. Small halls (i.e. Bolton Hall, Hattiesburg Hall, Hickman Hall, Mississippi Hall, Scholarship Hall and Vann Hall) shall have two (2) representatives. Large Halls (i.e. Bond Hall, Elam Arms, Hillcrest, Jones Hall, Roberts Hall, Scott Hall, McCarty Hall, Pulley Hall, and Wilbur Hall) shall have three (3) representatives. The resident assistants shall have four (4) representatives, two (2) from the upper class and two (2) from the first year area to represent them as a body of Residence Life as a whole.

Section 2: Good Standing of the Residence Halls

- a. To be in good standing with RHA, halls must:
 1. Elect RHA Representatives to represent the needs of those residents living in their respective building to RHA.
 2. Fill allocated number of representatives as stated in section one of this article.

Section 3: Residence Halls that fail to meet these criteria shall be placed on probation. Any Residence Halls on probation lose all rights and privileges granted by RHA. RHA may also choose to freeze funding for a hall not in good standing.

Article IV: Meetings

Section 1: RHA shall meet in the RHA Center every Monday that school is in session during the Fall and Spring Semester, except dead week of the semester.

Section 2: Regular meetings of RHA will operate in accordance with the RHA Constitution and *Robert's Rule's of Order Newly Revised.*

Section 3: The Director of RHA reserves the right to call special meetings.

Section 4: All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcomed unless a quorum calls for a closed session, which requires a two-thirds vote. During a closed session, only the Executive Board, RHA Representatives, and RHA Advisors are allowed to be in the meeting. No visitors or guest shall be allowed in a meeting during a closed session.

Section 5: The minutes of any general meeting shall be made available to the public.

Article V: Voting

Section 1: The members shall not vote on, or propose any legislation in a closed meeting.

Section 2: The RHA Representative(s) will cast the vote for that hall on any legislation, or proposals before RHA.

Section 3: The Executive Board shall not vote except to break a tie (excluding the Director). The Director may cast his/her vote only if the Executive Board vote does not give a majority.

Section 4: All voting members must reside in the hall they are to represent.

Section 5: It is the responsibility of all voting representatives to represent the interest of their respective halls.

Article VI: RHA Representatives

Section 1: RHA Representatives must attend each RHA meeting.

Section 2: Each representative is allowed three (3) absences per semester. On the second absence, the RHA Representative will receive a notice stating that two absences have occurred and that only one more absence is allowed. If a fourth absence occurs, the RHA Representative must resign.

Section 3: Vacancies

- a. Any open position(s) shall be, if needed temporarily replaced with an appointee of the Director with the recommendation from the Hall Director and approval of the RHA Representatives.
- b. If a resignation occurs prior to the last third of the Spring semester, the RHA Director shall appoint a temporary RHA Representative with recommendation from the Hall Director to fill the vacancy. If the resignation occurs in the last third of the Spring Semester, the Director shall appoint a permanent RHA Representative with the consent and approval of the RHA Representatives.

Section 4: RHA Representatives shall join one of RHA's standing committees.

Section 5: RHA Representatives shall vote on any legislation or proposals brought before RHA.

Section 6: All RHA Representatives must reside in the hall they represent.

Section 7: It is the responsibility of all RHA Representatives to represent the interest of their respective halls at the RHA meetings, and to communicate the activities of RHA to their halls.

Section 8: It is the responsibility of all members to refrain from using the organization's title for the enhancement of any endorsement without consent of a majority vote of the Executive Board.

Section 9: RHA Representatives shall do two (2) programs a term.

- a. The first program shall be at the beginning of the first semester, immediately after the representative is elected. Program coordination skills shall be taught at the RHA Retreat.
- b. The second program can be held at the Representatives discretion. Multiple representatives in the same hall may collaborate. Co-sponsoring with his/her RA is allowed.
- c. The Associate Director of Administration should be notified of each program and he/she must approve all programs.

Section 10: RHA Representatives shall update their RHA bulletin board by the 7th of each month.

Section 11: Point System

- a. The Residence Hall Association shall operate on a point system, in which representatives will be responsible for a designated number of participation points for each semester in office.
 1. Participation points shall be gained through weekly attendance of general RHA meetings, weekly attendance and participation in committees, and fulfillment of general membership duties. (See hand-out for specific details.)

Section 12: RHA Representatives serve as the residence hall senators in the Student Government Association Senate.

- a. A chosen Executive Board member will serve as advisor for the Senate.
 1. Senators shall be selected by the Executive Board and Advisor at the RHA training retreat.
 2. Senators shall adhere to the rules of the Student Government Association also.

Section 13: RHA Representatives shall maintain a 2.25 cumulative GPA. And all Hall Senators shall adhere to the 2.5 cumulative GPA requirement.

Article VII: Executive Board

Section 1: The Executive Board shall consist of the Director, National Communications Coordinator, National Residence Hall Honorary President, Associate Director for Administration, Associate Director for Finance, and the Associate Director for Public Relations.

Section 2: Responsibilities of the Director:

- a. Preside over weekly RHA meetings.
- b. Preside over weekly Executive Board Meetings.
- c. Attend a regular weekly meeting with the Advisor.
- d. Reserve the right to call a special session of RHA when necessary.
- e. Uphold the Constitution and present any proposed changes to the RHA Representatives for approval.
- f. Maintain active membership on an RHA standing committee and serve as supervisor/resource person to the committee chair.
- g. Work with the advisor on the coordination of all training efforts.
- h. Shall have the power of the veto.
- i. Serves as the official representative and spokesperson for the organization and serve as a role model for RHA members.
- j. Attend a retreat to coordinate the coming fall and spring semester's goals and activities.
- k. Endeavor to unify the organization.
- l. Serve on the Residence Life Rental Agreement Appeals Committee when needed.

- m. Provide leadership and supervision for the Executive Board and any employees of RHA.
- n. Maintain a positive working relationship with RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisors, and committee members.
- o. Provide direction to the Executive Board and RHA members in the area of RHA Center usage and Center improvements.
- p. Develop recognition of RHA members.
- q. Maintain five (5) office hours per week utilized in the best interest of RHA.

Section 3: Responsibilities of the National Communications Coordinator:

- a. Correspond with State, Regional, and National Residence Hall Associations and universities associated with State, Regional, and National Residence Hall Associations.
- b. Submit an annual report to the NACURH Information Center.
- c. Attend, prepare and organize delegations for MARHS, SAACURH, and NACURH Conferences (conference selection, conference preparation, travel arrangements, registration, fundraising opportunities, etc.)
- d. Make arrangements for photos to be taken at all RHA functions.
- e. Act as a Parliamentarian to RHA.
- f. Serve as a member of the Residence Life Rental Agreement Appeals Committee when needed.
- g. Coordinate bid process for state and regional awards.
- h. Provide support for RHA Representatives, and Executive Board.
- i. Inform RHA Representatives when two meetings have been missed.
- j. Update the Constitution and educate members about constitutional procedures.
- k. Maintain a positive and working relationship with RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisors, and committee members.
- l. Attend weekly Executive Board meetings and RHA meetings. Absences are only allowed with prior consent from the Director and/or the Advisor. Failure to receive consent before an absence may result in immediate probation; the second such occurrence may result in immediate removal from office.
- m. Attend a retreat to coordinate the coming fall and spring semester's goals and activities.
- n. Endeavor to improve and promote RHA.
- o. Maintain five (5) office hours per week utilized in the best interest of RHA.

Section 4: Responsibilities of the National Residence Hall Honorary President:

- a. Shall adhere to the responsibilities of the President listed in the National Residence Hall Honorary Constitution.
- b. Maintain a positive and working relationship with RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisor, and committee members.
- c. Serve on the Residence Life Rental Agreement Appeals Committee when needed.
- d. Attend weekly Executive Board meetings and RHA meetings. Absences are only allowed with prior consent from the Director and/or the Advisors. Failure to receive consent before an absence may result in immediate probation; the second such occurrence may result in immediate removal from office.
- e. Attend a retreat to coordinate the coming fall and spring semester's goals and activities.
- f. Endeavor to improve and promote RHA alongside with the National Residence Hall Honorary.

Section 5: Responsibilities of the Associate Director for Administration:

- a. Create agenda for all RHA and Executive Board meetings with direction from the RHA Director, Advisors, and Executive Board.
- b. Record minutes at all RHA, Executive Board, and all other special meetings.

- c. Distribute minutes from all RHA meetings within two days after the meeting to RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisors, Hall Directors, and Area Coordinators, and Central Residence Life Staff.
- d. Handle all RHA correspondence including typing letters/memos and other necessary paperwork.
- e. Coordinate RHA Center Reservations to include processing all reservation requests, confirming request with various parties, and monitoring center usage.
- f. Coordinate RHA Center desk assistant training.
- g. Maintain attendance records for all RHA Representatives.
- h. Assemble and update the RHA Directory of all members and distribute accordingly.
- i. Notify all members of regular and special meetings.
- j. Maintain all RHA files to include correspondence, committee reports, agendas, minutes, program files, and all other pertinent documents.
- k. Serve on the Residence Life Rental Agreement Appeals Committee when needed.
- l. Maintain a positive working relationship with RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisors, and committee members.
- m. Manage all RHA office operations.
- n. Attend weekly Executive Board meetings and RHA meetings. Absences are only allowed with prior consent from the Director and/or the Advisor. Failure to receive consent before an absence may result in immediate probation; the second such occurrence may result in immediate removal from office.
- o. Attend a retreat to coordinate the coming fall and spring semester's goals and activities.
- p. Endeavor to improve and promote RHA.
- q. Maintain active membership on an RHA standing committee and serve as supervisor/resource person to the committee chair.
- r. Maintain five (5) office hours per week utilized in the best interest of RHA.

Section 6: Responsibilities of the Associate Director for Finance:

- a. Meet with Executive Board Members and the Advisors to formulate the budget for the academic year.
- b. Maintain accurate, timely records of all transactions regarding RHA funds and be able to produce these at the request of any RHA member, Executive Board, Advisor, or Committee chair.
- c. Report financial status of RHA to its members at weekly meetings.
- d. Coordinate all fund-raising efforts – evaluate the strengths and limitations of fundraising efforts and report evaluations to the Executive Board and RHA Advisors.
- e. Research fundraising opportunities – make recommendations for future fundraising ideas based upon this research.
- f. Assume responsibility for all financial activities of RHA.
- g. Maintain active membership on an RHA standing committee and serve as supervisor/resource person to the committee chair.
- h. Make sure that the fundraising account does not drop below one thousand dollars (\$1,000).
- i. Attend weekly Executive Board meetings and RHA meetings. Absences are only allowed with prior consent from the Director and/or the Advisor. Failure to receive consent before an absence may result in immediate probation; the second such occurrence may result in immediate removal from office.
- j. Attend a retreat to coordinate the coming fall and spring semester's goals and activities.
- k. Endeavor to improve and promote RHA.
- l. Monitor supplies for RHA on a bi-weekly basis – purchase supplies as needed.
- m. Maintain an accurate inventory of all RHA furnishings and equipment for all university inventory audits.
- n. Serve as a member of the Residence Life Appeals Committee when needed.
- o. Maintain a positive and working relationship with RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisors, and committee members.
- p. Meet once a month with Residence Life Budget Manager to review RHA finances.
- q. Maintain five (5) office hours per week utilized in the best interest of RHA.

Section 7: Responsibilities of the Associate Director for Public Relations:

- a. Coordinate public relations efforts for all RHA functions and events through resources such as the *Student Printz*.
- b. Review and improve all RHA correspondence and publicity.
- c. Promote the participation of the hall in RHA and its activities.
- d. Distribute RHA materials (flyers, letters, etc.) to halls.
- e. Serve as a communication link between the halls in the sharing of ideas and suggestions.
- f. Responsible for press releases for events and other RHA activities.
- g. Attend weekly Executive Board meetings and RHA meetings. Absences are only allowed with prior consent from the Director and/or the Advisor. Failure to receive consent before an absence may result in immediate probation; the second such occurrence may result in immediate removal from office.
- h. Attend a retreat to coordinate the coming fall and spring semester's goals and activities.
- i. Endeavor to improve and promote RHA.
- j. Serve as the official webmaster for the RHA webpage and keep the information updated.
- k. Maintain a positive and working relationship with RHA Representatives, Executive Board, RHA Advisors, and committee members.
- l. Serve on the Residence Life Rental Agreement Appeals Committee when needed.
- m. Maintain five (5) office hours per week utilized in the best interest of RHA.

Section 8: Qualifications of all Executive Board Members:

- a. Be a member of RHA for one (1) full semester preceding the selection process. Those seeking the directorship shall have served two (2) semesters preceding the selection process as a member of the Executive Board.
- b. Maintain a 2.25 cumulative GPA.
- c. Reside in a residence hall.
- d. May not be a RHA Representative, Resident Assistant (with the exclusion of the National Residence Hall Honorary President), Hall Director, or a professional staff member of the Department of Residence Life.
- e. Be in good standing with the University of Southern Mississippi and the Department of Residence Life.

Section 9: The Executive Board shall serve as the RHA voting body, and have all rights and privileges as those of the RHA Representatives from the last meeting of the spring semester till the first meeting of the fall semester only. This shall allow the Executive Board to operate during the absence of the RHA Representatives and help the organization properly function to better residential life while away from school to be better prepared for the incoming school year.

Section 10: All Executive Board members must give two weeks notice prior to resignation from their position to the Director and Advisor. The Executive Board members' scholarship will be pro-rated for the time served unless the resignation is not taken in good standing, in which case the Executive Board members scholarship may be charged back for the entire semester.

Article VIII: Executive Board Selection

Section 1: Regular selection for the next year.

- a. Selection of the Director and Associate Directors shall take place in February. Applications shall be available for no less than two (2) weeks with sufficient advertising. The Executive Board will set a specific deadline for submission of applications with majority consent of the RHA Representatives. This date will be included in all advertisements.

- b. Selection of the National Communications Coordinator shall take place in February as well and follow the same guidelines as stated in Article VIII.
- c. Selection of the National Residence Hall Honorary President shall follow the guidelines of those listed out in National Residence Hall Honorary Constitution.
- d. Approval and selection procedure.
 - 1. The current Executive Board members and the RHA Advisor shall interview each applicant and present the results of the interview to the RHA Representatives.
 - 2. The RHA Representatives shall vote upon each position with consideration of the interview results. The candidate's application will be made available before a vote will take place.

Section 2: Executive Board vacancies before mid-semester of the spring term.

- a. The open position(s) shall be, if needed, temporarily replaced with an appointee of the Director with consent of the Executive Board and the RHA Advisors.
- b. If the Directorship position is the vacant position the National Communications Coordinator shall temporarily replace the Director.

Section 3: Executive Board vacancies after mid-semester of the spring term.

- a. In event of an Executive Board vacancy after mid-semester of the spring semester, the Director shall nominate with the consent of the Executive Board and RHA Advisors a candidate for majority approval by the RHA Representatives.
- b. The Director shall also provide sufficient information on the nominee for the RHA Representatives at the time of the nomination of the candidate. Sufficient information shall be defined as, but not limited to, questions asked during the normal interview process of Executive Board selection.

Section 4: In the event of an emergency, the Director with the advice and consent of the RHA Advisors may select an Executive Board member to fill a vacancy with the support of the existing Executive Board members until or if a replacement can be made.

Article IX: RHA Advisors

Section 1: There shall be two advisors for RHA, the Advisor and the Graduate Advisor.

Section 2: The advisor for RHA shall be the Assistant Director of Residence Life. Section two: The advisor shall have signature authority over RHA funds, and file all original copies of financial transactions of RHA.

Section 3: The graduate advisor for RHA shall be a Hall Director. Selection for this position will be as follows:

- a. Selection of the Graduate Advisor shall take place in August. Applications shall be available during the resident assistant training and sent to all hall directors. The Executive Board will set a specific deadline for submission of applications. This date will be included in all advertisements.
- b. Approval and selection procedure.
 - 1. The current Executive Board members and the RHA Advisor shall interview each applicant and the Executive Board shall vote on the candidates.

Section 4: Responsibilities of the Advisor:

- a. Participate actively in RHA and its functions.
- b. Attend weekly meetings of RHA and Executive Board and when needed at other special meetings.
- c. Assist the Executive Board in decision making.
- d. Provide leadership for the Executive Board and RHA Representatives.
- e. Evaluate the performance of Executive Board members.
- f. Assist in coordinating leadership training for RHA.
- g. The advisor reserves the right to place any member of RHA on probation or to request a resignation of that member with consent of the RHA Executive Board.

Section 5: Responsibilities of the Graduate Advisor:

- a. Participate actively in RHA and its functions.
- b. Attend weekly meetings of RHA and Executive Board and when needed at other special meetings.
- c. Assist the Executive Board in decision making.
- d. Evaluate the performance of Executive Board members.
- e. Provide leadership for the Executive Board and RHA Representatives.
- f. Assist in coordinating leadership training for RHA.

Article X: RHA Committees

Section 1: There will be three standing committees. RHA Representatives will be required to serve on one of these committees. The Executive Board and RHA Advisors with consent and approval of the RHA Representatives will appoint chairpersons for these committees.

Section 2: The standing committees and goals for these are:

Issues and Development

This committee focuses on the development of RHA and its members through the planning of leadership retreats, recognition and awards, and RHA Center improvements. This committee shall assess for on-campus students and work with the administration to address the issues, concerns and feedback provided by residence hall students. The goal of this committee is to make on-campus living a more positive experience for students. This committee is also responsible for promotional items of RHA such as t-shirts, giveaways, pens, etc.

Community Service

This committee coordinates programs that will serve the local community as well as on-campus in an attempt to outreach individuals in need, they will serve as the philanthropy committee. This committee is also responsible for the fundraising efforts of RHA. This Committee will strive to get more residence hall students committed to community service activities.

Special Events

This committee coordinates "special events" for on-campus students, they will serve as the programming committee. These events may be geared toward providing entertainment and social activities for on-campus students. These events may be social or educational.

Section 3: Ad-hoc committees shall be formed at the discretion of the Director of RHA. The Executive Board and RHA Advisors will select chairpersons for ad-hoc committees.

Article XI: Terms of Office

Section 1: The term of office for all Executive Board members shall be from the time of their induction into office to the end of the National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) Conference, the NACURH-to-NACURH cycle.

Section 2: The term of office for all RHA Representatives shall be from the time of their induction into office to the end of the academic year.

Section 3: The term of office for the Committee Chairs shall be from the time of their appointment to the end of the academic year.

Section 4: The term of office for the Graduate Advisor shall be from the time of their induction into office to the National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) Conference.

Article XII: Impeachment of Executive Board Members and RHA Representatives

Section 1: Charges against any Executive Board member or RHA Representative (here after named accused) must be in writing and submitted to the Executive Board, RHA Advisors, and RHA Representatives. An RHA member or the RHA Advisor may submit these.

Section 2: The RHA Advisor shall notify and give a copy of the charges to the accused.

Section 3: The charges shall be sent to an Ad-hoc committee. This committee shall consist of the RHA Advisor and non-accused Executive Board and RHA Representatives. This Ad-hoc committee should consist of no less than three (3) members.

Section 4: The RHA Advisor shall chair this committee.

Section 5: The RHA Representatives and Executive Board shall set a period for the investigation proceedings. This period should be no less than one (1) week but no more than thirty (30) days.

Section 6: The Ad-hoc committee has the power to subpoena any pertinent documents and/or persons involved.

Section 7: After the investigation, the Ad-hoc committee will present a report and their recommendation of either to impeach or place on probation the accused to the RHA Representatives. Then each RHA Representative will cast their vote. A two-thirds vote is required to move the recommendation of the Ad-hoc committee.

Article XIII: Free Access to Records

Section 1: No one shall be denied access to the financial records of RHA as long as at least one Executive Board member or the advisors are present to insure security and understanding of these records.

Article XIV: Methods of Amending

Section 1: The RHA constitution may be amended as follows:

Submit amendments to RHA Representatives and the Executive Board at least one week prior to consideration of said amendment.

- a. A vote on the amendment must take place before two weeks after the proposed amendment is presented.
- b. The amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the members.

Article XV: Non-Discrimination

Section 1: The University of Southern Mississippi offers equal education and employment opportunities to all persons without regard to sex, race, religion, color, sexual orientation, or current federal and state regulations subject to reasonable standards of admission and employment. Therefore, RHA shall operate in accordance of AA/EOE/ADA. All inquiries concerning discrimination should be directed to the RHA Advisor.