

# CONSTITUTION

## **Preamble**

The Residential Leadership Association (RLA) of the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst) is a student organization recognized by the Department of Residence Life. The Mission of RLA is to promote community and leadership development within the residence halls and represent UMass Amherst on a regional and national level. RLA is affiliated with the North East Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (NEACURH) in association with the National Association of College and University Residence Halls, Inc. (NACURH). RLA strives to identify and provide developmental opportunities for potential leaders, especially among first-year students. RLA acts as the affiliate organization to the UMass Amherst Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH).

RLA is committed to providing diverse developmental opportunities for all students in the residence halls and does not discriminate based on culture, ethnicity, religion, veteran status, race, sexual orientation, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, or age.

## **Article I: Membership and Voting Rights**

### **Section 1: Membership**

#### **A. General Member:**

Any student living in a residence hall at UMass Amherst is a General Member of RLA, and is permitted to attend any General Body meeting. General Members do not have voting rights, but do have speaking rights at meetings. General Members may serve on any committee and have voting rights on that committee.

#### **B. Cluster Representation:**

Residential clusters are represented by up to two Registered Representatives (Representatives). One of these Registered Representatives must be a Community Leader. After attending two consecutive meetings, General Members may be voted in by the Representative Body as Registered Representatives of the cluster in which they live. This title gives each Representative the right to vote at the RLA General Body meetings. Only two residents from each cluster may serve as Registered Representatives. Additional representatives known as a Registered Alternates (Alternates) may be voted in after attending two consecutive meetings. Registered Alternates will gain voting rights in the event of the absence of a Registered Representative. Registered Representatives and Registered Alternates may only vote provided that their cluster is in good standing.

#### **C. Representative Body:**

This is the voting body of RLA and is composed of the Registered Representatives and Registered Alternates. Each Registered Representative or Registered Alternate has one vote with a limit of two per cluster. A cluster vote is awarded first to a Registered Representative from that cluster. If a Registered Cluster Representative is not present the vote is awarded to a Registered Alternate from the respective cluster.

**D. Executive Board Members:**

The Executive Board will be the governing board of RLA and will be comprised of undergraduate or graduate students (who are not senior staff, as defined by the Department of Residence Life). This board is elected in the spring semester and will serve through the following academic year. The official officer transition will take place prior to the last RLA General Body meeting in the spring semester. The Executive Board shall include the following positions: President, Vice President of Administration and Finance(VPAF), Campus Communications Coordinator(CCC), National Communications Coordinator(NCC), Leadership Development Chair(LDC), Community Development Chair(CDC), Public Relations Chair(PR).

**Section 2: Cluster Attendance Policy**

In the event that a Representative cannot attend the upcoming meeting, the Representative must submit a written request for an excused absence to the President preferably before, but at least within 24 hours after the meeting. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, sickness, family crisis and night exams. The President will approve all excused absences and report them to the Executive Board.

**Section 3: Cluster Good Standing**

In order remain in good standing Clusters must send at least one Registered Representative to 2/3 of all General Body meetings per semester. If a cluster falls out of good standing they will lose their voting and funding rights for the remainder of the semester. The President will inform the Cluster RD of the change. Clusters may return to good standing at the start of the next semester.

**Article II: Executive Board Eligibility, Elections, and Removal/Resignation**

**Section 1: Executive Board Eligibility**

- A.** To be eligible for any Executive Board position, one must meet the following criteria:
1. Be free of judicial sanction from the Dean of Students Office.
  2. Must reside in a residence hall while holding the position.

3. May not be a member of the NRHH Executive Board.
  4. Maintain a MINIMUM Cumulative GPA of 2.5.
- B.** If at any point in the year an officer can no longer meet these requirements, that position will be replaced by election at the General Body Meeting following their dismissal.

## **Section 2: Executive Board Elections**

### **A.** Election Procedures

1. Elections will be included as part of the regular General Body agenda.
2. The Advisor(s) will oversee the election process acting as Sergeant-At-Arms.
3. Election order shall follow highest to lowest position as listed in the Constitution and Bylaws, beginning with the President followed by the Vice President of Administration and Finance(VPAF), Campus Communications Coordinator (CCC), National Communications Coordinator (NCC), Leadership Development Chair(LDC), Community Development Chair(CDC) and Public Relations Chair(PR).
4. Elections for positions shall proceed as follows:
  - A. The President will call for nominations off the floor at the General Body meeting prior to elections and the meeting where elections will take place.
    - 1) Only students that will be living in the residence halls in the following semester are eligible candidates.
    - 2) In the event of an excused absence, the candidate may have a proxy read the candidate's speech. No question and answer would be allowed in this case.
  - B. For each position, the candidates will be asked to leave the room and by random selection will be brought into the room one at a time to give a speech and a question and answer session.
    - 1) The candidates will be given three (3) minutes to speak about why they feel they are qualified for this position.
    - 2) The General Body and Executive Board will then be allowed to ask position specific questions of the candidate for a two (2) minute period.
    - 3) Each individual may be allowed no more than two questions per candidate.

- 4) When question and answer ends, the candidate will be asked to leave the room and the other candidates will proceed through this same process until all candidates for that position are heard.
- 5) Discussion will address the pros and cons of all of the candidates for a particular position.
  - a. Discussion may only involve topics covered in the candidates' statements or during the question and answer periods. Past experience of the candidates is appropriate to bring up if it refers directly to the candidate's ability to carry out the responsibilities of the position.
  - b. Each cluster may only mention 3 pros and 3 cons per candidate.
  - c. Each Executive Board member may mention 1 pro and 1 con per candidate.
  - d. Personal feelings concerning a candidate are not valid points of discussion (ex. Jimmy is a good/bad guy.)
  - e. This discussion will be limited to five (5) minutes to discuss all of the candidates.
- 6) A Representative may motion to extend any candidate's question and answer or any position's discussion period and a simple majority will be required to extend any session for a specified amount of time.
  - a. A maximum of 1 additional minute for Q & A's may be added to each candidate on an individual basis.
  - b. A maximum of 3 additional minutes may be added to the discussion of any position.
- 7) When discussion has ended, each Representative will be given ballots and may vote for a candidate or abstain. Candidates for the office being voted on will not be allowed in the room and hence cannot vote.
  - a. Only clusters that are in good standing will have a vote.
  - b. Each Representative will have one vote for each position.
  - c. In the event that a representative cannot decide he/she will submit a vote of abstain.
  - d. Abstention votes do not count as votes toward the simple majority.

- 8) The Advisor and President will count all the ballot votes, unless the President is a candidate for the position. In that case, the Vice President of Administration and Finance will assist the Advisor in the counting and so on through the officers according to rank so that no officer is counting the ballots for which they are a candidate.
  - a. Candidates must obtain a simple majority of the votes in order to be declared the winner.
  - b. In the event no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be thrown out, a two (2) minute discussion and a revote will be taken among the remaining candidates. There will be no opportunity for extension.
  - c. If all candidates for a position receive the same number of votes another two (2) minute Discussion session will take place prior to a revote. There will be no opportunity for extension.
- 9) The candidates will then be brought into the room and the results announced by the current President.
- 10) Any candidate not elected can choose to run for any remaining positions. The President will call for those nominations before beginning the election process for the next position.

**B. Mid-Year Openings:**

In the case of an Executive Board opening during the year, nominations and elections will happen at the General Body meeting immediately following the opening becoming available and will follow the normal election procedure. In the event no one runs for the position, the President will appoint someone with approval of a simple majority of the Delegate Body.

**C. Timeline**

1. Elections will be held in the Spring Semester by the first week of April at a General Body Meeting.
2. If elections run in excess of three (3) hours, election of the current position will be completed and all remaining elections will be completed the Tuesday immediately following which will be deemed a General Body Meeting.
3. The officers shall be elected by a simple majority of the Representatives in good standing that are present.
4. New officers will be installed by the last general body meeting of the spring semester and will remain in office for the following fall and spring semesters.

5. In the event of the resignation of an officer, an election will be held to fill the vacancy with the exception of the President.
  - A. In the event that the office of President is vacated, the Vice President of Administration and Finance will become President.
  - B. A general election will be held to fill the Vice President of Administration and Finance vacancy.
  - C. In the event that the Vice President of Administration and Finance would prefer to remain in their current position, they will act as President until an election can be held to fill the Presidential vacancy.
6. Unfilled Offices
  - A. In the event that during an election, an office does not become filled, elections for that position will only be postponed until the fall semester. The President Elect may appoint an interim for any unfilled positions until elections can be held in the fall.
  - B. Postponed elections must take place by the second General Body meeting of the semester.
  - C. Normal election process will be followed.

### **Section 3: Executive Board Impeachment**

Executive Board members can be impeached by the Representative Body after gaining a petition signed by three-fourths of the Registered Representatives. This will be followed by a hearing at the next General Body meeting and impeachment will occur with a two-thirds majority vote. The President will preside over these hearings except for his or her own, in which case the Vice President of Administration and Finance will preside. Any Executive Board member is allowed to testify on his or her own behalf.

### **Section 4: Executive Board Removal/Resignation**

- A. Executive Board officers not meeting the eligibility standards will be removed from office.
- B. Executive Board officers wishing to resign must submit a letter of resignation as well as a transitional report for that position's activities up to that date. The resigning officer must meet once with the individual elected to the vacant position in order to ease the transition of an officer elected mid-year.

### **Section 5: Registered Representative and Registered Alternate Removal/Resignation**

- A. Representatives and Alternatives must remain in good standing with RLA to represent their cluster. The following situations will cause a delegate to fall out of good standing:
  1. Failure to comply with the RLA General Body Meeting Attendance Policy.

2. Failure to meet the Representative qualifications.
  3. Failure to serve on at least one RLA Committee.
  4. Failure to uphold the RLA Constitution.
  5. Failure to abide by the UMass Student Code of Conduct at all RLA related functions.
- B.** The RLA President will inform the delegate of their standing and request another Representative from the Residence Director.
- C.** The Representative will be re-eligible for appointment after attending two consecutive RLA General Body meetings.

### **Article III: Advisors**

- A.** Advisor(s) will provide professional support and guidance to RLA.
- B.** Advisor(s) must meet regularly on a one-on-one basis with the Executive Board members.
- C.** An Advisor will attend all RLA Executive Board and General Body meetings except when absences are in accordance with their contract with the Department of Residence Life.
- D.** The Primary Advisor to RLA will be the Leadership Development Specialist or the individual designated by the Department of Residence Life.
- E.** Additional professional and graduate Residence Life staff may serve as secondary advisors to RLA when deemed necessary by the Leadership Development Specialist and their supervising Residence Life Management (RLM) member.
- F.** The process for selecting these additional Advisors will be the same as committee selection for professional staff with the approval of the Leadership Development Specialist and their supervising RLM member.

### **Article IV: The National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH)**

- A.** RLA will serve as an affiliate organization to NRHH.
- B.** RLA and NRHH will provide support for each other's initiatives and programs.
- C.** RLA will fund one NRHH Representative to each NACURH affiliated conference and meeting that RLA is attending. Funding for an NRHH Representative to a NACURH affiliated conference hosted at UMass Amherst shall also be allocated.
- D.** An NRHH member will serve as an Ex Officio member of RLA. This person will attend RLA General Body Meetings and give an NRHH Report.

### **Article V: Conferences**

## **Section 1: Conference Attendance**

- A.** NRHH is guaranteed one representative as a delegate to all NACURH affiliated conferences and meetings RLA is attending. The NRHH Executive Board selects this person by a time determined by the RLA NCC and/or CCC.
- B.** Any student not returning to UMass Amherst residence halls the following academic year is not eligible to attend the NACURH conference.

## **Section 2: Conference Delegations**

- A.** A selection committee that includes the NCC, CCC, an Advisor and one member of the General Body will choose the delegation.
- B.** The NCC prepares and leads the delegation both in preparation for and attendance at the conference. A delegation leader may also be selected for each delegation.
- C.** Delegates are required to present their impression of the conference experience and useful learned information at a General Body meeting following conference attendance.
- D.** Delegates are required to help coordinate at least one RLA sponsored event after attending a conference.

## **Section 3: Roles at the Conference**

- A.** The NCC shall represent RLA in the NCC boardroom at conferences.
- B.** The President will be guaranteed a spot on delegations to conferences where President Roundtables will be a part of the conference in order to represent RLA at the Presidential Roundtable discussions. Although not required, one Executive Board member (appointed by the Executive Board) may sit in on these Roundtables if the President is unable to attend a conference that fits such criteria.
- C.** Delegates will be required to attend all scheduled activities at the conference, unless otherwise decided by the NCC and Advisor.

## **Article VI: Finance/Budget**

### **Section 1: Funding**

- A.** RLA is funded by the UMass Amherst Department of Residence Life.
- B.** RLA gains additional funding through fundraising initiatives.

### **Section 2: Budget**

The budget shall be presented by the Vice President of Administration and Finance at the first meeting of each semester, where it must be reviewed by the General Body. The budget must be approved at that meeting, or as soon as possible, by two-thirds majority vote using the open vote system.

### **Section 3: Approval of Expenditures**

- A. A request for expenditures from the “Miscellaneous” line item in the budget must be formally presented at General Body meetings by Executive Board members, committees, Representatives, or General members. The expenditure must be approved by a majority vote using the open vote system.
- B. Terms of other expenditures will be set by the Executive Board at the beginning of the year.

## **Article VII: The RLA Constitution**

### **Section 1: Amending the Constitution**

- A. Amendments to the RLA Constitution must be submitted in writing to the RLA Executive Board one week prior to presentation to the General Body. Presentations must include rationale as to why the amendment will benefit the Association.
- B. The RLA Constitution can be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Representative Body using the open vote system.

### **Section 2: Bylaws**

- A. Bylaws to be added or amended to the RLA Constitution must be submitted in writing to the RLA Executive Board one week prior to presentation to the General Body. Presentations must include rationale as to why the Bylaws’ changes will benefit the Association.
- B. The RLA Bylaws can be added to or amended by a simple majority vote of the Representative Body using an open vote system.
- C. Bylaws will be added to the “RLA Bylaws” section at the end of the Constitution, and will be labeled according to the date at which it was voted into effect.

### **Section 3: Ratification**

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Residential Leadership Association will ratify their constitution under review of the entire General Body and must be passed by two-thirds majority of the General Body in an open vote.

### **Section 4: Constitution and Bylaw Review**

- A. The RLA Constitution and Bylaws must be reviewed in the spring of every odd numbered year. The review committee will be appointed by the President and must consist of the President at least one other Executive Board member and 2 General Body members.
- B. The Constitution can be reviewed at other times if a two-third majority of the General Body deems it necessary.
- C. The Bylaws can be reviewed at other times if a simple majority of the Representative Body deems it necessary.

## **Article VIII: Meeting Procedures**

- A. Proceedings involving all Executive Board and General Body meetings will follow a revised version of Robert’s Rules of Order for Parliamentary Procedure.

- B.** Quorum is constituted by a majority of Registered Representatives at the time of the vote.
1. A simple majority of the vote is defined as 50% +1 of the quorum.
  2. A Two-thirds majority vote is defined as 67% +1 of the quorum

# **BYLAWS**

## **Article I: Meetings and Voting Procedures**

### **Section 1: Meeting Times**

- A.** The Executive Board will meet at a regular time to determine the agenda for the following General Body meeting, and to give updates on committee work and other officer projects.
- B.** The Executive Board meetings will meet a minimum of biweekly weekly at a time established at the beginning of each semester.
- C.** General Body meetings occur Tuesday evenings from 5:30 – 7 p.m. Meetings will be open to all General Members, but only the Representative Body will have voting rights.

### **Section 2: Voting Procedures**

- A.** Every voting Representative will be allowed one vote per motion.
- B.** The Executive Board does not vote during General Body meetings.
- C.** All votes will be based on a simple majority except for the following situations, which will require a two-thirds majority of the Representative Body:
  - 1. Constitution ratification
  - 2. Amending the Constitution
  - 3. Choosing to review the Constitution except when specified by the Constitution
  - 4. Impeachment of an Officer
- D.** There are two systems of voting:
  - 1. Open Vote: Votes will be counted through a show of hands from the Representative Body. The President will determine ties for an open vote. This voting system will be used for the following:
    - A. All ordinary procedures throughout General Body meetings
    - B. The ratification of the constitution
    - C. Amending the constitution or adding or amending a Bylaw
    - D. Voting to approve programmatic or other organization wide funding in excess of \$500.
  - 2. Ballot Vote: Votes will be written on a slip of paper to be counted by the President and Advisor, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution. Ties for a Ballot Vote are determined through additional deliberation on the two choices receiving the top number of votes and then a re-vote will be taken. This voting system will be used for the following:
    - A. Election of Officers
    - B. Impeachment of an Officer
    - C. Awarding an individual or group

- D. When the Representative Body deems necessary, by a simple majority vote, regarding a specific motion.
- E. In the Ballot system, all Registered Representatives must vote. If a Representative chooses not to vote, they must write "Abstain" on their ballot and hand it in. The number of ballots must match the number of Representatives at the meeting.
- F. The Executive Board reserves the right to make Executive decisions regarding programming and majority vote issues while RLA is not in session.

## **Article II: Officer Positions and Descriptions**

### **Section 1: Overall duties for all Officers**

- A. Meet regularly with advisor
- B. Attend all Executive Board and General Body meetings. The President must approve absences.
- C. Hold a minimum of two weekly office hours.
- D. Create transitioning report for next year's incoming officer.
- E. Access the Resource File Index(RFI)

### **Section 2: Specific Position Descriptions**

- A. President
  - 1. Organize and preside over all RLA meetings.
  - 2. Serve as the tie-breaking vote at Executive Board meetings.
  - 3. Serve as liaison with the CCC to the Department of Residence Life and other constituencies.
  - 4. Meet at least twice per semester with the NRHH president.
  - 5. Meet monthly with other Executive Board members.
  - 6. To plan and implement RLA Executive Board and General Body group development and training.
  - 7. Work with the Vice President of Administration and Finance to develop Executive Board elections.
  - 8. Enforce the constitution of RLA.
  - 9. Represent UMass Amherst to the NEACURH Presidents group and list-serve.
  - 10. To work with the Executive Board to assure task completion.

**B. Vice President of Administration and Finance**

1. Oversee the upkeep of the RLA/NRHH office (*with NRHH Secretary*)
2. Take minutes at Executive Board and General Body meetings and distribute them to the appropriate members for each meeting.
3. Monitor attendance at General Body and Executive Board meetings.
4. Oversee the annual Re-Affiliation with NACURH (including the NIC Report and NRHH paperwork).
5. Maintain an archive of all files, photos, and other documents.
6. Create and update a contact list for RLA Executive Board Officers, Advisors, and Cluster Delegates.
7. Work with president on planning and implementing spring Executive Board elections.
8. Prepare and maintain the operating budget of RLA and present it for approval to the General Body each fall.
9. Oversee allocation of funds as voted on by the General Body.
10. Present to the General Body budget, incomes and expenditures at the second meeting of each month.
11. Develop fundraising initiatives for RLA when needed.
12. Preside over any RLA meetings the President cannot attend.
13. Oversee the Fundraising Committee when it is active.

**C. Campus Communications Coordinator (CCC)**

1. Advertise, interview, and select delegations to regional and national conferences.
2. Present conference information to the Residence Life Departmental meetings and RLA General Body meetings.
3. Implement outreach opportunities to Registered Student Organizations
4. Act as the liaison to NRHH
5. Serve with the President as the liaison to the Department of Residence Life and other campus constituencies.
6. Make post conference contact with the conference delegations.

**D. National Communications Coordinator (NCC)**

1. Act as the RLA liaison to NEACURH and NACURH
2. Assist the CCC to advertise, interview, and select delegations to regional and national conferences
3. Preside over delegation meetings in preparation for conferences
4. Attend NEACURH Sub-regional meetings, NEACURH Regionals, NEACURH Mini No-Frills, and the NACURH Conference as appropriate
5. Prepare bids and coordinate bid-teams for various regional and national awards
6. Report to RLA information about other school's programming initiatives and practices as requested by the Executive Board
7. Subscribe to the NCC List-Serve

**E. Leadership Development Chair(LDC)**

1. Plan and implement leadership opportunities for first year students
2. Plan and implement a fall retreat and a spring workshop
3. Plan and implement on-going leadership development initiatives
4. Oversee the RLA Leadership Development Committee
5. Assist the President with group development initiatives and training

**F. Community Development Chair(CDC)**

1. Plan and implement Community Development programs in all Residential Areas (a minimum of one per Residential Area per academic year)
2. Represent RLA during First Week planning
3. Explore, create, and implement ways to promote residence hall pride and community
4. Oversee the Community Development Committee
5. Access the resources at the National Information Center (NIC) for the Resource File Index (RFI) to obtain programs

**G. Public Relations Chair(PR)**

1. Design and implement strategies for promoting RLA within Residence Life, Housing Services, and on campus

2. Oversee the use of the RLA Logo and UMass Amherst Word mark on paraphernalia for distribution to UMass Amherst students and at conferences
3. Coordinate distribution of publicity for events and meetings
4. Develop ways to promote RLA to students and their families during the Residence Hall opening period and New Student Programs
5. Create advertising for all RLA sponsored events and meetings as requested
6. Maintain the RLA Webpage and YouMass TV information
7. Oversee the Public Relations Committee

### **Article III: Officer Annual Transition**

- A. Newly elected Executive Board officers will be required to attend the Executive Board meetings for the remainder of the year in order to shadow the individual holding the position for which they were elected.
- B. The new officers must also meet at least once with the current officer outside of the Executive Board meeting in order to review the transitioning report the current officer created specific to their new position.
- C. All new officers of the Executive Board must attend an RLA Officer Transition Retreat.

### **Article IV: Committees**

#### **Section 1: Standing Committees**

- A. All Committees will select a Chairperson from within the committee
- B. **Community Development Committee**

This committee is overseen by the Community Development Chair. The committee focuses on implementing educational, social, and pride-building programming on campus including First Week.

- C. **Leadership Development Committee**

This committee is overseen by the Leadership Development Chair. This committee focuses on organizing retreats and other leadership development opportunities.

- D. **Public Relations Committee**

This committee is overseen by the Public Relations Chair. This committee focuses on the creation and distribution of advertisements for RLA sponsored events and meetings as well as other promotional activities.

**E. Fundraising Committee**

This committee is overseen by the Vice President of Administration and Finance. This committee focuses on the development and coordination of the fundraising efforts of RLA. The Fundraising Committee will be created and disbanded at the discretion of the Vice President of Administration and Finance.

**Section 2: Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad Hoc Committees will be established when necessity requires it of RLA or the General Body. They will be created and appointed by the President.