

# **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 residing in a residence hall at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst shall be recognized as a member of the Residential Leadership Association. These students will serve as the general body and represent their respective residential cluster at General Body meetings. Residential clusters are permitted to send as many general body members to the General Body meetings to represent the cluster.

#### **B. 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: Director, AD of Campus/Community Development, AD of Business Administration, AD of Leadership and Student Development, National Communication Chair, AD of Public Relations, Advertising, Marketing, and Design, National Communication Chair In Training(ex-officio).

#### **C. Voting Representation:**

Each residential cluster shall be given two (2) voting seats, and two (2) votes at each General Body meeting. If only one (1) seat is filed that cluster will receive one (1) vote. If the cluster has elected Community Leaders, hence forth known

as (CL's), CL's have priority in filling voting seats. If a cluster has no CL's selected or are not present, any general body member from the respective cluster may fill the seats.

Only those members who are in voting seats may vote, but may seek council with remaining cluster representatives. Furthermore only voting seats may participate in discussion, question and answer, and debate, unless deferred to a cluster representative as per Parliamentary Procedure dictates.

## **Section 2: Cluster Attendance Policy**

In the event that a cluster representative cannot attend a General Body meeting, a cluster representative must submit a request for an excused absence to the President 24 hours before or 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. An approved excused absence will not count towards a cluster obtaining non-good standing.

## **Section 3: Cluster Good Standing**

Good standing is defined as having voting, discussion, and funding privileges within the general body. Non-good standing is defined as having discussion and meeting participation privileges, but not permitted to receive funding or vote.

If a cluster fails to have representation in two consecutive general body meetings, said cluster shall be placed in non-good standing. In order to regain good standing, the cluster must have representation two consecutive general body meetings. On the second of the two consecutive meetings a motion must be made to have the cluster in non-good standing, return to good standing and a vote of the general body, simple majority, will determine if the cluster will have good standing privileges restored. Each cluster begins the semester in good standing.

## **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 Director, followed by AD of Campus/Community Development, AD of Business Administration, AD of Leadership and Student Development, NCC, AD of Public Relations, Advertising, Marketing and Design, NCC-IT.
4. Elections for positions shall proceed as follows:
  - A. The Director 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 five (5) 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) Pro/Con session to address the pros/cons for each of the candidates for a particular position.
  - a. Pro/Con 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. After 3 rounds of pro/con with no response then the pro/con session ends and moves to discussion.
- 6) Discussion will follow after all candidates have presented, question and answer session, and pro/con concludes.
  - a. Discussion will be limited to 5 minutes to discuss the candidates.
  - b. Discussion will cover anything addressed during the presentation, question and answer session, and pro/con, as well as personal statements about the candidates.
- 7) 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.
- 8) When discussion has ended, each Representative will be given ballots and may vote for a candidate, no confidence, 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.
- 9) The Advisor and Director will count all the ballot votes, unless the Director is a candidate for the position. In that case, the AD of Campus/community Development 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.
- 10) The candidates will then be brought into the room and the results announced by the current Director.
- 11) Any candidate not elected can choose to run for any remaining positions. The Director 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 Director will appoint someone with approval of a simple majority of the General Body.

**C. NCC-IT**

The NCC-IT elections will be held on a rolling basis, only when there is a NCC in place.

**D. 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. 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.
4. In the event of the resignation of an officer, an election will be held to fill the vacancy with the exception of the Director.
  - A. In the event that the office of Director is vacated, the AD of Campus/Community Development will become Director.
  - B. A general election will be held to fill the AD of Campus/Community Development vacancy.
  - C. In the event that the AD of Campus/Community Development would prefer to remain in their current position, they will act as Director until an election can be held to fill the Director vacancy.
5. 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 Director 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 General Body, preference to CL's. This will be followed by a hearing at the next General Body meeting and impeachment will occur with a two-thirds majority vote. The Director will preside over these hearings except for his or her own, in which case the AD of Campus/Community Development 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.

### **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 Leadership (RLL) 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 RLL 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, with the exception of the NCC.

##### **Section 2: Conference Delegations**

- A. A selection committee that includes the NCC and an Advisor.

- 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 and NCC-IT shall represent RLA in the NCC boardroom at conferences.
- B. The Director 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 Director 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 through fundraising initiatives.

### **Section 2: Budget**

The budget shall be presented by the AD of Business Administration 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 Director and must consist of the Director 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 weekly 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.** General Body meetings occur every Tuesday from 6:00pm – 7:30pm. Meetings will be open to all General Members.

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

- A.** Each cluster is allotted two votes 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 General 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 Director 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 Director 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 Director must approve absences.
- C. Hold a minimum of two weekly office hours.
- D. Create transitioning report for next year's incoming officer.
- E. Submit monthly report at last executive board meeting of month.

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

**Director:** Duties include but are not limited to, overseeing the development of the executive board, running all meetings, acting as a liaison to Residential Life, represents RLA on campus, cast the deciding vote in case of ties, is responsible for the direction of RLA, responsible for the development of executive board, will meet with the NRHH twice a semester, work with the AD of Business Administration to prepare the budget, understand and enforce constitution of RLA, represent UMass at the regional and national level presidents board.

**Assistant Director of Campus/Community Development:** Duties include but are not limited to, acting as the Director in his/her absence, advising Ad-Hoc committees, building and maintaining relationships with on campus offices/student organizations, maintaining and building relationships with community businesses/charities/towns people, develop programming opportunities for students to engage in the local community.

**Assistant Director of Business Administration:** Duties include but are not limited to, preparing the budget each semester, ensuring that guidelines for proposals are met, recording of minutes at meetings, assisting with all fundraising opportunities and maintaining office supplies and organizing the office.

**Assistant Director of Leadership and Student Development:** Duties include but are not limited to, plan and implement leadership opportunities for first year students, plan and implement ongoing leadership development initiatives, assist Director in development of executive board, plan and implement programming initiatives in the residential areas, represent RLA during First Week planning, promote residence hall pride/community/leadership.

**NCC:** Duties include but are not limited to, overseeing the participation of RLA in the regional and national conferences, responsible for annual re-affiliation with NACURH, the NIC report and NRHH paperwork, assists the AD of Business Administration on

fundraising for conferences, subscribe to the NCC listserv, oversee bid writing process, and submit at minimum one bid per year.

**Assistant Director of Public Relations, Advertising, Marketing, and Design:** Duties include but are not limited to, increasing awareness of RLA to the residential students, coordinate with the executive board to promote programs/conferences/meetings/events, responsible for working with media outlets to promote RLA, assist in the maintenance and updating of the RLA website, oversee the use of the RLA logo and UMass Amherst word mark on paraphernalia for distribution to UMass students and conferences.

**NCC In-Training (ex-officio):** Duties include but are not limited to, shadowing the NCC and take on tasks delegated by the NCC. The NCC In-Training will accompany the NCC to all conferences and participate in board room and other NCC duties. The NCC-IT shall assume the role of NCC in the event that the NCC is unable to fulfill their duties, resigns, or is impeached. The ex-officio position allows the NCC-IT to participate in discussions and provide input during executive board meetings, but will not have voting privileges.

### **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.
- D.** All executive board members will run the second to last meeting with the newly appointed executive board running the last meeting of the year.

### **Article IV: Committees**

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

##### **A. Leadership Development Committee**

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

##### **B. Public Relations Committee**

This committee is overseen by the AD of Public Relations, Advertising, Marketing and Design. This committee focuses on the creation and distribution of

advertisements for RLA sponsored events and meetings as well as other promotional activities.

**C. Campus/Community Development Committee**

This committee is overseen by the AD of Campus/Community Development. This committee focuses on building relationships within the UMass community both on and off campus.

**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 Director.