



THE RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION

Letter from the RHA President

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the fall semester and look forward to this spring, I am excited to report that the University of Maryland Residence Hall Association (RHA) made important strides, dedicating itself to longstanding commitments to resident students.

The RHA Newsletter provides a broad look into the daily activities and accomplishments of our organization over the course of the past semester. As early as August, RHA collaborated with the Terps After Dark program, hosting a variety of events intended to engage resident students and introduce them to their new home. After an exciting election season, newly formed residence hall and area councils began their semesters with introductory events that continued to welcome students to the university.

With the commencement of the RHA Senate biweekly meetings, RHA passed major legislation originating from a hall council that upheld the organization's commitment to diversity and subsequently created a new ad-hoc committee, known as the Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (DIACom). DIACom continues to work today to strengthen diversity programming and education in the residence halls.

RHA, in collaboration with the Department of Dining Services, raised money to support the philanthropic work of the UMD Campus Pantry. In partnership with Terps for Service Members and the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH), RHA collected items to stock care packages that were mailed to service members stationed abroad during the holidays. Hall and area councils also hosted service and awareness events, including the North Hill Area Council's Post-Football Game Clean Up, Denton Hall Council's Breakfast to Beat Breast Cancer, and BCC Area Council's Project Linus Blanket Making event.

Our achievements were recognized at the 2017 Central Atlantic Affiliate for College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH) Regional Leadership Conference, where our organization brought home numerous awards commemorating our members' hard work.

The remainder of this newsletter will address in more detail the successes of this past semester. I would like to use this opportunity to thank the campus community for your continued support and friendship, and I look forward to seeing everyone throughout this semester.

Warmly,

Dana Rodriguez

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ABOUT RHA

RHA is the primary student-run governing body that represents the interests of the over 12,500 resident Terrapins at the University of Maryland, College Park. Made up of 15 hall and area councils, elected students advocate for the interests of their hall or area's residents and build community through fun and informational events, while the student representatives serving on the RHA Senate pass resolutions regarding campus-related initiatives.

RHA prides itself on its ability to effectively communicate student concerns to university administrators. The RHA Senate works in close partnership with the Departments of Resident Life, Residential Facilities, Dining Services, Transportation Services, and the Office of Sustainability to advise policies that directly impact resident students.

RHA is committed to empowering its student leaders to work to facilitate community development and campus engagement. It hopes to nurture a generation of leaders, ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

MEET THE NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

This semester, the RHA Executive Board underwent transition and we welcomed two new Executive Board members in November. We are excited to work with Laura and Julian and look forward to the impact they will undoubtedly make on RHA!



Laura Branna - Finance and Philanthropy Officer

- *Previous Position:* Senator of North Hill Area Council
- *Year:* Sophomore
- *Major:* Criminal Justice
- *Goals for Spring:* Get more students involved in philanthropy

Julian Chiveral - Administrative Officer

- *Previous Position:* President and Senator of Oakland Hall Council
- *Year:* Sophomore
- *Major:* Mathematics and Mechanical Engineering, minors in Nuclear Engineering and Sustainability Studies
- *Goals for Spring:* Host more campus-wide social events to build a stronger community and increase the number of council collaborations we have!



ADVOCACY



During Fall 2017, RHA's advocacy has been impactful. All of our members have worked diligently to improve the residential experience as an invaluable component to a student's journey at the University of Maryland. As a result of these efforts, RHA has grown as an organization, serving as a guide and avenue that students and administrators turn to when seeking expertise in addressing and resolving matters affecting resident students.

DIVERSITY

Concerns relating to diversity and inclusion issues have plagued our nation and our campus in recent months. RHA has taken a stand this semester to ensure all resident students feel included and safe in our residence halls. Senate visits from the chairs of the Joint President/Senate Inclusion & Respect Task Force and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Roger Worthington informed the RHA Senate of actions being taken on campus. These visits also offered a forum for our Senate members to ask questions and raise concerns.

The RHA Senate also passed two resolutions relating to diversity and inclusion this fall. One was authored by the Centreville Hall Council and passed on October 24, which affirmed hall and area councils' commitment to diversity. It called on other hall and area councils to start conversations with their council members and constituents about the campus climate.

A second resolution, authored by members of the RHA Executive Team and passed on November 7, created DIACom. The committee will "develop concrete actions RHA can take to promote diversity through programming and policy, as well as encourage a culture of inclusivity within residence halls," according to the resolution. In the short time the committee has been in existence, members have discussed the current campus climate and potential solutions for more inclusive residence hall cultures. In the coming semester, the committee hopes to put on programs that expose resident students to diverse cultures and explore partnerships with organizations that have similar missions.

ADVOCACY

SUSTAINABILITY

Comprised of both Senators and Vice Presidents of Sustainability of the hall and area councils, the Sustainability Committee of Maryland (SCOM) used its unique structure to ensure our campus is as green as possible, everywhere possible.

SCOM supported events on campus such as the Waste Audit and the Terp Farm Fall Festival. The main initiative of the fall semester and of the ongoing year is the implementation of a GreenEdu orientation program, designed to educate and promote sustainability to all incoming students before they arrive on campus. The GreenTerp pilot, the composting initiative, and other great programs will all be highlighted in GreenEdu.

TRANSPORTATION

The RHA Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) works with the Department of Transportation Services (DOTS) directly on a biweekly advisory basis. Throughout the Fall 2017 semester, TAC was able to accomplish many of its goals. These goals include improving on-campus biking services and broadening the bike share partnership between the University of Maryland and the City of College Park. Doron Tadmor, a Senator from La Plata Hall, introduced legislation that proposed changing existing bus routes to better accommodate North Campus students, which is expected to be explored in the spring semester.

An ongoing project the committee is currently tackling is making the DOTS website more user friendly. At the conclusion of the fall semester, TAC presented additional ideas to David Allen, the director of DOTS, and looks forward to what further improvements will be made.

ADVOCACY

DINING

The Dining Services Advisory Board (DSAB) works directly with the Department of Dining Services to improve the student dining experience. During the fall semester, DSAB worked with the different campus convenience stores to implement a new feedback mechanism for students to request more of the foods they want to see sold at these stores. DSAB successfully worked with Dining Services to allow the Green Tidings food truck to accept Dining Dollars. DSAB also worked with dining administrators to incorporate a more diverse menu selection in the different dining halls.

RESIDENT LIFE

In the Fall 2017 semester, the Resident Life Advisory Team (ReLATE) heard presentations regarding various issues pertinent to on-campus residents and gave their feedback on said issues. Nearly everything discussed will be brought before the RHA Senate at a later date.

Topics included the handling of marijuana and alcohol incidents, substance-free and sober housing, and modifying RoomSync to be more accommodating for the LGBTQ+ community. The closing and renovation of Dorchester Hall was also briefly discussed.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

The Resident Facilities Advisory Board (ReFAB) deals with the structures and attributes that directly affect students living in the residence halls. This past semester, ReFAB has taken a problem-solving stance in discussing and finding solutions for the concerns and proposals that residents and fellow RHA members have brought to the committee's attention. These have been a range of topics, from elevator malfunctions to wipe stations inside of the showers to the cost of washer and dryer machines. This semester, ReFAB will be taking a more initiative-driven approach to save residents money when doing laundry as well as improving the signage in the laundry rooms overall.

PROGRAMMING

HALL/AREA COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



The RHA's 15 hall and area councils hosted around a hundred unique programs across campus this semester. Each event offered residents opportunities to engage with their representatives and each other in social and educational settings. Councils hit the ground running at the end of September and in early October with "meet-the-council" events. Councils offered their constituents opportunities to become familiar with their RHA representatives, raise concerns, offer suggestions and, of course, enjoy free food!

Social programs provided spaces for residents to build communities within their halls, while educational and advocacy programs shed light on important topics. Some successful social programs included Denton Hall Council's Karaoke Night and Hagerstown Hall Council's Family Feud at the North Campus Diner. Educational programs this semester focused on topics including breast cancer awareness, as seen at Cumberland Hall Council's "Think Pink" event; sustainability, as seen at the North Hill Area Council's Sustainable Pizza Party; and hunger and homelessness, as seen at the BCC Area Council's peanut-butter-and-jelly-making event to benefit Martha's Table.

Seasonal holidays also offered councils opportunities to put on creative programs. Highlights included pumpkin painting, as seen at the South Hill Area Council's Halloweentown event; Thanksgiving dinners, as seen at the hugely successful Cambridge Community Terpsgiving; and holiday-cookie decorating, as seen at the South Campus Commons Area Council's "Seven Days of Commons," as well as Easton and Oakland Hall Council's joint Winterfest.



PROGRAMMING

SERVICE AND PHILANTHROPY EVENTS



Philanthropy and service are two of RHA's core priorities. Last semester, RHA had two major service events: the Dining Dollar Donation Drive and Operation Gratitude.

The Dining Dollar Donation Drive, or D3 Drive, is a one-day service event where RHA members ask for Dining Dollar donations from students entering and exiting all three dining halls to benefit a certain charity. The recipient of last semester's D3 Drive was the University of Maryland Campus Pantry, an on-campus organization that aims to alleviate food hardship among UMD students, faculty, and staff. For the drive, RHA partnered with MarylandPIRG for their Hunger and Homelessness Campaign, raising over \$600.

During the month of November, RHA collaborated with NRHH and Terps for Service Members to bring Operation Gratitude to the residence halls. Operation Gratitude, a service project that took place with partners all over the City of College Park, aimed to collect small toiletries to stock care packages that would be sent to U.S. service members stationed away from home during the holiday season. Hall and area councils mobilized collection drive events to target specific residential communities and bring awareness to the season of giving.

In addition to the collection drive, RHA worked with the Department of Dining Services to sponsor a collection box for thank you letters that would accompany the care packages. Dozens of handwritten letters were authored at the letter writing station in the North Campus Diner and were packaged to be sent away during the holidays.

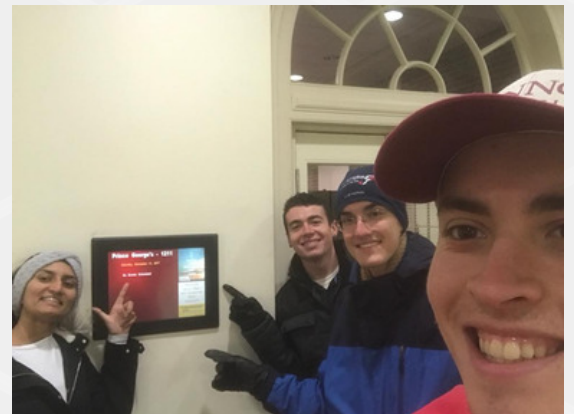
In October, RHA collaborated with Omicron Delta Kappa, the University of Maryland Student Government Association, and the UMD Panhellenic Association on a Hungry for Hurricane Relief event intended to help UMD students affected by recent hurricanes in Texas, Florida, and the Caribbean.

RHA hall and area councils also hosted service events, such as North Hill Area Council's PB&J Making Event and BCC Area Council's Community Cleanup Event. RHA members also volunteered with Casey Trees in early December, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit committed to restoring, enhancing, and protecting the local tree canopy.

PROGRAMMING

RHA SCAVENGER HUNT

Each semester, the RHA Executive Board hosts one large-scale social event for RHA members. This November, the Board planned a campus wide scavenger hunt where hall and area council teams had to decipher eight clues to RHA-related locations on-campus. Teams then had to travel to each location and take a selfie before they could obtain the final clue for the finish line. The RHA Scavenger Hunt was a great opportunity for hall and area council teams to bond while engaging in some friendly competition. It was met with great success and each participant said they had a great time!



RHA IN THE NEWS

"UMD RHA redistributes senators on campus in time for council elections"

By Julia Heimlich for The Diamondback (September 11, 2017)

"UMD RHA considers legislation to address hate-bias incidents on campus"

By Brooks DuBose for The Diamondback (October 25, 2017)

"A new UMD RHA committee will tackle diversity and inclusion issues"

By Brooks DuBose for The Diamondback (November 8, 2017)

"A suggested daytime bus route would connect north and south campus at UMD"

By Brooks DuBose for The Diamondback (November 28, 2017)



2017 Regional Leadership Conference

In early November, nine RHA and NRHH members from the University of Maryland, as well as two advisors, attended the CAACURH Regional Leadership Conference. This three-day conference took place just down the road at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The delegates attended focused programs on topics including leadership development, diversity, effective marketing, and self-care. Delegates will be able to bring these skills back and share them with other RHA members in a plethora of ways.

At the Regional Leadership Conference, the University of Maryland won several awards. We are incredibly proud that our institution won the awards for Commitment to Sustainability and Commitment to Service. Additionally, five students successfully completed the first Link in the National Association of College and University Residence Halls Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Program. Finally, we received certificates for several regional and national winning Of-The-Month nominations.

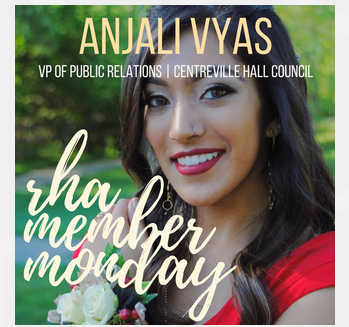
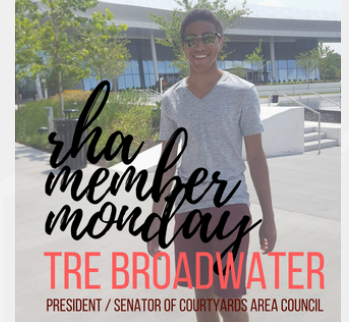


Looking Toward the Future

In the next few months, the University of Maryland will be bidding for several more awards. These include: First Year Experience, NRHH Chapter of the Year, and NRHH President of the Year. We are also bidding to host the CAACURH Regional Business Conference in February 2019. RHA is incredibly excited for this opportunity to show other schools how great UMD is and give an awesome leadership development opportunity to our members. Our bid teams and conference delegations would like to thank you for your ongoing support!

MEMBER MONDAY RECOGNITION

For this semester, the RHA Executive Board introduced RHA Member Monday in order to recognize high performing members. Every week, RHA members can nominate someone they believe to have performed exceptionally, and a winner is then unanimously chosen by the RHA Executive Board. There were a total of 11 RHA members recognized during the fall semester. Special shout-out to Dan Laffin for receiving Member of the Semester!



HALL COUNCIL RECOGNITION



The RHA Executive Board continued the "Hall Council Highlight" initiative last semester to recognize the hall and area councils that performed exceptionally the previous month. There were two hall and area councils recognized last semester: Hagerstown Hall Council and BCC Area Council. Congratulations!



SPRING SEMESTER PREVIEW

RHA has been hard at work preparing for the spring semester.

Our National Communications Coordinator, Valerie Kologrivov, is diligently planning and preparing for our Spring Leadership Training Day on January 28, where RHA members will have the opportunity to better the skills learned and practiced through a semester of hard work and dedication. Leadership development continues to be a core value of our organization, and the RHA Executive Team hopes to continue providing high-quality leadership development programs throughout the semester.

In the Senate, we are getting ready for budget season, in which the Departments of Dining, Transportation, Resident Life, and Residential Facilities present their budgets for the next fiscal year while using the opportunity to gauge student reaction and seek additional input. We are also eager to welcome President Loh during his yearly visit to the RHA Senate. Additionally, we hope to consider resolutions from all of our standing committees, as well as the ad hoc committee DIACom, as the semester continues and Senators increase their involvement. Lastly, we anticipate increased efforts related to the health and wellness aspects of campus living.

With regards to programming, the councils are individually and collectively planning events for their communities. With events this past semester that brought council members closer together, helped resident students survive their academic semesters, and provided general fun and enjoyment, we look forward to new, exciting ideas as well as the return of some classic events. Inter-council collaboration is starting to get underway as communities prepare for the annual North Campus Carnival and South Campus Block Party that help residents celebrate warmer weather.

SPECIAL THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

RHA Advisors: Aaron Hood and Steve Petkas

Senate Committee Directors: Lisa Alexander, David Allen, Jon Dooley, Deborah Grandner, Maria Lonsbury, and Colleen Wright-Riva

Hall and Area Council Advisors: Jordan Adams, Lisa Alexander, Amanda Baker, Coty Behanna, Amanda Bogdan, Jack Breffle, Chamika Ellis, Tiffany Harris, Brittany Marxen, Tynesha McCullers, Ray Nardella, Richard Scibetti, Nadéjiah Towns, Karlana Walker, and Ray Ward

Conference Delegation Advisors: Aaron Hood and Carli Weldon

University Staff: Linda Clement, Jay Gilchrist, Andrea Goodwin, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, Mary Hummel, Roger L. Worthington, Warren Kelley, Sarah Hughes, Aaron Goldbeck, and Wallace Loh

All Department of Resident Life Staff