

# RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION

The **VOICE** of on-campus students



## A Message from the President



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Dear friends,

As we reflect on the fall, I am excited to report that the Residence Hall Association (RHA) upheld its longstanding commitment to resident students and continued to push boundaries, despite challenges faced within our residential communities. This newsletter offers a glimpse into our organization's efforts and accomplishments from the fall semester.

In the face of a "full house" occupancy, overheating in the warm summer months and incidences of mold in our halls, new RHA leaders were elected to our 15 hall and area councils and built community among their fellow residents. During a semester when we were faced with uncontrollable stressors, our councils were able to provide escapes through social and educational programming. These unforeseen struggles also allowed our Senate committees to work with Resident Life and Residential Facilities to discuss how to best make residents feel at home in the face of these adversities.

The RHA Senate continued to expand our organization's advocacy initiatives. The Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (DIACom) was reinstated at the start of the semester, and the inaugural cohort of Vice Presidents of Diversity and Inclusion began its work. Our legislative body also became involved in larger, campus-level conversations, urging Athletics to consider an opt-in model for student tickets and voicing support for further exploration of a proposal to repurpose portions of the University Golf Course.

Our RHA also continued its tradition of regional excellence this fall, being awarded for the university's commitment to service and sustainability at the CAACURH Regional Leadership Conference, held at Ohio's Wright State University in early November.

The remainder of the newsletter further details the fall semester's successes. We thank you for your continued friendship and support as we work towards making the Maryland residential experience the best it can be.

Warmest wishes,  
Bryan Gallion

# About RHA

RHA is the primary student-governing body that **represents the interests of the over 12,500 resident students** at the University of Maryland. Each of RHA's **fifteen hall and area councils** works to represent the interests of their hall or area's residents and to **build community** through fun and engaging events. Representatives from each council, called Senators, convene biweekly at RHA Senate meetings to **debate and vote on campus-level legislation**.

RHA prides itself on its ability to **effectively communicate student concerns to university administrators**. RHA regularly serves the Departments of Resident Life, Residential Facilities, Dining Services, Transportation Services, and the Office of Sustainability in an advisory capacity. The organization also advocates for resident-driven policies and priorities on behalf of students living on campus.

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.



## Advocacy

This fall was a busy semester for resident student advocacy! Our goal was to engage with a **wider range of policy issues** and provide thoughtful student feedback. We were put to the test early when the **mold outbreak** in Elkton Hall raised alarm about resident health across campus. Members of the executive team met with Resident Life administrators to make sure their response was immediate and transparent. At the **Fall Town Hall**, members of Senate provided thoughtful feedback regarding the loss of parking spaces, dining initiatives, and the Strategic Housing Plan to the department directors. Senate and committees were lively with activity each week.

Two particular policy issues arose this fall that demanded Senate's attention. The first was a **response to the growing student discontent with the University football program and the Athletics Department**. Following Jordan McNair's tragic death at a football practice last summer and a confusing set of personnel announcements in early November, including Coach Durkin's termination and President Loh's resignation, several student rallies were launched expressing student frustration with the administration. Collaborating with colleagues in the Student Government Association, a team of Senators spearheaded by Julian Chiveral put together a recommendation to remove the student tickets portion of the student athletic fee. This would allow students to only purchase student tickets if they wanted them, letting people skip the costs if they did not want to support the program or attend games. After vigorous debate in Senate, the intent of the resolution was clarified and passed. Approval of the student athletics fee has been tabled until the spring semester, where student representatives will work with the Athletics Department to design a more equitable student ticket system.

The second policy issue arose late in the semester when it came to our attention that a recreational field proposal would go through initial administrative approval in December. The project proposed **repurposing sections of the University golf course to build additional recreational fields, a new track and field facility, and some amount of surface lot parking**. Given the timeline, an emergency Senate was called. Director for Administration and Finance Carlo Colella gave a thorough presentation, and after some thoughtful inquiries, voted to support the proposal. RHA's position was presented to the University Facilities Council and the College Park City Council. The project has given approval for additional studies and planning, and RHA Senate will continue to advise on the final design over the following months.

# Resident Life

The **Resident Life Advisory Team (ReLATE)** works directly with the Department of Resident Life to understand the issues faced by the on-campus residents and solve them. This fall semester, ReLATE **discussed the Worcester, Wicomico and Caroline (WCC) community and its future, the new residence halls planned for North Campus, and mental health struggles** faced many residents. **A new policy was put in place at the start of the fall semester** allowing resident students to return to their residence hall rooms following a hospital stay for mental-health emergencies. The committee provided a valuable student perspective for these long-term priorities of ResLife, and ReLATE will continue working on these projects during the spring semester.

## Residential Facilities

The **Resident Facilities Advisory Board (ReFAB)** deals with the structures and attributes that directly affect students living in the residence halls. Over the fall 2018 semester, ReFAB took a problem-solving and initiative-driven stance to find solutions to the concerns that residents and fellow RHA members brought to the committee's attention. ReFAB had three main focuses this semester: **helping Residential Facilities communicate with residents about concerns regarding mold concerns, working with Residential Facilities to apply for a grant to fund a pilot program that provides campus communities with outdoor water bottle filling stations, and brainstorming designs for the new residence hall common areas and outdoor space.** Residential Facilities dealt with the mold issue as swiftly as it could, and in the spring ReFAB will recommend preventative measures to help make sure it is not a recurring issue. ReFAB hopes the water station grant will be approved soon and expects to see stations installed in the spring pending approval. In the upcoming semester, ReFAB will work alongside ReLATE to **continue designing the new residence hall** and ensure it is modern, accommodating, and enjoyable for the future students who will live there.

## Dining

During the fall semester the **Dining Services Advisory Board (DSAB)** made several accomplishments. DSAB worked together with the Dining Services director and executives in order to begin the planning process for **the immigration dinner** that will be held this spring. Dining Services hopes to win a country-wide university dining competition by displaying cuisine that represents the diversity of students from around the world. In addition, DSAB has also been working with green organizations on campus in order to **be more environmentally aware** when it comes to our food practices. That includes **introducing mushroom burgers**, which are made from 50 percent mushroom and 50 percent locally sourced and never-frozen meat. Some new specials that DSAB recommended for the dining halls and convenience stores include **bubble tea and mochi ice cream.** DSAB looks forward to another semester of making the University of Maryland dining halls even better!





## Transportation

The **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** worked with the Department of Transportation Services (DOTS) on a biweekly advisory basis this fall semester. TAC has made several accomplishments in the Fall 2018 semester and is looking to make many more in the spring. TAC was able to **pass a resolution through the RHA Senate allowing for DOTS to bring cost-effective electric scooters to the campus in the spring semester**, allowing students an easy and safe way to travel around and off campus. TAC has several goals for the spring, including **continuing to address the ever-evolving parking situation** on campus by bringing new parking spaces to the campus by reworking the approach that DOTs takes to parking. TAC is looking forward to continuing to make a change and ease the lives of students next semester.

## Sustainability

In the Fall 2018 semester, **RHA's Sustainability Committee, SCOM**, kept busy. In addition to monitoring existing sustainability programs, **SCOM began work on the long-awaited Green EDU**. Green EDU will be an online training module for incoming students designed to give Terps a baseline understanding on what sustainability is, why it is important, and how everyone on campus can make a difference through small changes to their daily lives. SCOM has completed the content phase of development and will begin to work with campus partners to flesh out Green EDU in the semesters to come. The RHA Senate voted to support the initiative at the November 13 Senate, and a stakeholder meeting was held in early December to share information about the project. A prototype version of Green EDU is scheduled to be implemented by the Fall 2019 semester.

## Diversity & Inclusion

This past fall, the ad hoc **Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (DIACom)** was reinstated, and the first class of Vice Presidents of Diversity and Inclusion were elected on our hall and area councils. Committee members joined together to define "diversity," and "inclusion," as well as discern the differences between explicit and implicit biases and how they can be identified. From this baseline, the committee worked on **figuring out its role on campus in tandem with other organizations with the goal of supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion on our campus**. DIACom provided feedback for the upcoming updates to the **Inclusive Language Campaign** and worked on **unifying our goals with our multicultural advocates (MAs)** across campus, especially in regards to the **No Hate in Our Home campaign**. Whether it be through town halls, cultural showcases, or support of other organizations on campus, DIACom is looking forward to actively making UMD feel like a safe space for all of our students in the coming semesters, a home where all students are accepted, supported, and celebrated for their individuality.

## RHA in the News

With dorm space tight, University of Maryland forced to turn lounges into rooms and add extra roommates

by Liz Bowie for

**THE BALTIMORE SUN**

August 21, 2018

**U-Md. continues dorm cleanup after mold woes force students to relocate**

Students living in Elkton Hall are being temporarily moved to hotels.

by Sarah Larimer for

**The Washington Post**

September 28, 2018

**You've heard of AlcoholEdu. Now, UMD students are working on GreenEdu.**

The program would teach incoming students about sustainability practices.

by Rachel Hunt for

**THE DIAMONDBACK**

October 30, 2018

**UMD RHA joins other campus groups calling to make athletics fee opt-in**

The SGA and GSG had already passed similar legislation.

by Rachel Hunt for

**THE DIAMONDBACK**

November 14, 2018

**The RHA wants to bring dockless scooters to UMD**

Though a provider hasn't been determined yet, RHA wants the university to contract with Bird.

by Rachel Hunt for

**THE DIAMONDBACK**

November 14, 2018

**UMD RHA supports plan to place intramural fields on the golf course**

The overwhelming majority of RHA members were in favor of the resolution.

by Rachel Hunt for

**THE DIAMONDBACK**

December 4, 2018

# Programming

Along with advocacy, programming is a core tenet of RHA's efforts. Our organization upheld existing traditions this semester, as well as created new ones. From campus-wide events planned by the executive board, to hall and area events planned by councils, RHA's programs fostered community and created memories for our residents this past fall.

The semester started off with **RHA's LaPlata Beach Boardwalk** during Fall Welcome. Formerly known as RHA House Party, this event was reinvisioned this year to offer more attractions and best use the space offered on LaPlata Beach. The event, featuring a DJ, arcade games, glow-in-the-dark mini golf and boardwalk food, attracted about a thousand students! This massively successful event allowed RHA to invite Terps to campus on a grand scale.

Leading up to Homecoming, **RHA was asked to help create a new tradition with Athletics alongside a handful of other student groups**. Tifos, 25-foot-by-25-foot cloths, were painted with designs of the groups' choices. They were then displayed over the student section at the Homecoming football game in the same fashion as the Maryland flag. Our design focused around the slogan "Home is where the shell is," reminding alumni that they will always have a home at the university.

## Hall and Area Council Events



This fall, each of our 15 councils hosted numerous programs to foster community within their halls and areas. These events helped council members engage with residents and talk about the issues that are important to them. The beginning of the semester allowed newly elected councils to get their feet wet with advocacy and programming by hosting **"Meet the Council" events**. These "Meet the Council" programs gave the newly elected RHA leaders opportunities to meet their new constituents over informal conversations and free food! Starting in October, we began to see **holiday-themed programs** such as "Haunted Hallways" in Hagerstown and "Reverse Trick-or-treating" in Denton. These were great opportunities for programming that got residents involved in their halls!

This year we were fortunate that it was an election year, which brought several programming opportunities to help residents fulfill their civic duty. A vast majority of councils hosted **"Floats for Votes"** events that encouraged residents to register and make a plan to vote — and rewarded them with root beer floats in return. North Hill's voter registration event had over 250 people attend! November also saw many **Thanksgiving events** before the holiday break. Leonardtown hosted a Thanksgiving dinner that served almost one hundred people, while the Cambridge Community collaborated for "Terpsgiving." December came with the excitement of the holidays and the nerve-wracking advent of finals. These were wonderful opportunities for programming! Councils hosted **de-stressing events and holiday events** for all to enjoy. This past semester RHA saw great and meaningful programs come from all the councils. We are excited to see what they have to offer in the spring semester!

# Philanthropy and Service

To give attention to specific issues that our community confronts, **the Program Good Challenge** was implemented. This challenge is used to guide our hall and area councils to host and attend service events, to spread awareness by word of mouth, and to learn more about each cause throughout the academic school year.

**This October was Hunger Awareness month.** The **Dining Dollar Donation Drive** was held on October 15 in support of another on-campus organization fighting for change: Terps Against Hunger (TAH). RHA-ers were stationed at two of the main dining halls (The North and South Campus Diners). Students from across campus were excitedly greeted by our fellow friends in RHA, asking for a dining dollar as a donation. We were able to raise and donate over 300 dollars for TAH. Each dollar makes 10 bags of dry food and nutrient supplements for food-insecure families in the DMV area.

**The Hunger Banquet** finished off the month for a final push towards raising awareness for food insecurity. RHA partnered with the Student Government Association, the UMD Oxfam Chapter, Public Health Without Borders, the National Residence Hall Honorary, Maryland Hillel, and Dining Services to put on an interactive and fun event. Though the Hunger Banquet was delayed due to weather, it was successfully carried out on November 27. Over 40 students, leaders, and faculty members were in attendance to learn about hunger around the world, and how it can be confronted with advocacy and active participation in different communities.

A number of **hall and area councils also hosted events paired with donation drives.** We are so proud of the councils that took the time to advocate for the fight against food insecurity by asking for canned and dry food donations.

**This November was Gratitude Month.** Though there was no real “awareness,” the goal was to get RHA members to think about the things we are graced with every day. **The Gratitude Challenge** was a month-long event, lasting from November 1 until December 3. We received about 300 Gratitude Challenge form responses! It is clear that RHA-ers are more than appreciative of their surroundings, and we hope that the challenge was a reflective practice. Congratulations to the North Hill Area Council on their win!

**Residence halls were supplied with donation boxes and bags for donation drives.** Both Terps for Service and Toys for Tots received donations across campus to give goods to veterans and children in the area during the holiday season.

The semester finished off with **a joint dog toy-making service event between RHA and NRHH,** on November 29. Thanks to NRHH'S Director of Service, Nafi Mondal, RHA members were prepared to make dog toys out of old t-shirts. A handful of

members showed their support by offering helping hands for over an hour!

This fall semester, RHA was able to positively impact our campus community through both advocacy and service. We look forward to next semester, pushing to embody the same values with our following Program Good awareness months and more involved service events!



# Regional Report



**Central  
Atlantic**

Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls

On November 9, the University of Maryland sent a delegation to Wright State University in Ohio to enjoy the **CAACURH Regional Leadership Conference**. The delegation included RHA President Bryan Gallion, National Communications Coordinator Dan Laffin, NRHH President and Senator Shawn Verma, Administrative Officer Emily Berry, Chief Information Officer Hunter Marsh, Senator-at-Large Calvin Burns, Senator Lucie Roach, NRHH member Preeya Subedi, NRHH member Matt Talley, and of course, our adviser Aaron Hood.

The region, which is directed by our very own Rick Mikulis, has been an integral part in the growth of UMD's RHA through the sharing of resources and best practices. These conferences are, by far, the best place for resources and practices to be shared. While there, the delegation members participated in programs conducted by representatives from all over the region. The programs covered everything from time management to ending stigmas to finding your purpose. Each offered a unique perspective on leadership, communication, and decision making.

For the second and third consecutive year, respectively, **the University of Maryland was selected to receive the Commitment to Sustainability and Commitment to Service Awards**. The awards, which are only given to one institution in the region each year, are selected by a vote from representatives from each institution from the Central Atlantic region that attends the conference.

In February, Gallion, Laffin, Verma, and Berry will be **heading to West Virginia University for the Regional Business Conference**. This conference covers all the legislation, budgets, and other logistical proceedings that keep the region functioning so smoothly. Then, at the end of the spring semester, **a new delegation will head to Louisiana State University for the National Conference**. Much like the Regional Leadership Conference, the National Conference is full of programming, spirit, and networking. Keep an eye out for the application to attend! Any non-graduating RHA member that intends to return to the organization is eligible to apply. More details will be shared in the following months.

# Spring Semester Preview

The RHA Executive Team is preparing for our semesterly **Leadership Training Day** on February 3, where RHA members will discuss their fall experiences and prepare to take on their roles again this spring. Leadership development is a central focus of our organization, and the team hopes to continue providing leadership development programs and opportunities throughout the semester.

We are gearing up for budget season in **Senate**, in which the Departments of Dining, Transportation, Residential Life, and Residential Facilities propose their budgets for the next fiscal year while using the opportunity to seek student input. We hope to consider resolutions from all of our standing committees, as well as the ad hoc committee ReCON that reviews our governing documents, as the semester continues.

**The councils are individually and collectively planning events for their communities.** Fall events brought residential halls and areas together, and we are excited to seeing new programming ideas execution as well as the return of some classic events. Council collaboration is at the forefront of RHA's programming efforts in the spring, and our councils are preparing for the annual North Campus Carnival and South Campus Block Party.



## Thank You for Your Support

**RHA Advisors:** Aaron Hood and Steve Petkas

**Senate Committee Directors:** Lisa Alexander, David Allen, Andrea Crabb, Deb Grandner, Colleen Wright-Riva

**Hall and Area Council Advisors:** Jordan Adams, Amanda Baker, Quiona Beason, Amanda Bogdan, Chelsea Bradford, Jack Breffle, Chamika Ellis, Tiffany Harris, Allee Garry, Brittany Marxen, Tynesha McCullers, Ray Nardella, Nadéjia Towns, Karlena Walker, Ray Ward

**University Staff:** Linda Clement, Carlo Colella, Lucy Dalglish, Jay Gilchrist, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, Mary Hummel, Warren Kelley, David McBride, Anne Martens

**All Department of Resident Life Staff**