

# RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION

The **VOICE** of on-campus students.



## IN THIS ISSUE

**ABOUT RHA** 1

**NEW INITIATIVES** 2

**ADVOCACY** 3

**RHA IN THE NEWS** 7

**PROGRAMMING** 8

**PHILANTHROPY AND SERVICE** 10

**REGIONAL REPORT** 11

**SPRING SEMESTER PREVIEW/THANK YOU** 12



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Campus Community,

As we all reflect on the fall and look forward to what the new year (and decade!) will bring us, I am proud to share that the Residence Hall Association has continued our **commitment to serving resident students** throughout the past semester, all while adapting to new internal and university-wide changes. This newsletter offers a summary of RHA's advocacy and programming efforts last fall and our plans for the upcoming semester.

This semester was a special one, beginning with the **election** of new student leaders for our 15 hall and area councils, who have planned and executed wonderful programs throughout the semester to build their communities. RHA members also had the honor of welcoming UMD's new Director of Resident Life, Valronica Scales, participating in the beginnings of the search processes for the new Vice President of Student Affairs and university president, and welcoming Dr. Patty Perillo to the VPSA position. We are excited to continue to build these internal and external relationships and look forward to **working towards shared goals** with each new campus leader.

The RHA Senate continued to expand our organization's advocacy initiatives. We began work in the Resident and Police Advisory Committee, a new ad-hoc committee that allowed our student representatives to **voice safety concerns** to the University of Maryland Police Department and begin to develop ways to educate the student body on campus safety issues. The Senate voted to formally support Dining Services' adoption of the Cool Food Pledge and Ocean Friendly Campaign, both of which will **advance the university's sustainability initiatives**. To continue our work **advocating for students in Cecil Hall**, we passed a resolution supporting amending the current visiting hours policy to better meet the needs of Cecil residents. In addition, our senators and executive team actively participated in the ongoing **student fee review process** to give important feedback to administration on the collection and use of student funds.

The remainder of the newsletter further details the fall semester's successes and our efforts in giving back to the community. We thank you for your **continued friendship and support** as we work towards making the Maryland residential experience the best it can be. If any of this work interests you and you would like to talk more, get involved, or bring any advocacy initiatives to our attention, please do not hesitate to reach out to [marylandrha@umd.edu](mailto:marylandrha@umd.edu).

Warmest wishes,  
Emily Berry

# 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, the University of Maryland Police Department, 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**.



## FALL SNAPSHOT

- **August 23: RHA Block Party with Terps After Dark**
- **September 10: Elections for our hall and area council student leaders**
- **September 29: DMLeads Conference at George Washington University**
- **October 8: First RHA Senate**
- **October 11: RHA Cookout**
- **October 14: First meeting of the Committee for the Review of Student Fees**
- **November 5: Senate presentation from UMD's VPAF, Dr. Carlo Colella**
- **November 8: Regional Leadership Conference at the University of Pittsburgh (see "Regional Report")**
- **November 12: Fall RHA Town Hall**
- **November 12-14: RHA Dining Dollar Donation Drive**

# NEW INITIATIVES

This Fall brought changes within our organization that resulted from a transition to new leadership and from feedback from past members.

- The Executive Board has been **restructured** to include a **Student Fees Coordinator (SFC)**, **Marketing and Technology Officer (MTO)**, and **Programming and Community Development Coordinator (PCDC)**. These changes allowed us to better focus on campus-wide programming efforts and individualized mentoring with our PCDC, more targeted social media efforts and communication with our MTO, and a bigger voice and say when it comes to departmental fees through the SFC.
- We **revamped** our incentive program into the **Active Council Engagement (ACE) Competition**. This initiative was created to encourage accountability among and incentivize individual council members. ACE seeks to spark healthy competition between individual council positions and serves as an opportunity for **recognition** for individual positions and entire councils. We have found success with the program thus far and look forward to how our members utilize the competition in the spring.
- Our executive board has dedicated more time and efforts this year into our **engagement with RHA representatives** through our now weekly community hours. Students can come find us in our office space above the South Campus diner at various times throughout the week to talk about programming ideas, campus initiatives, concerns, or anything they wish to chat about.
- We began **professional development and informational workshops** this semester, including a resume tips and editing session, professional headshots, and multiple workshops on the process of student fee input. We plan to continue this more personal style of sharing information next semester.

## Passed Resolutions

- **JMC001F: A Resolution to Approve the Standard Operating Procedures for the 2019-2020 School Year**
- **EMP0015: A Resolution Supporting the Student Crisis Fund as the Beneficiary of the Fall 2019 Dining Dollar Donation Drive**
- **CAB001F: A Resolution Supporting Dining Services' Adoption of the Cool Food Pledge**
- **CAB002F: A Resolution Supporting Dining Services' Ocean Friendly Campus Campaign**
- **TJS001F: A Resolution to Amend the Cecil Hall Visitation Policy**

# ADVOCACY

During the fall semester, RHA Senators and Council Members participated in countless meetings, discussions, and debates regarding an extensive list of advocacy initiatives. The Senate considered eight resolutions and passed five, touching on topics ranging from amending campus policies to maintaining RHA's philanthropic efforts.

The five standing committees of our Senate worked with administrators to address numerous resident concerns



related to campus transportation, dining, sustainability, housing, and facilities. The Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee, an ad-hoc committee created by our Senate, continued to discuss programs promoting **inclusivity** on campus, while our new Resident and Police Advisory Committee allowed our student representatives to **discuss student safety issues** with the University of Maryland Police Department.

Our Fall Town Hall gave the entire RHA body a chance to engage in advocacy and policy discussions with the **executive directors and administrators** our Senate closely works with. Students provided thoughtful input on topics such as **north campus construction, the resident hall moisture prevention plan, accommodating students with dietary restrictions in campus diners, and the No Hate in Our Home** campaign.

One of the most important advocacy involvements RHA partakes in during the fall semester is the **student fee review process**. Our Executive Board members serve on committees that review and vote on fee proposals in order to offer feedback to administrators regarding the allocation of student money. This fall, the Senate was **heavily involved** in the fee review process as well; Senators attended fee workshops to review budget proposals and share thoughts regarding specific fees with voting members of the Committee that Reviews Student Fees, a committee that gives fee recommendations to members of the President's Cabinet at the conclusion of the review process. In addition, the **Senate had a lengthy discussion** about the proposed parking fee for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The body ultimately recommended that the university explore **alternative sources of revenue in order to reduce the increasing cost burden** on students.

# TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) worked with the Department of Transportation Services (DOTS) on a biweekly advisory basis this fall semester. TAC presented a resolution to approve the non-mandatory fees of a \$50 increase for on-campus student parking permits. Ultimately, this resolution was **not supported** by RHA senators. TAC has many ideas to address in the spring semester, including reevaluating the sustainability model of DOTS, discussing the decreased parking on-campus due to construction, remodeling DOTS' current parking tier system to adjust to wage increases, and more. TAC is aiming to make improvements for **on-campus safety and accessibility** and to ease the lives of the students next semester.

## RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

With all the new construction on campus, this semester has been an exciting time to serve on the Residential Facilities Advisory Board (ReFAB). From discussing new residence halls to decommissioning old ones, these senators have seen it all. In the two new residence halls that are being built on north campus, senators have been **working with Residential Facilities leadership** to make sure everything is accounted for, like deciding what furniture will go in the halls and discussions on the shared outdoor space surrounding the new buildings. As other residence halls continue to be renovated, ReFAB doesn't just want to add air conditioning; they've been dreaming bigger. Among their discussions have been adding **green walls and roofs, rain collection systems and other sustainable technology** to renovated buildings.

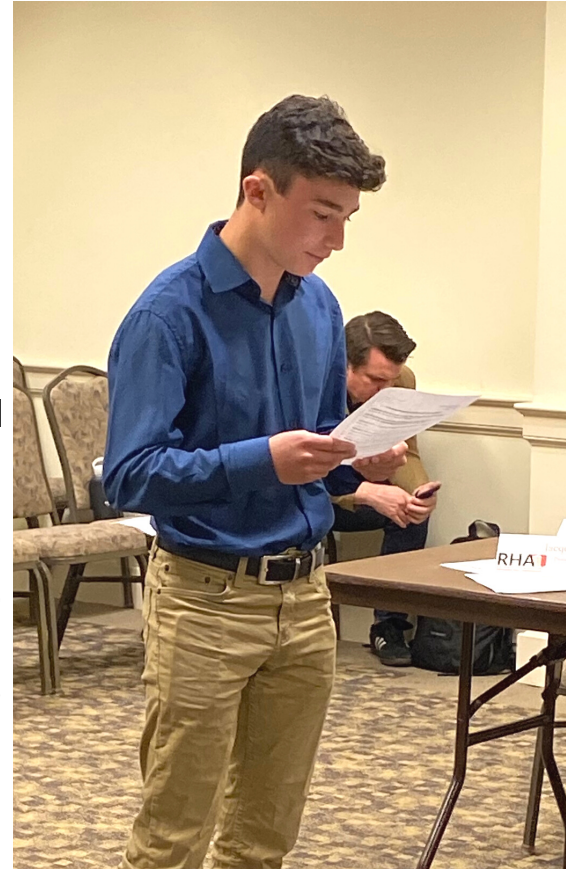
## RESIDENT LIFE

The Resident Life Advisory Team (ReLATE) welcomed Valronica Scales, the **new Director of Resident Life**, to UMD this fall. Continuing its advocacy for the issues faced by on-campus residents, the committee spent the fall semester reviewing possible changes to reduce the number of students with restricted visitation hours by **amending the Cecil Hall Visitation Policy**. The RHA Senate reviewed and passed TJS001F, A Resolution to Amend the Cecil Hall Visitation Policy, which reduced the limited visitation to only the third floor of Cecil Hall. The committee has expressed interest in reviewing policies and practices related to **mental health and hate/bias training** during the spring semester.



# SUSTAINABILITY

The Sustainability Committee (SCom) has been getting their hands dirty to **promote sustainable practices** in the residence halls. The committee has had a couple major projects that they've been working on, including preparing events to celebrate **America Recycles day, expanding plastic bag recycling, and reducing energy consumption**, all in the residence halls. With the help of SCom, we saw a number of **recycling-focused events** in the halls on and around America Recycles day. Residents were encouraged to decorate recycling bins made from upcycled Maryland Dairy ice cream bins. In addition to these new bins, many residence halls are now home to **plastic bag recycling**. SCom has also been actively working with Residential Facilities to work on reduced energy consumption programs, focusing especially on electricity and hot water usage.



## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This past fall, the ad hoc Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (DIACom) was reinstated, and the second class of Vice Presidents of Diversity and Inclusion were elected in our hall and area councils to continue their goal of **making UMD feel like a home** where all students are **accepted, supported, and celebrated** for their individuality. DIACom discussed the ways that diversity and inclusion can be brought to the forefront of hall council discussions regarding event planning, and even developed an **Inclusive Holiday Event Planning** document to help councils acknowledge diverse practices over the holiday season. DIACom looks forward to continuing its work towards making UMD a safe space for all in the coming semesters.

# DINING



This semester, with help from RHA's Dining Service Advisory Board (DSAB), Dining Services has placed **sustainability** at the forefront of everything they do. With the support of the RHA Senate, Dining Services has adopted two major resolutions. The first is the Cool Food Pledge, which has the team working to prepare **more climate-friendly foods** like plant-based alternatives. The goal is to cut food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 25% in the next decade. The second is the Ocean Friendly Campus Campaign, which involves the expansion of compostable waste materials and **eliminates single-use plastics** like straws and bags. These plastics often contaminate our waterways and ruin the natural beauty of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean, whereas paper products will have a much smaller footprint on the environment. RHA is excited to continue to work with Dining Services to realize a more sustainable future.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

Our newest committee, the Resident and Police Committee (RPC) has been busy in their first semester. With a focus on safety and security on campus, RHA has partnered with UMPD to offer residents a **more active role in their own safety on campus**. On the agenda have been topics like creating educational programming, touring UMPD facilities and addressing hate bias incidents in the residence halls. RPC and UMPD leadership are looking forward to another semester full of productive conversations, big ideas and strengthening relationships.

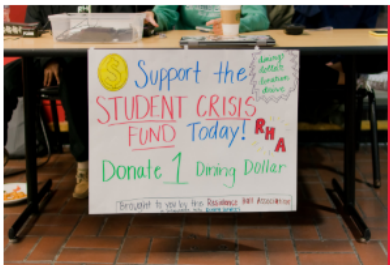
# RHA IN THE NEWS: THE DIAMONDBACK

CAMPUS

NEWS

## RHA and UMPD form committee aimed at improving students' relationship with police

Rosa Pyo · October 17, 2019



### RHA raised nearly \$400 through its dining dollar fundraiser to assist students in crisis

This fundraiser's earnings surpassed the last two semesters combined.

Rosa Pyo

November 22, 2019

CAMPUS

NEWS

## UMD RHA slams DOTS over proposed parking fee hikes

Rosa Pyo · November 20, 2019



### Attendees discuss electric scooters, nuisance ordinance at UMD RHA town hall

UMPD and DOTS leaders contributed to the town hall discussion.

Rosa Pyo

November 13, 2019

# PROGRAMMING

RHA kicked off Fall 2019 with a **Block Party** co-hosted with Terps After Dark as part of welcome weekend. After elections, RHA hosted a **Welcome Reception** dinner to introduce students to their councils and allow special guests from within Resident Life and across campus. In October, RHA members joined the executive board on the Washington Quad at our first ever **RHA Cook Out** to enjoy food and field games. Towards the end of the month, RHA teamed up with the STAMP event planning team to host a **Drag Bingo** at the STAMP All Niter. Students won amazing prizes, including RHA gear. To end out the semester, we hosted an **RHA Office Open House** in November to introduce RHA members to our office space above the South Campus Diner and provided pie and cider as well as games to celebrate the fall season and de-stress before finals.



## HALL AND AREA COUNCIL EVENTS

This fall, each of our 15 councils hosted a number of wonderful events. Most councils initiated their semester with “Meet the Council” programs. Throughout the months of October and November, we saw many events focused on **wellness**, including Cumberland Hall’s “Mental Health Awareness Tabling”, and Ellicott Hall’s “Self-Care Sunday,” as well as holiday-themed events like Leonardtown’s “Thanksgiving Buffet” and Easton Hall’s Spookfest.” A plethora of events involved **advocacy and awareness**, including South Hill’s “Hope for a Cure” Breast Cancer



Awareness Tabling; Bel Air, Chestertown, Cambridge and Oakland Halls’ “Let’s get Sustainable” programming, and South Campus Commons’ “Potted Plants” event. Other events promoted **bonding** between residents and help them to **de-stress**, including Oakland Hall’s first ever “Bingo Night” and North Hill’s “Ice Cream Social”. This past semester brought **meaningful and impactful** programs from all the councils and we are excited to see what they will all offer in the spring!

# COUNCIL EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

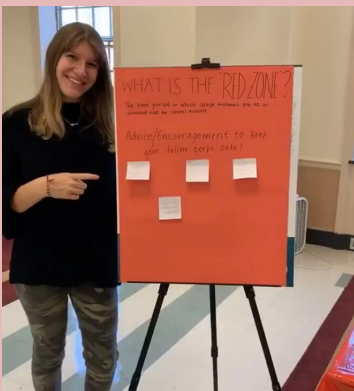


## Cambridge Community Tailgate

Cumberland, BCC, and Centreville hall councils partnered to host the community's **first ever tailgate** with field games, giveaways, breakfast foods and much more! Residents could come dressed in their UMD spirit gear and take pictures with friends in front of a custom backdrop, eat donuts and sip hot cocoa, and compete in games like spike ball and giant Jenga. **Giveaways** included Maryland gear from the UMD bookstore as well as a water bottle, blanket, lanyard, and football. This event was a huge success and we hope other councils will be inspired by the hard work of the Cambridge Community to **build relationships** amongst its residents.

## Denton Community Spookfest

Easton, Denton, Oakland, and Easton hall councils joined together to host their very own **Spookfest** to celebrate the month of October and the culminating holiday of Halloween. Easton and Denton halls held **hall decorating contests** and brought in the RHA executive board to judge to see which floor has the most Halloween spirit. They continued the event with a **costume contest** as well as Halloween themed treats to get residents engaged and encouraging mingling across buildings.



## Ellicott Hall Reclaim the Red Event

Ellicott RHA members hosted the first ever **Reclaim the Red** tabling event, based on the **Student Government Association** campaign, to educate the campus about **sexual assault awareness**. Everything from the table cloth to the giveaways was red, and the event encouraged residents to get involved by making a Halloween goodie bag with red candy and learning about the **campus resources** in place to prevent sexual assault and help those impacted. This event was a great way to engage residents on a **serious issue** that affects more than 19-27% of college women and 6-8% of college men their time in college.

# PHILANTHROPY AND SERVICE



In an effort to promote Philanthropy and Service within our organization, RHA hosts a **semesterly Dining Dollar Donation Drive** to raise money for a cause of our choosing. This semester, RHA Senators voted to donate all earnings from this drive to the campus **Student Crisis Fund**. RHA members tabled in the lobbies of all three dining halls during the week of November 12 and asked residents to **donate one of their dining dollars** to support the cause. We were able to raise nearly \$400 through these efforts, which will go towards **supporting students with financial need** on campus.

Additionally, we implemented a Program Good Initiative this semester that gives attention to certain awareness issues based on the month to help focus programming efforts throughout that month. For example, **September was Self-Care Awareness Month, October was Sexual Assault and Breast Cancer Awareness Month and November was Give Thanks Month**. Program Good hopes to encourage councils to partner with on-campus organizations or departments to provide resources and educational materials to residents around certain prominent issues. If councils put on events to spread awareness for an issue during a certain month, they received extra points towards the ACE Competition.

Finally, RHA collaborated with other on-campus groups to serve the community throughout this past semester. In partnership with Terps for Service, RHA sponsored a **Collection Drive** for service men and women overseas to support Operation Gratitude. With Hillel, our executive board participated in an event called Challah for Hunger to make Challah Bread to be sold on campus and all the funds earned are used to **ease food insecurity**. Lastly, we partnered with the UMD Campus Pantry to host canned food drives towards the end of the semester to collect unperishable foods to stock our on-campus food pantry.



# REGIONAL REPORT

This year, the CAACURH Regional Leadership Conference was hosted at the **University of Pittsburgh**. As always, the University of Maryland sent a delegation to represent our institution and learn best practices from across the region. The delegation included RHA President Emily Berry, National Communications Coordinator Dan Laffin, NRHH Director of National Affairs and Administrative Officer Zach Schlaich, Marketing and Technology Officer Michael Purdie, Student Groups and Organizations Liaison Alejandra Melnyk, Senator-At-Large Erica Patterson, Senator-At-Large Matt Blum, Senator Matt Lischin, and Senator Craig Bruder.



A majority of the Regional Leadership Conference is dedicated to **programming** sessions, where representatives from all over the Central Atlantic cover a wide array of topics and subject issues. Everything from human trafficking prevention to team working under pressure to identity exploration was covered at this conference. Meanwhile, the three voting representatives for our school, Berry, Laffin, and Schlaich, participated in **CAACURH Boardroom**. Among other policy and procedural concerns, the next conference host site was selected. We are excited to announce that next year we will be able to send a delegation to the **University of Toledo**! More information will be announced about that at the beginning of the next academic year.

The University of Maryland was also recognized as the recipient of **three regional awards**: the Commitment to Service Award, the Commitment to Sustainability Award, and the Student Award for Leadership Training. These awards are determined by a majority vote from each school at the conference and only given to one school each year. In just a few weeks, Berry, Laffin, Schlaich, Purdie, and Melnyk will once again represent UMD at a CAACURH conference. This time, it will be at the Regional Business Conference hosted by the New Jersey Institute of Technology. This is a strictly-policy focused conference, with no programming or delegates.

All legislation, budget changes, and other “behind-the-scenes” matters are handled here. This conference is structured to prepare the region to attend the NACURH Annual Conference. This is the largest conference of the year, with thousands of attendees from all eight regions. This year, the conference will be hosted at the University of Dayton. This conference is packed with **spirit, programming, competitions, and cheers**. The application to attend will go live after the conclusion of the Regional Business Conference and is available to any non-graduating member of RHA that intends to return to the organization next academic year. Keep an eye out for that!

# SPRING SEMESTER PREVIEW

The RHA Executive Team is preparing for our semesterly **Leadership Training Day** on February 2, 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 now in the thick of **budget season** in Senate, in which the Departments of Dining, 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 additional resolutions from all of our standing committees.



The councils are individually and collectively planning events for their communities. Fall events brought residential halls and areas together, and we are excited to see **new programming ideas** 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 large-scale events like block parties and formals.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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

**Senate Committee Directors:** Lisa Alexander, David Allen, Andrea Crabb, Valronica Scales, Colleen-Wright Riva, Ben Beltran, Chief Mitchell & Sgt. Hoas

**Hall and Area Council Advisors:** Daunece Cox, Roy Ward, Tiffany Harris, Jordan Adams, Jorde Almonte-Florimon, Katie Wilhelm, Karlana Walker, Bria Jackson, Chelsea Bradford, Brittany Marxn, Nadéjiah Towns, Amanda Bogdan, Tynesha McCullers, Aspen Shackelford, Quiona Beason, Cillisha Knights

**University Staff:** Carlo Colella, Jay Gilchrist, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, Mary Hummel, Warren Kelly, Anne Martens, David McBride, Patricia Perillo

**Shared Governance Partners:** Student Government Association, Graduate Student Government

**All Department of Resident Life Staff**