

TITLE V
Area Governments, House Councils
& the Residence Hall Association

Chapter 1

Definition – Residence Hall Association

Section 1 The Residence Hall Association (RHA) is a student representative of the University of Massachusetts Undergraduate Student Government Association.

Section 2 The RHA and its elected officials will operate within the boundaries and values enumerated within the SGA Constitution and bylaws and the RHA Constitution and bylaws.

Chapter 2

Structure and Procedure of RHA

Section 1 The structure of RHA, including that of its executive board and general body, as well as its rules, functions, and procedures, is delineated within the RHA Constitution and bylaws.

Section 2 All amendments to the RHA Constitution and bylaws must be approved by the Administrative Affairs Committee of the SGA Senate, as well as by the SGA Senate, following approval according to amendment procedures within the RHA Constitution and bylaws.

Chapter 3

Definition – Area Governments

Section 1 An Area Government shall be defined as a student representative body, recognized as a subsidiary governmental arm of the SGA, charged with the administration and facilitation of area-wide programming, advocacy, and constituent representation to the SGA for a residential area.

Section 2 Each of the following seven on-campus residential areas, as defined by the University, also herein denoted as Living Area, shall have an Area Government

1. Southwest Residential Living Area
2. Orchard Hill Residential Living Area
3. Central Residential Living Area
4. Northeast Residential Living Area
5. Sylvan Residential Living Area

6. North Residential Apartments
7. 7. Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community

Section 3 Programming, advocacy, and constituent representation shall be provided for Off Campus students through collaboration between the elected Off Campus Senators and the Off Campus Student Center.

1. The Delegation of Off-Campus Student Senators (DOCSS) will act with the relevant authority and powers delineated in Title V, Chapter 5 of the Bylaws, the relevant rights and privileges delineated in Title V, Chapter 6 of the Bylaws and the relevant prohibitions delineated in Title V, Chapter 7 of the Bylaws..

Chapter 4 Recognition

Section 1 Should a new residential area be designated on campus, an Area Government will be provided for through an amendment of Title V, Chapter 3, Section 2 by the semester prior to its opening, and the subsequent election of an Executive Board by its residents.

Chapter 5 Authority and Powers

Section 1 The Area Governments shall be empowered to make general recommendations regarding matters relevant to the educational, political, and social well being of the SGA membership residing in their respective Living Area to the SGA and the Residence Hall Association (RHA). Said recommendations shall be in accordance with Trustee Document T73-098, as amended.

Section 2 The Area Government shall be empowered to withdraw their support for any University Policy, official, or board, which, in the judgment of the Area Government, shall be detrimental to the educational, political, or social well being of the SGA members residing in the Area.

Chapter 6 Rights and Privileges

Section 1 Area Governments shall have the following rights and privileges:

1. Recognition by the University as a subsidiary arm of the SGA.

2. Access to the use of campus facilities.
3. Ability to receive space and equipment.
4. Assistance from Student Activities and Involvement, the Student Organization Resource Center, and the SGA Vice President in the way of mail service, program development, financial accounts, advising, and budgeting support. Residential Life shall also be a forum for program development and mail service.
5. The Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community shall also have the resources of the Commonwealth Honors College and its Student Advisory Board for program development and other relevant support.
6. The privilege of initiating programming ideas and planning with Residential Life advisors before contacting Student Activities and Involvement.
7. The ability to initiate area- specific referenda for a general election.

Chapter 7

Prohibitions

Section 1 No Area Government shall violate the integrity of the residence halls, or the integrity of the student residence hall rooms, as defined by the University, and in accordance with the Residential Life Solicitation Policy.

Section 2 Area Governments shall not fund organizations or programs, or perform activities, which are properly the responsibility of the University.

Section 3 Area Governments shall not allocate funding to any of the following:

1. Organizations or programs whose primary functions are not directly beneficial to their respective residential area.
2. Organizations or programs, which are not primarily initiated, organized, funded, or managed by SGA members.

Chapter 8

Structure

Section 1 All Area Governments will be structured according to the parameters listed within this Chapter.

Section 2 The authority of the Area Governments shall be vested in the Executive Officers:

1. The Governor:

- a. Shall be the chief presiding officer of the Area Government;
- b. Shall have Signature Authority;
- c. Shall preside over all Area Government meetings;
- d. Shall schedule and set the agenda for all Area Government meetings;
- e. Shall exercise supervision over the Area Government and its activities and programs;
- f. Shall represent the Area Government to other organizations, the SGA, the RHA, and the University at large;
- g. Shall be an *ex officio* member of the Undergraduate Student Senate, and will attend at least one meeting a month;
- h. Shall be an *ex officio* member of the RHA Executive Board;
- i. Shall attend Area Government Council and Coordinating Council meetings as scheduled;
- j. Shall be empowered to make all appointments to positions with the SGA and Residential Life, including vacant officer positions within the Area Government and SGA Election Commissioners.

2. The Lieutenant Governor:

- a. Shall be the deputy chief presiding the Area Government, as well as the liaison to House Councils and the RHA;
- b. Shall share in the supervision and coordination of the Area Government's activities and programs;
- c. Shall perform any duties delegated by the Executive Board and/or General Body.

3. The Secretary:

- a. Shall be the chief clerk and maintainer of permanent records of the Area Government;

- b. Shall maintain a record of all meeting agendas and minutes;
 - c. Shall forward all meeting agendas and minutes to the SGA Vice President and the RHA Associate Director at least twice a month;
 - d. Shall keep attendance at all Area Government meetings;
 - e. Shall perform any other duties delegated by the Executive Board and/or General Body.
4. The Treasurer:
- a. Shall be the chief financial officer of the Area Government;
 - b. Shall have Signature Authority;
 - c. Shall be responsible for the financial records of the Area Government;
 - d. Shall oversee the administration and disbursement of Area Government funds from all accounts;
 - e. Shall prepare the annual Area Government budget, for submission to the Ways and Means Committee of the Senate.

Section 3 The Executive Officers shall:

1. Be voting members of the Area Government;
2. Be elected by the constituents of the Residential Area in a manner prescribed by Title VIII of the SGA Bylaws, and shall be full-time undergraduate students of the University of Massachusetts Amherst;
3. Be residents of the Residential Area in which the Area Government is located. If an officer shall be dislodged from the Residential Area, they shall surrender their office.

Section 4 Officers may hold other elected or appointed positions, provided the office is below the rank of Executive Cabinet, Senator, or Student Judiciary. Area Government officers are prohibited from holding House Council office.

Section 5 Resident Assistants (RAs) and Peer Mentors (PMs), as well as other live-in student staff, may hold the position of officer. Residential Life may prohibit this, as per their respective job descriptions.

Section 6 Officers are responsible for securing active status for the Area Government according to the policies of the SGA Vice President, the SGA Secretary of the Registry, and Student Activities and Involvement. This includes, but is not limited to organization activation,

officer trainings, and signature responsibility training.

Section 7 Every Area Government will have a General Body, which will be comprised of:

1. The Secretaries of the Area's House Councils;
2. One-fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the Area's elected Senators, who will be designated by the Speaker before the first meeting of the Senate;
3. Any other Area residents who may join;
4. A representative from the Commonwealth Honors College Student Advisory Board (CHC Residential Community only);
5. Any other roles or positions designated by the Area Governor.

Section 8 Any resident of the Residential Area in which the Area Government is located can become a member of the General Body.

Section 9 The members General Body shall be voting members of the Area Government, and shall serve as a support group for the Executive Board in activities, programming, and constituent outreach.

Section 10 General Body members must attend at least two meetings per month to maintain active membership.

Section 11 Area Governments must maintain at least ten (10) active SGA members in order to be considered during the Ways and Means budgetary process.

Chapter 9 Advising

Section 1 Area Governments shall primarily be advised by Residential Life. Student Activities and Involvement may offer additional advising for programming, advocacy, and administrative support.

Section 2 The SGA Vice President will serve as an additional advisor, supporting the Area Governments through their responsibilities as dictated by the Bylaws.

Section 3 All Area Government advisors shall agree to communicate regularly with each other, in order keep apprised of actions, plans, and goals in different departments.

Chapter 10 Officer Successions

Section 1 The Governor, if removed from office by resignation, impeachment, displacement, or any other legitimate factor that results in vacancy, shall be automatically succeeded by the Lieutenant Governor.

Section 2 The Lieutenant Governor, if removed from office by resignation, impeachment, displacement, or any other legitimate factor that results in vacancy, shall be automatically succeeded by the Treasurer.

Section 3 The Treasurer, if removed from office by resignation, impeachment, displacement, or any other legitimate factor that results in vacancy, shall be automatically succeeded by the Secretary.

Section 4 The Secretary, if removed from office by resignation, impeachment, displacement, or any other legitimate factor that results in vacancy, their duties shall be performed temporarily by the Lieutenant Governor pending the selection of a new Secretary by the Governor.

Section 5 If an officer refuses to take a position that is in line with this succession, the next officer has the opportunity to fill said position. Vacancies which remain shall be appointed by the Governor.

Section 6 If any officer post remains vacant for greater than (30) calendar days, the Senate shall be empowered to appoint and confirm one named representative to the vacated officer position upon a majority vote of its voting membership in attendance at a scheduled meeting, provided the Area Governor shall not have acted, and notified the Vice President of the SGA, prior to the convention of said meeting.

Chapter 11

Recall and Impeachment of Officers

Section 1 Any officer, upon a petition signed by one-fourths ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the constituents of an Area Government, shall be subject to a recall vote.

Section 2 Once initiated, the recall vote process is as follows:

1. An assembly of constituents will be scheduled, with a week's notice given to the Residential Area. The assembly will be heavily publicized, and the SGA Vice President and RHA Director will be notified;
2. The assembly will be presided over by the Governor, unless the Governor is the subject of the recall vote, in which case the Lieutenant Governor will preside;
3. The officer in question will have the opportunity to speak before the vote occurs;

4. A majority of votes cast by the assembly through numbered, secret ballots, shall be required to remove the officer in question.

Section 3 Any officer may be impeached following the vote of two (2) of the three (3) other Executive Board officers, or upon receipt of an impeachment petition signed by one hundred (100) constituents of an Area Government by the Governor, or the Lieutenant Governor if the Governor is the object of the impeachment process.

Section 4 The Governor, or the Lieutenant Governor, shall forward the petition to the Chair of the Rules and Ethics Subcommittee of the Senate, which will then conduct an investigated and hearing according to Title II, Chapter 29 of the Bylaws.

Section 5 The officer shall only be removed following the decision of the Rules and Ethics Subcommittee.

Chapter 12

The Area Government Council

Section 1 The Area Government Council shall be a collaborative body between all university area governments. Every area government shall send representation to Area Government Council meetings.

Section 2 The Vice President and the RHA Program Coordinator shall jointly preside over the Area Government Council.

Section 3 The Area Government Council shall meet at least once a month, or more frequently, at the discretion of the Vice President and the RHA Program Coordinator.

Chapter 13

House Councils

Section 1 A House Council shall be defined as a student representative body, charged with the administration of programming, advocacy, and community development for a residence hall or cluster.

Chapter 14

Recognition

Section 1 A House Council shall not be eligible for recognition until the Area Government has completed elections for the House Council for the upcoming term, and the elections shall have been approved and validated through the provisions in Title V, Chapter 16, of the SGA By-Laws.

Section 2 To be recognized, a House Council must provide a time-stamped House Council Agreement Form, as provided in the Title V Chapter entitled “House Council Agreement Forms” of the SGA By-Laws, to the Vice President.

Section 3 An approval by the Vice President of the House Council Agreement Form, as prescribed in the Title V Chapter entitled “House Council Agreement Forms” shall grant recognition to a House Council.

Section 4 The Vice President shall not deny a House Council their recognition if all provisions for recognition have been met. If the Vice President shall have rejected recognition of a House Council, just cause must be presented and explain the criteria for achieving recognition.

Section 5 Upon recognition, House Councils shall enjoy the rights and privileges granted to House Councils by the Constitution of the SGA, the By-Laws of the SGA, or Acts of the SGA.

Chapter 15

Powers and Prohibitions of House Councils

Section 1 The House Council shall derive its power from the regulations and guidelines set forth from the Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Government Association.

Section 2 The House Council shall be empowered to make general recommendations regarding matters relevant to the educational, political, and social well being of the SGA membership residing in their respective residential building(s) to the Residence Hall Association. Said recommendations shall be in accordance with Trustee Document T073-098, as amended.

Section 3 The House Council shall be empowered to withdraw their support for any University Policy, official, or board, which, in the judgment of the House Council, shall be detrimental to the educational, political, or social well being of the SGA membership in their residential building(s).

Section 4 All powers in the House Council shall be vested in the officers.

Section 5 Resident Assistants may not hold position of House Council Officer.

Section 6 House Councils shall adhere to the University policies concerning health and safety in the residence halls.

Section 7 House Councils shall not provide fund organizations or programs, or perform activities, which are properly the responsibility of the University.

Section 8 House Councils shall not allocate funding to organizations or programs that are not directly beneficial to their respective residence hall(s) or to organizations or programs that are not primarily initiated, organized, funded, or managed by SGA members.

Section 9 House Councils in violation of Title V or deemed to be in “bad standing” as outlined by the RHA Constitution shall be subject to having their status frozen by the Residence Hall Association, whom shall be the sole entity able to freeze House Councils. In each case, the Residence Hall Association shall follow guidelines set forth the Constitution of the RHA.

Section 10 The following shall be direct House Council violations subject to 24-hour notice account freezing as stated in the Title V Chapter entitled “Violations of Title V”:

1. If a House Council fails to properly fill vacant positions according to the House Council Charter.
2. If a House Council allocates funding without quorum at a scheduled meeting.
3. If House Council fails to attend three unexcused meetings of their respective Area Government. In such a case, the Area Government shall forward notice of missed meetings to the Residence Hall Association along with minutes of all missed meetings showing everyone who attended the respective meetings.

Section 11 A House Council may have their accounts frozen by petition from the Area Government to the Residence Hall Association. In such case, an Area Government must forward a request to the Residence Hall Association stating the nature of their request, violations of the House Council meriting accounts being frozen, and a procedure for the re-activation of the respective House Council. The Residence Hall Association shall retain the right to render the final decision.

Chapter 16

Rights and Privileges

Section 1 House Councils shall have the following rights and privileges:

1. Access to the use of all residence hall facilities in which their House Council resides.
2. Ability to reserve space and equipment in residence halls in which their House Council resides.
3. Assistance from Residential Life by means of mail service, financial accounting, and community development.
4. Access to the Student Organization Resource Office computers, equipment, and advising services.
5. Assistance from the Residence Hall Association in the way of program development, leadership training, and organizational development.

Chapter 17

House Council Agreement Forms

Section 1 House Councils shall commit to the provisions in this Chapter as their official Charter. This Chapter shall serve as the strict rules and guidelines for all House Councils to abide by.

Section 2 Upon the start of a new House Council term, the Officers of the House Council shall sign a form provided from the Vice President that affirms the following:

“We, the undersigned officers of the (House Council) do hereby commit to the provisions set forth in Title V, Chapters 9 through 15 and Chapter 17, of the SGA By-Laws of the Constitution of the Student Government Association and the RHA Constitution. We affirm to faithfully execute the position of House Council Officer and support the Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Government Association, the Charter and By-Laws of our respective Area Government, and the Constitution of the RHA.”

Section 3 The Vice President shall provide this document on the SGA Web Site or other means of Internet access within ten days of the approval of a House Council election.

Section 4 House Councils shall not be active until Agreement Forms have been submitted to the Vice President and approved.

Chapter 18

Constituent Communication

Section 1 For the purposes of this Chapter, “primary officer” shall mean Governor, Lt. Governor, Treasurer, and Secretary when referring to Area Governments, and shall mean President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary when referring to House Councils.

Section 2 Each Area Governor shall set a date for a “Back to the People” meeting in coordination with the Residence Hall Association Executive Board and General Body at a desired location within their residence area. For the Commuter Area Government, this shall include the Campus Center, the Student Union, or other designated areas.

Section 3 Each Area Governor shall arrange, consistent with the Charter of their respective Area Government, to have at least two (2) primary officers of the Area Government and at least one (1) primary officer of the Residence Hall Association attend each “Back to the People” meeting.

Chapter 19

Violations of Title V

Section 1 If any House Council shall have failed to meet requirements outlined in the Title V Chapter entitled “Powers and Prohibitions of House Councils” it shall result in action taken by the Residence Hall Association. If the House Council which has been frozen feels the actions taken against them are unjust or unwarranted, they may then submit a formal appeal to the Vice President. The Vice President will then review the appeal and make a recommendation to the RHA on further action. The Vice President will retain final authority to override the decision of the RHA.

Section 2 If a House Council is frozen due to bad standing, they can regain good standing by following the procedure outlined in the RHA Constitution. Their account will then be unfrozen.

Section 3 If a House Council is frozen due to Title V violations, the RHA Executive Board will meet with the President of the House Council to discuss the violation and further action to be taken. Their account status will be unfrozen at the discretion of the RHA Executive Board. In the case that a House Council feels it was treated unfairly, the appeal process in Section 1 may be followed.

Section 4 If an Area Government or House Council, or any officer of the SGA shall have failed to meet the provisions set forth in Title V, any SGA member may issue a complaint with the Residence Hall Association.

Section 5 The Student Judiciary shall retain the right to investigate, veto, or overturn any decision by the Residence Hall Association in a manner prescribed in Title IV, Chapter 2, Sections 1 and 2, and Chapter 11.