

# **Constitution and Bylaws of the Residence Hall Council**

## **Article I: Name**

The name of the organization shall be the Residence Hall Council of SUNY Downstate Medical Center, henceforth referred to RHC.

## **Article II: Purpose**

The purpose of the organization shall be to promote the interest, welfare and community of the residents living in the Residence Halls of SUNY Downstate Medical Center, henceforth referred as DMC, located at 811 and 825 New York Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

## **Article III: Authority**

All authority and power granted by this Constitution, and all responsibilities delegated to the organization by the administration of the University shall be vested in the RHC.

## **Article IV: Functions and Responsibilities of RHC**

**Section A:** The general functions and responsibilities of the RHC shall be to promote the interests, welfare, and community of the residents of the residence halls, in accordance with all applicable regulations of the University

**Section B:** Specific functions and responsibilities of the RHC shall be as follows:

1. Determine, plan, and coordinate student activities in the residence halls.
2. Listen to residents' suggestions, complaints, or issues regarding any aspect of living or housing conditions in the residence halls.
3. Make recommendations to the DMC Director and/or Assistant Director of Residential Life or their respective equivalent DMC titles, concerning matters related to residents' welfare.
4. Propose and approve an annual budget for the student activity fees pursuant to sections VI.B.4 and VII that shall be submitted to the Faculty Student Association, henceforth referred to as FSA, prior to the start of each fiscal year each June 1<sup>st</sup> for DMC certification.
5. Serve as a liaison group between the residents and the DMC Administration and Faculty, and interact with the other DMC student groups for the purpose of coordinating and co-sponsoring activities.

## **Article V: Meetings, Membership and Voting Privileges**

**Section A: Membership:** All residents of 811 and 825 New York Avenue are general members of the RHC, and as such, may attend and participate in all general meetings and functions sponsored by the RHC.

**Section B: Voting Privileges:** All general members who pay the DMC RHC Student Activity fee are voting members of the council and will be allowed to vote on all issues at any RHC general meeting unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.

1. Four RHC Officers are elected at the end of each DMC academic year, and prior to May 1 of each year, pursuant to Article VI, section C. Each Officer has voting privileges on all matters of the Council with the exception of the President, who shall not vote on general issues except in the event of a tie.
2. The DMC Residential Life Staff (Resident Director and Resident Assistants) are currently required by their job descriptions to participate as active members of the Council. As employees of the University and representative of other residents, they are welcome to attend RHC meetings, voice opinions, propose programs, and serve as Executive officers.
3. The DMC Director and Assistant Director of Residential Life, or their respective equivalent DMC titles, shall participate as non-voting advisers to the RHC.

**Section C: Meetings** General meetings of the RHC will be held monthly from August through May to discuss pertinent residence hall issues and plan residence hall events.

1. Special meetings of the RHC may be called for by the President.
2. The general meetings of the RHC will run in accordance with Roberts Rules of order except where otherwise provided herein, and be chaired by the President. Normal business shall be conducted by majority vote of voting members in attendance.
3. The Agenda will be as follows:
  - a. Approval of minutes from last meeting.
  - b. Old business.
  - c. New business.
  - d. Open forum.
  - e. Advisors comments.
4. **Quorum:** A quorum of at least 10% of all voting members of each building, 811 and 825 (ie: 10% of 811NYA members plus 10% of 825NYA members), must be present to conduct business, except as provided by section VI.D. The Secretary will determine if the number of voting members present meets the number required for quorum. The total number of voting members residing in each building will be obtained by the Secretary from the Office of Residential Life and Services at the beginning of each academic year.

## **Articles VI: Executive Officers**

**Section A:** Executive Officers of the RHC shall be elected from among student residents and shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The terms of office shall begin on May 1, prior to the academic year of their service and continue until the April 30 of the successive year or until a successor is elected.

**Section B:** In addition to attending all general RHC meetings except if due to an unavoidable reasonable absence, the Duties of the officers shall be as follows:

1. **President-**
  - a. Shall serve as chief spokesperson for the RHC, and, as such communicate regularly with the Director and/or Associate Director of Residential Life and Services, and with other administrative bodies as needed, to discuss RHC issues.
  - b. Shall preside as chairperson at all meetings.
  - c. Shall establish subcommittees as needed and appoint members to these committees.
  - d. May co-sign all fund payment requests
  - e. Oversee elections of representatives in conjunction with other officers.
  - f. Shall cast a deciding vote where warranted in case of tie
2. **Vice-President-**
  - a. Shall assist the president in carrying out his/her duties as needed.
  - b. Shall be familiar with this Constitution and ensure that its policies are upheld.
  - c. Shall serve as chairperson at meetings of any subcommittees that have been established.
  - d. Shall assume the president's duties in his/her absence.

- e. Shall tally votes on motions and at elections.
- f. May co-sign all fund payment requests

### 3. Secretary

- a. Shall record attendance at all meetings in accordance with the DMC guidelines for meeting minutes.
- b. Shall keep minutes at all meetings and distribute copies to all RHC members, and send copies to the FSA, the Director and Associate Director of Residential Life and Services as soon as practical following each meeting. Distribution of minutes can be done via DMC email system.
- c. Shall post signs prior to RHC meetings and events in each building.
- d. Shall notify all eligible residence hall members via DMC email system of all RHC meetings with its proposed agenda at least 3 days in advance of all RHC meetings.
- e. May co-sign all fund payment requests

### 4. Treasurer

- a. Shall keep a record of and report on finances of the RHC.
- b. Shall co-sign fund payment requests.
- c. Shall timely process all payment requests from RHC funds in accordance with the RHC certified budget and within FSA disbursement policies and procedures.
- d. Shall, near the end of his/her term of office and after RHC annual elections, and in consultation with the Treasurer-elect, draft a budget for the next fiscal year which begins each June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- e. Shall present the draft budget to the RHC at the May RHC meeting, for RHC discussion and approval.
- f. Shall submit the RHC-approved budget to the FSA for DMC certification in accordance with SUNY Board of Trustees Guidelines for student activity fees.

**Section C:** Elections of RHC Executive Officers shall be conducted as follows:

1. Nominations for positions for the forthcoming year will be accepted at the March meeting. The nomination must be accepted by the nominee before the election. Any one individual may be nominated for and accept nomination for more than one office.
2. An election meeting shall be held in April. Election is to be carried out by simple majority secret ballot, by all voting members attending the meeting. Ballots are to be tallied by past officers not running for re-election or for a new executive officer position. Each executive officer position will be voted on independently. Ballots will be counted immediately after voting for each position. In the case of tie-vote or other complication in the election, a special vote among the voting body shall decide the outcome.
  - a. Elections are to be carried out in the following order: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. No one individual may be elected to hold more than one office.
  - b. "Drop Downs." Any person running for the position of President and does not win the election may elect to run for the position of Vice-President. A person running for the position of Vice-President may elect to run for the position of Treasurer or Secretary.

**Section D: Removal of Officers.** In the event a situation arises in which there is a demand by the membership for an Executive Officer to be removed from his/her position, a special meeting shall be held by the Executive Officers to determine if the demand is justifiable in the presence of the Director and/or Associate Director of Residential Life and Services, or equivalent titles. If so warranted, a secret ballot shall be conducted among the members of the voting quorum, conducted by the Director and/or Associate Director of Residential Life and Services or equivalent titles at a RHC meeting. A 2/3 majority vote is required to dismiss any executive officer in the presence of at least a 20% quorum. Voting members of the RHC must be notified of such a vote 21 day in advance via DMC email.

**Section E: Vacancies.** In the event an Executive Officer is not able to complete his/her term of office, a special nomination and election shall be held at the next general meeting to fill the remaining term of office.

## Article VII: Student Activity Fees

**Section A: Student Activity Fee (SAF):** shall be paid by each voting member of the residence halls at the rate voted on the previous year by RHC per academic semester (Fall and Spring), which shall be billed to residents in accordance with the procedures established by the University Bursar's Office.

**Section B** The current student activity fee is \$20 per year. SAF Rate changes (increases or decreases) in student activity fee rate shall be made by a 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote of voting members attending a RHC meeting and must be in accordance with the SUNY Board of Trustees guidelines for SAFs. SAF rate changes must be advertised in the proposed agenda and distributed to all residents at least seven days in advance of the meeting date and time at which the student activity fee rate change can be voted upon.

**Section C:** The annual budget for SAF shall be adopted in accordance with Article VI.B.4.d-f, and may be revised during the year, as needed, by a simple majority vote of the voting members.

**Section D:** Income received shall be deposited into a designated Trust and Agency account with the FSA exclusively for the RHC in accordance with SUNY guidelines.

**Section E:** Expenses drawn from the account shall be in accordance with the certified budget in place at that time and in accordance FSA procedures and within SUNY policy. All disbursements must be cosigned by the Treasurer plus one other RHC officer (President, Vice-President, or Secretary).

**Section F:** In the event of dissolution of the RHC, all remaining funds shall be turned over to the Board of Directors of FSA who shall make funds available in accordance with SUNY Board of Trustee policy to a successor Residence Hall resident organization, or utilize funds for the benefit of the residence hall operations in consultation with the department of Residential Life and Services.

## Article VIII: Ratification and Amendments

**Section A:** This constitution shall be considered ratified and in force when:

1. Approved by a simple majority of all eligible voting members in a residence hall ratification ballot at a duly called RHC meeting in which this matter has been appropriately placed on the agenda with a copy of this document provided at least 7 calendar days in advance to all eligible voting members, and
2. Approved on behalf of the University by the FSA President in accordance with pertinent FSA policies and procedures as well as SUNY guidelines.

**Section B:** The Secretary shall record the applicable date and time of voting, as well as a final tabulation of the vote and submit the same to FSA.

**Section C:** Amendments. Any and all subsequent amendments shall be adopted pursuant to Section VIII.A

Unanimously approved on 12/14/11 by RHC 33-0-0; Approved by Campus effective 12/14/11.