

## CONSTITUTION

Residence Hall Federation of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Ratified by the Residence Hall Federation Executive Board this Twenty-Ninth Day of March  
Two Thousand and Twenty One.

Ratified by the Residence Hall General Assembly this Tenth Day of September Two Thousand  
and Twenty One.

Ratified by the Commission of Student Affairs this Twenty-Sixth Day of September Two  
Thousand and Twenty One.

### PREAMBLE

Believing it is the right of the students to advocate to faculty and administration of Virginia  
Polytechnic Institute and State University to create, through the campus residence halls, a  
positive and diverse living/learning environment; and

Believing that the residence halls living environment can have a significant impact upon a  
student's academic performance, physical and mental well-being, and individual development;

We, the residential students of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, do hereby  
enact a Constitution for the Residence Hall Federation with the approval of the Executive Board,  
the General Assembly, and the Commission on Student Affairs.

### Article I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Residence Hall Federation of Virginia Polytechnic  
Institute and State University, hereafter referred to as RHF.

### Article II. PURPOSE

The purpose of RHF is to advocate on behalf of the students living in the residence halls and to  
promote a sense of community between residence halls at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University, hereafter referred to as Virginia Tech.

### Article III. MISSION

The mission of RHF is to improve residence life in any manner possible. RHF has a threefold  
aim in fulfilling this mission: advocacy, programming, and legislation.

- A. Advocacy: advocate on behalf of the students living in residence halls to Housing and  
Residence Life.
- B. Programming: coordinate and create educational, social, recreational, cultural, and scholastic  
opportunities within residence halls.
- C. Legislation: review and make recommendations on matters proposed by Hall Councils,  
student government, and other campus bodies.

## Article IV. MEMBERSHIP

- A. All students living in residence halls managed by Housing and Residence Life shall be members of RHF.
- B. Active members shall be defined as those who were elected, appointed, employed, or who are actively volunteering.

## Article V. ORGANIZATION

RHF is centrally governed by the Executive Board, which is composed of the Executive Officers. The RHF Executive Board governs the General Assembly, which is composed of the Executive Board itself, Hall Councils, RHF Advisor(s) and Hall Council Advisors, and Residence Life Professional staff who choose to participate in the organization. The individual residence halls are governed by their respective Hall Councils and Constitutions in conjunctions with the RHF Executive Board.

### Section A. Executive Board

#### 1. Membership

- a. The members of the RHF Executive Board shall be the Executive Officers who are annually elected by the General Assembly.
- b. All members of the Executive Board have the right to vote with the exception of the RHF Advisor(s), any Housing and Residence Life staff members, and the RHF President, who only votes in the case of a tie.
- c. Executive Officers
  - i. President
  - ii. Vice President of Membership and Legislation
  - iii. Vice President of Finance and Administration
  - iv. National Communications Coordinator
  - v. Director of Outreach
  - vi. Director of Programming
  - vii. RHF Advisor(s)

#### 2. Qualifications

- a. Executive Board Officers
  - i. Must be a full-time student as defined by the University.
  - ii. Must not be on active conduct sanction of probation or higher.
  - iii. Must have a cumulative GPA of no less than 2.5 at the time of election and throughout their term in office.
  - iv. Must live in a University residence hall managed by Housing and Residence Life during their term of office, excluding vacations and summer months.
  - v. Must not be employed by Housing and Residence Life in a live-in position such as, Resident Advisor, House Supervisor, Graduate Fellow, etc.

- vi. Must not simultaneously hold positions on the Executive Board and Hall Council.
  - vii. Must not simultaneously hold positions on the Executive Board and the National Residence Hall Honorary Executive Board.
  - viii. Must be able to serve in full capacity for the academic year at the time of their election.
  - ix. Must attend August and January training prior to the start of classes.
- b. Executive Board President
- i. In addition to the qualifications listed in Article V Section A.2, the Executive Board President:
    - 1. Must currently hold or have previously held a position on the RHF Executive Board or must currently be either a Hall Council President or Vice President or have formerly held either of those positions.
    - 2. May be asked to remain on campus during the summer to work the Housing and Residence Life internship for RHF. If the President is unable to fulfill this role it will be offered to other Officers to fulfill.
- c. Academic Probation
- i. Individuals that fail to meet the grade qualifications indicated may continue in office on academic probation for one semester.
  - ii. Student must participate in the following activities:
    - 1. Meet with an academic advisor in the individual's specific academic college.
    - 2. Midterm evaluation with primary advisor, student, and if necessary academic advisor.
    - 3. Review time management practices and organizational responsibilities with RHF Advisor(s).
    - 4. Any other steps as mutually agreed upon by the RHF Advisor(s).
  - iii. If the student fails to meet the grade requirement for two consecutive semesters and has made no progress on steps agreed upon by their RHF Advisor(s), the individual must then resign.
    - 1. If the individual refuses to resign, the Executive Board will move forward with the removal process as outlined in Article V Section A.6.
3. Duties and Responsibilities of the Executive Board
- a. To direct and guide the work of RHF in studying, formulating, and recommending to the University general policies and procedures concerning University residence hall students.
  - b. To represent RHF before student, faculty, and administrative groups, committees, and commissions as requested.

- c. To act as a liaison between the residence hall students, Housing and Residence Life, and Student Affairs.
  - d. To act as mentors to all Hall Councils and respective Hall Council Officers.
  - e. To inform Hall Councils about matters of concern to their populations.
  - f. To protect, defend, and uphold the RHF Constitution and Bylaws.
  - g. Specific duties and responsibilities of individual Executive Officers are outlined in Bylaw 1 Section 1.
4. Executive Decisions
- a. All Executive Officers shall have the authority to collectively make Executive Decisions:
    - i. Executive Officers shall make Executive Decisions when necessary and allowed by this Constitution and Bylaws in order to run an effective and responsive organization. Executive Decisions are reserved for instances when it is not practical to call the General Assembly and/or when the Constitution and Bylaws are vague and does not clearly instruct the Executive Officers as to an appropriate action.
  - b. Executive Officers who make Executive Decisions shall present their decisions at the next scheduled Executive Board meeting to approve, amend, or veto an Executive Decision. A majority vote is necessary to approve, amend, or veto an Executive Decision. The President shall only vote in the case of a tie.
5. Elections and Appointments
- a. Prior to Elections
    - i. Executive Board Officer elections shall be held in the spring, no later than April 1, with sufficient time for proper transition allotted.
    - ii. Elections shall be held in a General Assembly meeting. Voting for elections may only take place if there is quorum as outlined in Article V Section A.7.
      - 1. The Vice President for Membership and Legislation will develop a process, in collaboration with the RHF Advisor(s), should elections need to be held virtually.
    - iii. Any member of RHF, meeting the qualifications set-forth in Article V Section A.2, is eligible to be a candidate. Grade and conduct records will be confirmed prior to the candidate's installation as an Officer by the main RHF Advisor.
      - 1. Prior to the General Assembly meeting during which elections are scheduled, all candidates must sign the Eligibility Check form.
    - iv. Members interested in running for a position must submit a formal bid by the deadline established by the Vice President of Membership and Legislation. The bid process will be outlined by the Vice President of Membership and Legislation.

- v. A candidate must either be present at their election or have notified the Vice President of Membership and Legislation of their expected absence at least one week in advance of said election in order to be eligible to run.
- b. General Outline of Elections
  - i. Each candidate will be invited to address the General Assembly, in a speech limited to five minutes, in alphabetical order by the candidate's last name, in order of position allowing candidates to run for another position should they lose the election for the previous position.
    - 1. If the candidate is absent, they may designate someone to speak on their behalf.
  - ii. Following each presentation, the members of General Assembly will enter a question period asking bid or position specific questions of the candidate. A time of five minutes is set by the Vice President of Membership and Legislation with the option to extend for five minutes and a maximum of three times.
    - 1. Each member of the General Assembly may ask no more than two questions. All follow-up questions must be kept to the point.
    - 2. The Vice President of Membership and Legislation may rule any question out of order that is inappropriate or dilatory.
    - 3. All rules and procedures as set out in Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed in dealing with members who are ruled out of order.
  - iii. After all candidates have made their presentations, general bid or position-specific discussion of candidates will begin. Discussion of candidates will have a time limit of ten minutes with the option to extend for five minutes and a maximum of three times. Discussion will follow the general discussion format.
    - 1. All candidates for the office being elected will be required to leave the room during the discussion period.
    - 2. General Discussion – General Discussion is a process by which members of the General Assembly may state their opinions as they relate to the facts presented in the bids, presentations, or position presented by the applicants up for consideration. This time is also open for comparisons, but comments should remain relatively objective and to the point.
- c. Extenuating Circumstances and Rules
  - i. The following steps and rules shall be enforced for all Executive Board Officer elections:
    - 1. The General Assembly shall elect the Executive Officers.
    - 2. The Vice President of Membership and Legislation shall run the elections.

- a. If the Vice President of Membership and Legislation is seeking a position, they will designate another Officer to run elections.
  - b. In the case that all Officers are running for re-election, a RHF Advisor should run elections.
3. All candidates for the same position must leave the room during each competing candidate's presentation and question period.
4. Observers who are not members of the General Assembly or RHF shall be permitted to remain in the room at all times during the elections.
  - a. However, they shall have no power to speak, vote, or ask questions of the candidates.
5. Non-elected members of RHF may speak or ask questions only when yielded the floor by a member of the General Assembly.
  - a. Yielding will count as a speaking opportunity for that member of the General Assembly.
6. All persons present during the election shall be expected to conduct themselves with appropriate decorum fitting a business election of RHF.
7. Misconduct shall include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Failure to obey the directive of the Vice President of Membership and Legislation.
  - b. Excessive talking or otherwise disruptive discussion.
  - c. Personal attacks on any candidate or member of the General Assembly.
  - d. Any comment or question that is not related to the bids, presentations, or position presented by the applicants up for consideration.
8. Any non-elected member of the General Assembly who is being disruptive or otherwise interfering with the elections may be removed from the room at the discretion of the Vice President of Membership and Legislation.
9. Should quorum be lost then proceedings shall be halted until the next meeting when quorum can be regained.
10. No candidate for election shall vote in an election in which they are a candidate. If a candidate is from a Hall Council or acting as a Hall Council representative within the General Assembly, then the Hall Council's other representative(s) shall be recognized as voting members of the General Assembly and for quorum for that election. If a Hall Council has no other representation other than a candidate for election, then that Hall

Council may not be recognized as being represented for voting or for quorum purposes until the conclusion of that election.

d. Voting

i. Voting shall take place by secret ballot. Counting of votes will be conducted by the RHF Advisors.

1. Only voting members of the General Assembly may cast ballots.

a. Valid votes shall be:

i. The name of a candidate, which shall be defined as an affirmative vote for a candidate.

ii. No Confidence, which shall be defined as a vote against a candidate.

iii. Abstain, which shall count towards quorum, but neither as a vote for or against a candidate.

b. A majority vote is necessary for election.

i. If no candidate receives a majority, a run-off will then be held among the top two candidates, whereby a simple majority is all that will be needed to win the office.

ii. If no confidence receives a majority, the General Assembly may resume debate, and vote again, or leave the office vacant until another candidate can be identified.

iii. In the case of a tie, the RHF Executive Board will vote with the exception of the President. In the case of a tie of the RHF Executive Board, the President will break the tie.

e. Appointments

i. If no candidate is elected by General Assembly, or if a vacancy occurs after the close of the spring semester, then the Executive Board shall appoint a person that meets the following criteria:

1. Meets the qualifications stipulated in the RHF Constitution for holding an Executive Officer position.

2. Did not receive an official No Confidence vote by the General Assembly in the most recent formal election process.

6. Accountability

a. Before the end of the academic year, the newly elected Executive Board must vote in an accountability process. This process will be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding.

i. The Executive Board may choose to keep, edit, or completely rewrite the Memorandum of Understanding from the previous year.

b. If the newly elected Executive Board cannot reach a consensus, last year's Memorandum of Understanding will remain in effect.

## 7. Term of Office

### a. End of Term Transition

- i. The duties and powers of each Executive Board Officer begin when power is handed over at Housing and Residence Life's end of the year banquet. Duties and powers of a position end when they are transitioned to a newly elected Officer at this time.
  1. In the event that the end of the year banquet is not held or not an appropriate time for transition of power, duties and powers are transitioned to newly elected Officers at the last General Assembly meeting.
  2. If the last General Assembly is not an appropriate time for transition of power, duties and powers are transitioned on reading day.
- ii. To ensure the sustainability of the organization, every Executive Officer must submit a transition report at the end of their term in office.
  1. The transition report shall be turned in to the President and the RHF Advisor(s) by the last Friday in April, by 5 p.m.
  2. If the transition report is not completed, submitted, and of quality, the individual's stipend will be withheld.

### b. Removal from Office

- i. Causes for removal from office include, but are not limited to:
  1. Neglect of duties.
  2. Intentional breach of the RHF Constitution and/or Bylaws.
  3. Actions that reflect negatively on RHF, but which may not constitute neglect of duties or a breach of the RHF Constitution and/or Bylaws.
  4. If an individual fails to meet the qualifications to hold office, the individual must immediately resign, with the exception of the individual being placed on academic probation as outlined in Article V Section A.2.
- ii. An individual may be removed from office providing there has been:
  1. At least one documented meeting with the individual(s) involved and with the RHF Advisor(s) present.
    - a. The documentation from each meeting should be filed with the Vice President of Membership and Legislation, the respondent, and the RHF Advisor(s).
  2. An opportunity for the individual to resign.
- iii. Procedures for Removal from Office
  1. Any RHF active member or Executive Officer may make a claim to remove an Executive Officer from their position. This claim must be made to the Vice President of Membership and Legislation.



- a. If the claim is moving to remove the Vice President of Membership and Legislation, notification should be made to the President who will assume the role.
    - b. If the President is making the claim to remove the Vice President of Membership and Legislation, notification should be to the Vice President of Finance and Administration who will assume the role.
  2. The Vice President of Membership and Legislation shall provide written notification to the Officer explaining the claim brought against them, the date of the General Assembly in which a vote will be taken, and any supporting documentation that will or could be presented during the vote.
    - a. The written notification should also be sent to the RHF Advisor(s).
  3. The matter will be placed on the General Assembly agenda under New Business for the General Assembly to address.
  4. Supporting documentation of individual meetings and meetings with the RHF Advisor(s) must be provided to the General Assembly.
  5. The person(s) making the claim for removal of office will present, factually, the cause for removal from office.
  6. The Officer in question will have an opportunity to respond to the claims being made.
  7. General Assembly will ask questions to both parties. The questioning period will last five minutes and may be extended by five minutes a maximum of three times.
  8. Upon the completion of the question period, both parties will have an opportunity to make a final statement not exceeding three minutes each.
  9. Both parties will leave the room and General Assembly will enter a discussion period for five minutes and can be extended by five minutes a maximum of three times.
  10. A vote will be taken by secret ballot. A two-thirds majority is needed to remove the Executive Officer from office.
- c. Resignation
- i. Executive Board Officers wishing to vacate their positions shall give notice in the form of a letter of resignation to the President of RHF. The letter of resignation shall include the effective date of resignation and must be given at least three weeks prior to the effective date of resignation. The president shall notify the General Assembly within two academic weeks of receiving the letter.

1. If the president wishes to resign, the Vice President of Membership and Legislation is to handle the resignation process.
- ii. A special election shall be held after the General Assembly is notified of a resignation of an Executive Board Officer at the discretion of the Executive Board.
- iii. If no candidate is elected by the General Assembly, or if the vacancy occurs after the close of spring semester, then the Executive Board shall follow the appointment process as outlined in Article V Section A.5.

#### 8. Meetings

- a. Regular meetings - The RHF President shall set the date, time, place, and frequency of regular Executive Board meetings with the consent of the Executive Board.
- b. Call Meetings - The RHF President may call meetings as they deem necessary, with the consent of the Executive Board. An Executive Board Officer may petition the President to call a meeting.
- c. Quorum – 51% of the voting members of the Executive Board shall constitute quorum. The Executive Board will calculate this number by rounding up to the nearest whole number.
- d. Attendance - All Executive Board Officers must attend Executive Board and General Assembly meetings. No more than two unexcused absences shall be allowed.

### Section B. General Assembly

#### 1. Membership

- a. Each Hall Council shall be represented in the RHF General Assembly by at least one voting member. For every 300 residents, each Hall Council shall receive one vote.
  - b. The Executive Board may adjust composition of Hall Councils and their voters as needed.
  - c. Non-voting members of RHF General Assembly shall be:
    - i. RHF Advisor(s).
    - ii. Hall Council Advisor(s).
    - iii. Housing and Residence Life Professional Staff and student live-in staff.
  - d. All members of General Assembly have speaking rights.
  - e. All members of the residential student population are welcome to attend the General Assembly meetings.
  - f. Visitors of the General Assembly, such as members from outside organizations may obtain the right to speak by a yield from another member of General Assembly with speaking rights.
2. Duties and responsibilities of RHF General Assembly:
- a. To act on behalf of Hall Councils in the best interest of the residents.

- b. To review, discuss, and take action on all matters forwarded to the General Assembly by Hall Councils.
  - c. To recommend to Hall Councils proposals and programs that will meet the needs of residents.
  - d. To evaluate RHF Committees' issues of concern(s).
  - e. To serve as an open forum where views on matters of concern can be exchanged.
3. Meetings
- a. Regular meetings – The RHF Vice President of Membership and Legislation shall set the date, time, place, and frequency of regular General Assembly meetings with consent of the Executive Board, with the exception of examination and vacation weeks.
  - b. Call Meetings - The Vice President of Membership and Legislation may call meetings as they deem necessary, with the consent of the General Assembly. A General Assembly member may petition the Vice President of Membership and Legislation to call a meeting.
  - c. Quorum - 51% of Hall Council representatives will constitute quorum. The Executive Board will calculate this number by rounding up to the nearest whole number.
  - d. The Vice President of Membership and Legislation shall have the right to remove a member from a meeting of the General Assembly. This decision may be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly.

#### Article VI. PARLIMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern RHF in all cases to which they are applicable unless they are inconsistent with the RHF Constitution and Bylaws.

#### Article VII. HALL CONSTITUTIONS

Following the ratification of this Constitution each Hall Council must have a Hall Constitution. Hall Council Constitutions must be constructed in such a way as not to conflict with the RHF Constitution. Hall Council Constitutions must be ratified by the General Assembly or an ad hoc committee by the end of the fall semester each academic year.

#### Article VIII. AMENDMENTS

A notice of proposed amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws of RHF shall be given in the General Assembly agenda and considered at no fewer than two meetings of RHF General Assembly prior to voting. A copy of the proposed amendments shall be distributed with the agenda. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voting members present, and voting is required. Quorum of the members applies.

## Article IX. RATIFICATION

This Constitution shall be considered ratified upon approval by the Executive Board, the General Assembly, and the Commission on Student Affairs. The associated Bylaws shall be considered amended upon approval of the Executive Board and General Assembly.