

Developing Your Residence Hall Association

- Initial Development
- Support of Housing
- Constitution and bylaws
- Working with Student Government
- Finance & Funding
- Sponsorship & Solicitations
- Being Visible on Campus
- Hall Councils
- Recruitment & Retention
- Programming
- RHA Organizational Structure
- Membership Structure
- Role of the Advisor
- Leadership Development
- Recognition
- OCM
- RHA Role in NACURH
- Begin an NRHH Chapter
- Need for a NCC
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Meetings
- Acknowledgments

Initial Development of the RHA

From the NACURH White Papers and adapted from the Advice for Advisors

First of all, what is a residence hall association? An RHA can be defined as a leadership organization that represents the various halls and the general on-campus student population. An RHA seeks out to develop both the leaders within the halls and help make on-campus living more of a community through programming and services offered. In the initial development of the residence hall association and/or in the improvement of your residence hall association, there are some criteria that the NACURH white papers have set out for the developing residence hall association. These include:

1. Determine the need for the organization
2. Identify support for the organization
3. Obtain a source of income for the organization
4. Ensure effective leadership within the organization
5. Develop methods of system maintenance within the organization

Determining the need for the organization

The need for the establishment of the residence hall association needs to arise from the desire and wants of the students residing in the residence halls. Once those students recognize those needs, they can establish a mission and the goals for the organization, both long-term and short-term. From establishing this purpose, the residence hall association has its roots and can begin to row with a solid purpose towards the future.

When establishing goals for the organization, one must make sure that these goals are compatible with the purpose of the organization, are practical, are feasible, are attainable, and are measurable. These characteristics are also valuable in evaluating and re-evaluating future goals.

Support for the organization

Support needs to come from all aspects of the university. First and foremost, the housing department must support the independence and foster the growth of the organization. It also helps that the student affairs and other administrative groups of the university support this new organization. With the sincere full support of the university, students involved within the residence hall association can challenge, without fear, the current systems in place and let their voices be heard. The most important aspect of support for the residence hall association is that students make their voices heard and can and will be able to implement change to make their on-campus living experience a little better.

With support of the university, the residence hall association must also have the support of the individual halls in creating this organization. For the organization to grow, the individual halls must work together to make their voices heard on the entire campus level. "Grass-roots lobbying" becomes very important at this level. With a strong grass roots lobbying base with student support for the organization, the residence hall association will grow well into the future.

Obtain a Source of income for the organization

A residence hall association needs an independent and guaranteed source of income to allow for the growth of the organization. Also the finances need to be in the hands of the students and control given to

them. The control gives students autonomy and ensures that the housing department, the administration of the university or other student groups, does not influence their decisions. Audits performed by students within the organization are also vital to its growth.

Funding can be obtained in a variety of ways. Funding could come from the housing department as a per student amount based on occupancy within the halls. Funding can also come from a percentage of vending commissions, refrigerator rentals, and/or solicitation of member fees. Also, with working with NACURH, our corporate partner can help residence hall association receive their goals for funding. This organization is OCM.

Effective Leadership with the organization

The leadership of the organization should follow the goals, mission and overall purpose of the residence hall association. The original leaders on the organization will set the pace for future growth and development of the organization and how it will achieve its goals. A high level of energy and enthusiasm is essential in the beginning phases of a residence hall association.

Once the organization is established, continuous student development is essential to foster the nature and growth of the organization. Whether through leadership conferences, retreats or socials, the organization must be dedicated to increasing student involvement and personal development. Don't be afraid to accept new challenges and have faith in other students.

Develop methods of system maintenance within the organization

The RHA must be adaptable to change and flexible to the modifications that the organization might go through. The organization must define an appropriate structure to maximize student participation and involvement while still accomplishing the objectives of the organization. With flexibility, the organization must be able to deal with any concerns, issues and propositions as they arise. Whether a question arises about certain regulation or the organization becomes excited about an event on campus, the leadership of the organization must be able to channel this communication and energy into a positive impact on the organization and meet the needs of the students and the residence living environment in general.

Other methods of system maintenance include needs assessment of the students involved, office space for the organization, and a general and continuous meeting place for the organization. Regular meetings, an appointed and regular advisor, and supportive access such as duplication facilities and other resources are also helpful! Participation in residence-hall-oriented conferences can also aid in the networking of the members of the residence hall association on your campus with other members of residence hall associations in your state, region, and nation.

Support of Housing Department

To be a successful residence hall association, you must have full support from your housing department. You will be working with the housing staff whether to create programs, add services or implement changes in your residential living environment. With the support, you will be able to foster a better relationship between the volunteer students living in the residence halls and the paid staff, whether students or professionals.

Support will vary depending on your housing department and your relationship with them. Every housing department offers different types of support depending on the needs and purpose of the residence hall association. Support can range from general to monetary to simple visibility and interest. It is important that the needs of both groups are being met with the supportive role being a two-way form of communication. Both the RHA and the housing department need to support each other since they are both dedicated to making life for the residence hall students more of a community and a better environment to live and grow in.

Sometimes it helps if residence hall representatives serve on various housing committees and aid in the development of budgets and rules and regulations. Student input is vital to the growth of the RHA and to the housing department. This is a great way to involve student volunteers and encourage candid and constructive feedback, especially on issues that affect the residents.

The key element of support by the housing department is that the residence hall association is an independent organization from the housing department and can act on issues freely without the fear of repercussion. This is vital to the growth and development of the students and encourages them to face issues and come up with viable alternatives for meeting their needs and wants as well as negotiating to meet the purpose of the institution, housing department and general student welfare.

This will help if the advisor functions as a liaison between the RHA and housing and the RHA executive board or their designee functions as a liaison to the housing department. With each other working together toward the common goal, these two essential groups to student development with both grow together while still functioning independent of one another.

Remember that these are only ideas and suggestions and it is between your RHA and your housing department to set boundaries and the role of support between the two groups. Open communication and setting expectations early on will help alleviate discrepancies later. However, for the RHA to grow the housing department needs to have some form of support for the RHA if only to be visible at the RHA meetings and programs and to help advise the RHA. Needs will vary depending on the RHA and the strength of housing and student development on your campus. However, NACURH provides many resources, especially for networking, to help new RHAs and new advisors find their way and develop into stable and strong organizations on their individual campuses.

Constitution and Bylaws

The constitution should be the governing document of your residence hall association. The bylaws should include the basic operational structure of the residence hall association and reflects more of the changes that have occurred over time. You can also include a document called Rules and Procedures which outline meeting structure, election procedures and other rules inherent to the organization.

What to Include in Your Constitution

- Preamble (including goals, objectives and mission statement)
- Name of the residence hall association
- Diversity Statement
- Anti Hazing Policy
- Membership Guidelines
- Organization of the RHA
- Executive Board Election/Appointment
- Executive Board Position Descriptions
- Impeachment and Removal of Executive Board Officers or RHA Members
- Parliamentary Procedures (Robert's Rules is commonly used)
- Ratification and Amendment of the constitution

Other Things to include in either the constitution or bylaws: (optional)

- Meeting structure
- Quorum
- Attendance
- Finances
- Election Procedure
- Committees
- Voting Procedures (who has voting rights)
- Directorships and Chair Responsibilities
- Presidential Vetoes
- Compensation
- NACURH affiliation and responsibilities to NACURH

For a sample constitution and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Working with Student Government

Often representing a significant portion of your campus population, the RHA should have the support of and a good working relationship with their student government. An RHA is a form of student government for on campus students and with an ally in the general student government, these two forces could work together to further strengthen both organizations and increase on campus living for all those involved. Often student government can help address larger concerns to the administration such as lighting, safety, etc. With your student government association in full support of your RHA, you will increase the stability and overall potential of the organization.

Student government associations are very interesting. Many are unique to their own campus and it depends on your purpose and your expected relationship with your student government association to determine your working relationship with them. However, it is good to have at least a liaison between your two organizations to help foster growth and increase knowledge and communication. There are many different things that your RHA can do in conjunction with your student government association including getting funding, co-programming, getting access to information for other student organizations and much more.

Student governments also program but more for the general population. If your two groups work together, the residents' opportunities for programming only increase. Also, it helps with making your RHA more visible on campus and increases the image of your residence hall association. If you have a good working relationship, you can promote growth between both SGA and RHA.

This also will help with campus issues that can directly affect the residents such as campus safety and parking. If your RHA and SAG work together with the housing department and administration, hopefully more can be accomplished and everyone will benefit in the end. However this working relationship is not always easy to establish but certainly is not impossible. Open communication and a dedication to helping each organization grow and foster new services and ideas will benefit everyone involved.

Student government associations often have various committees working on different issues or programs. Your RHA can possibly work with your SGA to have representatives on those committees or at least discuss them at your RHA meetings and give your input to the student government association.

For a sample report on relationships with student government associations and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Finance and Funding

Budgets

Financial management is essential to the growth of the residence hall association. The members of the organization must hold each other fiscally accountable for their actions and ensure that they can maintain their budget wisely to last throughout the year. There are multiple ways to create budgets and hold each other accountable.

The most common way is the line item budgets where money is allotted in specific line items that represent that expenditure. Line items can be programming, office supplies, recognition, etc.

Line items budgets are used most often because they are simple to develop and easy to keep track of.

Incremental budgets are also simple but different from the line item budgets. Incremental budgets build on each other; thus, each year, following a given formula, the budget changes incrementally. Often, incremental budgeting complements line item budgets.

A zero-based budget is when one bases their budget if all expenditures and revenues were zero. This is a much more complicated way to create a budget and is based on scrutiny of what was spent in the past.

A final type of budgeting is cost center budgets, which link the activities of various subunits for budgeting purposes. This is a very complicated style of budgeting and is used for very large and intricate budgets.

Financial Statements

The various financial statements come in handy, particularly when looking at the past records of the residence hall association. It is good to prepare balance sheets for programs that require multiple line items as well as for the overall residence hall association budget.

Cash

Avoid using cash at all possible times. It is not as easily accounted for. If collecting money, try to collect checks because it provides a more fiscally accountable way of keeping track of items. Cash payments can also be sticky, especially where reimbursements are involved.

Co-Signing Checks

It is always a good idea to have checks co-signed to help the members hold each other accountable. You can have a maximum amount a check can be written without a second signature or have every check written with two signatures or none at all. These, as well as other financial suggestions, depend on your organizations structure and accountability.

Fundraising

Fundraising is good revenue for your residence hall association, but it is not usually the easiest way to get revenue for your RHA. Also, you need to check with your university and housing department on what can and cannot be used as a fund-raiser. Restrictions vary from campus to campus and administration to administration. Legal issues are definitely something to look into before any fundraising opportunity begins.

Possible Fundraising Ideas

Income from Services

1. Vending Machines
2. Pinball, pool table, video game rental/usage
3. Facility Rental
4. Jewelry cleaning
5. Lawn mowing
6. Leaf raking
7. Data entry
8. Babysitting

Income from Sales/Rental

1. Refrigerators
2. Lofts
3. Carpets (OCM)
4. Buttons
5. Exam Support Baskets (CFR)
6. T-Shirts or Sweatshirts
7. Telephones
8. Stationary
9. Balloons
10. College or organization mugs, cups, etc.
11. Stamps
12. Food products
13. Calendars

Other Ideas

1. Raffles/Drawings
2. Car Wash
3. Flower Sales (Valentine's Day)
4. Bake Sales
5. Stuffing Newspaper insert
6. Recycling
7. Selling Candy
8. Rent A Person
9. Book Exchange

It's all up to your imagination!

For sample budget and finance information of other schools and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Sponsorship & Solicitations

Adapted from a Solicitations Manual prepared by Suketu Pathak and David Winchester, University of Florida

Every program has a budget. Very few times, if ever, will money not be an issue for organizations you are involved in. That is why it is important to have good solicitations skills. With a bit of searching around you can find businesses that will give graciously to your cause. Forming good contacts and relations with local businesses can benefit your organization for years.

Getting Started

The first thing to do when starting the solicitations process for a program is to come up with a "wish list" of the items that you want for your program. The more specific you are, the easier it

will be when you start making calls to businesses. Make sure to know the time, date, location, purpose, expected attendance, the charity that will benefit (if there is one), and any other pertinent facts about the program before you start making calls. Just Be Prepared. Brainstorm with your organization and set high goals, the worst they can do is tell you no. You should also draft a basic solicitations letter that you can adapt to individual businesses later.

Building Contacts

Now for the fun stuff, grab a phone book and let your fingers do the walking. Flip through the yellow pages and compile a list of businesses that might be able to help you with your wish list. Check to see if any other people in your organization have contacts with any of these businesses, it can help to get your foot in the door. Once you have your list, start calling these businesses and ask for the manger on duty. The following is a example of a first contact phone call:

Business: Domino's Pizza, what's your phone number?

You: Actually, can I speak to the manager on duty?

Business: Sure, may I ask what this is regarding?

You: I have a question about your sponsorship of a program I'm running.

Business: OK, hold on.

(Wait five minutes)

Manager: This is Mike; can I take your order?

You: Hello Mike, Actually, my name is John Doe, how are you doing today, sir?

Manager: Fine, and you?

You: I'm doing well thank you, I am calling on behalf of Your Area Government and we are going to be having a Casino Night program on the 11th of August benefiting the Children's Without Ears Fund. I was wondering if you might be interested in sponsoring our program with some food for free or at a discounted rate.

Manager: How will this benefit us?

You: Well, we expect four hundred people at the event, all of which would see that you were gracious enough to sponsor us. We would also be willing to give you credit and put your logo on the publicity for the event. Over 800 residents will see this publicity as well.

Manager: Cool, when do you need it?

You: We could pick it up a couple of hours before the event.

Manager: Aright then, we will need a letter for our files as well.

You: No problem, I'll get it to you next week.

Manager: Just give me a call a couple of days before the event to remind me.

You: Thank you very much sir, we appreciate your support.

Following Up

Some businesses want to see you in person; in this case, a letter is a helpful tool. You may be surprised what they will give you in person that they would not offer you over the phone. Some businesses want to see a letter before they will offer you anything. Some want a letter for their files, but will offer you solicitations before they ever see the letter.

Tying up Loose Ends

You should make sure to write up a list of your contacts and leave it where your successors can use it also. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT** because it helps to build lasting relationships with businesses. Write thank you notes to all of the people that helped you out with your program. It also would not hurt to call them and thank them in person. This may seem excessive, but this is a good way to build your OWN personal connections.

Words to the Wise

1. Until you build your contacts, a lot of your success will be through luck. Many businesses have schedules and budgets of what they can give away and when. If you catch these businesses at the wrong time, you have no chance of getting anywhere.
2. Start Early. No one will give you anything if you tell him or her you need it right away. Three weeks to a month should be enough time for businesses to do their necessary paperwork.
3. Managers are busy. It may take several attempts to get in touch with someone in charge.
4. Having access to a car can come in handy if you try to visit the businesses personally. It gets pretty hard to bum rides all the time!!

For a sample report solicitations and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurhgig to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Being Visible on Your Campus

It is essential that people know about your organization and about all of the good things the RHA can offer them. Having an office and general meeting time that is regularly scheduled will aid in this visibility. Create a logo and place it on all publicity and marketing tools for your organization. You can also use mottos, themes, etc. to help increase awareness of your RHA. Also, you don't have to call your organization "RHA." You can be as creative as you want as long as you meet the mission and purpose of your organization.

Having annual events will slowly increase your awareness as well. For example, April is designated as National Residence Hall Month and you can try to have a special program or series of events during that month.

You can also have T-shirts or pins for the members of your organization. This helps increase their dedication in the RHA and encourages them to take pride in what they do. It also is a great marketing tool for your organization.

In addition to these items, it could be wise to early on design a logo and tag line for your residence hall association. Once you accomplish this, use it on everything. Use it on publicity, T-shirts, publications, etc.

To make your RHA more visible, you can also visit other student organizations. This will help with programming efforts as well as increasing membership in your organization and involvement in other organizations as well. The more active your executive board is with other organizations, the more you can improve your visibility and your campus image.

Another way to increase your visibility is to publicize your RHA at the beginning of each semester, which is the perfect time to recruit new members and make your organization more visible on your campus and in your community. Post office hours, phone numbers, and other contact information to aid in your visibility. If you offer welcome items or make brochures for your organization, include this information on them and encourage your residents to come by and visit.

You can also use technology to increase awareness of your RHA on campus. With e-mail and a web site for your organization, you can inform everyone of upcoming programs and meetings as well as the services and benefits that your organization can offer them. You can probably work with your university for web space and listing on the university web site to increase your visibility.

These are just a few suggestions on how to increase visibility of your organization on campus. It is very important to establish your organization and make a name for it on campus as soon as possible. This will help in the very beginnings of your organization and help increase the stability of the RHA as well.

Hall Councils

Depending on your organizational structure, each hall should be an extension of the governing unit of the residence hall association. The hall councils should be comprised of officers and members and serve as representatives to the residence hall association. These hall councils represent the needs of the students in the individual residence halls and can more easily represent those more specific needs.

Hall councils vary by their structure depending on the needs of the individual residence halls. Each hall council will function differently from one another but come together to form the membership of the overall residence hall association.

Some hall councils have executive boards, which basically functions as the hall council on a smaller level of the RHA. These individual hall councils have their own governing policies, constitutions, bylaws, budgets, programming, etc. They are sort of like a mini-RHA. The best aspect of hall councils is that they allow for the individual resident's needs to be met more on an individual basis. Some hall council executive boards make it a part to talk to everyone in their building, even if it is over 400 students!

Hall councils can also work more closely with the residence life staff in the area to program for the residents. This allows for more direct contact with the residents and allows for easier recruitment of officers and members to the hall council and then to the RHA. The closer the student volunteers are to the general resident, the better the services that are provided to the residents and the more important the issues are that the RHA focuses on and deals with.

Hall councils, like central RHAS, need to have office hours, specialized services to meet their residents needs and a focus on meeting their individual residents needs. Hall councils can do everything that an RHA does but on a smaller level. Then these hall councils can work together to meet more general needs of the on campus residents through the central residence hall association.

Please see the RHA organizational structure section to determine how you want to structure your hall councils (if any) and what impact you want them to have on your residence hall association. This should be placed in your constitution and is a great discussion at the beginning stages of forming your residence hall association.

For a sample report on hall councils/government and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Recruitment and Retention of Members

Recruiting and retaining members for the residence hall association are essential to the growth and stability of the organization.

Recruitment

The best time to begin recruitment of new members is at the beginning of the semester. Often, residence hall associations have Welcome Weeks filled with programming for the residents. This is the optimal time to begin reaching out to the new and existing residence hall students. Keep your residence hall association growing!

Some organizations have large recruitment drives particularly at the beginning of the semester with handbooks or flyers explaining the importance of their RHA and some of the programs that the RHA is involved in. Also, many organizations start off the year with a leadership conference with new members and also try to recruit members by having them attend their conference.

The executive board is essential to the recruitment process of the organization. The executive board needs to encompass the enthusiasm and optimism for the organization. Each executive board member should set out their responsibilities, goals and priorities for each other and for themselves. Also, it is important for the executive board to be a cohesive unit leading the organization together to achieve its goals and purpose. If this is achieved early on, prospective members will notice this and are more apt to want to get involved.

Tips for recruitment:

- Once you have established the name of your residence hall association, you can begin recruiting. Having established popular programs will also help attract new members.
- Get freshman involved! They are the easiest and best people to get involved.
- Present a positive image about your organization and emphasize what members get out of the organization (leadership skills, time management, etc)
- Send out letters to incoming freshman
- Emphasize the education out of classroom you get by being involved
- Inform them how they can improve their community since we're in this for the residents!
- Remind them that they are volunteers and are helping others and their community

Retention

Retention is essential to the continuation and stability of a residence hall association. As a residence hall leader, you must be aware of the needs of your residence hall association members and work towards reaching those needs and exceeding them. Keep members involved and encourage their growth within the organization as well as both professionally and personally.

Motivation of members is essential to the retention of your members. A highly motivated member is hard to come by and that's where you come in. You must reinsure all of your members, new and old, that:

- They are needed
- They don't have to dedicate their lives to the organization
- The tasks that need to be done can easily be achieved with a minimum effort
- You want them to be involved!

You should also be careful not to overload your members. This will be difficult at the very start of the organization but as the executive board you need to slowly delegate responsibilities and gradually build on those responsibilities that you delegate to members. When you delegate, make sure that both you and the member set expectations of each other and how to accomplish the task. Also, remember to recognize members for their time and effort in the organization.

Remember that retention of members takes time, especially with all of the encouragement, thanking and training that needs to occur to get members motivated about staying involved for longer periods of time. You should find out what members want to get out of their time with the organization and help them achieve these goals. Everyone's motivation will vary; some will be more social and others will be more community service oriented. Many may choose to go into student affairs as a lifelong career. But if you don't ask, you may never know.

Commitment is also important to an organization and its retention efforts. Commitment to an organization can be built by gradually increasing the amount and the importance of responsibilities that you delegate to an individual. Eventually he or she will grow to see his work **in** your organization as a priority in his or her life. This person will grow to realize his or her importance to the success of the organization.

A few more thoughts that help with retention is making sure that EVERY member feels welcomed. Your executive board should try to team all of your members names and as many of your residents names as possible. Talk to them. Find out what excites them. Find out what made them initially get involved. Above all, let them know you care about them and their dreams. This will make them a lifelong member in their heart and you also have a new friend and ally in making your residence hall community a better place.

For a sample report on recruitment and retention and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.or,!@ to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Programming (Educational, Community Service, and Social)

Programming is essential to every residence hall association. It is often the best way to get students involved with the RHA and is also a great way to expand leadership opportunities within your organization. There are three main categories of programming: Educational, Community Service and Social. Often social programs are the easiest to get residents involved, but educational and community service oriented programs will also reach a number of residents' special interests and needs.

A main part of a successful program is the publicity of the program. There are multiple ways to publicize or advertise your program and your RHA for that matter. Publicity can range from flyers to door hangers to table tents to sidewalk chalk. Word of mouth is always the best way to get strong attendance but you need to get the excitement going to get word of mouth going. Be creative with your publicity. Have themes, graphics, logos, and unique designs on everything and make publicity varied. Don't always use the same technique or make it the same way!

Don't procrastinate with publicity! The sooner you get it up the better. But don't forget to send reminders and keep the program top of mind for your residents.

After you have the publicity the way you want it, then you can focus on everything else like decorations, food and just having fun.

How to Program Checklist

- Identify interests and the people for whom the program will be. To develop program ideas, have brainstorm sessions, discussions and even surveys to find out the needs and wants of your residents.
- Develop a purpose for the program. What will your program accomplish and what is the best way of accomplishing this task?
- Develop a program and a catchy title!
- Delegate responsibility! This is a great way to get multiple people involved in the planning, implementation and coordination of the program. Good delegation can increase the effectiveness and outcome of the program for all of those involved.
- Identify resources and materials necessary to implement the program. This is where the bulk of the planning takes place. You need to pick a date, time and location of the program. Contact resources that you will need. Create a budget for the program. See what other events that might be planned at the same time. Reserve your facilities. Arrange for clean up.
- Arrange for publicity. Publicity is the key part of a successful program. Try new and innovative ways to get people to know about your program. Remember that word of mouth is the best way to get people excited.
- Discuss with people involved the expectations and objectives of the program.
- Review plans for last minute preparations and make sure that nothing is overlooked.
- Implement the program
- After the program return all resources and equipment and send thank you notes to everyone involved.
- Evaluate the program.

Suggestions for Educational Programming

- Study tips
- Resume building programs
- How to find a job/internship
- Alcohol awareness
- Black History Month
- Women's history month
- Asian Kaleidoscope Month
- Test Preparation programs with professors
- Get to know faculty programs
- Jewish Awareness Month
- Speakers on different issues

Suggestions for Community Service Programming

- Fund-raiser for a special group (Children's Miracle Network, etc.)
- Free tutoring (especially for high school students)
- Date Auction to raise money
- Voter incentive programs
- Penny Wars between the halls (pennies are positive and other change and dollars are negative)

Suggestions for Social Programming

- Dance
- Food programs (taco, ice cream, pizza, etc.)
- Be Kind to Roomie Day
- Bloc Seating
- Skit night
- Slumber Party
- Movie Night
- Sports events
- Field days

For a sample report on programming (which is the largest section of the RFI) and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

RHA Organizational Structure

Structural designs vary among residence hall associations. Each campus has a system-wide governing unit and must determine how to establish the structure that will work best for their individual campus needs. No matter what system is used, however, it must be perceived as coherently organized and work together.

Each level of government should have a central focus. However, there has also been a shift towards decentralization in the recent years. No one form is more effective than another. Each depends on the needs of your campus and the purpose of your organization. As a group who is beginning this organization, you need to set out the focus and the future direction of your residence hall association. The general structure of your organization will directly impact how you relate to your residents and how successful your RHA is on your campus.

Successful governments provide a continuity of officers and their responsibilities. You need to insure that your residence hall association provides continuity and fluidity among members and the executive board(s). Communication, dedication to the mission and long-term goals of the organization and a focus on residence life will aid in this continuity effort for a successful RHA.

Models of RHA Structure

Area/Building Government with a Central RHA - This represents the most common structure of residence hall associations throughout the nation. In this form of structure, each residence hall has its own form of residence hall government with its own membership, budget, programming, constitution, bylaws, etc. Members of the individual hall government are selected among the residents of that hall. The individual hall has its own executive board and addressing RHA issues on an individual hall basis. Then, representatives (the number determined by the residence hall association) from each individual residence hall attend the general RHA meetings (the central RHA) and take part in the residence hall government on a campus level with its own programming, budget, constitution, bylaws, etc. The central RHA has its own elected executive board which runs the RHA general meetings and lead the central RHA and the overall needs of the individual residence halls.

Central RHA with Representatives from Individual Buildings/RHAs who do not have their own individual hall governments - This form of student government is similar to the Area/Building Government with a Central RHA except 'It does not have individual hall governments. Each building, however, does elect representatives to serve on the residence hall association. The RHA is responsible for programming, policy, and issues management for the campus. Individual residence hall needs are not really addressed in this structure and are handled more by the residence life staff in that particular area. The RHA does have its own constitution and bylaws and serves as the governing body in the residence halls.

Area/Building Governments with no Central RHA which act independently of one another - This model consists of individual residence halls having their own form of government with constitutions, budgets, bylaws, programming, etc. However, there is no central RHA. Each residence hall government acts independently from one another. To create dialogue between the individual residence hall associations, an informal advisory council could be established depending on the needs of the individual residence halls.

Membership Structure

Executive Board Structure

The minimum people to begin a residence hall association include a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, national communications coordinator and an advisor. Other members could be added as seen fit to the needs and purpose of the organization.

Please note that these are only guidelines and suggestions and the actual position descriptions should be specific to the needs of your RHA.

President

- Serve as the official representative of the RHA to campus
- Preside over all RHA general meetings and executive board meetings
- Handle all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the organization unless delegated to another position
- Make appointments to committees and other organizations as deemed appropriate and necessary
- Vote only in the case of a tie at RHA meetings
- Provide for the election proceedings of positions of members and the executive board
- Serve as the liaison to the residence life/housing staff, office and administration

Vice-President

- Assume the duties of the president in his/her absence
- Coordinate and oversee the committees within the RHA
- Hold judiciary meetings as necessary and revise the constitution as deemed appropriate
- Chair or aid in large scale programming or general programming for the RHA
- Serve as parliamentarian
- Know and interpret the general parliamentary procedure for the organization

Treasurer

- If there exists a finance committee, this person would serve as chair
- Collect, record, and deposit all forms of funds for the RHA
- Prepare reports (weekly, semester, monthly and/or annually) for the RHA determined and outlined in the responsibilities
- Coordinate the budget and all expenditures for the RHA 'Insuring that there are no outstanding debts
- Maintaining a good relationship with local vendors
- Train and coordinate other financial officers in the RHA
- Prepare semester financial reports

Secretary

- Maintain records of the RHA including minutes, attendance reports, program reports, and correspondence
- Distribute materials to the appropriate students, faculty, administration, staff, etc.
- Send out reminders or updates to members and other appropriate students, faculty, administration, staff etc. as deemed necessary
- Oversee communication within the organization including contact lists, e-mail lists, etc.

- Maintain a recognition program within the organization
- Serve as a liaison to a university committee/housing committee

National Communications Coordinator (NCC)

- Serve as the liaison between the RHA, NACURH and the regional affiliate
- Attend and vote at regional and national conferences, in particular, NCC Business Meetings
- Serve as the delegation chair for conferences
- Coordinate all aspects of forming and sending a delegation to conferences including funding, spirit and other activities
- Relay information from other NACURH member schools to the RHA
- Prepare and submit all dues and reports as requested by NACURH and the regional affiliate, including monthly newsletters to regional institutions
- Coordinate the Of the Month process (nominations and selections) in conjunction with and/or in the absence of a National Residence Hall Honorary chapter

Advisor

- Attend RHA meetings and functions
- Interpret institutional policy and parliamentary procedure as appropriate
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the RHA
- Provide guidance, advice and support to RHA members as appropriate
- Provide history for the organization as necessary
- Provide stability as an ex-officio member of the organization

General membership

Now that you have determined the structure of your executive board, you must determine how to structure your general membership including who can vote, who has speaking rights, and at large and alumni members. This is essential; as it will impact the purpose of your organization and the way you handle issues.

You should outline membership in your constitution and/or bylaws. In this outline you should include election procedures (or appointment), responsibilities and expectations for these members. Attendance requirements for voting seats is also something to consider when defining who is and **is** not a member of your residence hall association.

Voting Members

So who will have a voting seat in your organization? Sometimes this is determined by elected members or appointed members. This needs to be determined at the start of the organization and set in the constitution and/or bylaws. Other voting members could also include hall representatives depending on the overall structure of your RHA. Voting members will vote on issues, budgetary allocations, and any other item that should be voted upon. This is one of the most important decisions that you will have to impact the RHA. The eligibility of proxy votes (or substitutes) also needs to be determined and set out in the constitution and/or bylaws.

At Large

These members can have voting status or not. They should be a certain percentage of your overall voting membership if you are going to make them voting members. If they do not vote, they can be considered ex-officio members and simply speak on issues but are not allowed to vote on them. You also need to determine how to elect and/or appoint at large members. This is another important decision in deciding your membership structure.

Alumni Members

Alumni members are former officers and/or members of the RHA. You need to determine the amount of time a member must have been involved before they can become an alumni' member as well as how you will elect or appoint these members. Alumni members typically can vote in the RHA except in elections and budgetary allocations. But it is up to your RHA to decide the impact alumni members can have on the organization.

Committees

There are two distinct types of committees that your organization should have. There are standing committees and ad-hoc committees. Standing committees are dedicated to the continuation of the purpose of the organization. These committees continue year after year. Some possible standing committees include public relations, diversity and annual program committees. Ad hoc committees are more need-based. These committees arise from issues that the organization chooses to follow up on and last as long as it takes to accomplish the task at hand. Ad hoc committees can deal with issues such as parking, alcohol and visitation rights.

It is up to the executive board and the initial development of the RHA to determine the standing committees that might also be included in the constitution. However, your executive board can always add standing committees as you see fit. Ad hoc committees depend on the issues at hand in the residence hall association.

For a sample report on membership and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

The Role of the Advisor

Advisors are essential to the stability of the residence hall association. They need to provide a resource to the members and the executive board as well as provide history of the RHA and NACURH as a whole. They are very important to the growth of the residence hall association and are an essential aspect of the RHA structure.

Advisors are professional educators. They are dedicated to leadership development and insuring that each student learns and gains from their experience with the RHA. They have the experience and knowledge to provide a strong resource for the students currently involved in the RHA and the growth of the RHA.

Advisors understand how to work with volunteers. They are trained to work with students and have multiple resources to learn how to troubleshoot and deal with problems as they arise. Advisors know when to be a listener and when to speak up. However, usually they are the listener and allow the volunteers to make their own decisions.

Advisors are flexible and have a high tolerance for ambiguity. Advisors know that, especially in the beginning, there is going to be a lot of questions and a lot of changes. The advisor is there to remind the student volunteers that they need to be adaptable to changes and allow for the progress of the organization. This will only aid in the growth of the residence hall association.

Advisors are highly engaged. Advisors love their jobs! They enjoy helping out at programs, attending meetings, and just being there for the students. Their job is in student affairs and they are dedicated to increasing the residence hall community that we, as students, reside in.

Advisors develop talent. As a resource, a friend and a listener, advisors are those people that upcoming leaders often speak to try to determine the focus they want their future to take. Advisors are there to advise and listen to the students' needs, wants and concerns. Advisors are even more essential in the beginning stages of the organization because they will be relied upon more to help develop talent and aid students with difficulties.

Hall level advisors face unique challenges. They usually deal with less experienced and younger leaders. Also they have their staff and hall council to budget their time with. These hall level advisors must manage their attention between their paid and volunteer students. Hall level advisors also are younger themselves and do not have the experience that general RHA advisors usually have.

Advisors possess multiple skills, beliefs and values. Advisors are adaptable to the constant changing structure and diversity within the organization. Advisors deal with different student leaders, different leadership styles, and different issues from year to year. They are always developing these various skills and always have their own beliefs challenged. However, their openness to student growth and development aid them in dealing with all of these different levels.

Set out expectations early on what is a good advisor, what is a bad advisor and what are the expectations you have of the advisor. Also the advisor should let you know the expectations they have of you and the executive board.

Leadership Development

On a national level, NACURH is dedicated to the development of student leaders. There exist multiple levels of formal leadership training on the national, regional and school level of the residence hall association. We have a strong commitment to develop leadership in the underrepresented groups and everyone who wants to grow as a leader on their campus. Officers of the RHA benefit from experiences with other campuses and residence life promotes leadership education.

So why are we so committed to all of this leadership development? The answer is simple: because it is in our nature. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of individual residents who live in our residence halls and it is in meeting these needs that they grow and we develop our leadership skills as well.

Regional and National Conferences

There are regional and national conferences that focus solely on leadership development with programming for personal, professional and organizational growth. These conferences also foster networking opportunities for all those in attendance. However regional and national conferences are only the beginning.

On Campus Leadership Conferences and Seminars

For those who attend those conferences, they should hold leadership conferences and seminars on their individual campuses to provide further training that they learned on the national level to those who could not attend the conferences. Leaders always learn from other leaders and help foster growth and development among each other. Everyone has something to learn from someone else.

With your leadership conferences, seminars and banquets get student leaders, faculty, administrators and community leaders involved. These can further the leadership development of your members and aid in your growth as well.

Educational Programming

Educational programming also aids in leadership development. Educational programming helps reach out to the more general resident who may not be able to attend a leadership conference. You can hold educational programs about date rape, resume building and motivational leadership. Educational programming should be a focus of your organization because it aids in the development of all of those involved and can reach more of the underrepresented groups.

For a sample report on leadership development and a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Recognition

One of the best ways to retain members and recruit new members is by recognizing the efforts of your executive board and of the residents in your area for work well done. Remember the goal of recognition should be to encourage and motivate. This is especially important because everyone in the RHA is a volunteer. Say thank you to everyone for their efforts, time, and energy in promoting a community within the residence halls. Let people know that you and your board appreciate everything that they do! Recognition is completely up to you.

Why should you recognize people? Most people like to know that they are doing a good job or that others have noticed their hard work. When you have the opportunity to simply thank someone for their efforts, it makes them feel better about themselves. This is what recognition is all about: Making people feel better! Remember to have fun with it!

Category Descriptions for the NRHH Recognition Guide

1. *Goal Setting*: These ideas help you set goals for your group that are fun and motivational.
2. *Group Morale*: These ideas help you lift morale and group productivity with recognition.
3. *Encouragement*: These ideas will help your group when things are tough. They can help motivate your members to continue to work hard.
4. *Simple Individual Recognition*: These ideas will help you to recognize outstanding individuals. These ideas are simple in nature, as they require small amounts of preparation.
5. *More Involved Individual Recognition*: These ideas will help you to recognize outstanding individuals. These recognition ideas are not difficult to complete, however they can take more preparation work.
6. *External Recognition*: These ideas help you to recognize individuals outside of your organization. These ideas tend to be more externally oriented.
7. *Miscellaneous*: These ideas do not fit in any of the above categories.

Of The Month Process

Of The Month Awards are excellent ways for you to recognize leaders and programs on your campus. There are 9 different categories to nominate. These include:

1. Programs - Educational, Community Service and Social
2. Resident Assistant
3. Spotlight
4. Community
5. Student
6. Advisor
7. Executive Board Member
8. NCC
9. NRHH Chapter

Nominations must be narrowed to one submission per category and sent to the regional Associate of NRHH by the 15th of the month following the month of nomination (i.e., October OTM nominations are due by November 15). Regional winners are then forwarded to the NRHH National Office for national winner selection. Nominations should be month specific and focus on residence hall activities. Visit the NRHH site for the most current list of the ways to recognize.

RHA Role in NACURH

What is NACURH

The purpose of NACURH, Inc. is to design and facilitate programs and informational services to promote the educational goals of the residence hall students. This takes the form of national and regional conferences, which are attended by delegations every year. These conferences combine fun and learning at the same time. Delegates have a chance to meet students from different schools and exchange new and innovative ideas, which will benefit both groups.

NACURH also maintains a viable communication network between all colleges and universities. This is accomplished through the National Information Center and the services it offers. Other parts of the communication network include our corporate contract with OCM. By taking an active role in NACURH and the services it has to offer, each residence hall student can help to improve residence halls worldwide.

Benefits of being a NACURH member school

Direct Benefits

- Regional & National Conferences
- Program Development
- Leadership Training
- Recognition and Pride
- Communication and Information Exchange
- Involvement of Advisors
- Corporate Sponsors

Indirect Benefits

- Improving Residence Hall Life
- Idea Exchange
- Motivation
- Sense of Accomplishment
- Group Identity
- Professional Affiliation

Regional Affiliation

You also benefit from a regional affiliate once you join NACURH. Each regional board varies and you should visit our web site to get the contact information of your regional board. Regional boards have regional conferences and regional publications to increase the networking opportunities among schools in a closer proximity of one another.

Handbooks

Handbooks are also available from the National Information Center to aid you in developing your RHA and dealing with NACURH matters. These handbooks include the President's Handbook, the NCC Handbook, the National Policy Book, the Advisor's Manual and the "How to Build an RHA" handbook. You can check the office if any other handbooks are available for purchase.

Technology and Internet

Please bookmark our web site, www.nacurh.org, for more updates and current information on NACURH and our services. The site is updated daily and includes information on your affiliation

status and any outstanding debts that you may owe to NACURH. There is also information on national awards, resources, NACURH bylaws and articles of incorporation, contact information, etc. available for your school to get more involved in the nation and the region. The web site is meant to be an informative resource for all member schools of NACURH and if you would like to see something that is not there, please contact the National Information Center and let them know!

NACURH Network

This is a newsletter that goes out at least five times a year to the NCC's of every member school and members of the National and Regional Board. The publication usually includes articles written by NACURH members, updates on conferences, news from the NIC office, and recognition for national OTMs and other awards. Old and current issues of the NACURH Network can be accessed via the web as well.

Resource Files

Resource files were established to promote the exchange of ideas among member schools. Member schools submit the reports that make up the resource files. Each school is required to submit a report yearly (the job of the NCC). Member schools can order pages from the resource files to enhance their RHA. The NACURH Resource Files have over 25,000 pages of information on a wide variety of topics. Your school receives an index of all of the files we have including their title and an abstract. There are also videotapes including videos of conferences, resource file reports and presentations.

For a multitude of other resources, the National Information Center can help you. The resource files have over 30 different categories, which include reports on everything from alcohol to programming to constitutions. It also has bids for national awards and regional and national positions. There are thousands of files for you to choose from. All it takes is a little searching and you will find everything you need to help your organization grow and foster into a stable and special residence hall association.

As a member of NACURH, you receive 100 free pages and every page after that is only \$0.05 per page. Please look in your RFI (Resource File Index) or visit www.nacurh.org to order online! Utilize all of your resources! It's the best way to grow your RHA!

Visit www.nacurh.org for more information!

Begin an NRHH Chapter

Why have an Honorary on Your Campus?

1. To give recognition to residence hall leaders for a job well done
2. To develop resident hall leaders
3. To improve residence hall life by developing new leaders, keeping veteran leaders involved, and establish programs to improve campus life
4. To provide local and national recognition through National Membership Pins, National Membership Certificates, "Of the Month" Awards and the "Outstanding Chapter of the Year" Award.

What can a Residence Hall Honorary do?

Your chapter can be exactly what the name implies, an honor. That is, members do not have to take an active roll. On the other hand, it can be as active as its members want to be.

Activities that most honoraries are involved with include:

1. A banquet to induct new members and to recognize current members
2. Regular meetings
3. Selection of new members
4. Social get-togethers (movies, picnics, hay rides, study breaks, etc.)

Activities that some honoraries are involved with include:

1. On-campus leadership conferences
2. Skill building workshops (time management, budgeting, programming, etc.)
3. Membership on a university housing committee
4. Programs co-sponsored with the Residence Hall Association
5. Studying a particular housing issue
6. Establishing a leadership award or scholarship
7. Community service projects
8. Academic programs and scholarship
9. Fundraising

How can my school start an Honorary?

If you have the following ingredients then you have everything you need to establish a chapter of the Honorary on your campus:

1. Your school is a member of NACURH, Inc.
2. Your school has outstanding student leaders.
3. You feel that these students are worthy of recognition.
4. You have received or requested NRHH chapter formation information.

If you have any questions or you would like to get started, please contact your Regional Associate Director of NRHH. Or you can visit the NRHH web site for more information at www.nacurh.org.

Need for an NCC

An NCC is the National Communication Coordinator for NACURH. The NCC's main job is to facilitate communication between the RHA and NACURH. The NCC does this by maintaining the schools affiliation status, choosing delegations to go to conferences, serving as the RHA's vote in conferences (if an affiliated member), and relaying information and networking opportunities to the RHA from NACURH. The NCC could be part of the executive board or be a member of the RHA. This is dependent on the structure of your RHA.

Some general responsibilities include:

- Serve as the liaison between the RHA, NACURH and the regional affiliate
- Attend and vote at regional and national conferences, in particular, NCC Business Meetings
- Serve as the delegation chair for conferences
- Coordinate all aspects of forming and sending a delegation to conferences including funding, spirit and other activities
- Relay information from other NACURH member schools to the RHA
- Prepare and submit all dues and reports as requested by NACURH and the regional affiliate, including monthly newsletters to regional institutions
- Coordinate the Of the Month process (nominations and selections) in conjunction with and/or in the absence of a National Residence Hall Honorary chapter

The NCC is a vital part of the relationship between your RHA and NACURH. In the structure of NACURH, the NCC is the one who is the networking person between the RHA and the national organization. The NCC even has a handbook to aid in the adjustment to this very important position. The NCC is the voting member in NACURH for the RHA and works to impact the national organization and its regional affiliate with items such as budgetary issues, legislation and voting on awards and other bids.

Please see the National Communication Coordinator
Handbook for more information on this important role.

Parliamentary Procedure

Fundamental Principles

- Rules exist to promote cooperation and harmony and not to hinder the decision making process
- The vote of the majority decides unless specified otherwise
- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- The minority has rights which must be protected
- Full and free discussion of all propositions is a right
- The simplest and most direct procedure should be used
- Logical precedence governs introduction and disposition of motions
- One question at a time is the necessary order of business
- Members have a right to know what they are voting on and what their vote means
- The membership may delegate power but must retain responsibility
- Rules must be administered impartially
- Do not allow parliamentary procedure to become so complicated that it hinders rather than helps or slows the process.
- A commonly used parliamentary procedure is Robert's Rules of Order

RHA Meetings

Meetings are an important form of communication among the members. A meeting is a forum to discuss and focus on the issues affecting the residence hall environment that we reside in. However, we must make meets functional, purposeful and interesting. Some of the main ingredients of a successful meeting include:

- Having a purpose or reason
- Advance preparation and planning
- Notify members of time, place and main topic of discussion
- Make sure everyone knows each other
- Start on time

Agenda

Agendas are a plan of action for all of those involved in the meeting. The agenda should be prepared by the executive council on a weekly basis and submitted to the body with the minutes of the previous meeting. An executive meeting with the executive council prior to the general meeting is a great time to prepare the agenda and go over what will occur at the general meeting.

Sample Order of Business

- Call to order
- Reading of the previous meeting minutes
- Officer, committee, advisor, etc. Reports
- Special Committee (Ad Hoc Committee) reports
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

It is up to you to make your meeting run smoothly and to make sure that the members are interested and involved in the meeting.

Types of Meetings

- *Legislative Council* - This is the general RHA meeting including all of the elected representatives from each residence hall meeting to discuss more campus issues. The meetings should be regularly scheduled and in a stable place. The RHA executive board runs the meeting. *Executive Officers* - This is composed of the executive board who meet regularly to discuss legislation, budgets, issues affecting the campus and the RHA.
- *Committee Meetings* - These are informal meetings with members of the various standing and ad hoc committees in your organization. They should give reports on what occurs at the meetings at the legislative council meetings.
- *President's Council, specific position meetings* - Various executive board members for those in similar positions hold these meetings. For instance, the president of the RHA could meet with all of the presidents of the individual residence halls to discuss issues such as executive board bonding, organization motivation and direction of the organization.

Acknowledgments

- Past NIC/RFI Reports
- Advice for Advisors: The Development of Effective Residence Hall Associations. Edited by Norbert Dunkel and Cindy Spencer.
- Advising Student Groups and Organizations. Norbert Dunkel and John Schuh.