

Recommended Improvements
to the
Residence Hall Association
of the
University of British Columbia

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Report Introduction	2
Introduction to the RHA	2
Current Marketing and Event Strategies	3
Current Executive Role Structure	3
Current Election Model	3
Improvements Regarding Marketing and Event Strategies	4
Marketing Strategies	4
Collaboration with the Resident Engagement Committee	4
Consistent use of an internal event calendar	4
Implementation of monthly residence newsletters	4
Internal Event Reporting and Tracking	4
Improvements Regarding Executive Role Structure	5
Introduction of Associate Vice Presidents	5
Introduction of a Marketing Director	5
Introduction of Monthly Positional Reports	5
Improvements Regarding Elections	5
Centralization of Elections	5
Chief Electoral Officer	5
Conclusion	5
Summary of Recommendations	5

Introduction

Report Introduction

This report is a collection of research regarding several key areas of the Residence Hall Association (RHA) of the University of British Columbia (UBC) and their associated recommendations for improvements. It is being written by Mitchell Prost as part of the ENGL 301 Technical Writing Course. Its aim is to analyse several areas of an organization and provide recommendations for improvements.

This report and its recommendations will be presented to the RHA Cabinet, a group made up of the RHA Executive Team, the Area Council Presidents, and the staff Advisor.

Introduction to the RHA

UBC is host to a plethora of student-run groups, one of which is the UBC RHA. This organization regularly has over 100 student-members and represents over 12,000 students living on campus. Each year, the RHA works to support students by providing engaging programming, advocacy support, and leadership opportunities. The RHA structure is depicted in figure 1. There are six RHA Executives:

- the President;
- the Vice President Administration and Finance;
- the Vice President Internal and Advocacy;
- the Vice President External and Marketing;
- the National Communications Coordinator; and
- and the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH) President.

The RHA is made up of eight Residence Area Councils, each with their own Presidents, Vice President(s), and other members. The presidents of each council sit on the RHA Cabinet alongside the RHA Executives and make up the highest body of the organization.

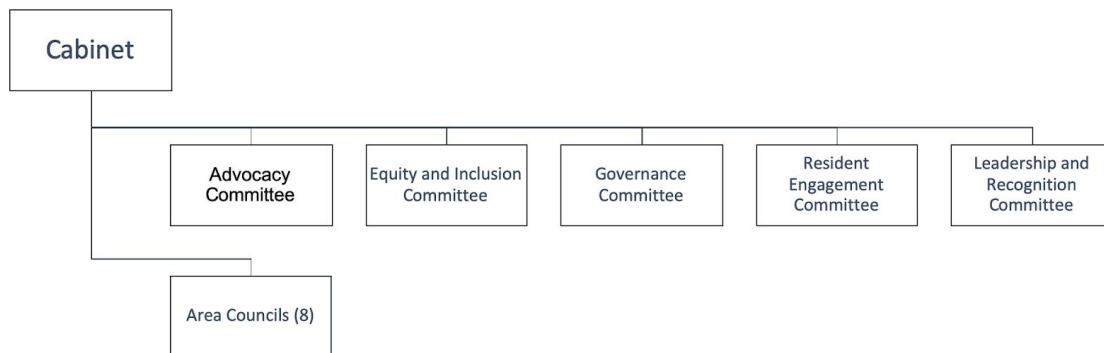


Figure 1. The UBC Residence Hall Association’s organizational structure as of December 2020.

Each year, the RHA and its area councils put on hundreds of successful events, creating many resident interactions and building residence communities. However, the RHA is limited by its structure and current operations. Engagement with students living in on-campus housing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and with those living in upper-year housing is not what it could be. Additionally, the RHA’s organizational structure can inhibit an effective flow of work, often leading to a lack of progress and growth in the organization year after year. A lack of engagement has profound effects on student success and their sense of belongingness within the university. How successful the RHA’s engagement efforts are additionally directly correlated to its organization and structure.

There are several aspects that contribute to the less-than-ideal levels of engagement and operation. Firstly, marketing is a large consideration. How the RHA markets events and initiatives will directly impact how the RHA is engaging with students. From this, the organizational structure becomes more important when the question “who does the work?” is asked. Lastly, the operations of the RHA’s election has been an aspect of the organization that has been criticized year after year for its exclusiveness and effectiveness. These three aspects of the RHA are explored in detail. From this detailed analysis, recommendations have been made that will be presented to the RHA Cabinet for consideration.

Current Marketing and Event Strategies

Current Executive Role Structure

The RHA’s executive team structure has been a dynamic one. Over the past several years, the makeup of this team has changed considerably. Figure 2 presents the most recent organization of the RHA’s executive team.

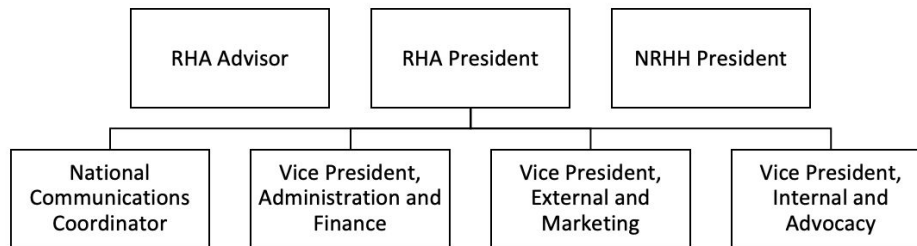


Figure 2. Current structure of the UBC RHA’s Executive Team as of December 2020.

Current Election Model

The UBC RHA’s current election model is styled as a closed boardroom. This is distinct from the elections of the area councils which operate in an open election style, with all residents residing in a particular residence having the ability to vote for their representatives.

Improvements Regarding Marketing and Event Strategies

Marketing Strategies

Collaboration with the Resident Engagement Committee

The newly created Resident Engagement Committee of the RHA is mandated to create, promote events, and engage with all residents. As it is written in the RHA's constitution, the Resident Engagement Committee shall:

- a) Plan and run RHA-wide events and initiatives;
- b) Promote awareness of the resources available to students in residence;
- c) Promote awareness of the RHA's role and responsibilities;
- d) Assist the Executives in creating and distributing a newsletter or similar communication to residents outlining the ongoing work of the RHA;
- e) Plan and execute the Annual General Meeting in conjunction with the Governance Committee;
- f) Hold meetings at least bi-weekly;
- g) Propose goals for the session to the Governance Committee and be responsible for working towards those goals; and
- h) Have such other duties as assigned by RHA Cabinet.

There is a great opportunity for collaboration with this council.

Consistent use of an internal event calendar

The RHA runs many events, but it can be hard to keep track of everything that is going on. The consistent use of an internal event calendar would allow for integration and communal knowledge of what is happening where.

Implementation of monthly residence newsletters

The RHA and its area councils have direct access to thousands of students. However, this access is mostly limited to social media at present. An additional avenue of exploration in engagement is through the use of monthly residence newsletters, sent out to student emails. This newsletter would be coordinated and sent out to residents in specific residence areas, with information pertaining to events and initiatives occurring in their area.

Internal Event Reporting and Tracking

One important way that events are successful is in their tracking. This aspect of the report proposes the creation of an RHA event tracking and evaluation form that will allow for the creation of a database of events run by the RHA for current and future use.

Improvements Regarding Executive Role Structure

Introduction of Associate Vice Presidents

Section in progress.

Introduction of a Marketing Director

Section in progress.

Introduction of Monthly Positional Reports

Section in progress.

Improvements Regarding Elections

Centralization of Elections

Section in progress.

Chief Electoral Officer

Section in progress.

Conclusion

Summary of Recommendations

A list of high-level proposals are provided below:

1. Increase collaboration with the Resident Engagement Committee for event promotion across residence
2. Implementation of an internal event calendar
3. Implementation of monthly newsletters
4. Implementation of an event tracking and evaluation form
5. Hiring volunteer Associate Vice Presidents to support in additional projects
6. Hiring of a Marketing Director to direct the RHA's marketing
7. Centralization of Elections
8. Hiring of a Chief Electoral Officer