

TITLE V
Area Governments & House Councils

Chapter 1

Definition – Area Governments

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

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

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

Section 3 There shall be a “Commuter Area Government” which shall encompass all Undergraduate Students not living in areas provided in Section 2.

Chapter 2

Recognition

Section 1 To be recognized as an Area Government, a residential area shall submit to the Associate Speaker of the Senate a time-stamped proposed Charter that shall provide for at least the following:

1. Four Officers defined herein:
 - a. **Governor** – Here defined as the chief presiding officer of the Area Government. The Governor shall have Signature Authority.
 - b. **Lieutenant Governor** – Here defined as the deputy chief presiding the Area Government, and as the liaison to House Councils.
 - c. **Secretary** – Here defined as the chief clerk and maintainer of permanent records of the Area Government.

- d. **Treasurer** – Here defined as the chief financial officer of the Area Government. The Treasurer shall have Signature Authority.
2. Succession of Officers
3. Impeachment and recall of Officers
4. Appointment of Elections Commissioners
5. A Charter amendment process
6. Appointment of Area Government representation to the Residential Committee
 - a. This applies to on-campus Area Governments only.
7. Appointment of Area Government representation to the Area Government Council
8. Appointment to the Residential Appeals Board
 - a. This applies to on-campus Area Governments only.
9. Appointments to any other applicable boards and/or committees necessary.

Section 2 The Senate, upon a two-thirds vote of its membership in attendance at a scheduled meeting, shall grant recognition to an Area Government Charter.

Section 3 Upon recognition, Area Governments shall enjoy the rights and privileges granted to an Area Government by the Constitution of the SGA, the By-Laws of the SGA, or Acts of the SGA.

Section 4 If the Senate shall not have acted to recognize or not recognize the proposed Charter of an Area Government within three (3) consecutive Senate meetings upon receipt of the said Charter, the Senate shall surrender its recognition right and the Area Government Charter shall be recognized.

Section 5 The Senate, upon a two-thirds vote of its membership in attendance at a scheduled meeting, shall review and determine any changes necessary to all Area Government Charters every two (2) years. The charter is to be returned to the said Area Government, which will have two (2) consecutive Senate meetings upon return of said Charter to the Associate Speaker of the Senate. The Senate shall be empowered to renew or not renew the proposed charter of said Area Government.

Chapter 3 Officers

Section 1 The authority of the Area Government shall be vested in the officers.

Section 2 Officers shall be elected by the constituents of their respective Area Government in a manner prescribed by Title VIII of the By-Laws of the SGA, and shall be full-time undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Massachusetts.

Section 3 Officers shall be residents of the Living Area in which they shall have been elected.

Section 4 If an Officer shall have been dislocated from his/her Living Area s/he shall surrender his/her Office.

Section 5 Area Governors, or their designees, shall be ex-officio members of the Senate.

Section 6 Area Government Officers may hold other elected or appointed positions, provided same office is below the rank of Executive Cabinet, Senator, or Student Judiciary member except House Council Officer, which an Area Government Officer is prohibited from holding.

Section 7 Residential Assistants (RA) may hold the position of Area Government Officer at the discretion of the specific Area Government Charter. Residence Life may deny these positions as per the RA Position Description.

Section 8 Officer shall, upon taking office, be administered the following affirmation by the SGA Chief Justice:

1. "I do affirm to faithfully execute the office of Area Government Officer and support the Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Government Association."

Chapter 4 Powers

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

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

Chapter 5 Prohibitions

Section 1 No Area Government shall violate the integrity of the residence halls, or the integrity of the student residence hall rooms, as defined by the University.

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

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

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

Chapter 6 Rights and Privileges

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

1. Recognition by the University as a subsidiary arm of the SGA.
2. Access to the use of campus facilities.
3. Ability to receive space and equipment.
4. Financial accounts from the Campus Activities Office.
5. Assistance from the Campus Activities Office in the way of mail service, program development, financial accounts, and budgeting support. It shall be understood that due to the nature of the Area Governments and their residential locations, that Residence Life shall also be a forum of program development and mail service for on-campus Area Governments.
6. On-campus Area Governments have the privilege of initiating programming ideas and planning with their Residence Life Advisor before contacting The Campus Activities Office, again due to the residential nature of on-campus Area Governments.
7. Access to Resource Center computers, equipment, and advising service.

Chapter 7
Responsibilities

Section 1 Area Governments shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Appointment of Elections Commissioners in accordance with Title VIII.
2. To forward bi-monthly, all minutes and documents otherwise deemed as public records to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, to facilitate actions described in Title II, Chapter 11, Section 1, Line 1.
3. To administer programs and expenditures in accordance to guidelines set forth by the Campus Activities Office, except in cases where Residence Life is affected by programs. In this case, the Area Government shall notify Campus Activities of appropriate planning being conducted through Residence Life.
4. To appoint necessary members to the Residential Committee and Residential Appeals Board.
5. To administer House Council elections in accordance with guidelines set forth in Title V.
6. To provide an officer report before the Senate once a month.
7. To attend monthly Area Government Council meetings, as defined in Title V, Chapter 8.
8. To facilitate, in collaboration with the Secretary of Administrative Affairs and necessary Housing Officials, the training of House Council Officers.
9. To provide adequate representation at all Coordinating Council meetings in accordance with Title I, Chapter 8, Section 3.
10. To provide support service to House Councils in the way of advocacy, including but not limited to, the use of copiers, liaison to Campus Activities Office and the Student Government Association.

Chapter 8
Area Government Council

Section 1 There shall be an Area Government Council, herein denoted the AGC, which shall have the following charges:

1. To increase cooperation and communication between Area Governments.

2. To increase cooperation between SGA and the Area Governments.
3. To fill appointed positions which represent all Area Governments.
4. To co-facilitate the training and development of Area Officers and House Councils.
5. To provide a forum to address any other issues which are of concern to Area Governments.
6. To approve House Councils as outlined in the House Council Charter.

Section 2 Membership of the AGC shall consist of the following:

1. All elected officers from all the Area Governments.
2. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs or designee, who shall serve as ex-officio.

Section 3 The AGC shall meet at the discretion of the Area Governors or the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, but not less than once a month, with a notice given to all members no less than 24 hours in advance. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall chair the meetings of the AGC, to organize and facilitate the meeting.

Section 4 No official business of the AGC may be conducted unless there is at least one representative from each Area Government present, with the exception of meetings dealing solely with House Council or Residence Life matters, in which a representative from the Commuter Area may not be present at the discretion of the Secretary of Administrative Affairs.

Section 5 The AGC shall have no other powers except those listed above, and shall have no independent authority outside of those powers granted to the Area Governments by the SGA Constitution and By-Laws.

Chapter 9 House Councils

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

Chapter 10 Recognition

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

Section 2 To be recognized, a House Council must provide a time-stamped House Council Agreement Form, as provided in Title V, Chapter 13 of the SGA By-Laws, to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs.

Section 3 An approval by the Secretary of Administrative Affairs of the House Council Agreement Form, as prescribed in Title V, Chapter 13 shall grant recognition to a House Council.

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

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

Chapter 11

Powers and Prohibitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 9 House Councils in violation of Title V shall be subject to having their status frozen by the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, whom shall be the sole entity able to freeze House Councils. In each case, the Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall follow guidelines set forth in Title V Chapter 17 Section 1.

Section 10 The following shall be direct House Council violations subject to 24-hour notice account freezing as stated in Title V Chapter 17 Section 2:

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

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

Chapter 12 Rights and Privileges

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

1. Access to the use of all residence hall facilities in which their House Council resides.

2. Ability to reserve space and equipment in residence halls in which their House Council resides.
3. Assistance from Residence Life by means of mail service, financial accounting, and community development.
4. Access to the RSO Resource Room computers, equipment, and advising services.
5. Assistance from the Secretary of Administrative Affairs and the Area Government Council in the way of program development, leadership training, and organizational development.

Chapter 13

House Council Agreement Forms

Section 1 House Councils shall commit to the provisions in Title V, Chapter 14, as their official Charter. Title V, Chapter 14 shall serve as the strict rules and guidelines for all House Councils to abide by.

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

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

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

Section 4 House Councils shall not be active until Agreement Forms have been submitted to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs and approved.

Chapter 14

The Charter of House Councils

Section 1 The Charter of all House Councils shall be the following document, before any amendments made:

(document pending)

Chapter 15
The House Council Forum

Section 1 There shall be a board, herein called the House Council Forum, or HCF, which shall have the following charges:

1. To increase cooperation and communication between the SGA and all House Councils.
2. To provide a forum for expression of concerns within the SGA and Residence Life and to provide a means for working out said concerns and problems.
3. To facilitate in training of officers if required.
4. To make general recommendations to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs to changes in Title V, Chapter 14 of the SGA By-Laws.

Section 2 Membership of the HCF shall consist of the following:

1. One officer from the House Council Executive Board, as defined by the House Council Charter.
2. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs, or their designee, who shall serve as moderator and ex-officio officer.
3. The SGA President shall be an ex-officio officer.
4. All Area Government officers and House Council officers, elected or appointed, shall serve as ex-officio.
5. The Student Development Specialist or their designee shall serve as ex-officio.

Section 3 The HCF shall meet at the discretion of the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, but no less than once every other month, with notice given to all parties involved no less than one week in advance. If notice of less than one week is given, a House Council is exempt from requiring an appointment to said meeting.

Section 4 The HCF shall have no independent authority and shall serve as an engine for communication and direction within the SGA.

Chapter 16
House Council Elections

Section 1 Area Governments shall have complete responsibility and jurisdiction in the administration of House Council Elections. They shall abide by the provisions set forth in this Chapter. Area Governments shall conduct the election during the month of May, no later than 4 academic days before the start of the University Reading Period, or if the Area Government elects to hold elections in the fall, elections must be conducted on or before the third Tuesday after classes have started in the fall semester. This shall supercede any elections rule outlined in an Area Government Charter.

Section 2 If there is no Area Government established when it is necessary to hold House Council elections, the Secretary of Administrative Affairs may contact the SGA Chancellor of Elections to hold a Special Election. At such a point, the Area Government has lost it's right to hold House Council elections for that term.

Section 3 An Area Government shall hold elections for a House Council that shall represent the residence hall or cluster that it resides in, based on what portion of the cluster the House Council represented the previous year. If an Area Government wishes to have a House Council represent a different proportion of the cluster than it used to for the following year, it shall seek the approval or disapproval of the affected House Councils and the Residence Life Advisor and forward it to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, whom shall have the final decision in the merging or separating of a House Council. Merging or splitting House Councils cannot be done while House Councils are not in session. Individual House Councils may represent at most one entire cluster.

Section 4 An Area Government shall only hold elections for the positions of House Council Officers outlined in Article VI of the House Council Charter. If a House Council wishes to have additional officers for election, it must present the request to the Area Government prior to the release of House Council nomination forms, as established in Article VI of the House Council Charter. The Area Government must abide by the request of the House Council in this matter.

Section 5 Area Governments shall have the following responsibilities in the administration of House Council elections:

1. The production, dissemination, and collection of nomination forms.
2. Proper advertisement of elections, including the distribution of flyers to Cluster Offices at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the election.
3. Nomination forms shall provide the following:
 - A. The printed name, address, student identification number, phone number, and signature of the nominee attesting that s/he shall have accepted the nomination.

- B. SGA members may take out nomination papers for the office of house council and obtain twenty-five (25) signatures from the residents of their respective residential buildings.
 - C. The date and time nominations shall be closed.
4. The Area Government shall review all nomination forms and determine the validity thereof.
 5. The production of ballots for the election.
 6. The operation of voting tables.
 7. The counting of ballots.
 8. Access to Residence Life involvement in the elections in the following manners:
 - A. Assistance in setting up locations for elections
 - B. Assistance from Residence Assistants or Community Leaders in manning election tables.
 - C. Advertising of elections
 - D. Obtaining alpha rosters.
 9. Submission to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs an elections report that shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - A. The date(s) and time(s) of the nomination process and the election.
 - B. All alpha rosters used in the election cross checked with a highlighter.
 - C. A tabulation of the results of all elections.
 - D. Any discrepancies regarding false ballots, discrepancies between the number of ballots and alpha rosters, and any irregularities in elections results or administration.

Section 6 The Area Government shall be empowered and required to create an elections committee, which shall aid the Area Government in the facilitation of house council elections. The Area Government shall include the names of any appointments to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs two (2) days prior to the election. These individuals shall be appointed by the Area Governor, and shall assist the Area Government in all aspects of the house council elections. Said appointments must be

undergraduate students enrolled at the University and may not be a candidate in either the race or a campaign worker of any candidate. Each voting station must be manned by at least one elections committee worker.

Section 7 Area Governors may initiate any referenda on the election ballots.

Section 8 The Area Government shall deliver an elections report to the Secretary of Administrative Affairs in no more than three (3) calendar days after said election.

Section 9 The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall have seven (7) calendar days to review and determine the validity of said house council elections. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall deliver his/her decision to said Area Government, who shall be empowered to post elections results in each residence building in his/her residential area. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall present just cause for denying House Council elections.

Section 10 Upon recognition, the Area Government shall post, within two (2) days, the results of the election in each representative residence building in said residential area.

Section 11 If the Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall have acted to deny said House council elections, the Area Government shall be required to facilitate a second house council election. The Area Government shall retain the right to determine the time and place of said elections, with the exception of the date that elections must be conducted by, which shall be an automatic extension to September 30.

Section 12 The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall provide the Senate or Coordinating Council with an elections report no less than one (1) week after said house council elections. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall also provide, upon request, a written election report to any SGA member or Housing Official.

Section 13 A person may appeal the decision(s) of the Secretary of Administrative Affairs or said Area Government by filing a petition for a ruling with the Associate Chief Justice of the Student Judiciary. In such case, the Area Government is not required to host new elections until the ruling has been determined by the Judiciary.

Chapter 17

Violations of Title V

Section 1 If any House Council shall have failed to meet requirements outlined in Chapter 15, it shall result in action taken by the Secretary of Administrative Affairs. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall conduct his/her own investigation into the matter, and with due regard to the nature of the violation, shall render his/her decision to freeze or not freeze said house council. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall provide a written warning that includes the nature of the violation and recommendations

to said house council and the chair of the Administrative Affairs Committee, seven (7) days prior to freezing said house council.

Section 2 If a House Council fails to meet guidelines outline explicit rules for having accounts frozen, the Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall retain the right to freeze the House Council with 24 hours warning to the House Council. Such guidelines are stated in Title V Chapter 11 Section 10.

- A. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall reactive accounts after making contact with the House Council to discuss reasons for being frozen and provisions for reactivation. The Secretary of Administrative Affairs shall reactive the House Council when it feels it has met the provisions established for reactivation. A House Council may appeal the decision of the Secretary of Administrative Affairs to the Area Government Council, which shall have the authority to reinstate a House Council by an 80 percent vote (4/5) at a scheduled meeting.

Section 3 If an Area Government or House Council, or any officer of the SGA shall have failed to meet the provisions set forth in Title V, any SGA member may perform the following:

- A. Issue a complaint with the Attorney General, who shall act in a manner prescribed in Title III, Chapter 10, section 1, line 4.
- B. Issue a complaint with the Secretary of Administrative Affairs, or the Chair of the Administrative Affairs Committee, wherever appropriate within the jurisdiction of Title V.
- C. File a petition for a ruling with the Associate Chief Justice of the Student Judiciary in a manner prescribed in Title IV, Chapter 11.

Section 4 The Student Judiciary shall retain the right to investigate, veto, or overturn any decision by the Secretary of Administrative Affairs in a manner prescribed in Title IV, Chapter 2, Sections 1 and 2, and Chapter 11.