

**Welcome to the 2007-2008  
Residential College/Residence Hall  
Officers' Handbook**

The primary information resource for hall officers

**Developed by: University Residential Life**

# Welcome to the 2007-2008 Residential College/Residence Hall Officers' Handbook

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## Introduction

Welcome to hall government! Whether you are from a residence hall or residential college, your hard work, dedication, and leadership are truly appreciated by all those that benefit from your programs, organization, advertisements, creativity, and countless hours put into making your community a better place than how you found it. I am sincerely grateful to have all of you working hard to make sure your residents and communities are having a memorable experience living on campus. I hope you are finding your roles to be rewarding even though you may not feel appreciated at times. You AND your work are most appreciated.

This handbook was created to help you find answers to questions and guidance to any concerns, initiatives, and situations you may encounter. If you have any questions, regarding the content (other than material specific to residential colleges), please contact Residential Life at 847-491-3541.

## Governing Boards

### **Residence Hall Association (RHA):**

This is the governing body for all hall governments within Northwestern University's undergraduate housing on campus. All hall governments are members of RHA and all residents living in residents halls are represented and served by RHA. You may access RHA's website by clicking on this link:

<http://groups.northwestern.edu/rha/>

RHA is advised by University Residential Life.

<http://www.northwestern.edu/reslife/>

### **Residential College Board (RCB):**

This is the governing body for all residential colleges within Northwestern University's undergraduate housing on campus. All residential college governments are members of RCB and all residents living in residential colleges are represented and served by RCB. You may access RCB's website by clicking on this link: <http://groups.northwestern.edu/rcb/>

RCB is advised by the Residential College Program.

<http://www.northwestern.edu/residentialcolleges/index.html>

## Finances

### Accessing Your Accounts

1. Hall government presidents and treasurers must attend a SOFO training session hosted by University Residential Life (URL). If you are elected into your position as treasurer or president after the sessions were offered at the beginning of spring quarter, please contact URL at 1-3541 and talk with Tara Freeman or Amy White.
2. At the training, the treasurer must sign a signature card with SOFO. The books must be cleared with SOFO before you can process any vouchers. This means that all cash advances and deficits must be cleared. If there are questions or problems, please contact the SOFO office at 1-2328. You will be required to take a small quiz at the conclusion of training at the following website:  
[http://www.norris.northwestern.edu/nbo\\_sofa.php](http://www.norris.northwestern.edu/nbo_sofa.php).
3. In order to spend money, you must vote on the transaction. Please examine your constitution for proper procedures. Also, please keep in mind that all receipts, voucher, contracts, and invoices must be signed by your advisor (ask your AC if unsure). If the amount of the receipt, voucher, contract, or invoice is over \$500, an Assistant Director from University Residential Life will need to sign this before taking it to SOFO.
4. It is important that you read the SOFO manual. We recommend you read it twice; once for content and again for specifics.

Review your hall budget with the new executive board. Set the goals and plans for the coming quarter and Wildcat Welcome. By doing this now, there will be no chance to overspend, thus causing your account to be frozen.

### Funding

*Where does all this money come from anyway?*

Each quarter every student is assessed fees on their housing bill called "social dues" and "maint. fees." The social dues and maintenance fees are determined by the hall government's constitution. These assessments should be included in the constitution as a result of a vote at some point in time. If your hall government would like to change the amounts of your social dues and/or maintenance fees, please follow the instructions found in this resource.

The minimum amount a hall government is able to charge students in their hall for maintenance fees is \$9. Of the \$9, \$2 is placed into the maintenance account, \$2 is placed into the damage account and \$5 is used to pay for the readership program.

(Bobb/McCulloch has \$14/person taken out and \$9 is deposited into the maintenance and damage accounts and \$5 is paid to the readership program). Regardless of the amount of your maintenance fee, \$5 is paid to the readership program and the remainder is divided and placed into the damage and maintenance accounts. After calculations are made to

determine how much money should be allocated to the proper accounts, 10% is held by the Accounting Department until they can ensure the exact amount actually collected each quarter. The adjusted 10% is then deposited in the accounts the following quarter. (see Tara Freeman, t-freeman@northwestern.edu with any questions).

## Your Accounts

### Maintenance Accounts

The Maintenance and damage accounts are managed by University Residential Life (Amy White, Assistant Director, and Tara Freeman, Department Assistant).

The Maintenance account is the "Improvements, additions, and Services" account. It was created to pay for items that are available to everyone in the building.

#### Improvements/Additions:

- microwaves
- kitchen appliances and equipment
- TV's
- computers
- furniture
- extra recycling bins
- magazine subscriptions which would be available to all residents
- pool tables
- printers and cartridges
- and many more

**If you are interested in major purchases** such as gaming tables, furniture, new carpeting, painting, etc., **you must contact your Area Coordinator** regarding your ideas. They will help you connect to the appropriate individuals within University Housing to gain approval, estimates, and/or assistants. After the Area Coordinator, an appropriate University Housing representative, the hall government and Master staff (only applicable to residential colleges) have all approved of the purchases, bring all invoices, contracts, and receipt to Tara Freeman in Scott Hall. Feel free to call her with any questions at ext. 1-3541.

#### Services

Services are ordered through the Residential Life Office. This may include:

- bolting down microwaves and TVs
- equipment repairs
- Facilities Management labor
- piano tuning

- motor pool vans
- summer storage
- and many more

To process such requests for services, contact Tara Freeman at 1-3541.

### **Damage Accounts**

The damage accounts are used to pay hall damages that are not attributed to individuals. Each quarter, presidents receive a bill for the damages from the previous quarter. These are student-initiated damages as opposed to normal wear-and-tear. Presidents will have a specified time period to review the charges and, when possible, ask the responsible individuals to come forward and be held financially liable for the damage.

Any questionable charges may be discussed with Tara Freeman or Amy White at 1-3541.

### **Social Accounts**

The social account is primarily used for general programs, events, munchies, firesides, formals, etc. Unlike damage and maintenance accounts, treasurers and presidents work directly with SOFO to make any transactions.

### **Money Allocation to RHA/RCB**

Please note that when you reconcile your account with SOFO at the beginning of the quarter you may have more money in your social account than may be accurate, as RHA/RCB charge dues to their halls/colleges once occupancy of the building has been verified. To avoid spending over your budget limit, please keep in contact with the RHA/RCB treasurer to verify funds have been transferred between accounts and your SOFO ledger is accurate.

## Student Organization Finance Office (SOFO)

The Student Organization Finance Office serves as a bank for student organizations and hall governments. University Residential Life and SOFO work together to ensure our offices are providing consistent policies, procedures, and communications to hall governments.

After presidents and treasurers attend the SOFO training provided by University Residential Life feel free to contact either of our departments.

**SOFO:**

Norris Center, Mezzanine Level

Phone Number: 491-2328

Email: [sofo@northwestern.edu](mailto:sofo@northwestern.edu)

**URL:**

Scott Hall, Garden Level

491-3541

[amy-white@northwestern.edu](mailto:amy-white@northwestern.edu)

For more information regarding SOFO, go to their website:

[http://www.norris.northwestern.edu/images/doc/sofo\\_pp\\_06-07.pdf](http://www.norris.northwestern.edu/images/doc/sofo_pp_06-07.pdf)

## Procedure for Changing Social Dues and Maintenance Fees

These procedures have been established in order to protect both your hall government and the Housing Office. All increases should be embarked upon cautiously, as you will probably find fewer people willing to pay Social Dues as the dues get higher. It is important to know that Social Dues are optional and Maintenance Fees are not optional. If residents are opposed to paying the Social Dues, please refer them to the Housing Office in Scott Hall.

1. File your intent to change dues to Amy White, Assistant Director, in University Residential Life (Scott Hall) by letter, stating the pertinent information as follows:
  - a. Name of hall
  - b. Amount of the present social dues and maintenance fee
  - c. Amount of desired increases/decreases
  - d. Any constitutional provisions appropriate to the process
  - e. Signed by the president and treasurer of hall
  - f. Provide a copy of the ballot to be used for voting

Here is a sample:

*Do you want to increase the (social dues or maintenance fee) for (name of hall) by (amount of increase) so that the total (social dues or maintenance fee) starting in the fall quarter (year) would be (total social dues or maintenance fee)?*

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

\*This ballot should also include a statement letting students know if they would like to opt out of paying the social dues, they should contact University Housing in Scott Hall.

2. In order for a change to be passed, a simple majority vote is necessary. This majority is not based on the number of those that voted but the total number of those currently living in the hall. If you are interested in voting based on all those currently living in the hall AND will be living in the hall during the next fall quarter, you may be able to vote under these conditions but will need 2/3 majority of those returning for your changes to pass. Please consult with Amy White in Scott Hall before proceeding with the latter of the two voting methods.
3. After the voting, (if the increase is approved), all ballots should be submitted to Amy White in Scott Hall for approval.

**Note: Due to the contractual housing agreement, which all students in residence have signed during the summer, the maintenance fee can only be changed effective the following Fall Quarter.**

4. If the changes in Social Dues and/or Maintenance Fees are approved by following the procedures, students must be notified that all students have the opportunity to be

exempt from paying their Social Dues. Please include instructions for those seeking exemption to go to the Housing Office in Scott Hall. These students should be given one week from the time they were notified to sign these releases (this deadline should be included in the notification). In addition, the notification should now show the newly adjusted Maintenance Fees and Social Dues.

5. **Deadlines:** For changes, which are to be effective the following fall quarter, the process must be completed, with all appropriate documents received by Amy White, in University Residential Life by April 30, 2008.

**Note:** A minimum of \$9 maintenance fee is required of all governments. Monies can only be spent on items, which will benefit the entire hall population, such as magazine subscriptions, and the purchase of items which are to be used in common areas of the building (e.g., main lounges, floor lounges, study room, recreation rooms, TV rooms, etc.).

## Contracts/Agreements

When you plan an event or purchase a service the contract/agreement is drawn up between the **University** and the **vendor**. A contract should never be issued in a student's name or paid for out of pocket. If a student signs a contract, the student takes responsibility for the cost.

No contract is valid until it has been reviewed by a designated University administrator. Subsequently, if you are planning an event or purchasing a service, you need to make the person you are contracting with aware of this procedure. Particularly, inform them of the length of time it takes to process the contract (two weeks) and that no payment can be made until this process is complete. You must also make the person you are contracting with aware that in order to process payment the University requires two (2) original copies of the document. Both copies must be signed. Faxed documents are not accepted. All contracts must be brought to Tara Freeman or Amy White in Residential Life to begin the review process. We recommend you make an additional copy of the contract for your records. Upon receipt of the contract, University Residential Life and the contract reviewers will assume you have reviewed the contract and made any necessary changes that you wish to make. You may be contacted regarding clarification. If you don't feel comfortable writing on the contracts or making changes, provide a note (the changes can be written on the front of the memo cover sheet provided by Residential Life). If a contract is submitted to Residential Life and requires a shorter review process, there will be no guarantees the contract will be reviewed in time for the contract deadline or payment deadline.

The person you are contracting with should also be aware that all goods and services purchased by the University are exempt from Illinois Sales Tax. You should let them know this before the contract is drawn up. On the other hand, some Chicago organizations you are contracting with may insist that you will need to pay certain taxes. If the tax is not Illinois Sales Tax, you may need to pay the particular tax. Allow this to be in the contract. If the University is exempt from paying this, it will be caught in the contract review process.

As hall government advisors, University Residential Life will assist you in making sure this procedure runs smoothly. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to communicate with the person you are contracting with and meeting the deadlines specified. It is essential that everyone involved in planning an event knows these procedures. The social chair, or whoever is planning the event, must be in communication with the president and treasurer throughout the process so that when all agreements have been made, the contracts are signed, and when it is time to make payment, vouchers are prepared and taken to SOFO in a timely manner.

## Important Policies

### Party Favors

Any glass that is solely used for alcohol beverages will not be approved for purchase or reimbursement through any hall government account. Shot glasses, snifters, martini glasses, and wine glasses, to name a few, are not approved party favors. The exceptions include pint glasses and glass mugs. These glasses are commonly used for non-alcoholic beverages. This is strictly a University Residential Life policy put in place to discourage underage alcohol use among its predominantly underage student population living within the halls.

### Movie Viewing

The display of a copyright-protected film for entertainment purposes in a residence hall lounge may require a public performance license if a substantial number of persons outside of a normal circle of family and its social acquaintances is gathered.

No group, individual, or organization may plan any movie-viewing program or event without paying for the rights to show the movie.

### Slush Funds

Hall governments may not create slush funds. If at any time, the hall is accumulating cash and/or checks made out to the hall government, it is essential the treasurer deposits this money into SOFO. The most common occurrence of this is when hall governments collect money for formal tickets.