

Rhetoric Society of America

University of Maryland Student Chapter

Chelóna RSA

Date of Origin: May 7, 2015

Preamble

We, the members of Chelóna RSA, do hereby establish this Constitution so that our purpose of fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among rhetoricians at the University of Maryland may be realized to its fullest extent.

Article I: Name

The name of the Rhetoric Society of America University of Maryland student chapter shall be “Chelóna RSA,” henceforth referred to as Chelóna RSA. Chelóna (the Greek, χελώνα) means “turtle.”

Article II: Purpose

- A. Chelóna RSA is an organization for University of Maryland graduate students interested in rhetoric.
- B. Chelóna RSA’s parent organization is the Rhetoric Society of America.
- C. The purposes of the organization are as follows:
 - 1. Provide resources and assistance with professional development and teaching in the field of rhetoric.
 - 2. Organize professional and co-curricular events for graduate students interested in rhetoric.
 - 3. Sponsor programs and workshops that enrich the experience of UM’s undergraduate rhetoric scholars.
 - 4. Provide networking opportunities with other graduate students (past and present), University faculty and staff, and individuals at other academic institutions who are interested in rhetoric.
 - 5. Engage the wider community in rhetorical civic engagement.

Article III: Membership

- A. Any currently registered UMD student interested in promoting the organization's purpose qualifies for membership in the organization.
- B. Active membership in Chelóna RSA constitutes current UMD registration, paid dues in any amount up to \$10, and participation in one Chelóna RSA-sponsored event per year.
 - 1. Chelóna RSA-sponsored events include meetings, programs, social events, committees, groups, or other activities.
- C. The majority of our active members must be graduate students.
- D. There must be at least 10 active members at all times.
- E. Only active members may vote, preside, or officiate. Only active members or the advisor may solicit funding on the organization's behalf.
- F. At least five members must be active members of Rhetoric Society of America.
- G. All other persons, including but not limited to, faculty, staff, and community members, are eligible for associate membership.
- H. **Members of Chelóna RSA shall abide by VI-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION:** The University of Maryland, College Park, affirms its commitments to a policy of eliminating discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, protected veteran status or on the basis of the exercise of rights secured by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. This Code is established to prevent or eradicate such discrimination in accordance with due process within the Campus community. In doing so, the Campus recognizes that it must strive actively and creatively to build a community in which opportunity is equalized.
- I. Chelóna RSA understands and is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities of abiding by University of Maryland, College Park policies.
- J. New Membership and Recruitment:
 - 1. Any and all new members will be given full access during recruitment events to chapter materials, including but not limited to:
 - a. Organizational documents (Constitution, Bylaws, etc.)
 - b. Organization events and activities
 - c. A list of responsibilities of members

2. All members, including but not limited to new members and recruits, reserve the right to refrain from participating in any activities without consequence, based upon personal/religious beliefs, personal values, or moral reserve as defined by the member.
3. Any and all interaction/activity between members and/or new members will be limited to guidelines stated by university policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

K. Membership Removal:

1. Chelóna RSA reserves the right to expel a member who is not following the policies of the organization, as outlined in this Constitution, with a majority vote of voting active members.
2. The member will be given prior notice of expulsion.

Article IV: Officers

- A. Only officially registered graduate students who are active members shall be eligible to serve as appointed or elected officers in Chelóna RSA for a term of one calendar year.
- B. Officers for the organization include:
 1. The Chair/President
 - a. Who will preside over meetings, serve as a liaison to departments and organizations on campus, assemble and oversee all organization committees and appoint chairs, and serve as spokesperson for the organization.
 2. The Vice-Chair/Treasurer
 - a. Who will be responsible for assisting the president in his/her duties, as well as handling Chelóna RSA finances and collecting member dues.
 3. The Secretary/RSA Liaison
 - a. Who will record meeting notes, serve as a contact point to the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA), organize members' contact information, create and archive paperwork related to organizational activities, and work with the Webmaster/Publicity Chair to maintain a digital archive.
 4. Webmaster/Publicity Chair
 - a. Who will maintain a website and a Facebook group for the organization and work with the Secretary to maintain a digital archive.

- b. Who will work to recruit new members from relevant departments, promote the programs and events of Chelóna RSA, and coordinate social media accounts with the website.
 - c. Who will work to recruit new members from relevant departments and promote the programs and events of Chelóna RSA.
 - d. Who will monitor and Tweet from the @RSATerps Twitter account.
 - 5. English Representative
 - a. Who will encourage recognition and awareness of the group in the English department and assist other officers.
 - b. Who will serve to inform her/his department of the Chelóna RSA activities and initiatives on a regular basis and encourage other students to participate.
 - c. Who will serve to inform Chelóna RSA of relevant programs or initiatives in the English department.
 - 6. Communication Representative
 - a. Who will encourage recognition and awareness of the group in the COMM department and assist other officers.
 - b. Who will serve to inform her/his department of the Chelóna RSA activities and initiatives on a regular basis and encourage other students to participate.
 - c. Who will serve to inform Chelóna RSA of relevant programs or initiatives in the Communication department.
- C. The Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer will have access to the SECU and PayPal accounts.
- D. The organization can choose to reorganize office duties based on the needs of any given year by a membership vote of plurality.
- E. The procedure for filling unexpected vacancies shall be as follows:
 - 1. Nominations will be taken at the meeting following the vacancy.
 - 2. Nominations can be proposed by any active Chelóna RSA member.
 - 3. Elections will occur at this meeting and will be run like a regular election (See Article VIII).
- F. In the case that there are organization members who feel that any of the officers is not doing a satisfactory job, they may submit a written request for impeachment detailing the perceived failures of the officer(s) in question to the Executive board. The Executive Board will review the case and follow appropriate mediation procedures before the concerns are voiced at a regularly scheduled Chelóna RSA meeting. The Chelóna RSA member must be prepared to explain to all those in attendance why they feel that the officer(s) should leave the position. The officer(s) shall be given a chance to reply to the request both vocally at the meeting in which the request is made, and in a written form to be completed and circulated through email within one week of the original meeting. One person attending the impeachment meeting shall volunteer not to vote on the

impeachment, and shall compile both written statements on a ballot that will be circulated to all members. Impeachment shall be determined by popular vote, and announced by the non-partisan volunteer at the next meeting, whether it be regularly scheduled or called in emergency.

Article V: Advisor

- A. Chelóna RSA must retain an advisor at all times.
- B. The advisor must be a full-time faculty or staff member at The University of Maryland, and s/he will be chosen by the organization.
- C. The advisor must be a registered member of the Rhetoric Society of America.
- D. The advisor must be from either the Communication Department or the English Department.
- E. The elected officers shall select the advisor.

Article VI: Finances

- A. The organization's account is at SECU (State Employees Credit Union).
- B. There is a PayPal account linked to the SECU account.
- C. Officers cannot spend \$200 or more for a single purchase without the approval of a majority (50%+1) of membership attending.
- D. Any purchase under \$200 must be approved by the majority of the officers.

Article VII: Meetings

- A. Meetings of the Executive committee (officers and committee chairs) should occur as frequently as needed.
- B. Open forum meetings of the whole organization will be held no fewer than two times per academic year. The schedule and agenda of the open forums will be decided by the officers. A quorum of eight members is necessary to constitute an organizational meeting.
- C. Members will be notified of meetings with adequate advanced notice through email.

Article VIII: Elections

- A. Nominations for officers shall be solicited near the end of each spring semester and will be accepted via email.
- B. This meeting will be publicized via email, and special notification will be given that elections are taking place.
- C. Officers will be elected by popular vote via an online ballot sent out after the nomination period.

- D. No one involved in conducting the elections may be an official candidate.
- E. If no one is nominated for a position, the officers have the power to appoint a member to fulfill the term.
- F. In the case of a tie, a second round of ballots will be distributed, and the winner will be determined by popular vote.
- G. New officers begin their terms of office one month following the election, in order to best provide a period of transition between the old executive board and the new group of elected officers.

Article IX: Amendments to the Constitution

- A. Amendments should be formally proposed via email. Voting shall occur at the meeting following its introduction or via a digital vote.
- B. Any active member can propose an amendment to the Chelóna RSA constitution.
- C. An amendment is passed by a two-thirds majority vote of active membership.
- D. The Amendment Proposal should indicate the date the amendment will take effect.

Article X: Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, by Sarah Corbin Roberts, shall be used in all cases not covered by this constitution.

Article XI: Accessibility of this Constitution

A copy of the constitution will be posted to the Chelóna RSA webpage and available to anyone upon request.

Bylaws

Article XII: Meetings

- A. Meetings of the Executive committee (officers and committee chairs) should occur as frequently as needed and at least twice per semester.
- B. Meetings of the executive board will be scheduled at the discretion of the chair.
- C. Open forum meetings of the whole organization will be held no fewer than two times per year. The schedule and agenda of the open forums will be decided by the officers. A quorum of eight members is necessary to constitute an organizational meeting.
- D. If an active member thinks that extenuating circumstances require a special official meeting he/she should request that the officers schedule one.
- E. Members will be notified of meetings with adequate advanced notice through email by the Publicity Chair.
- F. Meetings of all Ad Hoc and standing committees should occur as needed to ensure successful planning and execution of activities and initiatives.
- G. The following is a general outline for a meeting agenda:
 - 1. Attendance
 - 2. Report by the president/chair
 - 3. Committee reports
 - 4. Vote on all committee motions/decisions
 - 5. Any other business put forth by a member of Chelóna RSA.
 - 6. Adjournment by the president.

Article XIII: Voting

- A. All major votes will be made available to members digitally over a period no shorter than two weeks. Minor voice votes may be taken at meetings.
- B. Only active members may vote.
- C. For the purposes of voting, a quorum consists of eight active members.
- D. For the purposes of voting, a majority consists of 50%+1 vote of members present (or participating in a digital vote).

Article XIV: Finances

- A. Chelóna RSA will finance the activities it engages in by the following means:
 - 1. Membership Dues set at an amount up to \$10 per member each academic year, with consideration of financial constraints on active members at the discretion of the Executive Board.
 - 2. Chelóna RSA should submit a budget to the Graduate Student Government Finance Committee on an annual basis and request funding appropriate to the effective operation of the organization for each year.

- a. In addition to an annual budget, Chelóna RSA should submit funding requests to the GSG for specific events/activities that benefit both the population of the organization and the broader population of graduate students at the University of Maryland.
 - b. The budget and GSG event funding requests (EFR) shall be directed by the Treasurer with assistance from the Funding and Grants committee.
3. Fundraising for the organization.
 4. Seeking outside funding and grants through the Funding and Grants committee.
 5. Seeking co-sponsorship with other university organizations.
- B. Reimbursements
1. Any non-fundraising event which seeks reimbursement must be approved by a majority of the RSA board. Following the event, the Chelóna RSA member seeking reimbursement shall submit an event report with receipts detailing expenditures and income (if any) to the Treasurer. Reimbursement up to \$200 of approved Chelóna RSA events shall be refunded with approval by the Treasurer, Funding Committee Chair, and President. Reimbursements of approved Chelóna RSA events costing over \$200 must be brought before the membership and approved by a majority (%50 +1) of members voting.
 2. Any fundraising event which seeks reimbursement must be approved by the Treasurer, Funding Committee Chair, and President. Following the event, the Chelóna RSA member seeking reimbursement shall submit an event report with receipts detailing expenditures and income to the Treasurer. Reimbursement up to \$200 of approved Chelóna RSA events shall be refunded with approval by the Treasurer, Funding Committee Chair, and President. Reimbursements of approved Chelóna RSA events costing over \$200 must be brought before the membership and approved by a majority (%50 +1) of members voting. Reimbursement for fundraising shall come from the proceeds raised by the event.

Article XV: Committees

Section 1. Ad hoc committees.

- A. Shall be formed by the President, as deemed necessary, to investigate matters of immediate concern.
- B. The Chairperson and members of the ad hoc committee will be appointed by the President, to be approved by a plurality of the voting members of the organization.

Section 2. Standing Committees

2.1. Membership. Any Chelóna RSA member may join or chair a committee.

2.2 Scope. Each standing committee has its own set of functions. However, the expectation of Chelóna RSA is that most of the programs, activities, and projects will succeed with the support of more than one committee's work.

2.3 Changing of Committees

A. Any committee may be disbanded by vote of two-thirds of the active membership (See Article IX: Amendments to the Constitution). Committees being disbanded shall be suspended for one academic year, to be revisited the following year. If two-thirds of the membership votes at that time to continue the disbandment, it shall become permanent and that committee will require a formal proposal to be reinstated (see 2.3B).

B. A new standing committee may be proposed by any active member. This proposal should be submitted to the Executive Committee and should include a rationale for the committee and a description of the committee's purposes and responsibilities to be added to the Bylaws. This proposal must be submitted prior to the final meeting of the year so that a chair can be nominated for the new committee pending its approval by vote of two-thirds of active membership.

2.4 Committee Purposes and Responsibilities

A. The Conferences committee is designed to enhance and support professional development and networking opportunities for Chelóna RSA. Suggested ways this goal can be accomplished include, but are not limited to:

1. Creating and distributing an extensive list of national, regional, and boutique conferences of interest to active members at the beginning of each academic year.
2. Encouraging members of Chelóna RSA to submit proposals and present at research conferences in the field of rhetoric or other related fields.
3. Working to plan and execute a Chelóna RSA sponsored conference or symposium, inviting other departments at UMD and nearby universities to attend and participate.
4. Collaborating with the Undergraduate Rhetoric committee to foster undergraduate rhetoric students' participation at various conference levels.
5. Collaborating with the Publicity Chair to advertise these opportunities to the organization members.
6. Collaborating with the Communication and English liaisons to ensure cross-disciplinary considerations.

B. The Curriculum and Pedagogy committee aims to enhance the experience of graduate and undergraduate students studying rhetoric. Suggested ways this goal can be accomplished include, but are not limited to:

1. Enhancing the Graduate Curriculum by working with the Communication and English liaisons and the Publicity Chair to advertise relevant rhetoric or rhetoric-related courses to Chelóna RSA.

2. Working with Communication and English graduate faculty and administration to propose new rhetoric courses in either department, or cross-listed, or co-taught.
 3. Promoting the enhancement of the Undergraduate Curriculum by working cooperatively with administrators.
 4. Collaborating with the Workshops and Colloquia committee and outside organizations to plan or cosponsor workshops centered on pedagogical support.
 5. Other activities centered on course content, teaching, and the continued improvement and expansion of learning opportunities for students of rhetoric.
- C. The Workshops and Colloquia committee aims to enhance scholarly and pedagogical development for students interested in rhetoric. Suggested ways this goal can be accomplished include, but are not limited to:
1. Cosponsoring rhetoric-focused events/workshops/rhetoric colloquia held by the Communication and English departments.
 2. Collaborating with the Curriculum and Pedagogy, Professional/Scholarly Development, and Undergraduate Rhetoric committees to plan and execute workshops that meet the goals of those committees.
 3. Collaborating with other university organizations to cosponsor workshops that relate to Rhetorical Community Activism.
 4. Working with the faculty in the Communication and English departments to host workshops and colloquia related to the mission of Chelóna RSA.
- D. The Professional and Scholarly Development committee aims to assess the professional and scholarly needs of Chelóna RSA members and provide opportunities for development. Suggested ways this goal can be accomplished include, but are not limited to:
1. Collaborating with the Workshops and Colloquia committee to plan and execute specific professional development talks or workshops.
 2. Planning, advertising, and running scholarly Reading Groups, at least once per academic semester, centered on a topic, theme, scholar, or concept in or related to rhetoric.
 3. Coordinating writing groups where members can exchange abstracts, conference proposals, or other drafts of writing.
- E. The Undergraduate Rhetoric Committee seeks to foster collaborative and mentorship relationships between graduate and undergraduate students of rhetoric. Suggested ways this goal can be accomplished include, but are not limited to:
1. Collaborating and maintain a positive working relationship with the directors of the Rhetoric Minor.
 2. Facilitating mentorship relationships between graduate and undergraduate students.

3. Working with other standing committees to enrich the experience of our undergraduate rhetoric scholars.

Article XVI: Social Gatherings

Chelóna RSA should aim to host one social gathering of the whole organization at least once per academic year. These events should aim to provide a space and context for people from different departments/areas to get to know each other.

Article XVII: Amendments to the Bylaws

These Bylaws shall be reviewed every five years by a special committee led by the Chair. Amendments to bylaws shall follow the same procedures as amendments to the constitution (see Article IX).

Article XVIII: Registration Renewal

Chelóna RSA will apply to the Office of Campus Programs for registration on an annual basis after holding new officer elections.