



## Fall Retreat 2019-2020 Report

**Authors:**

Ase Wesam Awari, *Secretary*

**Editors:**

Andrew Petryna, *University Affairs Committee Chair*; Aneesh Deshpande, *Vice President*

**Advisor:**

Lori Smith, *RUSA Advisor, Associate Director of Student Involvement at Rutgers University*

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About the Fall 2019-2020 Retreat</b>	<b>3</b>
Preface	3
Purpose	3
Goals	3
<b>Timeline Before Retreat</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Timeline Planned for Retreat</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Actual Timeline for Retreat</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>In Depth Analysis of Activities Within Each Timeslot</b>	<b>8</b>
Icebreakers	8
Low Ropes	9
Waterfront	11
Hiking	11
Slack and Trello	11
Committee Training	11
Leadership Training	11
Nicholas Tharney Presentation	12
Idea Concept to Assembly Floor	13
Ash's Circle	13
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Choosing a Location</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Evaluation Forms Post-Retreat</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>19</b>
Timeline Before Retreat	19
Timeline Planned for Retreat	19
Actual Timeline for Retreat	19
In Depth Analysis of Activities Within Each Timeslot	19
Attendance	20
Cost	20
Choosing a Location	20
Evaluation Forms Post-Retreat	21

## About the RUSA Fall 2019-2020 Retreat

### **Preface**

The RUSA Fall Retreat takes place every year after the end of the Fall Elections which happen near the beginning of October. This usually places retreat on or around Columbus weekend. The RUSA Fall retreat has been a constant of the Assembly for a multitude of years, excluding the presidency of Evan Covello of 2017-18. The planning of retreat is assigned to the secretary and thus for this year Ase Wesam Awari was tasked to organize retreat and ensure its success. Though in this report there is a group of people referred to as planners of retreat, this group is more or less just made up of the secretary. In this endeavour he had the help of a multitude of members within the Assembly, both E-Board and the Assembly itself. While planning this event, the secretary was tasked with a purpose and goals to achieve by the end of the Retreat.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of retreat is to ensure that come the next assembly session, all members are prepared, informed, and educated in the functions and duties of the Assembly for the benefit of the student body.

### **Goals**

1. Help instill specific characteristics that ensure success within the Assembly
  - a. Leadership
  - b. Communication
  - c. Polite Dissent
  - d. Teamwork
2. The Assembly itself
  - a. Structure
    - i. Executive Board, Committees, Caucuses
  - b. Function
3. Knowledge needed to be a functioning assembly person
  - a. Legislation/Report Creation
  - b. Roberts Rules

- c. Voting
4. Ensure that while all previous goals are met, that assembly people on retreat have a fun time and feel welcomed in a group that they can one day call friends

## Timeline Before Retreat

<b><u>Timeframe</u></b>	<b><u>Specific Task Accomplished</u></b>
<b><u>Beginning of August</u></b>	Began to look for camps to have retreat at.
<b><u>August 8th - 10th</u></b>	Narrowed down to three, Camp Bernie, Camp Vacamas, Camp Mason.
<b><u>August 12th</u></b>	Attained contract for Camp Bernie.
<b><u>August 13th - 22nd</u></b>	Due to retreat being planned for columbus weekend, Camp Vacamas became booked before it can be 100% confirmed, choice narrowed down to two.
<b><u>August 26th</u></b>	Jill, Lori, and Ase visit Camp Bernie. Jill suggests Trout Lakes Retreat. The three of them end up going to visit it and then add it to list of camps as options. Now have three options for retreat.
<b><u>August 29th</u></b>	Attain contract for Trout Lakes.
<b><u>September 2nd - 3rd</u></b>	Ase speaks with Jhanvi and they decide to go with Trout Lakes.
<b><u>September 4th</u></b>	Attain release forms from Trout Lakes.
<b><u>September 5th</u></b>	Certification of insurance sent to Trout Lakes.
<b><u>September 11th</u></b>	Send signed contract to Trout Lakes Confirming attendance for weekend of October 11th - 13th, sent signed contract to treasurer for the deposit check.
<b><u>September 13th</u></b>	Waiver for ropes course, water activities, and travel attained. Treasurer creates check for Trout Lakes Retreats.
<b><u>September 16th</u></b>	Begin searching for bussing, In addition, Secretary informs assembly of dates for retreat as well as telling all members to inform the secretary if unable to make it. School waiver is placed in the email to be filled out for all attending members. Check made by Treasurer is cut on this day and sent to Trout Lakes.
<b><u>September 19th - 23rd</u></b>	Begins searching for bussing from list of approved vendors. In addition, Secretary informs assembly again to send waivers in as well

	as contact information. Lastly, the secretary attains a bus quote from First Student Transit.
<b><u>September 26th</u></b>	Check arrives to Trout Lakes. Hand out Trout Lakes waiver form to be filled out by the assembly.
<b><u>September 28th</u></b>	Secretary informs all fall electees of upcoming retreat.
<b><u>September 30th</u></b>	Secretary again informs all invited parties attending retreat to submit necessary documents.
<b><u>October 1st</u></b>	Treasurer creates check for First Transit Bussing.
<b><u>October 2nd</u></b>	Secretary begins creating schedule for Retreat.
<b><u>October 3rd</u></b>	Fall Retreat Bill passes, thus making an absence at retreat count as a regular meeting absence.
<b><u>October 5th</u></b>	Secretary sends email to all Unofficial Winners of the Fall 2019 Elections with all required information for Retreat.
<b><u>October 7th</u></b>	Check for First Transit Cut and sent. In addition, the Secretary again informs members of the assembly to fill out all required forms for retreat. Lastly, Secretary and Chief of Staff purchase snacks for Retreat.
<b><u>October 8th</u></b>	Allocations Chair already informed Allocations Board of Retreat but Secretary sends email with all necessary forms nonetheless.
<b><u>October 9th</u></b>	Have plan for a boxed lunch for Friday night but abandon plan in lieu of cheaper option of buying supplies from Walmart. In addition, the Secretary again informs members of the assembly to fill out all required forms for retreat as well as Unofficial Winners of the Fall 2019 Elections with all required information for Retreat.
<b><u>October 10th</u></b>	Secretary finalizes schedule for Retreat as well as collecting all final waivers and other necessary required forms for people attending retreat. Treasurer and Secretary purchase more snacks as well as food for Friday night.
<b><u>October 11th</u></b>	Secretary recalls one bus in order to save on money as well as submits travel itinerary and waivers/contact information to the student affairs office for retreat. In addition, specific members of Executive Board travel early to the camp in order to have everything prepared for when the Assembly arrives.

# Timeline Planned for Retreat

## **Friday**

<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Learning Goal</u></b>
7:30 PM - 8:00 PM	Arrival and Unpack	None
8:00 PM - 9:00PM	Late home made Dinner and snacks	People can now get to know one another while also enjoying food
9:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Icebreakers	Introducing members of the assembly and bonding
10:00 PM - 10:30 PM	Campfire	Bonding

## **Saturday**

<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Learning Goal</u></b>
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Breakfast	People can now get to know one another while also enjoying food
9:00 PM - 12:00 PM	Low Ropes	Team Building exercises that illustrate leadership, communication, and teamwork
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch	People can now get to know one another while also enjoying food
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Water Front	Recreation activity that encouraged fun and bonding
3:00PM - 4:00 PM	Hiking	Recreation activity that encouraged fun and bonding
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Slack & Trello	Aneesh gives a presentation on Slack and Trello educating the assembly on how to utilize both
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Break	None
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Dinner	People can now get to know one another while also enjoying food
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Committee Training	Specific activities that prepare members of the assembly for committees
7:00 PM - 8:15 PM	Leadership Training	Specific activities that focus on leadership

8:15 PM - 8:45 PM	Random Training	Training that focus on miscellaneous aspects of being a member of RUSA
8:45 PM - 9:45 PM	Tharney Presentation and Game	Nicholas Tharney gives a presentation on the Assembly as well as a a game that follows
9:45 PM - 10:00 PM	Assembly Training	Training that focus on the assembly itself
10:00 PM - 10:30 PM	Campfire	Bonding

### Sunday

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Learning Goal</u>
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Breakfast	People can now get to know one another while also enjoying food
9:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Idea Concept to Assembly Floor	Jhanvi gives a presentation on taking an idea and how to get it to the floor
10:00 PM - 10:30 PM	Ash's Circle	This activity is a way to make everyone who came on retreat feel included and united in the lessons learned
10:30 PM - 11:00 PM	Pack up and depart	None

## Actual Timeline for Retreat

Though the overall planned activities for retreat went more or less by the previous schedule, it should be noted that there were changes here and there that caused a divergence from the itinerary. Friday and Sunday more or less remained the same, the only difference occurring in that Aneesh and Jhanvi switched time slots. Specifically, the Trello and Slack presentation was given at 9:00 AM on Sunday while the Idea Concept to Assembly Floor was given at 4:00 PM on Saturday.

The largest difference between the preplanned itinerary and the actual activities that occurred took place on Saturday. At about 4:00 PM, the presentation Jhanvi was going to give was delayed because the group of students on the hike were delayed by a wedding procession.

This caused everything to be moved up about 30 minutes and thus it was decided at that point that the assembly training activity was to be disregarded. Then as the day progressed some activities took longer than expected and we had to cut one more activity. It was then decided that Nicholas LaBelle will not give his leadership presentation that was within the random training timeslot. Other than those miniscule changes however, the schedule was still able to accomplish all intended goals for every activity, including the ones that were discarded due to lack of time.

## In Depth Analysis of Activities within each time slot

Though each time slot above listed the activity, it did not quite go into the specifics of what occurred within that activity time slot. For example, under leadership training it did not specify that members of the assembly present at retreat participated in the true colors test or provide information for what that training consisted of. To solve this issue, below is each activity as well as the specific sub-activities that occurred within that timeslot. In addition, next to the activity it will list whether it was an activity from Trout Lakes or if it was an activity from the Assembly.

### Icebreakers (Assembly):

#### 1. Alliteration Game

- a. This sub-activity involved a group of two or more being made in which each person would say their name and then an alliteration to go with it. E.g. Aesthetic Ash. Then after the person is finished, the next person would go and repeat the previous person's name and alliteration as well as say their own name and an alliteration as well. This process then repeats for each person after until the last person repeats the name and alliteration of everyone who went as well as their own.
- b. The purpose of this is to help familiarize everyone with each other on a first name basis in a fun and non-forced way.

#### 2. Circle Game

- a. This sub-activity immediately followed the previous one and consisted of everyone in attendance grabbing a chair and forming a massive circle. However, one chair must be removed from the circle. Once the chair is removed, one volunteer would step up to the middle and say their name, their position within the assembly, and then say something that interests them. Then anyone else who has that same interest must get up and move to a different chair that is now empty



for the moment. At this point there will be one person left standing who was not able to find a chair because one was purposely removed. This person is then tasked to do the same thing as the previous person did in the center. Repeat this process until a majority of people have went up and said their name, position, and an interest.

- b. The purpose of this is to help familiarize everyone with each other on a first name basis as well as helping them remember the position of someone else in the assembly. In addition, they can also find someone who shares a similar interest as them.

### Low Ropes (Trout Lakes Retreat):

#### 1. Pre-Low Ropes Team Building

##### a. Circle Game

- i. This is more or less the same game that the assembly did on the night before, the difference being that after someone says their interest, then anyone with that same interest must run to the center and high fives them. The last person to do so is then the person in the center that must say their name, position, and interest.
- ii. The purpose of this is to help familiarize everyone with each other on a first name basis as well as helping them remember the position of someone else in the assembly. In addition, they can also find someone who shares a similar interest as them.

##### b. Fictional Leader

- i. In this sub-activity, students were broken up into groups and tasked to make a fictional character that had the traits of someone who was a good communicator. E.g. one group made a character names Dase, with specific traits that they felt illustrated what it meant to be a good communicator.
- ii. This activity helps illustrate the importance of communication and what traits one can have that help with communicating.

##### c. Blindfold Game

- i. This sub-activity and the next one were both done after first dividing the group of students on retreat into two groups. One group would then move on to this sub-activity which involved someone volunteering to be blindfolded and one to accompany the blindfolded person. Then the students who were neither blindfolded nor helping the blindfolded person were told explicit instructions that the blind person must follow. The caveat however is that only the volunteer, the one person who also volunteered with the blindfolded person, is allowed to speak. This means

that all the other students who were told the directions must somehow express to the second volunteer the instructions to give to the blindfolded person but only through physical movement.

- ii. The goals of this sub-activity were illustrating the importance of communication within a group not only as an individual, but also how to communicate as a team as well.

d. Card Image

- i. This activity then took the second divided group and involved them then getting further divided into groups of three or less. They were then handed some cards with images on them and each person in one of the sub groups was asked to take two cards that they feel they relate to most. They then would describe to the other members within their sub group why this card relates to them most. Then the entire group would form up again and a member of each sub group would then describe why one of their members picked that specific card.
- ii. Again as in the previous activity, this one places importance on communication, with an emphasis on listening. The purpose being that listening is an integral part of communication within any organization.

2. Low Ropes

- a. For this specific activity it involved the students being divided into two groups and then each group being guided to a specific low ropes course. Though each course was different they both required communication, patience, and teamwork for success.
- b. The purpose of these further emphasize that as an assembly for the upcoming year, all the previous work done with regards to listening, communicating, and working together are integral not only for any group, but for the individuals within them as well.

Water Front (Trout Lakes Retreat):

1. Water Based Activities

- a. This activity involved Trout Lakes setting up row boats as well as peddle boats for us to use on the lake. The peddle boats consisted of four seats while the the row boats seated two. Due to a wedding we were unable to utilize the shallow water for swimming.
- b. The purpose of this was to help the students get more acquainted with each other in a fun and comfortable capacity.

Hiking (Trout Lakes Retreat):

1. Hiking
  - a. This activity involved trout lakes giving us access to their hiking trail map. Also had the ability to ask for a trail guide but was informed it was not required so the secretary did not make the request.
  - b. The purpose of this was to help the students get more acquainted with each other in a fun and comfortable capacity.

### Slack and Trello (Assembly):

1. Slack and Trello
  - a. Aneesh gives a presentation on Slack and trello to the students.
  - b. The goal of this is to show the assembly how to join the slack as well as how it functions and how to utilize it in a useful capacity in their tenure as representatives. In addition, with regards to Trello, it educates the body within the committees on an easy-to-use interface for creating step-by-step instructions on project updates. It allows any member of RUSA to view what each committee is involved in, and it allows any member to work on specific tasks. RUSA at its core is a collaborative organization, and having this platform makes that process that much more efficient.

### Committee Training (Assembly):

1. Purpose of Student Government Presentation
  - a. The aim of the presentation was to provide members with the tools needed to effectively represent their constituencies in RUSA through actively participating in Student Government, and to ensure that new and returning members would have the knowledge needed to make motions, debate, and draft legislation so that they could effect change.
2. Legislation Creation
  - a. This activity involved the parliamentarian splitting the assembly into each respective committee at random with the chairs of each committee being the lead. Then empty legislation templates were handed out to each committee and they were tasked to create a piece of legislation that contains the proper wording and procedure that is necessary in order to have a credible bill or resolution presented to the assembly
  - b. The goal of this was to educate all new members on how to create legislation and prepare them for the upcoming year in the assembly. In addition, this gets them acquainted with how to function in a committee.

### Leadership Training (Assembly):

1. True Colors Test

- a. This sub-activity involves printing out free copies of the true colors test online and then handing it out to students on retreat. The students will then fill out the form and then be assigned to the color that they match with most. Then groups of the same color will meet up and discuss the pros and cons of their color with each other. Then the groups of the same color will split and form a table with students who had a different color than their own and discuss ways in which they can solve the issues that may occur due to miscommunication between these different personality types.
  - b. The colors test should be taken as nothing more than a fun game that has the goals of improving upon communication and understanding of other team members. In addition, it also gave attendees on retreat the chance to speak to one another and get to know each other on a more intimate and comfortable level.
2. With Interest
- a. This activity involves all the students being divided into two groups. One group was explicitly told to share one of their favorite interests or hobbies that they have. The other group was told to completely ignore the other person as they talk to them through any capacity, such as going on their phone, not making eye contact, or any other means to make the other person feel ignored. Then the two groups find a random person from the other group and partner with them and then proceed with the instructions they were given.
  - b. The goal of this is to illustrate the importance of being a good listener and what it means to be good listener. This trait is integral and needed in order to be well prepared as elected members into RUSA.
3. No Rules
- a. This activity had students split randomly into groups and each was assigned the topic of free speech and asked to discuss it with no boundaries. This meant that they can discuss this topic honestly and speak on their true opinions on it. Then after everyone had a chance to participate and put their input in they then were tasked to discuss the importance of hearing dissenting views, especially when they are completely opposing to your own.
  - b. This activity shows the importance of differing opinions and how even though you may disagree with someone, you can still have civil discussion. This is integral to the function of the assembly where legislation will be debated on and students will have opposing views and helps prevent grudges from forming within the Assembly.

### Nicholas Tharney Presentation Training (Assembly):

1. This presentation involved the Parliamentarian, Nicholas Tharney, discussing the history and structure of student governments, its purpose under our governing documents, and

how the Assembly conducts business through its committees, legislation and report writing, and debate procedures.

2. In addition, the parliamentarian then followed this up with a Cahoot game in which it solidifies the specific information given in the presentation.

### Idea Concept to Assembly Floor (Assembly):

1. Jhanvi gives a presentation on taking an idea concept to the assembly floor.
2. The goal of this is to show the assembly how to take an original idea they may have and work it up the chain in order to have this initial idea make it to the assembly floor to be passed as a whole. This provides the means in which any student within the assembly can impact the student body at large and work it through the proper channels to bring the impactful change that SGA's are founded on.

### Ash's Circle (Assembly):

1. This activity involves all the students to grab a seat and form a massive circle, however, everyone must be facing outside the circle. Then, the person running the activity will tap a certain amount of students to enter the circle, these will be the only students who go into the circle at the moment. The person running the activity then lists off specific traits and the people who were tapped to come into the circle then tap the shoulders of those seated, specifically, they tap people who exhibited the traits that the person running this activity is currently listing off. Then once the person running the activity has finished listing off all the traits, the people originally tapped take a seat again and the person running this activity then repeats the same process until every student has gone. Furthermore, the traits listed off revolve around leadership or just healthy traits in general.
2. The goal of this activity is a culmination of everything learned at retreat. It illustrates the healthy traits one needs when in a position of leadership and responsibility that accompanies RUSA. In addition, it also shows the impact of spending the weekend team building with people you never met before this point. Where previously none of these people knew anything about each other, yet now they are comfortable enough and prepared to work as a team for the year ahead. The former is important for the individual within RUSA, the latter is integral for RUSA as a whole.

## Attendance

In the build up to retreat it was starting to become abundantly clear that attendance was going to be an issue. In fact, by the week before retreat, the number of confirmed attendance was

25% of those who actually ended up attending. By that point, as can be seen in the timeline, the secretary emailed all invited parties, i.e. Allocations, Assembly, and advisors to please submit the forms or at least inform the secretary of an absence. Nonetheless, it was really only within the two days before retreat did the secretary actually start to be provided answers to whether or not someone would be able to attend retreat. The total number of people invited was 111, of those 111, 4 were advisors, 9 were from Allocations, and the rest were either people who were in the assembly or actively running for a position within the assembly. Of the 111, 97 were required to attend, 48 people who were required to attend were unable to and of those 48, only 14 were excused. The total number of those confirmed for retreat was 58, however, due to last minute cancellations that number became 51. In addition, some people unfortunately had to leave early and thus the total number who left Trout Lakes Retreats on Sunday, 10/13, was 47.

## Cost

<u>Item/Activity</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Per Person Rate (75 Expected)	\$10800
Water Front	\$500
Low Ropes Teambuilding	\$250
Golden Leaf Lodge (3-Day Rate)	\$179
Bussing to Locations (3 Buses)	\$1632
Bussing back to Rutgers (3 Buses)	\$1632
Bus Driver Tip (3 Buses)	\$210
First Snacks Purchase	\$120
Second Snacks Purchase	\$120
<b><u>TOTAL COST OF RETREAT</u></b>	<b><u>\$15443</u></b>

Starting with Per Person Rate, this cost came out to a total of \$10800 because it was expected that at most that 75 people would be attending retreat. As can be seen within this report,

that number was not nearly reached and if informed earlier that cost could have been lowered significantly. In fact, Trout Lakes Retreat was willing to wait a week before the actual date to confirm the cost and give the planners of retreat time to change the official number of attendees. Moving on to the next cost, with most activities that occurred on retreat these came as an extra cost on top of the per person rate, so for example, the waterfront and low ropes teambuilding came as additional line item costs, 500 and 250 respectively. In addition, unlike the lodging included with the per person rate, the extra lodging we attained for the advisors came as an extra cost of \$179. Next, the bussing to and from retreat was a total \$3264 and the reason for this was that the expected number of students was 75, thus we planned around the bussing capacity. However, since a large number of students only announced their absence the day before retreat, this cost ended up being much larger than necessary. Next, since the Bus Driver Tip had to be done with cash, this means the students who paid for the tip were not refunded by RUSA. Lastly, the second Snack Purchase was to ensure the assembly had food to eat the first night while the first snacks purchase was to ensure that throughout retreat the attendees would at least have access to some food in between meals or as the night progressed. These costs were paid for by students, however, they were refunded by RUSA. Thus the total cost of retreat came out to \$15443, and broken down per person that attended, the total cost was \$302.80.

## Choosing a Location

To go more in depth as to why this location was picked when compared to others is that with regards to price, it was about the same when brought down to cost per person. So what became the deciding factor for Trout lakes when compared to Camp Mason or Camp Bernie were two specific factors. These two factors were the activities available to the attendees as well as handicap accessibility. Compared to the other camps, Trout Lakes had an abundance of more activities, ranging from Archery, to a Waterfront, to High Ropes, Low Ropes, and many more. Overall these activities were a little costlier compared to the ones at other camps, however, we had the option to go with a range of activities instead of being forced to pick from a handful. The more important deciding factor was Handicap Accessibility. Specifically, Trout Lakes was ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant while both Camp Mason and Camp Bernie had a

multitude of issues with regards to handicap access. It was decided that though Trout Lakes was only a little costlier than the other options, it would be much more worthwhile to attend Trout Lakes Retreats.

## Evaluation Forms Post-Retreat

After retreat had finished and the assembly felt settled in, the secretary finally began work on an evaluation form to be filled out by those who went on retreat. It was created on October 21st with the intention of gathering the opinion of those who went and to gauge where improvements can and should be made for next year. There were a total of 7 questions, 6 being a scale rating and the last question asking to go in depth with suggestions that attendees had. The entire form was anonymous to ensure more honest answers. Overall, 25 people were able to fill out the form, not nearly as the secretary would have preferred, however, it still was a large enough sample size to get good feedback. Below is the list of all the questions as well as the answer that attendees on retreat filled out.

1. Question 1: How enjoyable an experience was retreat? (Scale rating 1-5: Not enjoyable to Very Enjoyable)
  - a. 1: Zero Responses
  - b. 2: Zero Responses
  - c. 3: One Response
  - d. 4: Three Responses
  - e. 5: Twenty One Responses
  
2. Question 2: How opportune was the timing for retreat? (Scale rating 1-5: Not Opportune to Very Opportune)
  - a. 1: Zero Responses
  - b. 2: One Response
  - c. 3: Six Responses
  - d. 4: Six Responses
  - e. 5: Twelve Responses
  
3. Question 3: Do you feel retreat strongly prepared you for your future in the assembly for this upcoming year? (Scale rating 1-5: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
  - a. 1: One Response



- b. 2: Zero Responses
  - c. 3: Two Responses
  - d. 4: Nine Responses
  - e. 5: Thirteen Responses
4. Question 4: How was the food on retreat? (Scale rating 1-5: Poor Tasting to Quite Phenomenal)
- a. 1: Zero Responses
  - b. 2: Zero Responses
  - c. 3: Seven Responses
  - d. 4: Ten Responses
  - e. 5: Eight Responses
5. Question 5: Were the activities provided by Trout Lakes satisfactory? (Scale rating 1-5: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
- a. 1: Zero Responses
  - b. 2: Zero Responses
  - c. 3: One Response
  - d. 4: Eight Responses
  - e. 5: Sixteen Responses
6. Question 6: Were the Activities provided by the Assembly satisfactory? (Scale rating 1-5: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
- a. 1: Zero Responses
  - b. 2: One Response
  - c. 3: Two Responses
  - d. 4: Seven Responses
  - e. 5: Fifteen Responses
7. Question 7: For next year, what are some suggestions you have or ideas you would like to see brought to retreat?
- a. This question had about 15 in depth suggestions while the other remaining were compliments to the planners of retreat. Below, the recurring suggestions are listed under common suggestions and the specific suggestions under unique suggestions.
    - i. Common Suggestions:
      - 1. Public Itinerary or at least timeline for activities

2. More down time to give the attendees more time to bond
  3. Timing, with regards to it taking place during midterms
  4. More in depth dive into committees and mock committee work
  5. Increasing attendance at retreat
- ii. Unique Suggestions:
1. More canned beverages
  2. Cost is way too high
  3. Need to have training available to members who couldn't attend
  4. Include the high ropes course
  5. Include a question on one of the retreat forms indicating whether someone feels more comfortable in the boys' cabin or the girls' cabin
  6. Food on the first night was unsatisfactory
  7. Have teams and make it a competition
  8. Tipping Bus drivers should be an expense that RUSA pays
  9. Better outdoor activities

The data shows from the first six questions that overall every facet of the retreat was done very well or could at least use some form of improvement. Of the six questions the ones with the most neutral feedback were question two as well as question three. For the second question, this feedback is not entirely reliable because the only people able to fill out this form were those who attended the retreat. Therefore, the data most definitely skews toward the timing not being favorable because a large portion of the assembly was unable to attend. For the third question, the feedback followed the pattern of the other responses, however, there was one response that said they feel woefully unprepared for their future in the assembly. Other than that, however, most of the feedback for the first six questions was overwhelmingly very positive.

The feedback from the seventh question provides the in-depth answers that provide the most vital input for the planning of future retreats. Of the common suggestions, all of them clearly show importance because they were a shared concern brought up by multiple people. However, within the Unique suggestions came some very insightful criticisms that should be taken into account for the future planning of retreat. Overall, the seventh question provided the integral feedback that allows retreat to be improved upon by the feedback it gathers every year.

# Recommendations

This last portion of the report will list recommendations to every single previously listed topic in this report. In addition, it will provide personal experience from the planners of this years retreat with advice that they hope will be able to guide the future planners of retreat.

## **Timeline Before Retreat**

The greatest way to plan for Retreat is to accomplish everything within this timeline at the end of the Spring Semester before the Fall Semester even takes place. In fact, the latest this should all be accomplished is the day before the Fall Semester starts. This may come as a big change, however, it is incredibly doable and since the new secretary is elected in the Spring, they will still have the ability to ask the previous secretary for advice and assistance in planning it. Lastly, to be planning the retreat to such a last minute degree was incredibly risky of the planners of retreat to do and should not be emulated whatsoever in the future.

## **Timeline Planned for Retreat**

Overall the timeline planned for retreat worked according to plan and there was not really any issues that occurred. As stated in the previous topic, the itinerary for the retreat should be planned well ahead of time and all parties who will be leading a presentation or taking a leadership role should have a copy. In addition, a simpler timeline with just the stated activities and timeslots should be given out to the attendees of retreat to give them the ability to plan their own time around it in case they need to study or attend to personal matters.

## **Timeline During Retreat**

Though there is not much difference between this topic and the previous one, the best suggestion is for the planners of retreat to have flexibility with regards to the timeslots and to be ready to discard an activity for the benefit of the attendees of retreat.

## **In Depth Analysis of Activities Within Each Timeslot**

It is highly suggested that for the next retreat, the planners please take inspiration from the activities listed under this portion and feel free to add different activities but with the same

goals as those listed. Direct feedback has shown that these activities were a great success and that just improving upon what was already done with similar but more effective activities can have great effects for the overall experience of retreat. In addition, it cannot be emphasized enough how important Ash's Circle is as an activity. It provides an experience in which everyone can be connected to each other as well as emphasize all the lessons learned from retreat in a short timespan.

## **Attendance**

In this topic lies the most important suggestion for the future planners of retreat which is that the planners of retreat should be given full autonomy to contact members of the assembly and push for attendance, or a notification of their absence. The executive board must be united on this front and every member must constantly be reminding and persuading members of the assembly to attend. In addition, if someone cannot attend they must notify the planners of retreat as soon as possible to give them the ability to notify Trout Lakes and adjust the total cost. If both of these simple tasks are accomplished than not only will attendance increase for Retreat, but it will also save the assembly a significant amount of money.

## **Cost**

The overall cost for retreat was high and was the largest expenditure RUSA had so far into this year. However, if the previous topic is taken into consideration, the cost can be reduced for future years and though it will still be high, it will at least be fiscally responsible. More concerning however is the fact that the cost of tipping the bus driver is a cost that someone from the assembly has to deal with. This should not be happening. The cost was split this year but disregarding that it should still be a refundable expense and not something that a member or members of the assembly have to pay for with their own money.

## **Choosing a Location**

In the future planning of retreats it is highly suggested that Trout Lakes still be considered the main retreat option. It cannot be emphasized enough how important the ADA compliance is for RUSA considering it is a diverse organization that represents every student. If

one student were unable to attend due to the location be noncompliant with ADA regulations then that place should not be considered a location to attend. In addition, Trout Lakes was not too different on cost but had a multitude of more activities available for the people of the assembly attending. Furthermore, the staff at Trout Lakes was incredibly easy to work with when it came to planning as well as on location help. Lastly, the location was exceptional both in scenery and in actual lodging which helped the assembly feel comfortable away from home but also excited to be away from home.

### **Evaluation Forms Post-Retreat**

Most of the suggestions from the evaluation form have already been discussed throughout the previously mentioned topics, however, it is encouraged that the future planners go back and take into consideration all the listed information and either find solutions to the suggest problems or find ways to minimize any issues from occurring. In addition, the planners of retreat suggest the evaluation form should be expanded and be more in depth to ensure that all opinions are taken into consideration and that their opinions are on more specific aspects of retreat. Furthermore, with this more in depth form, it should get a much larger amount of feedback from those attending and should be required to fill out on the way back or after a following RUSA meeting.

## **Closing Remarks**

This report has come out almost two months after the 2019 Fall Retreat has occurred, and though it is incredibly delayed, the information provided will be hopefully be an incredibly useful tool for the planners of future RUSA retreats. In planning this retreat, the effort put in is clearly shown, and though there were clear mistakes made along the way by the planners of retreat, the retreat still delivered on every goal it was initially set out to do as well as some more.

As stated in the beginning of this report, the overall planning, logistics, and execution was done by the secretary. However, it should also be stated that along the way he was aided by a terrific Executive Board who helped and aided him in any and every way possible. Whether it was providing counsel, assistance, or just moral support, the Executive Board cannot be thanked enough for the experience that as a whole they provided. In addition, the assembly people who

sacrificed time out of their schedule to attend retreat and to learn and grow from this experience deserve accolades of their own and though they were the group who benefited most from retreat, they were also the group integral to the success of the 2019 Fall Retreat. Lastly, the advisors of RUSA provided the need to know information as well as guide the secretary and provide the key support instructions on how to run a retreat. All three of these groups and their relentless contribution must be acknowledged and the author of this report would formally like to thank them all for helping to ensure that this retreat was a phenomenal experience.