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An Evening in Vegas: RHA's Casino Night

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An Evening in Vegas: RHA's Casino Night



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Casino Night is one of the biggest events that is set up by the executive members of the Residence Hall Association (RHA) each year. The event consists of all the well-known casino games such as poker, blackjack and craps, and offered attendees a chance to win prizes. Each year RHA hopes to engage students in a night full of glamor and games, and this year was no different.

The event encouraged students to dress up in formal wear, which RHA helped support by giving tips on where to get appropriate clothing through a post on their Instagram page.

Kayla Downing, a third-year political science and business administration student and the director of programming for RHA, was responsible for the planning of Casino Night this year. She talked about how important it was to work in tandem with marketing to help get students to the event.

“Our marketing chair is Chloe Platt, and [she] designed all of the marketing materials including the fashion post,” Downing said.

While Casino Night is a space for students to play gambling games, it is also a chance to win prizes. The event had nearly 450 students competing to get the most chips to have a better chance at taking home a windfall. The prizes were a JBL waterproof speaker, a dorm projector, two Chihuly Museum tickets, two Seattle Zoo tickets, two Aquarium tickets, an outdoor bundle, a dorm decoration bundle, a movie night bundle, and lastly–, the prize everyone was eyeing down–, a Nintendo Switch.

The RHA executives had set up the prize system in a special way. First, students got a ticket at the front desk as they signed in and then gave these tickets to the dealers to receive \$500 worth of chips. Students then went around betting on whichever game they wanted. The goal of the night was to get as many chips as they could to be exchanged for raffle tickets. The raffle tickets were for students to put their name on and place in the pot fitting the prize that they want. The more tickets a student had, the bigger chance they had to win a prize.

Besides the great games and the prizes that everyone was fighting for, Casino Night also included a photo booth featuring fun props and a glittery background. Everyone that dressed up wanted to show off their fancy outfits and the photo booth was the choice way to do it.

Anabella Vucci, a third-year women, gender & sexuality studies and public affairs double major and the president of RHA, talked about how she and other RHA members worked on Casino Night.

“Physically, it only takes a few hours to set up the event, but because of the scale of Casino Night, we spend the majority of our fall quarter planning and organizing the event,” Vucci said.

With plans beginning in October, Casino Night is the result of an entire quarter’s worth of planning and conversation, each member of the executive council pitching in to support Downing in making Casino Night come to life.

Downing explained her role in the event, and the detailed planning that goes into Casino Night that attendees might not know.

“I was responsible for coming up with the ideas for theme and decor, making contact with the vendors, allocating jobs to other members of RHA’s executive council, creating a comprehensive prize plan as well as collaborating with our marketing chair and finance chair on the overall event.”

Vucci also talked about how not only the executive members worked on the event but also members of hall councils. With a hall council for north campus, south campus, Bellarmine and Campion Hall, it was helpful to have all hands on deck.

“Due to the size of the space and the event, everyone in RHA—including both our Executive and Hall Councils—helped set up for Casino Night. It is very much a team effort,” Vucci said.

Casino Night has Vegas-style tables and professionally trained dealers at the event. Ryan Nimmick, a third-year social work major and the vice president of internal affairs for RHA, talked in a little more detail about how they get the dealers every year for casino night through a working contract with West Coast Entertainment.

“They come every year for Casino night and they help us set it up so that the process goes really smoothly,” Nimmick said.

Nimmick spent the evening welcoming and checking students into the event. Other members of the Executive Council worked directly with the dealers, going around and making sure everything was running smoothly.

Garland Lau, a third-year computer science major and president of the South Campus Hall Council, has been a member of RHA throughout his college career. He talked about his experience in attending the annual casino nights.

“This is my third time going to Casino Night ever since I have been to Seattle University,” Lau said. “I think it’s pretty fun seeing so much turn out now after each year, especially after COVID, and just seeing more people involved on campus.”

Nadeen Radi, a third-year finance major and director of finance for RHA, talked more about the planning. She explained how



decisions were made to make the evening enjoyable for all students in attendance and took into consideration the prizes that would appeal most to everyone.

“We decided to put more budget into the prizes, so that we could get better prizes,” Radi said.

Casino Night is a legacy event, meaning that it is put on by RHA every year. Last year, Vucci was programming chair, and planned an Alice in Wonderland-themed casino night. She shared how this year's event compared to its predecessor.

“Due to the fact that Casino Night is an annual event, many things stay the same from year to year—so the event this year was very similar to Casino Night 2023,” Vucci said. “But they always end up being unique, which I think is part of the beauty of legacy events.”

Downing discussed the advantages of working with a president who had previously been in the programming position, as Vucci was able to support her through all the logistical processes needed to run the event.

“There wasn't really much that varied from last year's event. [Vucci] planned last year's event so she had a lot of guidance,” Downing said.

Moving forward, Lau hopes to see little things improve, like crowding at playing tables.

“It does get busy sometimes so you have to wait a while for the games, so maybe we can add more tables,” Lau said.

Vucci shared how, ultimately, the mission of RHA is supporting students holistically and discussed how Casino Night is an effective way for them to reach students.

“Our main focus in RHA is supporting our residents, and our events are only one facet of the work we do on campus to pursue this mission,” Vucci said.

RHA has an active programming schedule and will be having different events throughout the year, including two more happening later in the quarter alone.

“This quarter we are beginning our legislative projects for the year as well as a new community connection initiative, which is really exciting. We are also, of course, looking forward to our next, and newest, legacy event, Spring Carnival!” Vucci said.

Downing feels that the goal of any campus organization is to bring students together and create a safe and fun environment for Seattle U students, with RHA being no exception.

“I think our organizations are working really hard to make sure that students feel a larger sense of community, and I think Casino Night did just that,” Downing said.