

# **Pennsylvania State Postdoctoral Society (PSPS) Bylaws**

Draft as of 4/30/08

## **I. Mission**

### A. Mission

The mission of the Penn State Postdoctoral Society is to enhance the postdoctoral experience at Penn State by providing resources to assist postdoctoral fellows in their professional and personal development. Our aim is to provide information and support around career advancement, financial support, and child and family issues. We are also focused on representing postdoctoral causes to the university administration. In addition, we would like to facilitate social interaction between postdoctoral fellows at Penn State, towards the goal of building a community who can benefit from the exchange of knowledge and experience.

### B. Primary goals of the Society include the following:

1. To enhance the professional enrichment and development of postdoctoral fellows at Penn State.
2. To foster social and professional interactions among postdoctoral fellows from across the university.
3. To serve as a liaison between postdoctoral fellows and the Penn State University administration to bring forth concerns regarding the overall work environment, benefits, and climate that postdoctoral fellows encounter.
4. To help postdoctoral fellows successfully further their professional careers while at Penn State
5. Assist in the elaboration of research policies Penn State University.

## **II. Organization**

The structure of the Postdoctoral Society is defined by the by-laws that follow. However, given the transitory nature of Postdoctoral Fellowships, in some cases the bylaws may not be applicable/enforceable. In these cases a course of action will be decided upon by a majority vote of the general membership.

To allow for the multi-campus character of Penn State University, chapters of the Society may be created at the request of the postdoctoral fellows at Penn State campuses. Initially, the Society will have two chapters: University Park and Hershey. All chapters will be co-equal. Each chapter will have a separate Executive Council and budget to finance costs of local events but there will also be provisions for common oversight of the Society and common events.

The PSPS executive council will be composed of the assembly of the executive council of each chapter.

### A. Executive Council for University Park Chapter

1. An Executive Council of 7-15 members of the Postdoctoral Society will serve to

organize seminars, workshops, and activities each semester, conduct business, and ensure the continued leadership of the Chapter.

2. A call for volunteers for the council will be issued each March/April. If there are more than 15 volunteers elections will be held at a general Chapter meeting in May and Council members will be selected by a majority vote of active members in attendance. If there are 15 or fewer volunteers, members will vote to approve the slate at a general Society meeting in May. Members of the Council must be Chapter members as defined below.

3. An open call for additional members can be held at any time the total number of Council members falls below 7.

4. Council members or officers who are not serving the Postdoctoral Society's interests may be removed by a 2/3-majority vote of the full Council.

#### B. Executive Council for Hershey Chapter

1. An Executive Council of 3-5 members of the Postdoctoral Society will serve to organize seminars, workshops, and activities each semester, conduct business, and ensure the continued leadership of the Chapter.

2. A call for volunteers for the council will be issued each year. If there are more than 5 volunteers elections will be held at a general Chapter meeting in March and Council members will be selected by a majority vote of active members in attendance. If there are 5 or fewer volunteers, members will vote to approve the slate at a general Society meeting in March. Members of the Council must be Society members as defined below.

3. An open call for additional members can be held at any time the total number of Council members falls below 5.

4. Council members or officers who are not serving the Postdoctoral Society's interests may be removed by a 2/3-majority vote of the full Council.

#### C. Officers

1. For each chapter, a chairperson and treasurer will be chosen amongst volunteers from the existing chapter Executive Council membership each Spring.

If more than one individual volunteer for each position, the positions will be selected by a majority vote of the active members in attendance at that meeting.

2. Secretarial duties will rotate for each meeting in alphabetical order by last name.

3. If the chairperson is unable to attend a meeting, the chair will notify the Council in advance to select a member to serve as chair.

#### D. Council Members

1. The Postdoctoral Society will strive to maintain diversity and equal representation amongst scientific discipline, experience, gender and foreign national status. The Postdoctoral Society does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, national origin, language, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.

2. Regular members are selected by volunteering to participate on the council, usually in March or April, and being voted in or approved at a general Society

meeting, usually in May.

3. If the council has more volunteers than open slots, new members will be selected by a majority vote of the active members in attendance at the general Society meeting.

4. Upon accepting membership in the Council, individuals agree to maintain active membership for a minimum of one year.

E. Appointment:

Appointments to the Council are for a minimum of one year. Members must notify the chair 2 months prior to the expiration of their term to allow sufficient time for their replacement. This notification should occur at the time of a scheduled Council meeting. Members who are unable to complete their term for any reason should immediately notify the chair.

### **III. MEMBERSHIP**

- A. At University Park all individuals with the title of Postdoctoral Fellow, Postdoctoral Scholar, or Research Associate in the Pennsylvania State University payroll system or identified as such through their departments and on the University Park campus are recognized as members of the Postdoctoral Chapter and as such, are eligible to serve on the University Park Executive Council.
- B. The College of Medicine only uses the titles of Postdoctoral Fellow or Postdoctoral Scholar for postdoc; the title of Research Associate is not used for postdocs. Therefore, only individuals appointed at the College of Medicine with the title of Postdoctoral Fellow or Postdoctoral Scholar are recognized as members of the Postdoctoral Chapter and eligible to serve on the Hershey Chapter Executive Council.
- C. Other individuals with similar positions to those described above who are interested may be recognized as members of the Postdoctoral Society upon request. The Executive Council of the appropriate chapter will approve such requests.

### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The chairperson is responsible for the following items:
  - 1. Notification of the Postdoctoral Society membership of vacancies on the Executive Council.
  - 2. Overseeing the timely appointment and/or election of new members.
  - 3. Will be responsible for replying to emails or directing them to the appropriate persons/committees.
  - 4. Obtain a current list of all active postdocs from the payroll office and/or the Postdoctoral Office.
  - 5. Serve as liaison to the University administration
  - 6. Scheduling the monthly Council meetings, forming the agenda, and facilitating the meetings
  - 7. Scheduling the periodic Society meetings, forming the agenda, and facilitating the meetings
  - 8. Scheduling a bi-annual meeting (video conference or personal) between the executive councils of each chapter.
  
- B. The treasurer is responsible for the following items:

1. Developing the PSPS budget with input from the Executive Council
2. Soliciting planned expenses at Council meetings. The Council will approve expenses by majority vote.
3. Recording and handling all funds that the Council receives.

C. The secretary is responsible for the following items:

1. Recording minutes at each Council meeting and general Society meeting.
2. Maintaining a record of meeting attendance and minutes.
3. Ensuring that information from Postdoctoral Society meetings is available to all postdocs. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that minutes of meetings are emailed to Postdoctoral Society members.

D. Postdoctoral Council Members, including officers, are responsible for the following items:

1. Organizing and facilitating of Postdoctoral Society seminars, workshops, and activities.
2. Ensuring that pertinent information is disseminated to the postdoctoral population at large.
3. Communicating concerns and ideas to the Council from other postdocs.
4. Informing postdocs of events and helping to organize as needed.
5. Holding informal meetings with postdocs as necessary.

E. The faculty sponsor, who is not a member of the Executive Council, is responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring that Postdoctoral Society activities are in compliance with university regulations.
2. Providing guidance for the executive council to professional development opportunities.

## **V. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS**

Each chapter is sovereign on the motions concerning their campus. If a general PSPS bylaw modification is needed, each chapter shall approve the motion.

### **University Park chapter**

A. Quorum: A minimum of five Council members voting is necessary to vote on proposed motions. Votes remove Council members or officers must be solicited from all Council members not present by email, and votes on proposed motions should be solicited by email from those not present. Executive Council meetings will be held each month and general Chapter meetings will be held at least once a semester.

1. A general meeting can be held upon request to the Executive Council, by 20 or more members.

## B. Order of Business for Council and General Meetings

1. The chair will solicit agenda items from Council members/general members prior to the meeting.
2. An agenda will be distributed in advance of all scheduled meetings.
3. The chair or designated substitute shall call the meeting to order.
4. Approval of minutes: A copy of the previous month's minutes will be posted on the website prior to the monthly meeting. At the meeting, the chair shall ask if there are additions or corrections to the minutes. If there are no changes or changes are made by general consent, the minutes will be declared, "approved" or "approved as amended."
5. Reports of special representatives and standing committees: The chair shall call only on those special representatives or standing committees who have reports to make.
6. General orders or unfinished business: Unfinished business or general orders shall be considered in the order of the agenda. Items to be considered under this heading include:
  - a. Any question that was pending when the previous meeting adjourned.
  - b. Any question that was to be considered at the previous meeting but was postponed for debate.
7. New business: The chair shall ask if there is any new business. Members can introduce new business or remove from the table any matter that is on the table.
8. Announcements: The chair may make, or call upon others to make, any necessary announcements; or, members can briefly obtain the floor for such a purpose.
9. Program: If there is to be a presentation or other program, it is usually presented before the meeting is adjourned.
10. Voting Motions shall carry if they receive a majority vote. All members present may vote.
11. Determination of topics for next meeting's agenda: Any member can recommend additional agenda items. Agenda items can be sent to the Council chair.

## Hershey chapter

A. Quorum: A minimum of three Council members voting is necessary to vote on proposed motions. Votes remove Council members or officers must be solicited from all Council members not present by email, and votes on proposed motions should be solicited by email from those not present. Executive Council meetings will be held each month and general Chapter meetings will be held at least once a semester.

At the time of social events planed by the committee more meeting could be necessary to insure a correct schedule of the events.

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### **Joint meetings of Chapter Councils.**

At least once a year a joint meeting between the executive members of the different chapters should be held, either by video-conference or in person. These meetings would be a time for general discussions of postdoctoral issues at Penn State campus, in order to bring those concerns to the University administration.

### **VI. SUBCOMMITTEES**

A. Subcommittees shall be created by the Council Membership, as needed, at the regular monthly meeting to investigate and recommend action on matters that are of interest or concern the Executive Council or for the purposes of organizing seminars, workshops, social events, or other activities.

B. The subcommittees will be headed by volunteers from the Executive Council membership or the general Society membership. If a general member serves as a subcommittee chair, he/she or a designated representative will be required to attend monthly Council meetings.

C. Subcommittee members may be specifically recruited from the general postdoc

population.

D. The duties of a subcommittee and its power to act on certain decisions shall be outlined at its formation and shall be approved by the Executive Council.

## **VII. REVIEW**

A. The Executive Council shall review the bylaws each March to ensure that they remain current.

B. Proposed changes to the bylaws can be made at any time following discussion at a regularly scheduled Society meeting.

C. Proposed changes should be submitted in writing to the chairperson and presented for discussion at the next scheduled general meeting.

D. All proposed changes to the bylaws will be discussed and approved by a majority vote of the general Society members in attendance.

1. Proposed amendments must be sent to all members at least two weeks prior to the general meeting.

2. Amendments to the bylaws must be made at the general meeting, with no less than 8% of members in attendance. If this percentage is not achieved the amendments are voted upon by the members present at the meeting after 30 minutes.