

**By-laws of the  
Postdoctoral Association (PDA)  
in the Biological Sciences Division (BSD)  
at The University of Chicago**

**I. Mission**

- a. The purpose of the Postdoctoral Association (PDA) organization is to serve the Postdoctoral Fellows, Postdoctoral Scholars and Research Associates of the University of Chicago by promoting their continued success in the scientific community.
- b. The PDA provides a skills development and resource organization that addresses essential topics for continued excellence in scientific careers. In addition, the PDA fosters communication among its members and provides representation in both the division and the university.
- c. The **goals** of the BSD-PDA are:
  - i. To provide a collective voice and liaison between postdocs, faculty, and the administration at The University of Chicago.
  - ii. To promote effective training and career counseling of postdocs at The University of Chicago.
  - iii. To collect, develop, and disseminate information useful to postdocs including job announcements, seminar notices, and materials on personal and professional resources.
  - iv. To promote research and social communication among postdocs.

**II. Membership**

- a. All postdoctoral scholars and fellows in the Biological Sciences Division of the University of Chicago, collectively termed postdocs, are members of the PDA
- b. Individuals with PhD/MD/MD-PhD degrees holding other non-tenure track title can elect to be a member of the PDA.
  - i. These other positions titles include, but are not limited to, Research Assistant Professor, Research Professional and Instructor.
- c. Other individuals can petition to become members, including postdocs in different divisions of the university.

**III. Administration of the PDA**

- a. Steering Committee members
  - i. Steering Committee members are representatives of the PDA body.
  - ii. The Steering Committee determines the schedule of PDA events for the year, maintains budgets, and provides input to the Dean and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.
  - iii. Any PDA members can petition for membership to the Steering Committee.
  - iv. There is no limit to the term for a Steering Committee member so long as they maintain PDA membership eligibility (See Membership, Section II).

- v. A two-thirds majority of those Steering Committee members present, which must include the officers, is required for passage of all issues voted upon by the Steering Committee.
- vi. Requirements for active status:
  1. Attendance to least 50% of Steering Committee meetings during the University calendar year (July-June)
  2. Active involvement in at least 1 standing or ad-hoc committee
- b. Steering Committee meetings
  - i. Steering Committee meetings occur monthly during the academic year and ad hoc during the summer. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.
  - ii. All PDA members are invited to attend Steering Committee meetings.
    1. Postdocs in other divisions of the University of Chicago are welcome to attend Steering Committee meetings; notification of attendance (to Postdoctoral Affairs Administrator) is requested prior to the meeting.
  - iii. Any PDA member has the right to petition the Steering Committee with respect to any matter relevant to the purpose of the PDA. The PDA member is required to contact the PDA President with their petition in advance of the monthly Steering Committee meeting. The President has the right to delay discussion of the topic until the next meeting if the agenda is already full.
- c. Officers
  - i. Named Officers of the Steering Committee include the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
  - ii. Officers are voluntary positions either elected by a majority vote or, in the case of a single candidate, volunteer and are approved by the Steering Committee.
  - iii. Officers are appointed to one-year terms. Terms usually start in late spring/early summer but can start anytime.
  - iv. There is no limit to the number of terms served by an individual, but 2 years is deemed the optimal term for a President.
  - v. Any current Steering Committee member can fill officer vacancies if approved by the majority of the Steering Committee.
  - vi. Steering Committee members must have been an active member (see Section III.a.iv) for at least 6 months prior to running for an officer position.
- d. Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and the Postdoctoral Affairs Administrators
  - i. Attend Steering Committee meetings.
  - ii. Act as liaisons to the University.
  - iii. Offer administrative support and guidance.
- e. Duties of the officers
  - i. The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the PDA and has the following responsibilities:
    1. Delegates responsibilities subject to the advice and consent of the Steering Committee.

2. Sets the agenda and presides over all meetings.
  3. Represents the PDA at campus and off-campus activities or designates another Steering Committee member to act in his or her place.
  4. Serves as the liaison for the PDA when meeting with other organizations or The University of Chicago administration.
  5. In the absence of a majority (i.e., a tie vote) at a Steering Committee meeting, the decision of the President will prevail.
- ii. Vice President has the following responsibilities:
    1. Assist the President.
    2. Assume the duties of the President in their absence.
    3. Chairs a standing committee.
  - iii. Secretary has the following responsibilities:
    1. Records the minutes of all meetings and sends to the Steering Committee in electronic format.
    2. Calls and publicizes meetings in conjunction with the Postdoctoral Affairs Administrator.
    3. Handles appropriate correspondence and record keeping for the PDA Steering Committee.
    4. Assumes the duties of the President or Vice President in their absence.
  - iv. Treasurer has the following responsibilities: (this role is currently fulfilled by the Postdoctoral Affairs Administrator)
    1. Proposes a budget to the PDA Steering Committee each year.
    2. Maintains financial records.
    3. Submits budget and financial records yearly to the Dean and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.
    4. Coordinates finances for the PDA when the administrator is unavailable including ordering and scheduling payment for events.
  - v. Circumstances may arise that would necessitate the election of Co-Presidents rather than a President and a Vice-President. These circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the current officers and the Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs.
  - vi. Other officers created by the PDA through amendment to the Bylaws shall have duties as assigned by that body.

#### **IV. Denial, suspension, termination, resignation of membership or office**

- a. Members who violate any provision of these by-laws, commit any act injurious to the association, or engage in any conduct determined by the Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs, in its sole discretion, to be unethical or in any way detrimental to the PDA, may be denied membership, suspended or removed from the PDA. This removal or suspension must be approved by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.
- b. An Officer of the PDA or a Steering Committee member who wishes to resign from their position must notify the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs,

PDA Officers and the Steering Committee of their intent through written or electronic communication at least 2 weeks prior to their resignation.

- c. Replacement of PDA officers will be decided by the Steering Committee by the next Steering Committee meeting.

## V. **Income and Reimbursement**

- a. All income to the PDA or its working subsidiaries will be received by The Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. The Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs will provide quarterly income reports to the Treasurer.
- b. Disbursements of funds or property valued over \$200 must be approved by the Steering Committee.
- c. The Treasurer will provide an annual report to the Steering Committee, the Dean and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs concerning all incomes and disbursements.

## VI. **Committees and Representatives**

- a. Standing Committees are permanent committees comprised of Chair and Members who serve for one year. Representatives are individuals that serve in the positions for one year. The standing committee members and representatives can serve multiple terms as approved by the Steering Committee.
- b. Standing Committees
  - i. The **Seminar Committee** shall be responsible for organizing seminars that provide career guidance, professional development and information relevant to PDA members.
  - ii. The **Survey Committee** shall be responsible for creating, administrating, analyzing and disseminating results from the annual Postdoctoral Climate Survey.
  - iii. The **Social Events Committee** shall be responsible for planning social gatherings of the PDA, including the annual picnic.
  - iv. The **Symposium Committee** shall be responsible for planning the bi-annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium. The committee should work with the Postdoctoral Administrator to organize the symposium.
  - v. The **Public Affairs Committee** disseminates current news and important items of interests to the postdoctoral community at University of Chicago and acts as liaisons for postdocs with administration and faculty.
  - vi. The **Policy Committee** addresses important policy issues affecting postdocs, from postdoc benefits to issues of equality and representation in science, working together with university administrators, faculty and leadership to address these issues.
  - vii. The **Social Media Committee** facilitates communication between postdocs and UChicago as well as promotes the distribution of relevant topics and concerns to postdocs. The committee utilizes social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and our blog page.
  - viii. The **Orientation Committee** meets every new postdoc within their first month on campus, both to welcome them to the University of Chicago and to ascertain whether their transition to campus has been smooth and if they

have any questions or issues that may need to be resolved. During our visit, we introduce the postdocs to the PDA and our upcoming events and provide them with a folder of useful resources including postdoc benefits and rights, policies, and contact information for administrative offices.

- ix. **Teaching & Outreach Committee:** This newly-formed Committee has two separate but related aims: 1) to establish a centralized resource for science-related outreach and guest-lecture opportunities, and 2) work with University administration and faculty to build a postdoctoral teaching program that will include a mentorship component, courses in developing and teaching undergraduate courses, and workshops designed to make UChicago postdocs more competitive applicants for teaching positions.
- c. Ad hoc Committees and Representatives
  - i. In addition to Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees and Representatives may be created as required by the PDA, which will specify their composition, charge, and tenure.
- d. Rules of Committees and Representatives
  - i. All committees must be approved and adhere to the rules of the PDA.
  - ii. All committees and subsidiary groups within the PDA remain accountable to the Steering Committee and PDA members. The Steering Committee retains the right of review and veto over all the activities of groups that it creates.
  - iii. All appearances, institutional or external, by a PDA member representing the PDA must be nominated by the President and approved by the Steering Committee. The PDA Administrator may represent the PDA without Presidential nomination.

## **VII. Amendments and Review**

- a. All PDA members can submit amendments to these bylaws.
- b. A 2/3 vote of the Steering Committee which must include the officers and approval by the Dean and Postdoctoral Affairs Administrator(s) in the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs is necessary to amend the Bylaws.
- c. The Steering Committee will review these bylaws annually to ensure that they remain current.

ORIGINAL VERSION DATE  
October 2011

REVIEW DATE  
February 2013

UPDATED VERSION DATE  
June 2014

UPDATED VERSION DATE  
August 2015