



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## Postdoctoral Association

### BYLAWS of the

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

The Texas A&M University Postdoctoral Association (TAMU PDA) is an organization of Postdoctoral Scholars (“Postdocs”) for Postdocs. The TAMU PDA is the umbrella organization for all other PDAs on and off TAMU campus in Bryan/College Station, and is supported by the Division of Research (DoR). The TAMU PDA conducts business according to these bylaws.

#### **Ratification**

The current version of the bylaws was approved on May 17, 2023 by the TAMU PDA at the annual General Assembly. All postdoctoral fellows and researchers at Texas A&M University were eligible to vote.

#### **Article 1. Mission**

The mission of the TAMU PDA shall be to foster a sense of community among the postdoctoral scholars, promote networking, support their professional development, advocate and represent the voices of the postdoctoral scholars, and to improve the quality of the postdoctoral experience at TAMU. The TAMU PDA works closely with the TAMU Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA), which is housed within the Division of Research (DoR).

#### **Article 2. Membership**

##### 2.1 Definition of a TAMU postdoctoral scholar

A postdoctoral associate or fellow (“Postdoc”) is an individual holding a doctor of philosophy degree (Ph.D.) or equivalent (e.g., Sc.D., M.D., D.D.S., J.D.) who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of their choosing. At the moment this includes regular salaried employees and certain fellowship holders. Postdocs are essential to the scholarly mission of the mentor and host institution.

##### 2.2 Membership in the TAMU PDA

Any postdoc at Texas A&M University is considered to be a “general member” of the TAMU PDA. All general members are invited to attend and speak at all general assembly meetings. General members may raise topics for discussion by submitting an email request to the Executive Committee ([pda@tamu.edu](mailto:pda@tamu.edu)) at least three days ahead of time. Any general member is eligible to serve on the EC pending the results of an election or appointment (Article 3.3).



### Article 3. Executive Committee

#### 3.1 Structure and purpose of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) is the main governing body of the TAMU PDA. The members of the EC include a President, Vice President, Communications Officer, Treasurer, Event Coordinator, Recording Secretary, Satellite Campus Officer, and interim positions created according to current or anticipated needs. Officer positions are elected or appointed to one-year terms.

The EC shall meet regularly to discuss ongoing business and topics that are related to the TAMU PDA mission. The EC will be in charge of updating the bylaws to remain relevant to the PDA's operations and mission. A vote by the general members is required to approve changes. The EC shall propose amendments and provide analysis of their legality prior to a vote. The EC shall be responsible for interpreting the bylaws when a question of interpretation arises.

#### 3.2 Terms of office

Terms of office are June 1 to May 31 of the following calendar year. Terms are automatically terminated on May 31.

#### 3.3 Applications and appointment procedures

A current EC officer can be re-appointed for the next term by a majority vote of the EC either to the same position or to a different one as deemed appropriate by the current EC. Each member can serve a maximum of three terms on the EC. The EC shall send information about vacancies and EC officer roles to the general members no later than four weeks before the General Assembly. Current or outgoing EC officers shall make themselves available to answer questions about their roles.

EC officer roles will be determined annually. Any general member is eligible to apply for and serve in any EC position if they anticipate remaining at TAMU as a postdoc for the duration of the full upcoming term. Each applicant must provide a written statement to the EC at least one week before the General Assembly. Applications may occur *ad hoc* at the General Assembly if deemed necessary by the current EC. If two or more candidates apply, the EC determines the successful candidate.

#### 3.4 Resignation of appointment

If an EC member is unable or unwilling to complete a full year's appointment for any reason, they may resign by informing the remaining EC officers of their intent via email.



### 3.5 Termination of appointment

If an elected EC member does not fulfill their duties or conducts duties in a way that is detrimental to the mission of the PDA, a meeting of the remaining EC officers will be held to discuss the issue. The EC must communicate their concerns in writing (via e-mail) to the respective EC member. If improvement is not apparent within one month, the EC may meet again and a simple majority vote among EC members will terminate the appointment.

### 3.6 Filling vacancies

Vacancies that arise mid-term may be filled by *ad hoc* application and appointment by the EC. Current officers may fill a vacant position and may hold more than one position if deemed necessary by the EC.

### 3.7 Duties of Executive Committee officers

This section provides a list of duties and responsibilities for each EC officer position, and general duties for all positions. Since the PDA maintains a Google Drive for archiving and future reference, each EC officer shall upload relevant documents and templates to the Drive. The PDA was further granted guest seats at other TAMU organizations (see Article 4.3). The PDA shall attempt to have an EC officer present at all scheduled meetings of such TAMU organizations, preferably the President.

#### 3.7.1 President

The President shall preside over and set agendas for the EC meetings and the annual General Assembly. For EC meetings, a first draft of the agenda and call for additional items shall be sent out no later than one week in advance. Requests for additional items shall be sent by EC members to the president no later than two business days in advance of the meeting. The president shall serve as the liaison to TAMU and other organizations and approve or initiate PDA events (with OPA approval where required). The President will serve in official capacities as the representative of the TAMU PDA.

#### 3.7.2 Vice President

The Vice President (VP) shall support all of the duties of the President and assume those duties, or those of the other officers, in their temporary absence. The VP shall coordinate creation of an annual written report to be presented at the General Assembly. This report will summarize all completed business, ongoing business, and plans for the next year. The VP shall stay in close communication with the President and, when possible, assume duties to alleviate the task load of the president, including representation on TAMU campus organizations.



### 3.7.3 Communications officer

The Communications Officer shall actively maintain the social media accounts of the TAMU PDA and initiate communications to the postdoc community about our events through these platforms. They shall create all flyers for that purpose. They shall distribute any news and noteworthy achievements of the PDA members. Further, the officer shall monitor the PDA email account and respond to incoming emails, or forward them to the appropriate person. The listserv and announcements are managed by the OPA. Together with the President and the OPA, they shall further maintain the contents of the PDA website and update as necessary to provide an appealing and informative web presence of the PDA.

### 3.7.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer, together with the President and the faculty advisor (Director of the OPA), shall develop a budget request and present it to the DoR prior to a new fiscal year (September to August of the following year). Upon approval, the Treasurer shall keep record of spending and administer budget tracking, keep record of attendance to events organized and co-organized by the TAMU PDA, and report on the organization's finances at the General Assembly and EC meetings. Together with the president and the faculty advisor, they are responsible for the organization's compliance with TAMU rules and regulations related to disbursements using institutional funds. They shall complete required financial training through the TrainTraq system. They shall be familiar with the proper use and procedures associated with the use of the TAMU PDA Payment Card provided by the DoR. The Treasurer and the Event Coordinator Officer shall coordinate the payments related to events organized by the TAMU PDA.

### 3.7.5 Event Coordinator

The Event Coordinator shall assume the organizational tasks of PDA events. This includes the Fall and Spring picnic, the National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) events around the annual research symposium, and other social networking events. They shall work closely with the Treasurer to organize necessary payments and with the Communications Officer to promote them. Where appropriate, they shall also coordinate with representatives of other (active) PDAs at TAMU.

### 3.7.6 Recording Secretary

The recording secretary shall take minutes at EC meetings and the General Assembly. Minutes shall be circulated to the EC and OPA within two weeks and approved at the start of the next meeting. They shall archive the minutes to the PDA Google Drive (or similar repository) for future reference. They shall further maintain the PDA Google Drive to preserve previous work and templates, which will facilitate the work of future ECs and ensure continued successful pursuit of the PDA mission. While each officer is responsible for uploading relevant documents, the Recording Secretary oversees the Drive's organization.



### 3.7.7 Satellite Campus Officer

The Satellite Campus officer shall serve as the point of contact for postdocs from satellite campuses. They shall collect their suggestions and present them to the EC and the OPA for discussion. They shall arrange virtual events, such as virtual write and share sessions or virtual coffee talks.

### 3.7.8 Interim officer positions

The EC can create interim officer positions to meet current or anticipated business needs and will define their duties and responsibilities. These temporary positions will be terminated after the business need is met, as determined by a majority vote of the EC. At the end of a standard term of office, interim officers may be re-elected in the same manner as other EC positions.

## **Article 4. Committees**

### 4.1 Committee formation

The main governing body of the PDA is the EC. Other committees can be established *ad hoc* to meet particular goals. As the needs of the PDA evolve, the EC may establish or dissolve committees. For example, previous committees included professional development, advocacy, communications, and events.

### 4.2 Research symposium committee

The annual postdoctoral research symposium is held in September and organized by the research symposium committee. This committee is led by the TAMU OPA. The entire executive committee of the TAMU PDA is part of the research symposium committee. Organization of the NPAW events are led by TAMU PDA in collaboration with other EC PDAs, their respective postdoc offices, and volunteers.

### 4.3 Guest seats at other TAMU organizations

The TAMU PDA has been granted guest seats in TAMU campus organizations, including the University Staff Council (USC), the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Faculty and Student Advisory Board (FSAB), and the Council of Principal Investigators (CPI). These guest seats are important to enhance our visibility as postdocs at TAMU and serve as an important instrument to make our voice heard. The PDA shall attempt to have an EC officer present at all scheduled meetings of such TAMU organizations.



## **Article 5. Meetings**

### 5.1 General Assembly

The General Assembly will be held annually in Spring, and will be chaired by the President. All general members are encouraged to attend. These meetings will include a report of recent activity from the EC and any *ad hoc* committee chairs. All general members are encouraged to present ideas and topics for future PDA activities.

### 5.2 Executive Committee meetings and order of business

Unless otherwise announced, the TAMU PDA EC and the OPA shall meet on a monthly basis to discuss business matters of the PDA and should be run by the President. An agenda will be distributed by email in advance of all scheduled meetings. Agenda items shall be prepared by the President with input from other EC members and the OPA. Minutes should be taken by the Recording Secretary and approved at the start of the next meeting. Agendas and minutes should be archived on the PDA Google Drive.

Any general member may attend or request to be included in the regular agenda by writing to the President. General members are not eligible to vote at EC meetings.

### 5.3 *Ad hoc* Committee meetings

*Ad hoc* Committees are encouraged to meet as needed, and the meetings should be open to all members. Notes should be recorded and archived on the PDA Google Drive.

## **Article 6. Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the general members. Amendments may be proposed by any general member via email or written submission to the Executive Committee at least one month before the General Assembly. Amendments must be presented, with an opportunity for discussion, to all members of the PDA before voting occurs. *Ad hoc* suggestions from general members can be collected by the EC and will be presented at the next General Assembly.