

# **University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association**

## **Constitution**

*Ratified: September 7, 2009*

**Article I. Definitions and Abbreviations**

- A. The University  
The University of Pittsburgh
- B. University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association  
Herein referred to as the UPPDA, it comprises Postdoctoral Professionals at the University and is governed by the Executive Board.
- C. Postdoctoral Professionals  
A Postdoctoral Professional is defined as a person who meets all four of the following criteria:
- has been awarded a doctoral degree (Ph.D., M.D., Sc.D., or equivalent).
  - is involved in substantial full-time academic research or scholarship.
  - is not in a full-time clinical training program.
  - is pursuing a program of research and training under the direction of a faculty member(s) with the approval of the department or research unit.
- D. The Membership (singular: Member) – also referred herein as “Members”
1. All Postdoctoral Professionals at the University are eligible to be Members of the UPPDA.
  2. The Membership must all be comprised of Postdoctoral Professionals at the University.
- E. The EB  
The UPPDA Executive Board.
- F. OACD  
The Office of Academic Career Development at the University.
- G. FAB  
  
The Faculty Advisory Board of the UPPDA.

## **Article II. Mission Statement**

The mission of the UPPDA is to facilitate a more constructive and positive experience for Postdoctoral Professionals that will benefit Postdoctoral Professionals and the University of Pittsburgh alike.

The focus of the efforts of the UPPDA includes:

### Networking/Social

Promote interactions among Postdoctoral Professionals, as well as with former University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Professionals. Assist incoming Postdoctoral Professionals with logistics and by providing social contacts.

### Institutional Representation

Create avenues through which the Postdoctoral Professionals develop a dialog with The University of Pittsburgh administration and external venues to address concerns regarding benefits, grievances, and institutional policies.

### Career Development

Provide centralized resources for career development, postdoctoral training opportunities, job placement resources and alternative career path information.

### Education

Increase institutional and external awareness of both faculty and Postdoctoral Professionals about relevant University of Pittsburgh postdoctoral policies and activities, and federal guidelines affecting Postdoctoral Professionals.

## **Article III. Membership and Organization**

### **A. Eligibility and Membership**

1. All Postdoctoral Professionals at the University are eligible to be Members of the UPPDA (see Article I. Section D.).
2. There is no fee for joining, or maintaining, membership of the UPPDA.
3. Members, executive or non-executive, cannot be paid for their services to the UPPDA.
4. The Membership is divided into two overlapping groups: The Membership and The Executive Board.

### **B. The Executive Board**

#### **1. Function**

The Executive Board is the governing body of the UPPDA and has the responsibility of running the UPPDA on behalf of the Membership.

#### **2. Election**

The Executive Board must be elected to their positions by the Membership, either by online ballot or paper ballot.

#### **3. Officers (The Executive)**

- a. Executive Board Members (herein, The Executive) have full executive power of the UPPDA.
- b. The EB is comprised of the following Officers:
  - President
  - Vice President
  - Secretary
  - Marketing & Communications Officer
  - Finance Officer

#### **4. Executive Board Meetings**

- a. Executive Board meetings shall be held at least monthly.
- b. Ad hoc Executive Board meetings can be requested at any time by any Executive Board Officer.
- c. All Executive Board meetings shall be minuted and the minutes made available to The Membership within one week of the meeting.
- d. Names and other confidential information must be omitted from the posted minutes, but the original, unaltered, minutes will remain available for Executive Board Officers.

5. Voting and Decision Making
  - a. With the exception of an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting, only the Executive Board Members can vote on UPPDA issues at any other time.
  - b. The Membership has the right to overturn an Executive Board decision by registering the request with the President. A vote will then be taken from the Membership to either sustain the objection or repudiate it.
  - c. For Executive Board decisions, a minimum of three of the five Officers is required for voting, and all decisions must be made by a simple majority vote.
6. Terms of Office
  - a. The Executive Board shall be appointed for fifteen months, as follows:
    - Twelve months (December 1 – November 30) as Executive Officers
    - Three months (adjacent November 30 – February 28/29) to advise and support the new incoming Executive Board.

#### **Article IV. UPPDA Membership Meetings**

- A. Meetings may be scheduled (Extraordinary General Meetings, EGM) at any time by order of the Executive Board.
- B. If an Executive Board Officer is unable to attend an EGM, a written report will be submitted.

#### **Article V. Duties of the Executive Board Officers**

- A. President
  - Chair and preside over any EGMs.
  - Chair and preside over Executive Board meetings and FAB meetings.
  - Present a report to the Membership at each EGM.
  - Coordinate the running of the UPPDA.
  - Act as official representative of the UPPDA to the University and external (outside the University) officials and parties.
  - Maintain the professional image of the UPPDA.
  - Serve as the official UPPDA contact for the Faculty Advisory Board.

- B. Vice President
- Perform the duties of the President when the President is absent.
  - The Vice President will share the roles of the President.
- C. Secretary
- Coordinate and schedule Executive Board Meetings and EGMs.
  - Write and distribute the minutes of all Executive Board meetings and EGMs.
  - In the absence of the Secretary, another Executive Board officer must take minutes.
  - Provide weekly or biweekly activity updates to the Executive Board and, when appropriate, OACD or other University bodies.
- D. Marketing & Communications Officer
- Advertise and notify the Membership of upcoming EGMs.
  - Advertise and notify the Membership of other postdoctoral events.
  - Advertise and notify the Membership of all actions.
  - Coordinate events for Postdoctoral Professionals.
  - Keep an updated distribution list of Postdoctoral Professionals at the University.
  - Ultimate responsibility for keeping the Web site up to date.
- E. Finance Officer
- Prepare an annual budget to be submitted for University approval.
  - Present a budget proposal to the Membership for discussion and approval.
  - Process official University financial paperwork.
  - Coordinate budgeting of events for Postdoctoral Professionals for the Executive Board.
  - Maintain detailed and accurate accounting records of the UPPDA.
  - Authorize and verify all expenditures.
- F. Common Duties to all Positions
- Perform other duties as deemed necessary by the Executive Board.
  - Present a report to the Membership detailing the actions of the UPPDA and Executive Board as required.
  - Update the Web site regularly.

## **Article VI. Requirements and Expectations of UPPDA Executive Board Officers**

- A. All Executive Board officers.
  - 1. Accept the majority decision and support the Executive Board on the decisions made.
  - 2. Perform all duties in a professional and ethically responsible manner.
  - 3. Must not use the UPPDA as a way to push personal agendas, and must always act in the interest of the Membership.
  
- B. Executive Board Officers
  - 1. Must not miss more than three Executive Board meetings in any given term of office.
  - 2. May participate in meetings via teleconference for not more than three Executive Board meetings per annum.
  
- C. Annual Goals
  - 1. Annual goals may be set by each Executive Board Member complete with a clearly stated, measurable product, and a timeline for completion no greater than 12 months long.
  - 2. Annual goals will support the mission of the UPPDA.
  - 3. Annual goals must be set within 30 days of the election of a Member to the Executive Board.
  - 4. Set goals may be related to, but must be over and above, the established duties of the Executive Board (Article V).

## Article VII. Elections

### A. The Executive Board

#### 1. Annual Election of the Executive Board

- a. Executive Board officers are nominated and elected once a year by online or paper ballot.
- b. Registration with the UPPDA is required before a Member can participate in the vote.
- c. A minimum of 15 non-executive Members is required for election results to be ratified.

#### 2. Election Process

- a. Time: The election period shall take place during a four week period, beginning with the first week in October.

Week 1: The Executive Board announces the election to the postdoctoral community by email. This email clearly expresses the election procedure and the mission of UPPDA. The role of the current board members is limited to advertising the elections to postdoctoral associates and scholars.

Week 2: Call for manifestos from the candidates by email. This email will state, that once statements are submitted to the website, they cannot be altered. The email encourages campaigning within the rules (see subsection f).

Week 3: Review of manifestos by the Election Committee (see Article VII. Section A. 2. d.). Manifestos will be made public by Monday morning of week 4.

Week 4: Voting. The voting period shall be for a period of time of not less than five days and not greater than fourteen days. The postdoctoral community shall be notified when the voting process begins, as well as when it ends. The new members of the Executive Board shall be announced by the Election Committee no later than one week after voting has closed. If any vacant Executive Board positions remain, or there is a tie, the Election Committee will resolve these issues by November 30, or within 30 days of the close of the election.

- b. Any current UPPDA executive board member who wishes to be a candidate in the election shall announce this by September 30 to the current Executive Board as well as to OACD. This candidate will not be involved in further election planning.
- c. Candidacy: The UPPDA was established to benefit the postdoctoral community of the University of Pittsburgh. All candidates for UPPDA executive board positions shall be current University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Associates or Postdoctoral Scholars, as defined by the University. This shall be verified by the Election Committee or the OACD. Candidate

manifestos should demonstrate an understanding of the mission of the UPPDA, as well as provide some background on the individual's past leadership experience, and contain a statement of the goals that they wish to accomplish during their term of office.

- d. Election Committee: An Election Committee shall be organized to oversee the entire election process, including reviewing manifestos, monitoring the voting process, and announcing the election results. The Committee shall be composed of one current or former UPPDA Executive Board member, one member from the OACD, and one member from the Faculty Advisory Board. Only members of the Election Committee will have access to the online voting portal. They will follow the election and announce the new board to the postdoctoral community, the candidates, and OACD, by email.
- e. The Election Committee shall review all candidate manifestos for completeness. If more information is required, manifestos may be revised up to the date when manifestos are made public and voting begins. After voting begins, manifestos may not be revised or withdrawn.
- f. Campaigning: Campaigning by word-of-mouth and flyers (printed and electronic) should be encouraged. Posters and flyers should be posted in discrete areas. Candidates must obtain approval from departmental and/or building administrators before posting campaign material. UPPDA and OACD will not accept any responsibility of legal action or actions taken against candidates who do not comply with this rule. Usage of UPPDA or any university logos and UPPDA-emailing list for campaigning is prohibited. Negative references to other candidates (e.g. "mudslinging") is prohibited. Candidates may campaign together, as a "ticket"; however, all offices will be voted on individually.

### 3. Interim and Vacant Executive Board Positions

- a. In the event that an Executive Board position becomes vacant due to resignation or removal from office, the Executive Board shall appoint an Interim Executive Board member to fill the position until a special election can be held. If a vacant office is filled within the first six months of the term of office, a special election must be held. If the vacant office is filled in the last six months of the term of office, no special election is necessary, and the Interim Executive Board member shall become a full Executive Board member.
- b. The special election shall occur within three months of when the vacancy occurs, and shall follow the process outlined in Article VII. Section A. 2.

### 4. Tied Ballots

If the result of a ballot is tied, the Election Committee will vote to resolve the tie.

5. Loss of Position

- a. Any Executive Board Officer can be removed from their position at any time by a majority vote of the Membership or of the Executive Board.
- b. Terms for removal of an Officer from the Executive Board. Reasons for removal include missing five or more Executive Board meetings annually and in the cases of negative references to any of the Officers of the Executive Board. UPPDA will not tolerate racism and/or sexual harassment.
- c. These actions shall be coordinated and overseen by the Executive Director of the Office of Academic Career Development. The removed officer shall have an opportunity to pledge their case. The final decision will be carried out by the President.

B. Returning Officer

A Returning Officer may be appointed to conduct Executive Board elections. Roles include:

- Registering candidates for the ballot.
- Notification of candidates and voting logistics to the Membership.
- Confidential counting of votes.
- Notification of results to the Executive Board, candidates and the Membership.

C. Extraordinary General Meetings

- a. All Members are entitled to vote on UPPDA issues and decisions at Extraordinary General Meetings.
- b. Each Member has one vote on all decisions made and ballots cast at an EGM.

## **Article VIII. Relationship with Internal and External Organizations**

- A. The UPPDA represents Postdoctoral Professionals affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh in institutional, regional, national, and international meetings and committees.
- B. The UPPDA Executive Board will decide by simple majority vote as to which Postdoctoral Professional(s) will officially represent UPPDA at any of the above meetings or committees.
- C. Faculty Advisory Board
  - a. The Executive Board shall maintain a Faculty Advisory Board consisting of a range of faculty from across the University.
  - b. The Faculty Advisory Board should be consulted at least annually to report on UPPDA events, plans and actions and as required to ask for input into the running of the UPPDA.
  - c. The primary role of the Faculty Advisory Board is to help and support Members within the University by interactions with the UPPDA.
  - d. The Faculty Advisory Board do not have executive power or voting rights.
  - e. The remit of the faculty advisory board is as follows:

The purpose of the UPPDA Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) is to draw on the knowledge and experience of knowledgeable faculty and mentors to enhance the postdoctoral experience of UPPDA Members. FAB appointees should collectively represent the whole Pitt community and will be consulted semi-annually by the UPPDA Executive Board. At these semi-annual consultations, the FAB will be briefed on all UPPDA activities, plans, actions, and budget proposals. The FAB will be looked to by the UPPDA executive board for advice on current, past, and potential future projects and issues regarding enhancing the postdoctoral training at the University of Pittsburgh. The UPPDA will look to the FAB for perspective and knowledge, including The University point of view, to supplement the input already available from the Office of Academic Career Development. Thus, the FAB works both as a postdoctoral think tank and a sounding board for UPPDA proposals and ideas.

The FAB will consist of six Pitt faculty Members as equally distributed between The University Schools and Centers as possible. Each local Member of the FAB will be asked to serve a two-year term. No limit will be placed on the number of terms a FAB Member can sit on the board. the UPPDA Executive Board reserves the right to limit the number of terms one person can serve as a FAB Member. The terms will be staggered to allow for memory retention and limit complete board turnover. When a board Member steps down, their position must be filled by a faculty Member of the same affiliation to ensure ongoing equal representation.

An additional FAB Member may be added (seven total Members) from an external university system to advise the UPPDA on events, projects, issues, and actions from an external point of view. This external faculty Member would be experienced in advising and familiar with the postdoctoral experience. He/She should be known for being nationally active in postdoctoral activities, organizations, boards, or associations (e.g., NPA) and may be affiliated with an academic institution (university or college) with an existing postdoctoral association. Feedback from the external FAB Member will be used to: 1) benefit from the experience of other university's active faculty Members and perhaps postdoctoral associations; 2) network outside the university to increase visibility of Pitt, the UPPDA, and UPPDA Members; 3) allow collaborative learning of "best practices" for postdoctoral associations. This external board Member is not required, but may be desirable for the reasons stated above. The term for this position will be flexible, but with a minimum of one year.

**Article IX. Ratification and Changes to the UPPDA Constitution**

- A. Following and changes (not limited to amendments, additions, retractions, complete removal or replacement) to the UPPDA Constitution, ratification must be achieved.
- B. Ratification of the UPPDA Constitutions requires all of the following:
  - a. Simple majority vote of the Executive Board prior to the presentation to the Membership.
  - b. Simple majority vote of the Membership participating in voting.
- C. Upon the satisfactory completion of these requirements, the new constitution will be ratified and immediately binding.
- D. Amendments or replacement of the UPPDA constitution can only be achieved by Members, and not by faculty or staff of the University.
- E. The current President and Vice President must sign an original copy of the Constitution to indicate its ratification.
- F. The Secretary shall keep the current, signed, ratified constitution.

## **Ratification Status**

We, the undersigned, hereby confirm that this constitution was ratified by the Membership according to the required regulations.

**Ratification Date:** September 7, 2009

### **Signatures:**

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**Dr. Savanh Chanthaphavong**  
President of UPPDA, 2009

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**Dr. Karen Thickman**  
Vice President of UPPDA, 2009

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**Dr. Revathi Rajkumar**  
Secretary of UPPDA, 2009

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**Dr. Derek Cashman**  
Marketing & Communications  
Officer of UPPDA, 2009

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**Dr. Andrea Cronican**  
Finance Officer of UPPDA,  
2009