University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association

Constitution

Ratified: May, 2020
**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 full-time academic research.
- 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.

Included, but not limited to, Postdoctoral Associates/Scholars and Research Associates.

**D. The Membership (singular: Member) – also referred herein as “Members”**

1. All Postdoctoral Professionals at the University are automatically 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.

**H. EGM**

Extraordinary General Meeting
Article II. Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Association (UPPDA) is to develop a culture of professional growth, enhance research training, and improve the postdoctoral experience.

The goals of UPPDA are as follows:

Advocate for the Postdoctoral Community
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.

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

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.

Build the UPPDA Community
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.

Provide leadership opportunities for UPPDA members either through UPPDA directly or through development of partnerships with other organizations.

Provide Resources for Postdoctoral Professionals
Increase awareness of UPPDA signature programs and develop new programs that address the needs of postdoctoral associates and scholars.

Assist in the transition of new postdoctoral professionals to the University of Pittsburgh by providing information about postdoc life and centralizing resources for postdocs.
Article III. Membership and Organization

A. Eligibility and Membership
1. All Postdoctoral Professionals at the University are, by default, Members of the UPPDA (see Article I. Section D.).
2. There are no fees associated with 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, through online ballot.
3. Executive Board Members (herein referred to as EB) have full executive power of the UPPDA.
   a. The EB is comprised of the following Members:
      • President
      • Advocacy Chair
      • Career Development Chair
      • Communications Chair
      • Networking Chair
      • International Chair
      • Returning officer (specialty position, may be filled by EB member)

4. Executive Board Meetings
   a. Executive Board meetings shall be held at least monthly.
   b. Ad hoc EB meetings can be requested at any time by any Executive Board Member.
   c. All Executive Board meetings shall be recorded and the minutes made available to The Membership upon request.
   d. Names and other confidential information must be omitted from the posted minutes, but the original, unaltered, minutes will remain available for Executive Board Members.
5. Voting and Decision Making
   a. With the exception of an EGM, only the EB Members can vote on UPPDA issues.
   b. The Membership has the right to upturn an EB 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 EB decisions, a minimum of three of the five Officers are 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 thirteen months, as follows:
      • Twelve months (June 1 of election year – May 30 of following year) as Executive Officers
      • Three months (June 1- Aug 30) as consultants to advise and support the new incoming Executive Board.

Article IV. UPPDA Membership Meetings

A. EGMs may be scheduled at any time by order of the EB.
B. If an EB 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 EB 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 FAB.
   • Serve as the focal point for fundraising efforts.
   • Authorize and verify all expenditures.
   • Prepare an annual budget to be submitted for University approval.
• Provide activity updates to the EB and, when appropriate, OACD or other University bodies.

B. Career Development Chair
• Coordinate all activities and events related to professional development (e.g. Data & Dine Symposium)
• Organize postdoctoral career fairs
• Identify, advertise and execute new career and training opportunities for postdocs

C. Networking Chair
• Maintain the Pitt Postdoctoral Network page on LinkedIn
• Coordinate all events for Postdoctoral Appreciation Week
• Coordinate Happy Hour social gatherings
• Coordinate any external/volunteer activities of the UPPDA
• Work with the University Center for Teaching and Learning and local schools and colleges to promote teaching development initiatives for postdocs
• Assume the responsibilities of the Communications Chair when the Communications chair is absent. The Networking Chair will have access to all email, website, and social media accounts.

D. Communications Chair
• Advertise and notify the Membership of postdoctoral events and upcoming EGMs.
• Generate flyers, advertisements, and registration links for events
• Keep an updated distribution list of Postdoctoral Professionals at the University
• Ultimate responsibility for keeping the website, and if applicable, Facebook and Twitter pages up to date.
• Field emails from the UPPDA account and forward them to the appropriate committee member or OACD official.
E. Advocacy Chair
   • Participate on the National Postdoctoral Association Advocacy Committee
   • Work with the OACD on advocacy issues for postdocs at the local level
   • Conduct necessary background research and draft proposals for change to present to senior university administrators
   • Coordinate and schedule EB Meetings and EGMs.
   • Write and distribute the minutes of all Executive Board meetings and EGMs.
   • Assume the responsibilities of the President when the President is absent.

F. International Chair
   • Collaborate with the Office of International Service (OIS) and large ethnic student organizations on campus
   • Host seminars for international postdocs
   • Maintain content for an International Page on the UPPDA Website, which would include resources specific to international postdocs
   • Serve (with committee members) as point of contact for international postdocs seeking information or assistance

G. Common Duties to all Positions
   • Perform other duties as deemed necessary by the EB.
   • Present a report to the Membership detailing the actions of the UPPDA and Executive Board as required
   • Provide content to the Communications Chair for regular website/social media updates
   • Promote engagement of UPPDA members, provide a pathway for University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Associates/Scholars, or Research Associates to serve as committee members
Article VI. Requirements and Expectations of UPPDA Executive Board Officers

A. All Executive Board officers.
   1. Accept the majority decision and support the EB 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 EB meetings in any given term of office.
   2. May participate in meetings via teleconference for no more than three EB meetings per annum.

C. Annual Goals
   1. Annual goals may be set by each EB Member complete with a clearly stated measurable product, and a timeline for completion (no greater than 12 months).
   2. Annual goals will support the mission of the UPPDA.
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 ballot.
   b. All UPPDA Members are eligible to vote.
   c. A minimum of 15 non-executive Members are required for election results to be ratified.

2. Election Process
   a. Time: The election period shall take place during a four-week period, beginning in April.

      **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 May 31, 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 March 31 to the current EB 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 EB position becomes vacant due to resignation or removal from office, the EB shall appoint a new EB member to fill the position within three months of the position vacancy.

b. The EB may choose to hold an open a call for candidates to fill the vacant position. The new Chair will be selected by a majority vote of the EB and shall occur within three months of when the vacancy occurs.

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 EB Officer can be removed from their position at any time by a majority vote of the Membership or of the EB.
   b. Terms for removal of an Officer from the EB. 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 EB. UPPDA will not tolerate racism and/or sexual harassment.
   c. These actions shall be coordinated and overseen by the Executive Director of the OACD. The removed officer shall have an opportunity to pledge their case. The final decision will be carried out by the President.

B. **Returning Officer**
   1. A Returning Officer may be appointed to conduct EB elections. Roles include:
      a. Registering candidates for the ballot.
      b. Notification of candidates and voting logistics to the Membership.
      c. Confidential counting of votes.
      d. Notification of results to the EB, candidates and the Membership.

C. **Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)**
   1. All Members are entitled to vote on UPPDA issues and decisions at EGM.
   2. 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 Professionals will officially represent UPPDA at any of the above meetings or committees.

C. Faculty Advisory Board
   1. The Executive Board shall maintain a Faculty Advisory Board consisting of a range of faculty from across the University.
   2. 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.
   3. The primary role of the Faculty Advisory Board is to help and support Members within the University by interactions with the UPPDA.
   4. The Faculty Advisory Board do not have executive power or voting rights.
   5. 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 at least annually by the UPPDA Executive Board. At these 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 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:
   1. Simple majority vote of the Executive Board prior to the presentation to the Membership.
   2. 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 Communication Chair must sign an original copy of the Constitution to indicate its ratification.

F. The Communications Chair shall keep the current, signed, ratified constitution. A copy of the constitution shall be provided to the OACD for institutional record and published on the UPPDA website.
Ratification Status

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

Ratification Date:

David Gau, PhD
President

Ben Vincent, PhD Career Development Chair

Jenny Jones, PhD
Networking Chair

Mariarosaria De Rosa, PhD
Communication and Networking Chair

Alex Cole, PhD
Advocacy Chair

Camille Jacqueline, PhD
International Chair