Bylaws of the University of Vermont Postdoctoral Association





*Adopted at the UVM PDA 2018 Annual Meeting: May 29, 2018*

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**Preamble:**

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA), a 501(c)3 organization that seeks sustainable change and improvement for the postdoctoral experience, defines a postdoc as “*A postdoctoral scholar (“postdoc”) is an individual holding a doctoral degree 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 his or her choosing.”* As a sustaining member of the NPA, the University of Vermont Postdoctoral Association (UVM PDA) adheres to this definition. In addition, the UVM PDA supports the six core competencies identified by the NPA that all postdoctoral scholars should develop. These six core competencies are: I) discipline-specific conceptual knowledge; II) research skill development; III) communication skills; IV) professionalism; V) leadership and management skills; and VI) responsible conduct of research. Specifically, the NPA has discovered that additional training and experiences in grant writing, project management, leadership, and broad communication are often neglected during the postdoctoral training period but are highly valued by hiring managers.

According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, postdoctoral scholars have a dual role as both active contributors to ongoing institutional research efforts and trainees “expected to be actively engaged in their training and career development under their research appointments as postdocs.” There is currently no single group or organization at UVM that properly represents all of these roles as postdoctoral scholars occupy a unique and diverse niche at any institute. The University of Vermont Postdoctoral Association aims to meet this unmet need.

The following bylaws outline the goals, roles, and responsibilities of the University of Vermont Postdoctoral Association, its officers, and members. The bylaws of the Stanford University Postdoctoral Association (SURPAS), 2016 revision, provided the foundation for the following UVM PDA bylaws.

**Article I: General**

**Section 1: Mission**

1. The mission of the University of Vermont Postdoctoral Association (UVM PDA) is to promote a culture reflecting the University of Vermont Common Ground and six core competencies identified by the National Postdoctoral Association to facilitate professional development, broaden the training experience, and foster a vibrant, open, and collaborative community for all Postdoctoral Scholars at UVM.
2. The primary goals of the UVM PDA and its Executive Committee are as follows:
   1. Be a common voice for postdoctoral scholars at UVM.
   2. Build a strong and well-defined Postdoctoral community through professional and social networking.
   3. Provide diverse professional and career development opportunities for Postdoctoral Scholars.
   4. Foster interaction between the UVM PDA, local professional and academic institutes, societies, and organizations.
3. Members of the Executive Committee will represent the interests of Postdoctoral Scholars to the University by serving on UVM committees and governing bodies.

**Section 2: Membership**

1. All Postdoctoral Scholars at the University of Vermont are eligible for membership. A Postdoctoral Scholar shall be defined by Human Resources as either a Postdoctoral Associate or Postdoctoral Fellow/Trainee.
2. Non-represented individuals possessing a doctoral degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D., Pharm.D.) who conduct research under a UVM faculty member’s sponsorship or supervision may not all be classified by Human Resources as either a Postdoctoral Associate or Postdoctoral Fellow/Trainee. These individuals are often associated with a UVM affiliate, such as interns/residents at the University of Vermont Medical Center, and are eligible for UVM PDA membership and participation in UVM PDA events.
3. Dues and registration are not required for membership. Membership is implied for all Postdoctoral Scholars conducting research under a UVM faculty member.

**Section 3: Non-Discrimination and Diversity Statement**

1. These Bylaws, the Executive and Advisory Committees, and the elected officers shall not discriminate against any individual or organization on account of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability.
2. UVM PDA shall act in accordance to UVM’s diversity statement *“Why Diversity and Inclusive Excellence is an Academic and Institutional Strategic Priority for the University of Vermont.”*
3. The Executive and Advisory Committees seek to ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all Postdoctoral Scholars, across all UVM colleges, schools, and affiliates, in UVM PDA membership, leadership, and activities.

**Section 4: Conflict of interest**

1. The members of the Executive and Advisory Committees are expected to avoid any actual, apparent, or perceived conflict between their own individual personal or professional interests and the interests of the UVM PDA. Personal self-interest shall be set aside.
2. The members of the Executive and Advisory Committees shall act at all times in the best interests of the UVM PDA, adhering to the mission and goals outlined in Article I, Section 1. Duties shall be performed in such a manner that promotes confidence and trust in their integrity, objectivity, and impartiality that upholds a positive perception of trust in the UVM PDA.
3. UVM PDA shall act in accordance to UVM’s *Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment* and *Financial Conflict of Interest in Sponsored Research* policies.
4. All UVM PDA members are expected to respect the Conflict of Interest policies listed in Article I, Section 4.C and have a responsibility for self-monitoring.

**Article II: Executive Committee**

**Section 1: Officers of the Executive Committee**

1. The UVM PDA Executive Committee represents and advocates for the interests of all UVM Postdoctoral Scholars.
2. The Executive Committee consists of six (6) officer positions: two (2) Co-Chairs, Treasurer, Secretary, Webmaster, and Public Relations. One person may occupy up to but no more than two (2) positions. The Co-Chair positions must be held by different Postdoctoral Scholars.
3. The Executive Committee shall consist of Postdoctoral Scholars from at least two (2) different schools or colleges with at least one (1) officer not affiliated with the Larner College of Medicine (LCOM). The UVM PDA recognizes the limited number of UVM Postdoctoral Scholars outside the Larner College of Medicine. This requirement can be met by including a non-LCOM Postdoctoral Scholar on the Executive Committee as a Postdoc-at-Large Advisor.
4. The Executive Committee shall have those powers and responsibilities described in these Bylaws. Officers of the Executive Committee share all UVM PDA responsibilities and duties and shall collaborate, fostering the academic culture of openness. All decisions shall be made by consensus.
5. The Executive Committee shall have the power to create permanent and ad hoc committees as needed to fulfill the UVM PDA mission and goals.
6. The Executive Committee has discretion in responses to incoming requests from UVM PDA members, UVM and UVM affiliate Postdoctoral Scholars, the UVM administration, and non-UVM contacts.
7. The Executive Committee shall ensure that the following information be available online or upon request to all UVM PDA members: these Bylaws, the approved minutes of all UVM PDA meetings, the regular newsletter, the names and titles of all elected and appointed Executive and Advisory Committee members.

**Section 2: Responsibilities: Co-Chairs (2)**

1. Lead all meetings of Executive and Advisory Committees. This includes soliciting items from committee members and preparing an agenda that shall be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting to be used for taking meeting minutes.
2. Serve as the primary contact for University of Vermont administration. One Co-Chair shall be selected as Chair and the other as Co-Chair by the Executive Committee. Chair and Co-Chair shall be elected by a majority at the first Executive Committee meeting following the Annual Meeting. This designation is primarily for administrative reasons. All responsibilities shall be shared between the Co-Chairs unless otherwise denoted in these Bylaws.
3. The Co-Chairs shall meet regularly with the Administrative Advisors including, but not limited to, the Dean of the Graduate College, the Vice President of Research, and their staff. These meetings shall occur at least twice per year.
4. Serve as the liaison to other postdoctoral associations and offices, Universities, local businesses, and the National Postdoctoral Association.
5. Represent the interests of the UVM PDA and UVM Postdoctoral Scholars on institute-wide committees. If deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee, the Co-Chairs may appoint a member of the Executive Committee to sit on such committees.
6. Oversee elections and timely appointment of Executive and Advisory Committee members.
7. Oversee the planning and organization of official UVM PDA events. These include, but are not limited to, the Annual Meeting, symposiums, professional development, and social events. The Co-Chairs may recruit UVM Postdoctoral Scholars and form ad hoc committees as needed for such events.
8. Compile an annual “State of the UVM PDA” report that presents the current UVM PDA status, summarizes achievements of the prior year, and outlines goals for the upcoming year. The Co-Chairs shall present the “State of the UVM PDA” at the Annual Meeting.
9. The Co-Chairs may delegate any of these duties to other members of the Executive Committee, Advisory Committee, or UVM Postdoctoral Scholars.

**Section 3: Responsibilities: Treasurer**

1. Manage the UVM PDA budget and act as a liaison with the Administrative Business Services Center (ABSC) for financial matters. The Treasurer shall provide financial oversight, compliance, and disbursement in accordance with UVM policy. At least one Co-Chair must act as a co-signer for the Treasurer to be reimbursed.
2. The University issued UVM PDA credit card (PurCard) shall be in the Treasurer’s name. The Treasurer shall oversee UVM PDA associated chart string usage, approve all purchases, and distribute reimbursements. One of the Co-Chairs may approve purchases in the case that the Treasurer is unavailable.
3. Compile and present quarterly financial reports of revenue and expenses to the Executive Committee.
4. Act as the primary contact person for donations and lead fundraising activities. The Treasurer may recruit help from members of the Executive and Advisory Committees, UVM Postdoctoral Scholars, and those individuals, businesses, or institutes affiliated with the University of Vermont.
5. The Treasurer shall draft a yearly budget report that includes both the prior/current fiscal year and upcoming fiscal year. The Treasurer shall negotiate with members of the Executive Committee to finalize yearly budget requests. The Treasurer shall present the draft budget at the Annual Meeting. The draft budget shall be voted on by UVM PDA members at the Annual Meeting. If the budget is not approved by the majority at the Annual Meeting, the Treasurer shall hear comments and present an updated draft to the Executive Committee for final approval by July 1st. The fiscal year shall begin on July 1st, in accordance with UVM policy.

**Section 4: Responsibilities: Secretary**

1. Schedule all Executive and Advisory Committee meetings and reserve space for such meetings. The Secretary shall notify and remind all UVM PDA members of meeting time, date, and location. The Secretary shall work with the Webmaster to post meeting information on the UVM PDA website and calendar(s).
2. Record minutes at each Executive Committee meeting and other appropriate UVM PDA events. The Secretary shall send draft minutes to the Co-chairs for approval in a timely manner (within 5 days). The Secretary shall distribute approved minutes to all Executive and Advisory Committee members. The Secretary shall provide minutes upon request to UVM Postdoctoral Scholars and University administration.
3. Organize and manage all UVM PDA documents. The Secretary shall maintain both hard copies, when available, and digital copies of all documents. Digital versions shall be made available upon request and archived in a shared data storage solution. The Secretary shall work with the Webmaster to maintain these documents in an organized system.
4. Notify the UVM Postdoctoral community of pertinent information from the official UVM PDA.

**Section 5: Responsibilities: Webmaster**

1. Maintain and curate the UVM PDA website, [www.uvm.edu/postdocs](http://www.uvm.edu/postdocs), and update the UVM PDA calendar of events. The Webmaster shall update the UVM PDA website at least monthly to present the UVM PDA as an active organization. The Webmaster shall work with all members of the Executive and Advisory Committees, as appropriate and needed, to ensure timely posting of UVM PDA news, events, documents, and other pertinent information.
2. Maintain the UVM PDA email account, [postdocs@uvm.edu](mailto:postdocs@uvm.edu). The Webmaster may respond to emails or forward them to Executive Committee members, as appropriate.
3. The Webmaster shall work with the Secretary to maintain organized digital copies of UVM PDA documents in a streamlined digital storage solution that is easily accessible.

**Section 6: Responsibilities: Public Relations**

1. With help from UVM, local, and regional communications offices and other Executive Committee members, compile a list of upcoming events and notify UVM Postdoctoral Scholars of upcoming weekly events in an email sent from [postdocs@uvm.edu](mailto:postdocs@uvm.edu). Upcoming weekly events shall be distributed by Friday of the week before. These communications may include important information other than events. Extraneous information shall be kept to a minimum.
2. Compose and distribute the UVM PDA Newsletter. This is currently a quarterly publication but may be more frequent upon approval of the Executive Committee. The Public Relations officer may recruit other Executive Committee members as needed.
3. Maintain and curate active social media accounts.
4. Interview UVM Postdoctoral Scholars and compose a corresponding Postdoc Spotlight for publication in the Newsletter and posting on the UVM PDA website and social media accounts. The Public Relations officer may recruit Executive Committee members as needed.
5. Promote UVM PDA events. The Public Relations Officers may recruit members of the Executive and Advisory Committees as well as UVM Postdoctoral Scholars for such promotions.
6. Maintain an active connection with the UVM communications community.
7. Reach out to new and established UVM resources, such as UVM Foundations, to promote the UVM PDA and UVM Postdoctoral community.

**Section 7: Responsibilities: Postdoc-at-Large Advisor(s)**

1. The Postdoc-at-Large Advisor position shall be open to all UVM Postdoctoral Scholars who want to participate UVM PDA meetings and in the planning of UVM PDA events but cannot commit to the duties and responsibilities of being an officer.
2. The Executive Committee shall solicit nominations and appoint a maximum of four (4) Postdoc-at-Large Advisors. Postdoctoral Scholars may self-nominate to become a Postdoc-at-Large Advisor.
3. As stated in Article II, Section 1, Clause C, the requirement to include at least one (1) non-LCOM Postdoctoral Scholar may be met by the Post-at-Large Advisor(s).
4. The Postdoc-at-Large Advisor(s) shall be able to cast a vote as deemed appropriate by officers of the Executive Committee.
5. Listen to fellow Postdoctoral Scholars within their department, college, and UVM as a whole. Bring relevant issues to the attention of the UVM PDA Executive Committee.
6. Provide aid to officers of the Executive Committee including, but not limited to, leadership and participation in ad hoc committees (e.g., events, symposium, etc.).

**Section 8: Term Expiration**

1. Appointments to the Executive Committee are for one (1) year.
2. A position on the Executive Committee shall become vacant upon resignation or dereliction of duty. A member of the Executive Committee may resign by submission to the Executive Committee of a written statement of resignation. Dereliction of duty shall be determined by the Executive Committee and must receive unanimous approval.

**Section 9: Guidelines for Executive Committee Meetings**

1. Executive Committee members may meet when needed.
2. Meetings shall be led by the Co-Chairs who shall determine the agenda upon input from all officers. The agenda shall be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting.
3. The Secretary shall take notes and submit draft minutes to the Co-Chairs following each meeting for approval. Meeting minutes shall be distributed to all Executive and Advisory Committee members.
4. A quorum shall consist of the presence of two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Committee officers. Decisions taken at Executive Committee meetings must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority. It is advised that all decisions be by consensus and supported by all Executive Committee members present.

**Article III: Advisory Committee**

**Section 1: Membership**

1. The UVM PDA Advisory Committee shall provide guidance to the Executive Committee to ensure unbiased representation and advocacy for the interests of all UVM Postdoctoral Scholars.
2. The Advisory Committee shall consist of Junior and Senior Faculty Advisors, Administrative Advisors, and an Administrative Aide.
3. The Advisory Committee shall have those powers and responsibilities described in these Bylaws.
4. Members of the Advisory Committee shall provide oversight to the Executive Committee to ensure that the mission and goals of the UVM PDA are being met. Since a postdoctoral position is a temporary training period, the Advisory Committee shall provide continuity as officers of the Executive Committee transition to the next phase of their career.

**Section 2: Responsibilities: Faculty Advisors**

1. The Executive Committee shall solicit nominations for two (2) Junior Faculty Advisors and one (1) Senior Faculty Advisor. Junior Faculty Advisors shall have a doctorate degree and be tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professors. The Senior Faculty Advisor shall be a tenured Associate or Full Professor.
2. Faculty Advisors shall consist of Faculty from at least two (2) different schools or colleges with at least one (1) advisor not affiliated with the Larner College of Medicine (LCOM).
3. Provide advice and guidance to the officers of the Executive Committee as needed to ensure the goals and mission of the UVM PDA are being met.
4. Impart knowledge gained from their experiences transitioning from a Postdoctoral Scholar to Faculty.
5. Oversee long-term goals and initiatives of the UVM PDA, providing continuity, to ensure long-term survival of an active postdoctoral community.
6. Attend the Annual Meeting, if possible, and regular meetings of the Execute Committee as requested.
7. Share potential funding and career development opportunities.
8. Faculty Advisors serve at their pleasure and convenience. The recommended commitment is a minimum of two (2) years.
9. Faculty Advisors may resign at any point by submission to the Executive Committee of a written statement of resignation. The Executive Committee shall solicit nominations for a replacement.

**Section 3: Responsibilities: Administrative Aide**

1. The Administrative Aide shall be an administrative professional employed full time at the University of Vermont for a minimum of five (5) years. They shall have first-hand experience with the inner workings of UVM including room reservation, event planning, and expense report submission. It is important that the Administrative Aide have a broad administrative expertise as Postdoctoral Scholars do not have the appropriate training.
2. Coordinate with Sodexo, or UVM contracted cater, and the Executive Committee for all catering events.
3. Provide guidance and, when possible, interoffice introductions between the Executive Committee and UVM staff to facilitate the goals of the UVM PDA. Such introductions include the office staff of individual departments, colleges, and Deans
4. Attend the Annual Meeting and meetings of the Executive Committee as requested.
5. Notify the Executive Committee of funding and/or professional development opportunities.
6. The Executive Committee may compensate the Administrative Aide for they time and effort. The Treasurer may include a budget line item to provide partial support to the Administrative Aide as a bonus.

**Section 4: Responsibilities: Administrative Advisors**

1. The Administrative Advisors shall consist of the Dean of the Graduate College, Vice President of Research, and their respective staff.
2. Maintain the sustaining membership of the University of Vermont to the National Postdoctoral Association.
3. Guide UVM PDA strategic planning, oversee progress towards UVM PDA goals, and facilitate fundraising.
4. Act as a liaison between the UVM PDA and the Provost, Human Resources, and other UVM Administrative bodies.

**Article IV: Elections**

**Section 1: General**

1. Officer elections shall occur in May prior to the Annual Meeting. The positions will be effective by the start of the upcoming academic year. Outgoing officers shall mentor the newly elected officers over the summer during this transition period to ensure long-term group viability.
2. In the case that an officer position becomes vacant mid-term, elections for that position shall be called within one month to create an interim officer. In the event that an officer position cannot be filled by an interim officer, the Co-Chairs shall appoint a member of the Executive Committee. This member shall hold two (2) officer positions for the remainder of the term.
3. The positions shall be advertised to all UVM Postdoctoral Scholars and then elected by majority vote. Winners shall be announced and introduced to UVM PDA members at the Annual Meeting. All elected posts shall be held for one year. Officers may run for consecutive terms.

**Section 2: Campaign Regulations**

1. All UVM Postdoctoral Scholars shall be eligible to run for an office of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall send a written advertisement of elections and call for candidates to all Postdoctoral Scholars no later than one (1) month prior to the Annual Meeting.
2. The deadline for nominations shall be a minimum of one (1) week prior to the Annual Meeting. Nominations shall be submitted to the Executive Committee. It is preferred to have nominations submitted via email to [postdocs@uvm.edu](mailto:postdocs@uvm.edu).
3. Each candidate (opposed or unopposed) shall submit a statement of purpose for the position for which they are campaigning that outlines the candidate’s abilities, ideas, and experience. Statements of purpose shall be posted on the UVM PDA website.

**Section 3: Voting**

1. Voting shall occur online, prior at the Annual Meeting where each Postdoctoral Scholar shall carry one vote. The elected officer shall be the candidate receiving the most votes.
2. In the case of a tie, the Executive Committee shall call for runoff elections.

**Section 4: Invalidation of Election Results**

1. The Co-Chairs, acting together, shall have the power to invalidate the results of an election if the election was not done in accordance with these Bylaws.

**Article V: Annual Meeting**

1. An Annual Meeting shall be held in May, near the end of the Spring academic semester.
2. Each Executive Committee officer shall give a brief report to include accomplishments from the preceding year and goals for the upcoming year.
3. Following these reports, the floor will be open to any UVM Postdoctoral Scholar present for discussion of relevant issues, short and long-term goals, and planning of future professional and social events.
4. Any amendments to these bylaws shall be presented and voted on by majority.
5. The annual meeting shall conclude with the announcement of election results and introduction of officers, as described in Article IV.

**Article VI: Official UVM PDA Events**

It is the goal of the UVM PDA to host an annual symposium, one (1) community building event for Postdoctoral Scholars, one (1) community building event for the broader UVM community, and one (1) community outreach event. Other career development events may be planned to provide both traditional and non-traditional career training in line with the UVM PDA mission and goals outlined in Article I, Section 1. UVM PDA events shall benefit Postdoctoral Scholars the greater UVM community, including students, staff, and faculty, and the surrounding communities in Vermont and northern New York.