

Constitution of THE SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS at the University of Texas at Austin

PREAMBLE

The name of this Organization shall be “The Society of Physics Students”, otherwise herein referred to as “SPS”. The purpose of this Chapter shall be the advancement and diffusion of knowledge of physics, the encouragement of interest in physics throughout the academic and local communities, the advocacy for the best interests of physics students, and the introduction of students to the professional community.

ARTICLE I. UNIVERSITY COMPLIANCE

This organization is a recognized student organization at The University of Texas at Austin and shall comply with all campus policies as set forth in the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

ARTICLE II. PROHIBITION OF HAZING

State law and Sec. 14-103(3) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities define hazing as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Society of Physics Students Membership

In accordance with Sec. 6-202(a)(2) and Sec. 6-302 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, this organization restricts membership to students, faculty members, and staff members of the University.

In accordance with Sec. 6-202(a)(3) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, this organization may not deny membership on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, except that a registered student organization created primarily for religious purposes may restrict the right to vote or hold office to persons who subscribe to the registered student organization's statement of faith; and a registered student organization may restrict membership based on the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Membership in this SPS Chapter shall be open to all individuals interested in physics.

Section 1A. Member Removal

Should one violate any campus policies as set forth in the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, or engage in activity in their capacity as an SPS member that the officers deem unsafe or harmful to the Organization, the procedure shall be follows:

- a. A complaint shall be submitted to the current officers for review.
- b. Should the officers find a violation as described above, the member will automatically be ejected from the Organization.
- c. The individual in question will be immediately notified of their removal, be asked to not attend any SPS meetings or events, and will be removed from all SPS contact lists, including the Organization's e-mail list and online social media groups.

Section 2. Sigma Pi Sigma Membership

For undergraduate students in physics or related fields, the minimum requirements for $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ membership within this Chapter shall be as follows:

1. All members-elect shall have completed 60 credit hours towards an undergraduate degree.
2. All members-elect shall have completed 15 credit hours of physics courses.
3. All members-elect shall have attained a 6.5 combined grade point average (GPA), taking the sum of the cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale and the physics-only GPA on a 4.0 scale, with a minimum of a 3.0 physics-only GPA. Rounding should be done to the tenths place to calculate the combined GPA (e.g., a 6.445 combined score or above will qualify for this requirement).
4. All members-elect shall have completed 10 hours of SPS- or $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ -organized or approved service during both the Fall and Spring semester prior to induction and all following semesters (for a total of 20 hours per year), including, but not limited to:
 - a. a. Teaching students in elementary, middle, or high schools
 - b. b. Volunteering for events like the Physics Open House, Explore UT, or Prospective Students Day
 - c. c. Tutoring fellow classmates during Sunday Night Study Sessions
 - d. d. Acting as a mentor for SPS Mentoring groups
 - e. e. Aiding in projects or activities sponsored by SPS or $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$
5. All members-elect shall report completed service hours through prescribed means prior to the date listed on applications for membership.
6. All members-elect shall be registered members of the National Society of Physics Students.
7. All members-elect shall have obtained the approval to join $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ from the $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ Chapter Advisor based on the requirements listed in this document. The $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ Chapter Advisor may allow for special circumstances with regard to requirements.
8. All members-elect shall attend a minimum of two-thirds of the official $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ meetings, unless the member has a valid scheduling conflict. Such conflicts must be approved by the $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ representative at least two days in advance of the conflicting meeting.
9. All members-elect are expected to uphold the requirements above once inducted. Except for the cases outlined below, failure to comply with requirements above will result in termination of membership in $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$:
 - a. Combined GPA falls below 6.5, but not below 6.0 in a semester other than the semester in which the member is graduating. The member will become a probationary member for a maximum of one semester until all requirements are again fulfilled.
 - b. Community service time as outlined in requirement 4 falls below 10 hours/semester, but not below 5 hours/semester in a semester other than the semester in which the member is graduating. The member will become a probationary member for a maximum of one semester until all requirements are again fulfilled.

- c. Special circumstances as approved by the ΣΠΣ Chapter Advisor.
10. All members are allowed only one probationary period unless that probationary period would start after the semester of graduation. If the circumstances for probationary membership (as outlined above) are encountered more than once, the offending member will have their ΣΠΣ membership terminated.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Chapter Officers

The officers of the Chapter shall be a President, Vice-President, Outreach Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations Coordinator, and Freshman Representative. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by this Chapter. Additional officer positions can be created at any time should the current officers agree that a new position is needed. At the time a new position is created, it must be determined whether the position can be one of appointment or must be one of election.

1. President- The President is the main contact point between faculty, staff, officers, and other members. The President shall run weekly meetings, set the agenda for officer meetings, and delegate official officer-oriented duties throughout the year. They shall also send weekly emails to the member body about meetings, upcoming events, and other pertinent information (This duty may be given to the Secretary if the President sees fit).
2. Vice-President- The Vice-President is the presiding officer in the absence of the President. The Vice-President is expected to fulfill the obligations of the President should the President not be present.
3. Outreach Coordinator- Point of contact event for outreach events, such as Gone to CNS, Explore UT, Prospective Students Day, etc. They shall be in charge of the upkeep of the SPS physics demos, and in charge of securing volunteers for various volunteer events.
4. Treasurer- In charge of any and all SPS-related transactions, including but not limited to:
 - a. Ordering pizza for weekly meetings
 - b. Ordering shirts, stickers for yearly t-shirt sales
 - c. Keeping track of book sale inventory
 - d. Managing the SPS bank account
 - e. Organizing profit shares and other fundraising events
5. Secretary- Keeps a record of every official SPS officer meeting, as well as relays those records to all officers.
6. Public Relations Coordinator - This position will be charged with maintaining the SPS website and social media accounts. This includes making sure pertinent announcements are posted, monitoring social media requests, and creating polls and surveys if necessary. They shall also make flyers and other forms of advertisement for weekly SPS meetings and special events.
7. Freshmen Representative- This position shall be elected in the late fall semester or early spring semester, and must be filled by a 1st-year college student; transfer students are not eligible. Their position will act as a liaison between officers and members, and to ensure that the content of weekly SPS meetings and events is engaging to our audience.

Section 2. Procedure for Officer Removal

Should an officer violate any campus policies as set forth in the Institutional Rules on Student

Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, engage in activity that the officers deem unsafe or harmful to the Organization, or encourage any of the aforementioned behavior, a complaint must be raised and brought to the President. The President will make it known to the other officers, including the one the complaint concerns, about the situation. The officers shall hold a private meeting, excluding the one the complaint concerns, to evaluate the complaint. If the President is the officer in question, the duties of the removal procedure shall fall to the Vice-President.

If the officer in question is found to be guilty of the accusations placed against them, they will automatically be removed from their official position and lose SPS membership. They will be asked to not attend any SPS meetings or events, will be removed from all SPS contact lists- including the Organization's e-mail list and online social media groups- and be relieved of any obligations or duties previously held in their position.

Upon the removal of an officer, the remaining officers shall decide if it is necessary to fill the vacant position, if the position is to be one of appointment or election, or if the position shall remain vacant until the next election cycle.

Section 3. Sigma Pi Sigma Responsibility

Upon the installation of a Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter within the Society of Physics Students Chapter, one of the officers, who is a Sigma Pi Sigma member, and the Chapter Advisor shall be given specific responsibility for the affairs of the Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Regular meetings shall be held weekly as determined by the officers, with the content of each meeting advertised in some format (including by not limited to emails, flyers, and social media posts) to members. Any non-meeting weeks shall also be announced. SPS will also host the following special meetings at some point in the academic year, if not specified previously:

1. Freshmen Representative elections
2. T-shirt design contest voting
3. Registration Meeting (once a semester)
 - a. This meeting must be held between the release of the Fall/Spring Course Catalog and the first day of class registration
4. Officer elections
5. Demo meeting (optional)

ARTICLE VI. CHAPTER ADVISOR

In accordance with Sec. 6-101 (14) and Sec. 6-101(15) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, this organization may have a University Advisor who is at least twenty-one years of age, is not enrolled as a student at the University, and serves as either:

- a. a part-time or full-time employee of the University.
- b. a representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization
- c. serves as either.

- i. a part-time or full-time employee of the University
- ii. a representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization (registered student organizations only).

The Chapter Advisor shall be a faculty member appointed by the Chairman of the Physics Department, after consultation with the Chapter officers. The Chapter Advisor shall provide liaison among the Chapter, the Physics Department, and the National Office of the Society of Physics Students. The Chapter Advisor will supply counseling to the Chapter, furnish continuity of experience in Chapter operations, and provide a long-range perspective to insure departmental interest in and support of SPS. The Chapter Advisor shall assist the Secretary in furnishing the National Office with the required data and shall assist the Treasurer in transmitting fees and dues to the National Office.

ARTICLE VII. FINANCES

There is to be no cost of a membership to join this Chapter of SPS. If one wishes to join the National Organization, this Chapter may help a member navigate how to register and pay dues if the member so desires.

The Treasurer will be in charge of this Chapter's funds. No purchases may be made without first discussing the actions to be taken with all other officers. If requested, the Treasurer must be able to produce records to show the current Chapter balance, expenses made within the semester, etc.

ARTICLE VIII. ELECTIONS

Definition: For this section only, the term "member" shall refer to official members of this Chapter of SPS and non-members who are active participants in the Chapter as judged by attendance, volunteerism or other characteristics outgoing officers deem appropriate.

Officers shall be elected at a scheduled meeting or via an online vote in April or May of each year. In exceptional and unprecedented circumstances, officer elections may be postponed until the beginning of the Fall semester. The current officers must evaluate the situation leading to the said proposition and come to a unanimous decision to do so. If elections are postponed, it must be the first act of business in the new semester. Procedures for elections will follow in the same order as outlined below.

Nominations shall be by open nomination into a pool of nominees via email or other nomination processes that members will be notified of at least one week before the scheduled election. Nominees may run for more than one position, and also may reject a nomination they do not wish to accept. If running for more than one position, nominees will only be able to accept one upon winning the election. Nominees will be provided a medium to communicate a message to members with reasons they believe they should be elected prior to the election.

Elections will take place in a cascading fashion with all present members. The positions will be voted for in the following order: President, Vice-President, Outreach Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, and Public Relations Coordinator. ~~All officer positions will be elected by a majority vote.~~ The nominees of a given position are not allowed to vote for that position. ~~Should a tie occur at any point for the majority vote for a particular office, the candidates with the same number of votes shall be placed in a run-off election, wherein additional votes are taken until a single candidate has the majority vote.~~

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the current officers, provided that the amendment shall have been proposed at least one meeting previous to the time of the vote and is deemed necessary by the current officers. Any member can propose an amendment by bringing their concerns to a current officer, who will relay the proposed amendment to all the current officers.

All amendments must conform to the regulations established by the National Constitution of the Society of Physics Students, as well as all campus policies as outlined in the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

All amendments or changes to this constitution must be reflected in an updated constitution that must be submitted to Student Activities in the Office of the Dean of Students at 2609 University Ave., Suite 2.112 within 14 days of its approval.

Amendment I. Amendment of Elections

If an election has three or more candidates, the instant runoff system will be used. In this system, each voting member may rank as many candidates as they choose, in order of preference. Ballots will then be distributed according to first-preference votes. If any candidate has a simple majority of votes, they are declared the winner. Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and each of their votes is redistributed to the next-preference candidate on the ballot who is still in the running. This process continues until one candidate has a majority of votes, who is then declared the winner. In the event of an exact tie that must be broken to continue this process, the highest-ranking officer not running for the contested position shall break the tie.

If an election has two or fewer candidates, the candidate that receives a simple majority of the votes will be declared the winner. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a failed election will be declared and a new nomination period will open.

If fifty percent or more of ballots are returned as blank, abstentions, or votes of no confidence, then a failed election shall be declared. A new nomination period shall immediately be opened.