

## **University of Texas at Austin Chapter of the Society of Physics Students BYLAWS - Approved November 14, 2013**

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be “The University of Texas at Austin Chapter of the Society of Physics Students” (SPS or UT SPS below). The name of the honors physics organization shall be “The University of Texas at Austin Chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma” ( $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  or UT  $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  below).

### **ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of these Chapters 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 III. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section I. Society of Physics Students Membership**

Membership in this Society of Physics Students Chapter shall be open to all individuals interested in physics.

#### **Section 2. Sigma Pi Sigma Membership**

Membership in Sigma Pi Sigma ( $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ ), the physics honor society included within this Society of Physics Students Chapter, shall be based upon character, academic and professional attainments and is not restricted to physics majors. New members shall be inducted in April or May.

#### **Subsection 2.a Undergraduates**

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. Teaching students in elementary, middle, or high schools
  - b. Volunteering for events like the Physics Open House, Explore UT, or Prospective Students Day
  - c. Tutoring fellow classmates during Sunday Night Study Sessions

- d. Acting as a mentor for SPS Mentoring groups
  - e. Aiding in projects or activities sponsored by SPS or ΣΠΣ.
5. All members-elect shall be registered members of the National Society of Physics Students.
6. All members-elect shall have obtained the approval to join ΣΠΣ from the ΣΠΣ Chapter Advisor based on the requirements listed in this document. The ΣΠΣ Chapter Advisor may allow for special circumstances with regard to requirements.
7. All members are expected to uphold the requirements above once inducted. Failure to comply with requirements above will result in termination of membership in ΣΠΣ, with the following mutually-exclusive exceptions:
  - 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 provisional 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 provisional member for a maximum of one semester until all requirements are again fulfilled.
  - c. Special circumstances as approved by the ΣΠΣ Chapter Advisor.

### **Subsection 2.b Graduates**

For graduate students in physics or related fields, all members-elect either (a) shall meet the academic requirements for undergraduate members-elect, based upon their undergraduate records, or (b) shall have completed at least one year of graduate work, meeting departmental standards for satisfactory progress towards an advanced degree. Graduate students interested in becoming members of ΣΠΣ must fulfill all other requirements of undergraduates in terms of service, ΣΠΣ Chapter Advisor approval and membership in the National Society of Physics Students.

### **Subsection 2.c Other Members**

For faculty members, research staff members, and other qualified individuals, who are in physics or related fields, election to membership shall be based upon their professional attainment and membership in the National Society of Physics Students.

## **ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. SPS Chapter Officers**

The officers of the Chapter shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Secretary and an Outreach Coordinator; elections shall be in accordance with the order listed above. A Freshman Representative may be elected during the Fall semester for the following Spring at the discretion of the officers listed above. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by this Chapter. Additional appointed officer positions can be created at any time should the majority of current officers agree that a

new position is needed. However, if the position needs to be required for normal operations for longer than a year, these bylaws will need to be amended to incorporate the additional position an elected position. Although responsibilities of officers may vary year to year, some likely tasks include:

**President:** lead organizer for large-scale events (Open House, Prospective Students Day); ensure members are informed of current events; aid other officers in accomplishing tasks; be an advocate for physics in the department and college.

**Vice-President:** website management (as this is skill-based task, it may be swapped with any other officer), must be able to fulfill same requirements as president if president is unable, contact person for faculty and other university SPS and graduate level physics groups

**Treasurer:** responsible for financial affairs of SPS, including but not limited to pizza, cookies, t-shirts, lockers, and travel to various events including national SPS events or trips to physics related locations

**Secretary:** take minutes at officer meetings, responsible for official emails, ensures officers and members are aware of current and upcoming important events, calendar updates

**Outreach Coordinator:** organize outreach within the university and outside the university with groups such as ASA, WiP, and graduate physics groups, as well as local elementary/middle/high schools, contact for physics circus, get volunteers for events, organize social events

**Freshman Representative:** provide input on all categories, bring new ideas about what they and their peers would like to see in the club and department and what changes can be made to better address their needs, run mentoring meetings

## Section 2. SPS Officer Elections

Definition: for this section only, the term “member” shall refer to official members of this chapter of the Society of Physics Students 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 online vote in April or May of each year. Nominations shall be by open nomination for each position via email or other nomination process at least one week before the election; members may nominate themselves. Nominees will be provided a medium to communicate a message to members with reasons they believe they should be elected prior to the election. The President shall be elected first, then the officers listed in the order in Section IV.2. Nominees may run for multiple positions, but may not hold more than one position at a time. Should a tie occur at any point for the plurality of 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 plurality of the vote. Should the officers serving during the Fall semester decide to hold an election for a Freshman Representative, an announcement of the election shall take place no less than a week before the election, which shall take place no later than the final class day of the Fall semester during a scheduled meeting or online vote. Only first-year UT students are eligible for this position and may nominate themselves or be nominated by other members. Nominees will be provided a medium by which to communicate a message to members prior to the election. The Freshman

Representative will be elected by plurality, with ties being broken by a run-off election.

### **Subsection 2.a SPS Officer Special Elections**

Should an officer be incapable of performing the tasks associated with the position or otherwise elect to remove themselves from office, a special election may be held for the position with no less than one week's notice and the approval of the majority of the officers. As in other elections, nominations will be open, and the winner of the plurality of the vote will take the position for the remainder of the school year. In the event of a tie, a run-off will then take place.

### **Section 3. ΣΠΣ Officers**

The UT Austin ΣΠΣ Chapter shall serve as part of the UT Austin Chapter of the Society of Physics Students. One officer shall be elected to represent ΣΠΣ to the other UT SPS officers. This ΣΠΣ Representative shall serve as the head of the ΣΠΣ chapter, and shall be elected by plurality of current members of ΣΠΣ during the Spring semester at a scheduled meeting. The ΣΠΣ representative will serve as an officer of UT SPS, and will, with the ΣΠΣ Chapter Advisor be given the responsibility of managing the affairs of UT ΣΠΣ and the representative shall report on ΣΠΣ to the other SPS Officers. Any change in elected ΣΠΣ officers requires an amendment to this section as outlined below.

### **Section 4. SPS Officer Meetings**

All elected and appointed officers of SPS and ΣΠΣ ("officers") should meet regularly, preferably once per week, in order to discuss matters of import to SPS and ΣΠΣ and prepare for the week's activities. Meetings should be open for observation but agenda items from non-officers should be requested to be added to the agenda prior to the meeting. Furthermore, should the officers need to discuss sensitive information (passwords, etc.), the officers may hold a closed meeting instead.

## **ARTICLE V. CHAPTER ADVISOR**

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

## **ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS**

Group meetings shall be held weekly as determined by the officers, with any non-meeting weeks announced to regular meeting attendees. Officer meetings should occur regularly, and generally be open to others, however agenda items from non-officers should be proposed ahead of time.

## **ARTICLE VII. DUES**

There is to be no cost of membership to join this chapter of the Society of Physics Students other than the dues to join the national organization.

There shall be no cost of membership to join this chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma other than the dues to join the National Society of Physics Students.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Chapter may adopt.

#### **ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of SPS meeting attendees for sections and changes specifically relating to SPS and not to  $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ . A two-thirds vote of  $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  meeting attendees is required for sections and changes specifically relating to  $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  and not SPS as a whole. Should an amendment involve both Chapters, the amendment must be approved by both Chapters by two-thirds vote in each Chapter. For either organization, amendments must be proposed at least five days prior to the time of vote by email or other official means of communication, and must conform to the regulations established by the National Constitution of the Society of Physics Students. Should the number of members in one organization become 3 or fewer, the larger organization shall presume ability to amend bylaws of both organizations.