

## Constitution of the Medical University of South Carolina Postdoctoral Association

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this constitution is to codify the definition, organization and responsibilities of the Medical University of South Carolina Postdoctoral Association (herein referred to as the PDA). The PDA, established in 2007, facilitates the professional and personal development of its members by promoting scholarly learning and social activities as well as giving its members a forum to communicate ideas and push for advocacy. The current bylaws delineate the goals for the PDA and set down guidelines for future postdoctoral scholars to use. A postdoc is defined as:

*An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path.*

The term postdoc will be used throughout the text and will refer to postdoctoral fellows, postdoctoral scholars, and/or postdoctoral researchers.

### **Article I – Purpose and Function of the PDA.**

The PDA has the purpose and function of supporting the postdoc at Medical University of South Carolina (herein referred to as MUSC). This purpose is broken into three main categories. The articles of this constitution revolve around article I and are written to implement the purpose of the PDA.

- A. *Scholarly Learning* – This includes inviting outside speakers, organizing workshops, continuing education and giving postdocs opportunities to present their work in local meetings.
- B. *Networking Activities* – This includes formal and informal meetings and gatherings of postdocs. In addition, this includes social activities both at the University and outside of the University. The PDA shall have a commitment to promoting networking opportunities both within the postdoc community as well as between the postdoc community and the faculty.
- C. *Postdoc Advocacy* – The PDA should be a source of information and a sounding board for complaints and concerns. The PDA is a place to pass those concerns on to the appropriate channels; however, the PDA does not, in and of itself, have authority to directly alter any policy except its own bylaws and governance. The PDA interacts with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (herein referred to as the OPA) in the College of Graduate Studies, as well as, faculty to address the concerns that are brought forward.

### **Article II – Membership.**

Membership in the PDA will be open to all postdocs as defined above. The best source of identifying a postdoc at MUSC is the OPA postdoc list serve which is maintained by

the OPA. The PDA will not discriminate based on race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or any other way. All postdocs at MUSC are automatically members of the PDA and are invited to participate on committees and executive committee positions. The officers of the PDA have a major responsibility in increasing the participation and input from all facets of the postdoc community. Any faculty, graduate student, or staff who show an interest in helping the PDA are also allowed to attend any meetings and have input; however, they will not be allowed to vote on any issue that is brought to the PDA. Any item requiring a majority vote will be solely decided by those who are postdocs at MUSC.

### **Article III – Executive Committee.**

The Executive Committee of the MUSC PDA consists of five members whose responsibility is to provide continuity, leadership, and organization to the PDA. The executive committee has flexibility in how to implement the goals of the PDA; however, they are responsible for adhering to the mission of the PDA as described in article I.

The Executive Committee, with input from the PDA, will have fiscal responsibilities in deciding how money should be spent as well as determining fundraising opportunities for the PDA. Furthermore, the executive committee must regularly attend PDA meetings. The Executive Committee will meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month from 12-1pm. At least one Executive Committee member will attend the yearly National Postdoctoral Association Meeting (it is recommended a poster or presentation abstract be submitted); if none can attend committee chairs will be solicited for attendance. Each member of the Executive Committee will serve as a liaison to one of the standing committees to facilitate accurate communication between the Executive Committee and the standing committees.

The five Executive Committee members are appointed for a one year term. The five positions are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Development. All of the positions are elected. A call for nominations will go out via e-mail to the Post Doc listserv in May by the OPA. A list of nominees will be sent out for a vote after the June meeting and voting will be open for one week. Ballots will be counted by the OPA and winners will be by a simple majority (i.e. the individual with the most votes wins, See Article VI). New officers will start at the July meeting for their yearly appointment. There is no limit to how many terms one person may serve as an executive member.

- A. *President* – The President should be a person who has served as an officer of the PDA in the past and is familiar with the workings of the PDA. Their job is to lead the officer team in fulfilling the responsibilities of the PDA. Individual responsibilities include meeting with the OPA, Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs and ad hoc faculty advisors on a regular basis, attending the monthly Graduate Council meetings and any other meeting where the PDA is asked to be represented. The President will also serve as liaison to the Committee on Career Development & Scholarly Learning.

- B. *Vice President* –The Vice President, along with the executive committee, will be responsible for selecting agenda items and will play a major role in assigning individuals to committees. The responsibilities of the Vice President are to serve as a liaison to the Advocacy Committee. The Vice President will be in charge of maintaining and editing the Constitution of the PDA at MUSC. If the President is unable to attend any of their monthly engagements the Vice President will attend or another member of the executive committee should attend.
- C. *Treasurer* – The Treasurer of the PDA will be responsible for maintaining all fiscal records of the PDA. The offices' duties include creating the yearly budget projection, due by March first of each year for submission to the OPA. The Treasurer will also take minutes of the Executive Committee meetings in the event of the Secretary's absence. The Treasurer will serve as liaison to the Social Activities & Fundraising Committee.
- D. *Secretary* – The Secretary will be responsible for maintaining and organizing all records of the PDA (ie minutes, budgets, sign in sheets, committee reports). The Secretary will take minutes of the monthly executive committee meetings, create sign up sheets for the general PDA monthly meetings and coordinating with the OPA on the storage of the PDA archival information at MUSC. The Secretary will be the liaison to the Mentoring Committee.
- E. *Membership Development* - The membership development officer shall be responsible for maintaining, distributing and collaborating with the International Programs Office on the Postdoc Handbook and will make available to all post docs and/or faculty who request it. The Membership Development officer will be in charge of creating the quarterly Postdoc Newsletter and maintaining copies for the PDA archive. The Membership Development officer will be the liaison to the Media, Website & Outreach Committee.
- F. *International Affairs* – The international affairs officer will be primarily responsible for keeping the PDA up to date on issues relating to and affecting international postdocs at MUSC. He/She will be responsible for interacting with the international office and the OPA on matters relating to international postdocs at MUSC, and will also function as a liaison between International Programs and the PDA.

#### **Article IV – Committees.**

There will be five standing committees which will be based on the overall purpose of the PDA. In order to maintain as much flexibility as possible, subcommittees can be created or terminated by the executive committee if needed. Chairs or co-chairs for the five standing committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee to serve for one year. Service on subcommittees will be as long as deemed necessary by the Executive Chairs. Committee meetings shall be held on an as needed basis as established by the

Chair/Co-chair. The Executive committee liaison will attend their respective committee meeting. Each Chair/Co-chair will report to an officer on the executive committee who oversees the respective committee.

- A. *Committee on Career Development & Scholarly Learning* – This committee will be responsible for overseeing the Career Workshop Series and helping organize and plan other monthly workshop meetings outside the scope of the Career Workshop Series. This committee will be involved in selecting speakers (either internal or external) for regular seminars or workshops of interest to the postdocs, organizing any annual scholarly postdoc events Medical University of South Carolina. This committee’s liaison will be the President of the PDA.
- B. *Committee on Postdoc Advocacy* – This committee will evaluate concerns and/or complaints from postdocs and pass those on to the executive committee who will bring those problems to the Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs. This committee is responsible for creating and sending out yearly (or bi-annual) surveys to solicit input from fellows on problems and/or needs. This committee’s liaison will be the Vice-President of the PDA.
- C. *Committee on Networking Activities & Fundraising* – This committee will be responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing social activities for the postdoc community. These include the annual National Postdoc Appreciation Day, annual holiday party, happy hours, service events and other social events that the committee decides on. This committee will also be involved in planning and organizing any PDA fundraising activities. They will be responsible to maintain compliance with MUSC regulations on university functions. This committee’s liaison will be the Treasure of the PDA.
- D. *Committee on Mentoring* – This committee will be responsible for implementing, organizing and working with the Graduate Student Association on the Postdoc/Graduate Student mentoring program. The committee will work on mentoring, organizing and planning any postdoc mentoring workshops, in addition to or in conjunction with the Committee on Career Development & Scholarly Learning. This committee’s liaison will be the Secretary of the PDA.
- E. *Committee on Media, Website & Outreach* – This committee will be in charge of maintaining the PDA website at MUSC hosted on the OPA’s website. This committee will insure that calendar updates and quarterly or bi-annual website changes are affected. This committee will be in charge of assisting the Membership Development Officer for maintaining and updating the Postdoc Handbook on a yearly or bi-yearly basis. They will help organize and plan any special events or announcements that fall outside of the other standing committee’s responsibilities. This committee’s liaison will be the Membership Development Officer.

### **Article V – Meetings.**

Meetings shall take place on the last Thursday of every month, except for the months where a holiday conflicts with this time. The Executive Committee reserves the right to change the date of the monthly meeting to accommodate attendance of the committee members at national meetings, to accommodate invited speaker's schedules or panel member's schedules; in which case the new date and time of the monthly PDA meeting will be sent out at least one week prior to the meeting. The agenda for the monthly meetings should be e-mailed one week prior to the meeting and a reminder for the meeting should be emailed out the morning of the meeting. In order to increase attendance at meetings, snacks and drinks should be served if at all possible. In addition to formal meetings, committees and the Executive Committee may meet informally as needed.

### **Article VI – Voting**

Any issue relating to a policy or action to be taken by the PDA brought forth by any member of the PDA must be voted on at the monthly meetings and determined by a majority of the people in attendance at that meeting. Any item voted on by the PDA can be sent out for ratification by e-mail vote to the entire postdoctoral community through the post doc list serve. Any item that proposes non-housekeeping (i.e. grammar, spelling, etc.,) changes to this constitution must be sent out to the list serve. For a vote to pass, a majority of respondents must reply in the affirmative (e.g. if 20 votes are received, eleven must be aye votes for a motion to pass). In the case of email vote, the question will be emailed three separate times over a fourteen day period and total votes will be tabulated from those respondents.

### **Article VII – Impeachment or Resignation of officers**

In the event that anyone in the postdoc community has suggested in writing to the Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs that an officer or officers is deemed to be unfit or unable to perform his/her position a meeting with the Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs and two of the remaining Executive Committee members shall be scheduled. A second meeting with the Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs will take place with the officer in question to discuss the allegations. The outcome of these meetings can result in several options: resignation by the officer, no action taken, a formal reprimand by the PDA (this will serve as a one and only warning), or a move for a vote of impeachment (the last three options will be decided upon by the remaining Executive Committee members after the Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs has informed the Executive Committee of the contents from the meeting with the officer in question). An impeachment vote will take place by email to the list serve and voting tabulated per Article VI. In the event of impeachment or resignation of an officer, the remaining Executive Committee members may either take over the vacated officer's tasks or appoint an interim officer to maintain the position until normal Executive Committee nominations and voting occurs, see Article III. The appointed officer shall be a majority

vote of the remaining officers and in the event of a tie the Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs will serve as a tie breaker.

**Ratification**

These Bylaws were ratified by the MUSC PDA on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PDA President

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, College of Graduate Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date