

The Constitution of:
The Biomedical Engineering PhD Student Association

A student organization at Duke University
Chartered 10/25/13 by the Doctoral Students of the Biomedical Engineering Department

THE ARTICLES

Article 1: Name

This organization shall be known as the Biomedical Engineering PhD Student Association at Duke University and shall be abbreviated as BEPSA when space or content dictate.

Article 2: Mission

The mission of BEPSA is to give a voice to the BME PhD student body and improve the PhD student experience within the BME Department. The organization will facilitate communication between students and faculty, connect students to resources available within the department, and advocate for the department within and outside of the university.

Article 3: Members

All PhD students within the Department of Biomedical Engineering will be automatically registered as members of BEPSA upon enrollment in the doctoral degree program; students may choose to opt-out of the organization at any time via email. Only members registered on the official roster are eligible to vote on relevant organizational business. The official registry shall be maintained on the BEPSA Sakai site as a private document.

Article 4: Non-Discrimination

BEPSA shall not discriminate on the basis of political ideology, race, color, national and ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation or preference, gender, or age in its membership, activities, and projects. BEPSA & Duke University shall not tolerate harassment of any kind.

Article 5: Officers

Any member of BEPSA who is listed on the official registry for two or more semesters can become an officer; this rule does not pertain to the First Year Officer at Large, who may join after enrollment in the Duke BME PhD Program. Two students may serve together as co-officers only for the position of First Year Officer at Large (see voting regulations in Article 6). The officer positions listed below, along with the committee chairs from Article 6, will serve as the Executive Board for BEPSA.

President

- *Must have served 1 year minimum in BEPSA executive board.*
- *Calls and presides over official meetings of the organization*
- *Maintains organization in good standing with Duke University via communication with the Office of Student Activities and Facilities and/or other interested University entities.*
- *Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through By-law*

- *Serves as a liaison to the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC).*
- *Acts as an alternate for the Vice President as a liaison to the Graduate Affairs Committee*

Vice President/ Grad Affairs Committee Liaison

- *Acts as tie-breaking vote in matters of business*
- *Acts in place of the president when the president is absent*
- *Oversees committee activity. Committees must report to the vice president with deliverables. Attends and prepares information for monthly Grad Affairs Committee meetings, participates in discussions, and disseminates committee actions to the executive board via official reports from each meeting.*
- *Represents the voice of BEPSA at Grad Affairs Committee meetings via: minutes from executive committee meetings, survey responses, etc...*
- *Serves as ex-officio member of any committee that is created through By-law*

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

- *Maintains accurate ledger and financial records*
- *Approves all expenditures from the organization financial account*
- *Approves (i.e. signs) all requests for allocations from third party sources*
- *Delivers a financial report upon the request of the membership*
- *Handles or assists with all ordering and catering requests*
- *Serves as ex-officio member of any committee that is created through By-law*

Chief Technology Officer (CTO)

- *Maintains the official roster of the organization and manages email listserve (with assistance of the Director of Graduate Studies Assistant)*
- *Records minutes of all official meetings of the organization*
- *Maintains official historical file for the organization (constitution, by-laws, minutes, rosters, financial records, etc...)*
- *Maintains organization website, facebook site, and multimedia publications*
- *Manages official communications and distributions (i.e. on letterhead) from BEPSA to the outside community*
- *Maintains digital branding and design files*
- *Maintains survey system and consults with committees to conduct surveys*
- *Serves as ex-officio member of any committee that is created through By-law*

First Year Officer at Large

- *Represents the interests and concerns of first year BME PhD students to the executive board*
- *Promotes networking amongst first year incoming class, and trains incoming First Year Officer at Large during Fall semester*
- *Responsible for circulating information to incoming first year graduate students via close collaboration with Committees*
- *Assists the Events Committee Chair with events which may include Spring Retreat and Recruitment*
- *Serves as ex-officio member of any committee that is created through By-law*

Article 6: Committees

- Committee chairs will be elected by majority vote of a quorum of the organization during officer elections, and serve as members of the executive board. Upon a vote of the executive committee, committees may form sub groups and assign officer positions within themselves. New committees and changes to committee responsibilities can be modified ad hoc by majority vote of said committee, and subsequent approval of the executive committee. Each nominee for the position of a committee chair may run independently as sole chair, or may run together with one other student (“running mate”) with the intent to serve as co-chairs. Each pair of running mates will be listed as a single entry on the ballot, i.e. the co-chairs will either win together or lose together. A student interested in running as a co-chair but without an explicit running mate can contact the BEPSA E-board for help in finding a co-chair.
- *Resource Committee* will focus on generating a first year survival guide, providing student mentorship (including first year outreach), organizing fellowship & internship panels, and facilitate networking with Duke BME alumni.
- *Events Committee* will coordinate events to promote unity within the department including but not limited to: BME retreat, new student recruitment, social events, and conference outreach.
- *Outreach Committee* will organize and publicize volunteer and community service opportunities available on campus and in the Durham area.
- *Curriculum Committee* will communicate with students and faculty regarding necessary improvements to the PhD program/curriculum including but not limited to: BME seminar series, degree milestones, and teaching assistantships.

Article 7: Faculty Advisor

A full time faculty member appointed to the Duke University Department of Biomedical Engineering shall be selected by the executive board to serve as the organizational advisor.

Advisor duties include:

- *Interpret University policy for organization*
- *Direct membership to appropriate campus resources to accomplish organization goals*
- *Act as the official university contact in matters of policy violation*

Article 8: Removal of Officers

Officers shall be removed with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of the general body or unanimous vote of the faculty advisor and their fellow executive board members. If the officer is voted to be removed by the executive board, he/she is allowed the opportunity to request general body vote. The officer in question must be notified of the vote for removal at least one (1) week in advance and shall have the opportunity to speak before the general body and/or executive board prior to the vote. Executive officers may resign upon their own request with one month of notification to the executive board, and a special mid-year election may be held to replace the officer who has stepped down. Otherwise, the tasks of the resigned officer may be divided among the executive board members until the next general election.

Article 9: Executive Board

The executive board of BEPSA shall be composed of the organization officers and the committee heads. The executive board shall generate and present recommendations to the general body for approval that effect and promote the mission of the organization.

Article 10: Meetings

Regular general body meetings of BEPSA shall be held at least once per semester during the academic year, and at the discretion of the President at other times at an on-campus venue. Quorum shall consist of at least three (3) members of the board and interested members of the general body. Executive board meetings shall consist of at least half of the executive board membership and be held at least monthly.

Article 11: By-laws

By-laws may be created to include information not present in the charter. By-laws may be dictate the structure and procedures of the organization based on the needs of the organization. By-laws may be proposed by any member and must obtain a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a quorum of the membership.

Article 12: Parliamentary Authority

Shall be included in by-laws and modified annually as needed.

Article 13: Elections

Elections must be openly publicized for at least one week and are open to the entire membership of the organization. Nominations and elections shall be structured by the Election of Officers By-law. Officers shall be elected annually at the end of the spring semester and will take office at the beginning of the following fall semester. First year student members shall be elected during their first fall semester by a majority vote of the membership. Upon midyear resignation of an officer, the executive board will pose recommendations for replacement officers for the approval of the organization.

Article 14: Amendment

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any member and must obtain a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of the general body.

THE AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1: Quorum

Quorum for a vote of the general body shall consist of 20% of the total membership of BEPSA. Executive members count toward quorum. In the event that quorum is not reached within the allocated voting period, the voting will be extended by a period of 3 business days, and the extended voting period will be openly announced to the entire membership.

Document History:

Revised following general body vote in June 2016 by the Executive Board of BEPSA: Amy Frees Martinez, Mark Juhas, Daniel Salo, Christopher Jackman, Nikki Pelot, Zachary Abzug, Katheryn Rothenberg, Liad Holtzman, Robert Morhard, and Megan Madonna. Since matters of elections were being changed, the following disclaimer was given: "The amendment will be passed if the amendment receives a 2/3 "approve" vote of the total votes placed."

Revised following general body vote in May 2016 by the Executive Board of BEPSA: Amy Frees Martinez, Mark Juhas, Daniel Salo, Christopher Jackman, Nikki Pelot, Zachary Abzug, Katheryn Rothenberg, Liad Holtzman, Robert Morhard, and Megan Madonna.

Revised following general body vote in July 2014 by the Executive Board of BEPSA: Beth Lorden, Amy Frees, Katie Glass, Mandana Manzari, Will (Yangziaolu) Cao, Simone Costa, Cristina Fernandez, Laila Roudsari, and Nicole Virdone.

Created November 4, 2013 by the founding members of BEPSA: Beth Lorden, Amy Frees, Katie Glass, Mandana Manzari, Will (Yangziaolu) Cao, Yan Wu, Maryam Vejdani Jahromi, Erika Moore, Cristina Fernandez, Joseph Simon, Laila Roudsari, and Nicole Virdone.