



# Student Chapter Organization Manual

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# FOREWORD

This Biophysical Society (BPS) Student Chapter Organization Manual has been prepared as a source of information and guidance for the Chapter Officers and Chapter Sponsors. The structure and suggestions presented here will enable each Chapter to maintain the continuity necessary for a cohesive and active local group.

## BPS History, Structure and Goals

The Biophysical Society was founded in 1958 to encourage development and dissemination of knowledge in biophysics. It does so through its many programs, including its meetings, publications, and committee outreach activities. The Society's members, now over 9,000, work in academia, industry, and in government agencies throughout the world.

Each year, the Society holds an Annual Meeting, which brings together over 6,000 research scientists in the multidisciplinary fields representing biophysics. With more than 4,000 poster presentations, over 200 exhibits, and more than 20 symposia, the Annual Meeting is the largest meeting of biophysicists in the world. Despite its size, the meeting retains its small-meeting flavor through its subgroup meetings, platform sessions, social activities, and committee programs. Abstract submission to the Annual Meeting is a privilege of membership, although a member may sponsor a non-member. The Society also sponsors smaller thematic meetings each year throughout the world.

The Society publishes the peer-reviewed *Biophysical Journal* twice monthly, which is accessible online to all members as a benefit of membership. Furthermore, a monthly Newsletter, and a Directory of Members, are also made available to members.

Membership to the Society is open to scientists who share the stated purpose of the Society and who have educational, research, or practical experience in biophysics or in an allied scientific field. Categories of membership include Student, Early Career, Regular, and Emeritus.

Governed by a membership-elected Council, the Society's central office is located at 11400 Rockville Pike, Suite 800, Rockville, Maryland, 20852. Telephone: 240-290-5600; Fax: 240-290-5555; [society@biophysics.org](mailto:society@biophysics.org).

## BPS and the Student

BPS recognizes the need to establish programs of professional encouragement for students beginning their careers in the quantitative and biological sciences. Each student member of BPS is viewed by the Society as a force that will determine the future vitality of the profession.

The BPS Student Chapter brings together students and practicing biophysicists to build a broad-based understanding of the profession and a sense of unity and identity with their peers. The Chapter is the link between school and career, which enables each participant to engage in the type of activity necessary for professional development.

As transitions are made from study to career, from entry level to upper levels in business, government, and academia, BPS provides a continuous source of professional support and counsel.

## Becoming a Student Member

Student membership is open to those who have educational, research, or practical experience or are pursuing a course of study in biophysics or in an allied scientific field.

Students, including undergraduates and graduates, are eligible for reduced price membership. For current rates please visit the BPS Membership page located at [www.biophysics.org](http://www.biophysics.org).

To become a Student Member, you will need:

A copy of your most recent institutional Student ID and Chapter Sponsor's signature (JPEG and TIF files are acceptable). Your Chapter Sponsor's signature can be written on the copy of the Student ID and submitted as one document, or you may also upload a brief letter from your Chapter Sponsor verifying your student status in your institution. Your Chapter Sponsor must be a current member of the Biophysical Society (see page 5 for Duties of the Chapter Sponsor).

# Benefits of BPS Student Membership

## Benefits

Biophysical Society members receive many intangible benefits, including representation through [committee outreach](#) and [advocacy efforts](#) for the field of biophysics and for its funding at the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, and other agencies. The tangible benefits are many and in multiple areas, including publications, meetings, career development, and funding opportunities.

## *Biophysical Journal*

All members receive FREE access to the Journal [Online](#).

Members who publish in the Journal pay \$30 less PER PAGE than do non-members.

Members who publish in the Journal receive free online color.

Members receive reduced rates for print color.

Members may subscribe to the print the Journal for a substantially reduced rate.

## Other Publications

Members receive the monthly [Biophysical Society Newsletter](#).

Members pay reduced rates for the [Annual Reviews of Biophysics](#).

Members have access to all contact information for other Society members through the online [Membership Directory](#) and may search for members by areas of research, geographic location, and subgroup membership.

Members may subscribe to Cell Press journals at a reduced rate. To view a complete listing of Cell Press journals and to submit your order, see the [Cell Press Subscription Form](#).

Members may subscribe to AIP journals, like [Physics Today](#), at a reduced rate.

## Meetings

Members pay significantly reduced registration rates for all Biophysical Society meetings.

Only members may submit or sponsor an abstract for the Annual Meeting.

Members are eligible to apply for Travel and Bridging Awards.

Members may submit proposals for [Thematic Meetings](#).

## Career Development

Society members may post their resumes free-of-charge on the [BPS online job board](#).

Employers who are BPS members may post job openings on the Society's online job board for rates far lower than those paid by non-members.

Apply to be a [Congressional Fellow](#).

## Other Benefits

Members are eligible for nine prestigious [Society Awards](#).

Members are eligible to apply for funds to [support meetings they organize](#).

Members are eligible to join [subgroups](#) and to create new subgroups in their areas of research.

Members may receive free email updates from the Society's [Public Affairs](#) Department.

Members are eligible to apply for funds to [host a local networking event](#).

Members are eligible for free access to Career Webinars.

# Formation of a BPS Student Chapter

The formation of a BPS Student Chapter is an important step for proactive students looking to advance academically and professionally as biophysicists. Students should welcome the opportunity to meet and become known in the scientific community. Students in neighboring institutions within a hundred mile radius may join together in one Chapter. Where sufficient interest and enthusiasm is identified for the creation of a BPS Chapter, the following steps should be taken in the order indicated:

1. Secure the appointment of a Society Member to serve as the Chapter Sponsor and contact the Biophysical Society to request formation of a Student Chapter of BPS. (The Student Chapter may be initiated by the host Biophysics Department(s), individual Student Members, or the prospective Chapter Sponsor. If the Student Chapter is initiated by Student Members and the students are unable to identify a Chapter Sponsor, the Society Office may be contacted for assistance in finding a local member interested in serving as the Chapter Sponsor.
2. Upon assignment of the Chapter Sponsor, the Chapter shall draw up proposed Bylaws and submit them to the Society via the Chapter Sponsor. These must be endorsed by (1) the Department (or designated Chapter Sponsor[s]) and (2) each of the Student Members who will constitute the Charter Members of the Chapter. (Sample Bylaws appear in Appendix A)
3. Elect Officers, each of whom must be a BPS Student Member.
4. Complete the Chapter Information Sheet (Appendix B) and forward it with the proposed bylaws.
5. Agree to host a Chapter-lead affiliate event each year during Biophysics Week. The event will be reported in the Chapter's Annual Report submitted to the Society.
6. The BPS Education Committee will vote on the request and the Chapter Sponsor and Chapter President will be notified of the Committee's decision. If approved, a Charter certificate will be issued.
7. BPS will provide the newly formed Chapter \$200.00, in reimbursable expenses, as seed money. Funds will be distributed upon submission of receipts for Chapter related expenses to the Society.

## Duties of the Chapter Sponsor

The Chapter Sponsor, who is a member of the Biophysical Society, is responsible for providing professional guidance, practical advice, and needed assistance. It is important that the Sponsor be accessible to the Chapter members to provide guidance either through face-to-face meetings, email, webchat, or phone. Membership development, program organization, and other Chapter projects will be more successful if the Sponsor's judgment and aid are readily available.

The Chapter Sponsor is responsible for promoting contact between Student Chapter Members and Society Member professionals and others, as well as providing guidance and assistance to the Chapter. The Chapter Sponsor's familiarity with the local scientific community can be invaluable in program planning. In most cases, the Chapter Sponsor will be a faculty member at the institution(s) where the Chapter is formed, but this is not a requirement.

## Duties of Chapter Officers and Committees

With the exception of the founding year of each Chapter, Chapters must elect Officers during the spring semester to begin serving their terms during the fall semester at the beginning of the academic year. Each elected Officer must be a BPS Student Member, in the following order of rank: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Chapters may combine the offices of Secretary and Treasurer. The Chapter Bylaws may provide for election of additional Officers. The elected Officers constitute the Executive Committee of the Chapter. With the exception of the Chapter President, the terms of all elected Officers are one academic year, the "administrative year," normally commencing with the fall term. The Chapter President shall be elected to serve a 2-year term. Elected Officers are eligible to serve two consecutive terms in the same office, and may serve a maximum of four terms if elected to a different office. The Chapter Sponsor, while not necessarily a member of the Executive Committee, normally meets with it and participates in its discussions.

The sample Chapter Bylaws suggest the appointment of the following Committees: Program, Field Trip, Membership Development, and Publicity. Additional Committees (e.g., Awards, Nominating, Professional Affairs, etc.) may be appointed by the Chapter Officers.

# Executive Committee

The Chair of the Executive Committee is the President. A quorum, consisting of a simple majority, is necessary to conduct business. The Executive Committee conducts the business of the Chapter, acts on periodic reports from the Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee Chairs, and is responsible to the Society, and the will of the majority of all Chapter members. Annual reports of the President, Secretary, and Treasurer are approved before submittal to BPS Society Office as part of the Chapter's Annual Report (see Appendix C).

## President

The Chapter President, as the highest-ranking officer, assumes all executive responsibilities of the Chapter not otherwise delegated. The President, or the ranking officer present, presides at all meetings of the Chapter and the Executive Committee; and should be familiar with and observe basic Rules of Order.

As presiding officer of the Chapter and of the Executive Committee, the President calls such meetings as are deemed necessary. The President appoints a Nominating Committee to select a suitable slate of candidates for office for the following year. Elections should be held not later than the next to the last meeting of the year. This will permit orderly transfer of records and responsibilities, and encourage effective planning. Provisions should be made for acceptance of additional nominations from the general membership at the time of the election.

Before the close of the administrative year, the Chapter President prepares the report of the activities of the Chapter. The reports of the Secretary and Treasurer are included in the Annual Report. Three copies are prepared — one copy to be retained with the Chapter records, one to be sent to the Chapter Sponsor, and one copy to be sent to the Society office.

At the close of the administrative year, the outgoing President transfers to the incoming President a copy of this Chapter Operations Manual and other records required for the term of office.

## Vice-President

The Chapter Vice-President acts as the assistant to the President in carrying out organizational duties. The Vice-President, during the absence or incapacity of the President, acts as the President on all Chapter business, and presides at Chapter Executive Committee Meetings. The Vice-President fulfills any other assignment given by the President or outlined in the Chapter's Bylaws. Ideally, the Vice-President also serves as the Chair of the Program Committee.

## Secretary

The Chapter Secretary attends all meetings of the Chapter and Executive Committee and records the minutes of each meeting. Following each meeting, the Secretary should send the minutes to the Chapter Sponsor and current Chapter Members. Immediately after the election of Officers, the Secretary completes the Chapter Information Sheet and sends it to the BPS Society Office, with a copy to the Chapter Sponsor (see Appendix B). If the Secretary is unable to attend a meeting, the President shall assume the responsibilities of the Secretary for that meeting, or appoint a Chapter Officer or Chapter Member to temporarily serve as Secretary.

Unless the responsibility is otherwise delegated, the Secretary maintains a record of all members and records the number of members and guests in attendance at each meeting. The Secretary should carry on all communications necessary for the activities of the Chapter and be the custodian of all records of the Chapter, including copies of all reports submitted to the Society office. The Secretary sees that the activities of the Chapter are properly conducted under the provisions of the Chapter Bylaws.

The Secretary also assumes responsibility for the Chapter's marketing, outreach, and communications efforts, including the creation of a midyear and end-of-year newsletter that shall be submitted to the Society Office at the time of its distribution. Newsletters may be electronic or printed.

The office of Secretary may be divided between an elected Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary, who is either elected or appointed as the Chapter may provide in its Bylaws. The Recording Secretary maintains all records and submits all reports, as described above. The Corresponding Secretary is responsible for all other correspondence of the Chapter, including marketing, outreach, and communications.

# Treasurer

The Chapter Treasurer, working under the supervision of the Chapter Sponsor, receives all money and pays all debts of the Chapter authorized by the Chapter Executive Committee as provided in the Chapter Bylaws. The duties of the Treasurer may be combined with those of the Secretary. The Treasurer keeps an exact account of receipts and expenditures, and deposits all money received in the name of the Chapter in a depository designated by the Chapter Executive Committee with the approval of the Chapter Sponsor. The Treasurer makes disbursements only as authorized by the Chapter Executive Committee, and prepares financial statements for the administrative year for (1) submittal to the Chapter Executive Committee for certification by the Chapter Sponsor and (2) transmittal to the Society Office. The Treasurer prepares a fiscal budget for approval by the Chapter Executive Committee, collects all local dues and keeps records of dues-paying members of the Chapter. The Treasurer also collects any revenue generated through Chapter fundraising activities or sponsorship.

# Program Committee

The Vice-President normally serves as Chair of the Program Committee. The Program Committee's duties are vital since the effectiveness with which the Committee operates directly influences the amount of interest that the year's program will receive. The Committee should meet well in advance of the program year and outline the general program for the ensuing year. The first program of the year should offer direct support to the Membership Development Committee's efforts to recruit new members. The Program Committee is responsible for preparing materials for the Publicity Committee in time to properly publicize the meetings and other special activities of the Chapter. The Program Committee is responsible for obtaining a meeting place that has adequate seating capacity to accommodate expected attendance and securing equipment needed for the meeting such as screen, lectern, pointer, projectors, etc. Be specific in determining the exact audiovisual requirements of program participants.

## Programming might include the following activities:

### Securing Speakers from the Biophysical Community

The Program Committee should solicit the assistance of the Chapter Sponsor and the Society Office in securing speakers. Speakers at Chapter meetings should be treated with special courtesy. Arrangements may include Chapter Officer(s) meeting the speaker upon arrival and an informal meal with the speaker before or after the meeting.

### Movies/Videos on Biophysical Subjects

Many sources are available in the biophysical community for movie and video materials on various biophysics-related topics and methods.

### Panel Discussions

Programs based on a topic of interest can provide a stimulating meeting.

### Field Trips

These trips are a valuable addition to a well-rounded program. Suggestions for field trips include visits to nearby national labs, neighboring universities, and local companies.

### Student Paper Contest

Local contests can add interesting presentations and friendly competition.

### Social Activities

Social programs, such as a networking event, food tasting, or recreational activity are of considerable value to a Chapter and often arouse interest in the Chapter's programs.

# Publicity Committee

The Secretary oversees the Publicity Committee which is responsible for publicizing each Chapter meeting and other activities. The Publicity Committee should work in close cooperation with the Program Committee in the preparation and distribution of meeting notices to the Chapter membership. Notices of meetings and special activities should be brought to the attention of the Chapter members at least two weeks before the date set for the meetings. The Publicity Committee will also assume responsibility for creating the Chapter newsletter.

## Membership Development Committee

The Chapter President will oversee the Membership Development Committee, which is responsible for calling to the attention of prospective members the advantages of BPS Membership. At the beginning of each year, a membership drive should be organized with the assistance and cooperation of the Chapter Sponsor and the Program Committee. Members of the Committee should be assigned the responsibility of contacting prospective members. Personal invitations to non-members to attend one or more meetings with arrangements to introduce them to fellow members can be an effective way of promoting BPS.

## The Annual Report

In order to remain recognized by the Society, each Student Chapter is required to prepare an Annual Report, describing the year's activities of the Chapter. It must be received at the BPS Society Office no later than July 15th of each year, so that it will be available for review by the BPS Education Committee (see Appendix C).

The concept of an Annual Report is extremely important. It gives the Chapter an opportunity to share its activities with others while being professionally accountable, and also provides the Society with a means of collecting and recording student activity for historical record and determining the Chapter's viability.