

Constitution of the McMaster Astronomy and Physics Student Association

January 20, 2020

1 Preamble

1.1 Name

The organization of McMaster physics and astronomy graduate students shall hereafter be referred to as the McMaster Astronomy and Physics Student Association (MAPSA)

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of MAPSA is as follows

1. To provide a platform for graduate student concerns to be expressed to the department and university and to represent the interests of graduate students at department meetings.
2. To disseminate important information to the graduate student body.
3. To coordinate graduate student committees.
4. To assist graduate students in obtaining support for issues related to harassment, discrimination, mental health, and inter-personal conflicts.

1.3 Organization

Roles and responsibilities in MAPSA will be organized by an executive body known as the MAPSA Council, hereafter referred to as the Council. The Council will be of a flat organization structure with no hierarchy (i.e. there is no President).

2 Membership

2.1 Eligibility

Membership in MAPSA shall be automatic for all graduate students in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at McMaster. Membership in this club is open to all such students in accordance with all criteria enumerated in the “GSA Clubs Operating Policies” document and is offered irrespective of race, religion, gender, class, age, nationality, ability, marital status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

2.2 Required Composition

At minimum one third of the clubs membership must be constituted of GSA members.

2.3 Dues

There shall be no dues for participating in MAPSA.

3 Executive Offices and Committees

3.1 Officers

The Council shall be divided into two categories:

1. *Directly Elected Representatives* (6 officers) - one officer nominated and elected by each of the student constituencies defined in article 4 according to the procedures of article 7.
2. *Standing Committee Representatives* (3 officers) - chosen by the membership of standing committees according to article 3.3.

The Council shall select individuals to fill the following roles,

1. *Chairperson*. Must be a member of the Council. Responsible for organizing meetings, keeping minutes, and ensuring that meetings conform to the code of conduct outlined in section 4.1. The Chairperson is Selected by the Council at the beginning of each year.
2. *Election Organizer*. This office can be filled by any member of MAPSA. Responsible for overseeing the annual election and ensuring that each constituency has at least one candidate. The Election Organizer may not be a candidate in the election.
3. *Treasurer*. Must be a member of the Council. Responsible for overseeing MAPSA finances, including drafting the annual budget for approval by the Council.

3.2 Officer Responsibilities

All officers must commit to the following responsibilities,

1. Officers must be available to members to discuss any concerns regarding department culture and department policies. Details of these discussions must be kept confidential.
2. Officers of the directly elected leadership must represent the interests of their constituents honestly at department and Council meetings and with consideration to all constituent opinions.
3. Each year the officers must collect input from students on course offerings and general improvements for the graduate student program and present this to the department.
4. Directly elected representatives are responsible for maintaining and updating a list of the current membership of their constituency, along with an avenue of contact for each member.
5. If the department requests MAPSA representation (e.g. at department meetings, retreats, colloquium committee meetings), the officers will appoint a representative to attend.

Failure to meet these terms may result in the removal of the officer, as outlined in article 8.2.

3.3 Committee Requirements

Committees wishing for representation on the Council must satisfy the following criteria:

1. The basis of the committee must not be discriminatory toward any person's gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, or religion. Participation in the committees must be consistent with the policies outlined in article 2.1.
2. Annual elections must be held for executive positions within the committee and to fill vacant positions. Elections must be open to all members of the committee.
3. Annual recruitment must be formally done to ensure participation of all who are interested, and recruitment must be open to all members.
4. Committees must hold a membership of a minimum of 5 individuals.
5. The committees must be active, i.e. must hold at minimum one event/training/meeting per term.

4 Council Representation

4.1 Constituency Membership

The list of constituencies and their members shall be publicly available and kept up to date following a review session. Members may only vote for a single directly elected representative in the September election, with the exception of the international constituency members. Students have the option to request membership in the constituency of their choice via notification of the Council. Those who do not self-determine will be assigned to constituencies as outlined by article 4.2, with course-based masters' students assigned to the constituency covered by the current Department Graduate Chair.

4.2 Standing Constituencies

- *Astronomy*: e.g. students under supervision of A. Chen, L. Parker, R. Pudritz, A. Sills, J. Wadsley, C. Wilson, B. Harris, H. Couchman, D. Welch.
- *Condensed Matter/High-Energy Theory*: e.g. students under supervision of C. Burgess, C. Kallin, S. Lee, D. O'Dell, E. Sørensen.
- *Soft Matter and Biophysics*: e.g. students under supervision of K. Dalnoki-Veress, C. Fradin, P. Higgs, M. Rheinstadter, A. Shi.
- *Condensed Matter Experiment*: e.g. students under supervision of B. Gaulin, T. Imai, G. Luke, D. Venus.
- *Rad-Grad*: e.g. students under supervision of F. McNeill, D. Chettle, S. H. Byun, J. Juhasz
- *International Students*: e.g. students from outside of Canada

4.3 Standing Committees

- Promoting Inclusion in Physics and Astronomy (PIPA)
- Entertainment Committee
- Navigation Committee

4.4 Yearly Review

A review of the Council positions shall be conducted prior to the September election period. The standing representation must be approved by unanimous consent of the Council. In the case of non-unanimous consent, the standing representation may be modified according to the following guidelines:

- If the constituencies are deemed to have failed to properly represent the graduate student body, the Council must present at least two proposals of constituencies, with one necessarily being the standing representation, for referendum. The result of the referendum will amend article 4.2.
- If a committee is deemed to have failed to meet the requirements as outlined in article 3.3, or in the case of a new committee seeking representation on the Council, a referendum will be held to amend article 4.3.

5 Meetings and Communication

5.1 Code of Conduct

Meetings must be conducted in such a way that all members have an opportunity to express their viewpoints. Any behaviour which seeks to discriminate against a member for any reason outlined in article 2.1, or which seeks to silence dissenting opinions will not be tolerated and may result in ejection from the meeting. A motion must be made for ejections and voted on by attending MAPSA members in the room with simple majority required to pass.

5.2 Frequency

The Council shall meet at least twice per term. In addition, a meeting can also be called with signatures from at least 5 members of MAPSA for a date to be determined by those members whose signatures have been offered.

5.3 Attendance and Access

Notice of meetings of the Council will be sent one week prior to the meeting with the agenda of the upcoming meeting to be included. All meetings must be open to all members. The opportunity to voice concerns must be made available to attending students except in those cases where an attending student violates the code of conduct outlined in article 5.1. Meeting minutes will be taken by a member of the Council and sent out to all MAPSA members.

5.4 Voting

Referendums are required for any change to the Constitution, suggestions to the department on behalf of the graduate student body, or as decided on by the Council. Referendums will follow voting procedure as outlined in article 6. Other business pertaining to the day-to-day running of the Council may be approved by simple majority in the presence of a quorum consisting of three quarters of the Council.

6 Referendums

All referendums as outlined in article 5.4 must be presented to graduate students no less than two weeks before the vote. A reminder email must be sent out both the day before the vote and no less than one week ahead of the vote. A simple majority is sufficient to approve referendums. Referendums must have a participation of at least 50% of the MAPSA membership to pass. Should a referendum fail to reach quorum, the referendum also fails.

7 Elections

Elections are to be held every year during the last week of September to determine the directly elected representatives of the standing constituencies. Nominations for the elected representative positions will take place in the week prior to elections. The organization of the election shall be conducted by the Election Organizer, as outlined in article 3.1. Only students within a constituency may vote for the representative of that constituency. Elections must guarantee the anonymity of the voters.

Newly elected officers take office from October 1st of the year of election to October 1st of the following year. The elections are by simple majority of the voting constituency in the case of two-candidate elections. In the case of a single-candidate election, a majority approval is required. If there are more than two candidates for a given constituency, voting will occur in two phases: the top two candidates from the first phase of voting will compete in a runoff election.

8 Removal of Officers

In the case that an officer is removed from their position, an election must be held within one month to fill the vacant position.

8.1 Officer Resignation

Officers may resign from their roles during their elected term by notifying the Council.

8.2 Officer Dismissal

Any member of MAPSA can make a motion to dismiss a directly elected officer who is not fulfilling their responsibilities. A majority vote by the officer's constituency and the Council must be met to dismiss an officer.