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| The Constitution of  The University of Winnipeg Biology Students’ Association | | |
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|  | 23 January 2015 |  |

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# Preamble

The University of Winnipeg Biology Students’ Association (UWBSA) is a volunteer student group established to represent and advocate for science students on campus. Democracy, academic freedom, mutual respect, and service are the principles that shall guide its endeavours.

The UWBSA was created to achieve the following four goals:

1. To advance the interests of Biology and other science students;

2. To build a sense of community on campus;

3. To give members the opportunity to develop leadership and organizational skills by getting involved in university affairs; and,

4. To collaborate with other student groups, external organizations, and the University to work toward the greater good.

## Definitions.

*Bio Club*: this term refers to the University of Winnipeg Biology Students’ Association (UWBSA), comprising general and executive members. Hereon in the UWBSA shall be referred to as ‘Bio Club’.

*General members:* any person who meets the eligibility requirements for membership in Bio Club as outlined in Section 1.a.i. and does not hold an executive position is referred to as a ‘general member’.

*Bio Club executive*: The Bio Club executives are elected ‘executive officers’ (see Section 2 for division of powers, responsibilities, voting rights, and method of appointment). Hereon in the term ‘the executive’ refers to only elected named positions.

# Section 1 - Membership

## 1a. Eligibility.

i). General membership: any attending University of Winnipeg student who is or has taken a course in the department of Biology.

ii). The executive. All Bio Club general members are eligible to run for an elected executive officer position. The Executive is defined as the named Bio Club positions that must fulfil obligations outlined by job descriptions as listed in Section 2. V. Non-members must first become Bio Club members to be eligible for nomination, election, or appointment to a Bio Club executive position. Removal from executive named positioned must be voted upon by the other 11 members of the executive and must have at least a 8/10 vote.

## 1b. Enrollment

i). To become a Member At Large of Bio Club, the prospective Member At Large must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in section 1a. The prospective Member At Large must submit the following information to the Executive to be entered into the Membership At Large roll: full name and email address. The Executive may request the prospective Member At Large to submit proof of enrollment and evidence of good standing at UW before granting Member At Large status if deemed necessary. The prospective Member At Large must attend two consecutive meetings and be in good standing with the Bio Club. Members At Large lose their title upon missing a Bio Club meeting without notifying a member of the Executive.

## 1c. Rights and Responsibilities.

### Rights.

i). Bio Club General Members have the right to attend general meetings and any Bio Club social event hosted on or off campus.

ii). General members have the right to vote on all matters subject to a popular vote as per Section 3.c., which includes executive elections, constitutional amendment, and any other issue put to referendum by the Executive.

iii). General members have the right to review all executive and general meeting minutes, Bio Club financial statements, and this Constitution, which they may access by submitting a written request to the Secretary or another member of the Executive in the Secretary’s absence.

iv). If the Executive revokes the membership of a General Member, that member has the right to receive in writing the reasons for their expulsion, and may appeal their expulsion by submitting a written request to the President. A written appeal affords the expelled member the opportunity to argue in person to the Executive for their membership to be reinstated at a closed-session executive meeting held no more than thirty days after the date of their expulsion, and have a Bio Club liaison faculty member present at that meeting where possible. If the Executive fails to facilitate the expelled member’s rights as outlined here, the Executive must reinstate the expelled member immediately.

v). General members have the right petition the Executive to act on an issue of concern that accords within reason with the principles and goals of Bio Club. General members may submit a motion describing the relevant action for the Executive to debate and vote on as per Section 3.c.ii.. If the Executive votes against the motion and the member wishes to pursue the matter further, that member may compel the Executive to submit the original motion to a general vote at the next general meeting if that member gathers a petition signed by thirty Bio Club members. The petition must state the original motion and how it accords with the principles and goals of Bio Club. The voting procedure shall follow the same voting process outlined in Section 2.b.v..

### Responsibilities.

vi). Bio Club Members At Large and Executive must behave and interact respectfully with their fellow Members At Large and Executives at all times. Bio Club upholds and encourages academic freedom, the respectful exchange of ideas, and constructive feedback on executive decision-making. However Members At Large who act or communicate by any medium in a manner that they reasonably ought to have known will threaten, demean, or harass any UW student or faculty may have their Bio Club membership revoked by a majority vote of the Bio Club Executive.

# Section 2 - Governance

## 2a. Composition and responsibilities of the Executive.

i). The Bio Club Executive shall be comprised of ten executive officers: The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Liaison Officer, Communications Coordinator, First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative, Fourth Year Plus Representative.

ii). The term of office for Bio Club executive officers of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Liaison Officer, and Communications Coordinator begin on the first day of the Spring Term after their election, and ends on the final day of the following Winter Term. The term of office for Bio Club executive officers of First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative, and Fourth Year Plus Representative begin on the day of their election, and ends on the final day of the following Winter Term.

iii). All Bio Club executive positions are voluntary in nature. No Executive member may accept financial compensation from Bio Club or any other organization for the conduct of the duties required of their position on the Executive. The Executive must immediately terminate the term of office for any executive member(s) caught in breach of this section.

### Executive Officers.

v). The positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Liaison Officer, Communications Coordinator, First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative, and Fourth Year Plus Representative shall comprise the Bio Club executive officers. The Executive Officer positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Liaison Officer, and Communications Coordinator must be filled through a secret ballot vote held by the outgoing Executive before their term of office expires at the end of Winter Term. The Executive Officer positions of First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative, and Fourth Year Plus Representative must be filled through a secret ballot vote held by the current Executive within the first two months of the academic year.

vi). The President is responsible to lead the Executive in setting Bio Club’s agenda and establishing policies for their term of office. The President must organize monthly executive meetings where possible, and convene no less than one general meeting open to all Bio Club members during the Fall and Winter Terms respectively. The President is responsible to ensure that all executive members fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in Section 2.a. of this Constitution. As the elected head of Bio Club, the President must exemplify and uphold the principles and stated aims of Bio Club, and ensure that all Bio Club activities represent the interests of the general members.

vii). The Vice President is responsible to support the President in the performance of his/her duties, and to fulfill the duties of the President in his/her absence. The Vice President is also responsible for knowing and enforcing the Bio Club Constitution during the conduct of all Club business and social events.

viii). The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the financial accounts of Bio Club. The Treasurer must produce a financial statement for executive review at the beginning of Fall Term, and produce no less than two financial statements thereafter – preferably one per term. The treasurer is also responsible to keep general members updated on Bio Club’s financial situation. The Treasurer must track and record all revenues and expenditures of the Bio Club, and may only release funds for expenditures that have been authorized as per Sections 3.c.iv. and/or 3.d.. When an Executive’s term of office ends, the outgoing Treasurer must pass his/her authority over the Club’s financial accounts to the incoming Treasurer.

ix). The Secretary is responsible for maintaining the written records of Bio Club, past and present, which includes meeting minutes and the Constitution. The Secretary must record the minutes at all executive and general meetings, maintain the membership roll, and keep a record of all Bio Club activities during each Executive term of office. The Secretary should also produce an annual report summarizing the Bio Club’s activities throughout the year if possible. When each Executive’s term of office ends, the outgoing Secretary must pass the Bio Club’s records on to the incoming Secretary.

x). The Liaison Officer is responsible for inter-organizational communications and coordination of Bio Club activities with external organizations. The Liaison Officer is also responsible to foster strong, positive relations between Bio Club and the Biology Department faculty and graduate students.

xi) The Communications Coordinators have two main objectives: As of the 2017/2018 year, a temporary second communications coordinator has been added with the responsible of the development and maintenance of the Bio Club website. They must manage the calendar, make 1-2 posts monthly, post meeting minutes, job opportunities, and educational opportunities on the website as they arise. Additionally, the primary, permanent responsibility of the Communications Coordinators are the upkeep of the Bio Club social media pages and the Bio Club email account. They must manage correspondence through social media platforms such as Facebook, post events and respond to messages and comments. The Social Media Coordinator must also manage email correspondence and inform the executive of important emails. They will send out meeting emails and provide General Members with necessary information on upcoming events and voting opportunities.

xii) Representative Roles: First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative, and Fourth Year Plus Representative will act as representatives of Bio Club at events, and will be the voice of the students of the same academic year to the executive members of Bio Club.

## 2b. Elections and Voting.

i). General elections. The Bio Club Executive must hold a general election before their term in office expires in order to fill the five executive officer positions for the following academic year.

ii). Notification. The outgoing Executive must notify the Bio Club general membership of a pending general election no less than three days prior to the election date. This notification must communicate the positions open for election; the date, time, and location for the general meeting at which the election will occur; and call for nominations. If the Executive facilitates remote voting, the notification must include all of the relevant details on how the members may exercise this option (see Section 2.b. v.).

iii). Nominations. Any Bio Club General Member is eligible for nomination for the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Liaison Officer, Communications Coordinator. Bio Club General Members are only eligible for nomination for the positions of First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative, and Fourth Year Plus Representative if they have been enrolled at the University of Winnipeg for that many academic years, independent of the credit hours accumulated. A General Member may nominate him or herself or any one of their peers at any time prior to voting. No general member may stand for election for more than one executive office at a time, nor hold the same position for more than one term of office.

iv). Conduct. On the date of election, the Bio Club Executive must convene a general meeting. The Executive must give reasonable opportunity for general members to submit any final nominations, and then present the final list of nominees to the general members present, after which time no further nominations may be submitted. Each nominee has the right to make a short statement to the members present as regulated by the outgoing Secretary according to time constraints and requirement for respectful conduct. Once each nominee has exercised or waived their right to make a statement, the Executive will begin the voting process outlined in Section 2.b.v.

v). Voting. At minimum the election of Executive Officers will occur by secret ballot at a general meeting as outlined in Section 2.b.iv.. A simple majority of votes will determine the outcome. The Secretary or a designated executive member must ensure that only eligible Bio Club members vote. Matters of general business put to a general vote by the Executive or general members must follow the procedure outlined in this section.

vi). Remote voting. The Executive may facilitate a remote voting process in addition to the secret ballot, but must clearly communicate this intent as per Section 2.b.ii.. This notification must give clear direction on how a general member may register for remote voting, the medium by which the remote vote may be cast, where to send this vote, a transparent method by which the Executive will account for all remote votes, and that the voter must surrender their right to anonymity when sending their vote in remotely.

vii). Extended voting. The Executive may also choose to facilitate a secret ballot voting process that extends beyond the general meeting, but must communicate to the General Members in advance of the location and operating hours of the voting station and how its integrity will be maintained.

viii). Counting the vote. The Executive must arrange for some general members to be present when the votes are counted in order for the vote outcome to be considered valid. No less than two executive members must verify the tally of votes. The Secretary must record the outcome of every vote held in the meeting minutes.

ix). If a nominee runs unopposed, they must still stand for election as outlined in Section 2 to ensure they have the confidence of the general membership.

x). If extreme weather or an exigent circumstance of similar nature happens to interrupt the conduct of an election, the Executive attempt to hold the election at the soonest opportunity thereafter at which the members have a reasonable opportunity to cast their vote. The Secretary must record the reason for the interruption and detail the Executive’s actions taken in response.

### By-elections.

xi). If an executive officer resigns from their position or is dismissed by a majority vote of the executive officers for violating their responsibilities as outlined in Sections 2.a and 3.b., the Executive may decide to hold a by-election to refill the vacant position, or leave the position vacant until the next general election. The by-election process must follow the same notification and voting procedures outlined in Section 2.b. of this Constitution.

# Section 3 – General Procedure

### 3a. General meetings.

iii). The Bio Club Executive is responsible to hold regular general meetings during the Fall and Winter Terms for the central purpose of informing general members and inviting their input and feedback. Bio Club is a democratic organization; the Executive is responsible to use general meetings to remain accountable and responsive to the interests of the General Members whom the Executive represents, which includes updating the general members on all activities and the financial position of Bio Club.

### Meeting minutes.

iv). The Secretary or a designate in his/her absence must record minutes at every Bio Club meeting. The meeting minutes comprise an essential component of the Club records, and verify that all Club decision-making and expenditure comply with the rules and procedures outlined in this Constitution. Meeting minutes must include attendance to ensure quorum is met for any vote held; a verbatim record of any motions requiring a vote and that vote’s outcome; and a general record of the discussion.

## 3b. Executive Responsibilities.

i). Attendance and dismissal. Regular attendance is essential for executive members to fulfill the responsibilities of their office, and for Bio Club business to proceed without unreasonable delay. Any Executive Member may be removed from their executive position as subject to an 80 percent majority vote of the current executive, excluding the Executive Member in question.

## 3c. Decision-making Procedure.

i). As a democratic organization, any business that requires expenditure from Bio Club funds, or any project or activity conducted in the name of Bio Club, must be approved by a majority of the Executive before the expenditure, project, or activity may proceed.

ii). For a vote to be considered valid, a general or executive member must submit a motion to be recorded in the minutes. The President must ensure reasonable time is given for all members present to debate the motion. Following debate, a vote by the appropriate members as defined in Section 3.c.iv-vi. will accept or reject the motion.

### Levels of decision-making.

iii). Bio Club has three levels of decision-making: normal business, extraordinary business, and constitutional amendment. Each level has a specific quorum and voting process described below.

iv). Extraordinary business. Extraordinary business covers matters that affect the integrity of Bio Club. It includes any change to the composition of the Executive, such as the removal of any Executive Officer and expenditures related to a single project or event that exceed $500. Because the general membership has granted a democratic mandate to the executive officers only, only the executive officers may vote on extraordinary business. A simple majority is required to approve extraordinary business related to expenditure; a two-thirds majority is required to approve extraordinary business that changes the composition of the executive. The voting procedure for extraordinary business will be an open show of hands, the result of which the Secretary will record in the minutes.

v). Constitutional Referendum. The Bio Club Constitution guards the fundamental character of Bio Club. Therefore any amendment to this Constitution must be subject to a two-thirds majority vote in which all Bio Club members are eligible to vote. Any Bio Club member may propose an amendment to the Constitution at a Bio Club meeting. The Secretary will record the motion for amendment in the minutes, and the Executive must communicate the proposed amendment to the general membership and hold a general meeting at which the referendum vote will occur as per Section 2.b.v-x. and Section 3.d.iv.. All members shall have an opportunity to debate the proposed amendment at the meeting, after which a show of hands vote will occur. A two-thirds majority of the Bio Club members present must vote in favour of a Constitutional amendment for it to pass. If the amendment passes, the Secretary will update the Constitution accordingly, and record the change and the date on which it occurred in a footnote on the page where the change occurred.

vi). Any Club business not covered in sections 3.c.iv. and 3.c.v. of this constitution shall be considered normal business. All members of the Executive and all Members At Large are eligible to vote on normal business.

## 3d. Quorum.

i). Quorum must be met for any vote on all Bio Club business to be considered valid.

ii). Quorum for a vote on normal business requires either the President OR Vice President AND half of the Executive to be present.

iii). Quorum for a vote on extraordinary business requires the President and an additional six out of Ten Executive Officers to be present. Only Executive Officers may vote on extraordinary business.

iv). Quorum for a constitutional amendment and/or general election requires the President and a majority of the Executive to be present at a general meeting held for the purpose of a referendum.

## 3d. Expenditures.

i). Any expenditures that reimburse a general or executive member for out-of-pocket expenses must be approved by an executive vote as normal business.

ii). Comprehensive funding requests must accompany all new proposed projects, and all funding must be approved by executive vote as per normal business.

iii). All votes on new expenditures must be recorded in meeting minutes with full attendance taken to ensure quorum before the vote may be considered valid.

iv). Any expenditures that do not meet the procedural requirements outlined in Section 3.d. of this Constitution are not eligible for reimbursement from club funds.