

BYLAWS OF THE HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL BLACK POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Harvard Medical School Black Postdoctoral Association, abbreviated as HBPA.

Section 2. Purpose

The Harvard Medical School Black Postdoctoral Association, henceforth referred to as HBPA, is an organization committed to ensuring the professional success of black postdoctoral scientists employed by Harvard Medical School and its hospital affiliates. Formed in 2020, we aim to unite black postdoctoral fellows in a community with shared interest and values, providing professional and social support to all members of the Black Harvard Medical School postdoctoral community.

Section 3. Membership

- General membership in HBPA shall be open to anyone who qualifies under one or more of the following categories: (1) Is employed by Harvard Medical School or a Harvard Medical School Affiliate, (2) Must hold the title of postdoctoral fellow or postdoctoral fellows who have transitioned to instructor.
- Active membership:
 - A member must have attended 75% of all HBPA business meetings (9 meetings per year) to be eligible for election to the governing board.
 - Anyone is eligible for election to committee chair

Section 4. Governance Structure

The HBPA is composed of three layers of governance:

- The Governing Board.
- Committee Chairs.
- Voting Members.

Section 5. Governing Board

- The governing body of the organization shall be a Governing Board consisting of the elected Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Secretary, and Treasurer.
- The Governing Board must meet at least once every three months to discuss the general direction of the HBPA.
- The Governing Board shall have full power to carry out the purposes of the HBPA and shall have general charge and control of its affairs, funds, and property, but shall not have the sole right to amend this Constitution.
- It is responsible for setting immediate goals for the current administrative year and long-range goals for future HBPA achievement.

HBPA Governing Board Structure

- The HBPA governing board is composed of the following positions:

Chair

- The chair is the chief elected member of the HBPA. Their role is overall governing, management of HBPA activities, meetings, and HBPA-related interactions with external entities.
- The chair is responsible for determining the general meeting agenda, running HBPA general meetings, and ensuring that procedural issues are managed in an efficient and timely manner.
- Appointment/removal of temporary standing officers to fulfill HBPA business.
- The Chair is an ex officio member of every committee and shall also have the power to appoint or remove committee chairs, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- Engaging with senior officials of Harvard Medical School, and the HMS affiliate institutions, in consultation with the Governing Board and the HBPA community.
- Maintains communications between the National Black Postdoctoral Association (NBPA) executive board and the HBPA.
- The Chair will submit the complete HBPA member roster to the NBPA upon request from the NBPA governing board.

Vice-chair(s)

- Assist the chair in overall governing, management of HBPA activities, meetings, and HBPA-related interactions with external entities.

Secretary

- Assist the chair and vice-chair(s) in overall governing and management of HBPA.
- Responsible for taking minutes of general HBPA meetings and meetings with external entities.
- Compiling minutes from committee meetings (see. Section x. Committees) in a central location accessible to all governing board members.
- Responsible for notifying active members of an election or any other vote requiring active members.
- Running the annual elections in collaboration with an elected appointee.

Treasurer

- Authorized to collect all monies payable to HBPA, shall be charged with keeping the funds for HBPA, and from such funds shall make the necessary disbursements.

- Keep the HBPA's financial accounts and shall enter in detail all receipts and disbursements to a shared drive viewable by all Governing Board members.
- Authorized to open an account in the name of HBPA and deposit all funds therein, in consultation with the governing board.
- Make an annual statement and report for the HPBA Governing Board and Committee chairs, or, when required.
- Perform other duties of the office as assigned by the chair.

Section 6. Other Standing Officers

- Standing officers, if necessary, shall be appointed by the chair and shall carry out the details necessary to the office to which they are appointed. The chair is responsible for dismissing a standing officer when their task is fulfilled.

Section 7. Committees

Committee responsibilities

- Each committee is responsible for planning and organizing the tasks designated to them by this Constitution and the Governing Board.
- Each committee must meet at least once per month, with the meeting called for and run by the committee chair(s).
- Active (voting) members of a committee are appointed by the Committee Chair in consultation with the elected HBPA Chair, at the request of the member. An active committee member who is absent for more than four consecutive committee meetings can be dismissed from their active committee status without notice, at the discretion of the Committee Chair.
- Only active members of the committee can vote on committee related business.
- There are no restrictions on who can attend a committee meeting.
- Committee votes are passed/denied by a majority vote of the Committee. The Governing Board can veto any decision made by a committee or committee chair with a two-thirds vote of the Governing Board. The Governing Board veto can be overruled by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of HBPA.

Committee Descriptions

- *Career Development Committee: The goal of the Career Development Committee is to support and facilitate the professional development and career goals of HBPA members through the following: Inviting speakers from academia, industry, and other professions, who have a STEM PhD and are otherwise established in their career, and who are sourced from our members; Organizing research presentations from HBPA members; Organizing presentations on professional development topics of member interest.*
- **Social Committee:** The HBPA social committee seeks to create community amongst our members and provide social engagement opportunities to strengthen our group from within. The social committee chair(s) will hold monthly meetings and will report on current activities during the business meeting. The social committee members will:

organize frequent (monthly or bi-monthly) social events for HBPA community members; act as liaison(s) to other postdoctoral associations; ensure networking opportunities through social events.

- **Community Outreach Committee:** The goal of the HBPA Outreach Committee is to increase representation in biomedical research by engaging and educating black students and communities across MA by exposing them to cutting-edge biomedical research conducted by Black scientist at Harvard Medical School.
HBPA Outreach Committee:
 1. Engages scientific curiosity, inspires, and provides early exposure to biomedical research to black middle and high school students.
 2. Provides resources for middle and high schools with high Black student populations across MA, including complementing their school curriculum with biomedical research and information about college scholarships
 3. Provides mentoring to students (K-12, undergraduate and graduate Black students)
 4. Identifies and partners with local groups to provide scientific or pertinent health talks to black communities
- **Communication and Social Media Committee:** The mission of the Social Media Committee is to develop, coordinate and implement the social media strategy for the HBPA. The committee works together to ensure social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, HBPA website) are engaging with the community to increase the visibility and connections of the HBPA. Duties include promoting local and national events, spotlighting achievements by members and allies, and fostering collaborations with individuals and organizations.

Section 8. Annual Meeting

- The Annual Meeting shall be held at a time and place to be determined by the Governing Board, must be held no later than one year after the previous annual meeting, and no earlier than 11 months after the previous annual meeting.
- All Governing Board and Committee Chair positions are vacated at the end of the Annual Meeting.
- The Governing Board is responsible for determining the time and date of the Annual Meeting. An Annual Meeting occurs automatically one year from the date of the previous Annual Meeting if the Governing Board has not set a date that fulfills the criteria defined in Section x x b.
- The Secretary as directed by the Governing Board shall give notice of the Annual Meeting no later than eight weeks before the date set by the Governing Board.

Voting rules

- All votes will be conducted via secret ballot.

Election of the Governing Board and Committee Chairs

- Election of the HBPA Governing Board and Committee Chairs occurs at the Annual Meeting (refer to Section 9 Annual Meeting).
- Elections will be run by the Secretary and another designate appointed by a majority vote of active HBPA members. The designate can not run for election.
- Elections will be run by secret ballot.
- The secretary is responsible for ensuring all ballots are submitted by an active HBPA member.
- Any active member of the HBPA can be elected on the governing board or as a committee chair.

- Co-occupancy of the Governing Board and Committee Chair positions is allowed, except for the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- For positions where co-chairs are possible (Vice-chair and all committee chair positions) the first two people who pass the minimum threshold will be appointed. If only one person makes the minimum threshold, then only that member will be appointed.
 - e.g. if a position can have co-chairs, if two candidates reach 50% vote after preference transfer both will be elected and serve as co-chairs.
 - If a candidate reaches 33% after preference transfer, and only one candidate is elected via the 50% threshold in a position where co-chairs are possible, then the candidate with 33% can become co-chair with the consent of the newly elected candidate that reached 50%.
 - If there is only one candidate running for a position, at least 33% of submitted votes are needed to be elected.
 - If any thresholds are not met, the position(s) will remain vacant and run-off elections will be held for individual positions until a candidate is elected. Run-off elections will be conducted by the highest-ranking elected member of the HBPA if the secretary position is vacant.
- The Governing Board and Committee Chair positions of the HBPA shall be elected for a one-year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive one-year terms.
- All elections will use the Single Transferable Vote System.

Section 9. HBPA member input

- Any proposal can be made during a business meeting, followed by a majority vote of voting members if required. A proposal can pass by unanimous consent if no dissent is made. Votes will be noted in the minutes.
- Any proposal can be vetoed by the Chair at any point following the vote.
- The chair's veto can be overruled by a 75% vote of the Governing Board.

Section 10. Quorum

- A Governing Board meeting requires all members of the Governing Board to be present.
- A Committee vote requires at least 50% of eligible committee voting members, for the committee having the vote, to be present.

Section 11. Amendments to the constitution

- A motion to amend the constitution must be submitted to the Governing Board, in writing, for initial discussion.
- 75% of the Governing Board must vote in favor of considering the amendment, which will table the amendment for discussion and a vote at the next available HBPA meeting. All members of the Governing Board must be present for the vote.
- Once the motion to vote on the amendment is approved by the Governing Board an email must be sent to all voting members of the HBPA informing them of the pending amendment vote.
- The amendment is tabled for Board discussion and voting during the next available HBPA meeting if the Governing Board has not voted 4 weeks upon receiving the amendment request. In that same meeting, the Governing Board has to vote on the amendment, followed by a vote of the HBPA voting members, if applicable.
- If applicable, a vote of HBPA voting members will be held immediately after discussion.

- A two-thirds vote of eligible voting members in favor of the amendment will result in its adoption.

Section 12. Governing Board and Committee Chair vacancies

- Vacancies occurring in any office, except the office of the Chair, shall be filled, by a willing volunteer, at the discretion of the Chair for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- In case of a vacancy occurring in the office of the Chair, a Vice chair then in office shall serve as Chair for the remainder of the unexpired term, and the Governing Board shall fill the vacancy of the Vice Chair for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- If co-vice-chairs are in office a vote of HBPA voting members will be triggered at the next available HBPA meeting to choose between the two vice-chairs running for the vacated chair position. The secretary will become the interim chair, in a limited administrative capacity only (e.g., can not dismiss committee chair(s), governing board members).

Section 13. Removal from an elected position

- A member must make a motion to remove an individual(s) from their elected position for malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance, explaining in detail the nature of the infraction, 2 weeks prior to the HBPA business meeting. The motion must be sent to the official HBPA email account and at least one member of the governing board.
- The governing board member approached by the accuser (henceforth referred to as designate) is responsible for distributing the accusation to other governing board members.
- The motion is adopted for further discussion, and the accused is then notified of the upcoming discussion and vote by the designate.
- An adopted motion to remove a member from office will trigger a special session at the next HBPA business meeting.
- Voting members must be notified at least twice of the upcoming removal from office vote. Voting members may abstain digitally (e.g., Slack or email), if desired. If a voting member does not respond from the removal from office vote, their voting privileges will be immediately rescinded prior to the vote.
- The designate will read the motion to all in attendance at the special session.
- The accuser and the accused in the motion must be given at least 20 min of time to address voting members. The individual(s) involved can choose to not participate in this meeting or make any statement.
- Following the meeting a vote will be called by the designate to vote on removal from office.
- A two-thirds vote of voting members supporting the motion will result in removal from their respective position.
- All felonious or violent crime should be reported to the police or appropriate authorities.