The Constitution of the Society of Physics Students at UNC-CH

Be it enacted by the 2021-2023 Joint Executive Board of the Society of Physics Students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, consisting of Giovani Leone, Tyler Kay, Austin Blitstein, Ravi Pitelka, Megan Pramojaney, Alex Stewart, Stephen Schmidt, Vimal Palanivelrajan, Logan Selph, Stephen Snare, Abbey Dunnigan, Em Chittenden, and Gary Zhang assembled.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

A. This may be cited as “The SPS Constitution” and “The Constitution”.
B. “The Society of Physics Students at UNC-CH” may be cited as “The Society of Physics Students” and “SPS”.

SECTION 2. MISSION STATEMENT AND PURPOSE.

A. Mission Statement.

“SPS, as a chapter of the Society of Physics Students National Organization, is a collaborative community of physics and astronomy students. We aim to promote an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone to pursue their interest in physics, share it through outreach programs, and connect with the larger physics community beyond UNC-CH.”
B. This is incorporated into the activities of SPS through the following:
   a. Holding weekly meetings that are open to the UNC community that engage the undergraduate physics community by means of a common interest in exploring physics, astronomy, and other related disciplines.
   b. Building a connection among the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the Physics and Astronomy graduate student cohort, and the Physics and Astronomy undergraduate cohort.
   c. Actively supporting a physical space when possible that is open to the Physics and Astronomy undergraduate cohort for the purposes of collaboration and social engagement.
   d. Organizing opportunities for the professional, academic, and intellectual development of the Physics and Astronomy undergraduate cohort.
   e. Representing the interests of the UNC-CH Physics and Astronomy undergraduate cohort.
   f. Engaging with the UNC community, local community, and other external groups through outreach activities to bolster their physics aptitudes.

SECTION 3. THE CODE OF CONDUCT

A. The Code of Conduct.

“The UNC Society of Physics Students (SPS) and Visibility in Physics (ViP) at Carolina are privileged to have a dedicated room in Phillips Hall for study, collaboration, and camaraderie. The Department of Physics and Astronomy has entrusted SPS/ViP with this space; most departments do not grant this privilege.

The SPS/ViP Room (PH 245) is a safe space within the department for everyone, free from discrimination, harassment, and emotional/physical harm. Those who are given access to the room and its resources are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following guidelines. If you feel that these ideals are not being upheld, you are equally encouraged to speak up in a respectful manner or bring the problems to a member of the executive board of ViP and/or SPS.

The ability to work in the room takes high priority.

While working together is absolutely encouraged, your collaboration does not hold more importance than other collaboration that might be occurring. Be mindful of the physical space you are taking up. If others are working quietly,
please be considerate and mindful of your noise level. This is not a quiet-designated room, but we can do our best to accommodate each other’s needs.

Respect the background and experiences of others.

We all have varied academic histories: we went to different high schools, took different classes, and are all at different points in our own academic journeys. We all started as newcomers to this department at one point -- have empathy towards others that are earlier on in their journey. Our experiences allow each of us to bring something unique to SPS/ViP, but also means that you will know more than others on a specific topic at some point in your UNC career.

When sharing the knowledge you’ve gained, ensure that your conversation is both prompted and welcome. Additionally, recognize that not everyone wants to teach or be taught. While there are times that your input is certainly helpful, if it is unwanted it can easily be construed as condescending.

Ensure you are respectful of not only your peers, but also the department’s faculty and staff. Everyone should get the opportunity to form their own opinions and have their own experiences in the department.

Strive for a culture of collaboration, not competition.

We aim for a collaborative community absent of competitive attitudes with regard to majors, tracks, grades, or experiences. The physics department has very challenging courses. Therefore, we should all avoid statements and conversations that can be condescending or belittling towards others. In particular, discussing exams and exam grades can have the unintentional impact of making other people feel isolated and/or like they do not belong in physics. There is a difference between saying “I am proud of my grade on this exam,” and “Wow, that exam was so easy.” As organizations, we want to celebrate each other’s successes without minimizing the difficulties others face.”

SECTION 4. MEMBERSHIP.

The membership of SPS consists of general body members, referred to as “members”, who are distinguished between “active” members and “non-active” members, and Executive Board (see SECTION 5.) members, who may be referred to as “officers”. SPS will also have an advisor, who must be a full-time faculty member or staff member of UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC Hospitals, or an affiliated department; an emeritus
UNC-Chapel Hill faculty or staff member; UNC-CH retiree with affiliate status; or a campus minister. The advisor is not considered a member nor an officer of SPS and thus does not have the right to vote.

The following applies to all members and officers:

A. Only currently enrolled UNC-CH students can be active members with the right to vote and hold office.

B. Active membership is defined by attending two or more meetings or SPS sponsored events per semester.
   a. Membership recurs on a semesterly basis.
   b. All standing Executive Board members are active members ex officio.
   c. All Presidential Appointees are considered active members ex officio.
   d. All standing members of SPS Committees are considered active members.

C. No dues will be imposed upon any members.

D. All members (whether active or not) and officers are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and the SPS Constitution.
   a. If an SPS Member is accused of infringing the Code of Conduct or the SPS Constitution, this accusation may be submitted to the SPS Executive Board.
      i. Anonymous accusations are allowed.
   b. In instances where evidence of violating the Code of Conduct or SPS Constitution is submitted to the SPS Executive Board but a formal accusation has not been levied, an SPS Member, including members of the SPS Executive Board, may cite the submitted evidence, including by preponderance of said evidence, and submit a formal accusation to the SPS Executive Board.
   c. Upon receiving evidence that a member might have infringed the Code of Conduct or the SPS Constitution, or a formal accusation of a member infringing the Code of Conduct or the SPS Constitution has been submitted to the SPS Executive Board, the SPS Executive Board must vote to open a formal investigation into the nature of the potential violation of the Code of Conduct or SPS Constitution.
      i. The President (see SECTION 5.C.a) may appoint SPS Executive Board members or Special Counsels, who must be SPS Active Members at the time of appointment, to lead the investigation.
      ii. If the President is the subject of evidence or accusation in the infringement of the Code of Conduct or the SPS Constitution, the Vice President may make the appointments described in SECTION 4.D.c.i.
         1. If both the President and the Vice President are the subjects of evidence or accused of infringing the Code of Conduct or
the SPS Constitution, The Executive Board may make the appointments described in Sections 4.D.c.i.

iii. A date must be set by the SPS Executive Board, agreed upon by the investigation leaders, on which the investigation leaders must give a status update to the Executive Board.

iv. Subsequent dates must be set by the SPS Executive Board, agreed upon by the investigation leaders, on which the investigation leaders must give a status update to the Executive Board.

v. Once the investigation leaders finish their investigation, they can formally submit a conclusion briefing to the Executive Board, which will mark the conclusion of the formal investigation.

d. Given a formal accusation having been submitted to the Executive Board and either the conclusion of its corresponding investigation or the denial of opening an investigation by the Executive Board, the Executive Board must vote on the verdict of the formal accusation.

i. The Executive Board will decide on a verdict by simple majority, with the options being “Guilty” or “Not Guilty”. Given a “Guilty” verdict for infringements of the Code of Conduct or SPS Constitution, the SPS Executive Board will decide on a formal response to be administered to the guilty party.

ii. Example responses to the infringement of the Code of Conduct or Constitution that could be dealt by the Executive Board out to the party that made the infringement include but are not limited to having an informative conversation with an Executive Board member, requiring participation in a diversity and inclusivity seminar or training, a formal rebuke by the Executive Board, removing active member status, removing Executive Board member-elect status, prohibiting from attending SPS meetings and events for a set or indefinite amount of time, prohibiting from being in Phillips 245 for a set or indefinite amount of time, or a motion of removal (see SECTION 4.F.) being submitted to the Executive Board.

iii. Once a formal response has been determined, the guilty party will be informed of the verdict and the response in writing.

1. Given that a motion of removal is accepted by the The Executive Board (see SECTION 5.), then the President (see SECTION 5.) must immediately notify the accused party via a written notice of removal and set a date of removal within a minimum of 7 days, which must be stated on the notice of removal (see SECTION 4.F.).
E. SPS abides by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Non-Discrimination Policy for Student Organizations, which states the following:

“Membership and participation in SPS must be open to all students without regard to age, race, color, national origin, disability, religious status or historic religious affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Membership and participation in the organization must also be open without regard to gender, unless exempt under Title IX.”

F. To remove a member or officer from SPS, adequate written notice to that person (7 days minimum) is required before officially removing them from the organization.
   a. Upon written notice of removal, before the written date of removal, the accused party may petition for an appeal hearing under due process, during which the accused has the right to speak on their own behalf.
      i. Such an appeal must be submitted to The Executive Board (see SECTION 5.)
      ii. Due process must be allowed, as in the right to speak on one’s behalf, and right to an appeal. The Executive Board should contact the Carolina Student Legal Services office or SPS’s assigned Heel Life Coordinator to ideate about how to structure the due process.
      iii. If the accused party does not petition for an appeal hearing before the written date of removal or the appeal is denied, the accused party will be immediately ejected from The Society of Physics Students at UNC-CH.
         1. The ejected party will not be considered an active member.
         2. If the ejected party was an officer, they immediately lose their position.
   b. If a member or officer is ejected from The Society of Physics Students at UNC-CH, the Executive Board has the right to bar them from SPS activities, events, and resources on a case by case basis.

SECTION 5. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

The Executive Board will consist of executive board members, constituting the governing representative body of SPS. All officers of SPS must be full-time, registered students of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a minimum of a 2.5 cumulative GPA. All officers are voted into their respective offices (see SECTION 6. ELECTIONS) and have terms that span the academic year.
A. Eligibility
   a. All nominees must be active members for the current semester.
   b. If the nominating party is a returning officer, they must have completed and abided by all the requirements and expectations outlined in SECTION 5.B.c.

B. Requirements and Expectations for each Executive Board Member
   a. All Executive Board Members are expected to attend all SPS Meetings, unless one provides a valid excuse given at least 24 hours in advance; extenuating circumstances will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and will only be approved with confirmation from the President.
   b. All Executive Board Members are expected to check group messaging regularly, and respond when appropriate.
   c. All Executive Board Members must complete one of: Mental Health First Aiders, HAVEN training, Safe Zone, Green Zone, Carolina Firsts (For faculty), OneAct, or another diversity/inclusion training approved (via a vote) by the board, ideally within the first semester of their time in office but at latest by the end of the academic year, and must complete another by the end of the year to be eligible for re-election. Returning officers must complete one training in subsequent years. In extenuating circumstances, online training substitutions can be approved on a case-by-case basis (via a vote) by the board.

C. Positions
   a. President
      i. It is the President’s duty to oversee the overall maintenance, efficacy, and reputation of SPS.
      ii. It is the President’s duty to ensure that The SPS Constitution is adhered to.
      iii. It is the President's duty to maintain external affairs within the Department of Physics and Astronomy, including but not limited to the SPS Advisor and the Physics and Astronomy Department Chair.
      iv. It is the President's duty to send out a weekly email, updating members of SPS with news and affairs of SPS.
      v. It is the President's duty to provide the greetings at every SPS meeting.
      vi. It is the President's duty to be available to every member of the SPS, and to apply themselves fairly to all individuals.
      vii. It is the President's duty to approve the schedule for each meeting, ideally at least two weeks in advance.
         1. It is the President’s duty to oversee all SPS Operations, including meetings, events, and committees.
viii. It is the President’s duty to maintain all social media platforms, including the SPS website, and delegate the oversight of them to other officers as needed.

b. Vice President
   i. It is the Vice President’s duty to remind the President when emails must be sent.
   ii. It is the Vice President’s duty to step in when the President is unavailable, including (but not limited to) providing greetings at the beginning of SPS Meetings, and reporting to the President on any committee activities, such as apparel sales, notifications, etc...
   iii. It is the Vice President’s duty to plan when the Executive Board Meetings will take place, make the agenda for each Executive Board Meeting, lead each Executive Board Meeting, and to rally all members of the Executive Board to attend.
   iv. It is the Vice President’s duty to organize all class visits at the beginning of each semester, and to coordinate with Visibility in Physics for such visits.
   v. It is the Vice President’s duty to conduct all votes within Executive Board Meetings and to tally the results of such votes (see SECTION 7.C.e).

c. Secretary
   i. It is the Secretary's duty to record minutes at every SPS Meeting and every Executive Board Meeting, and post them in the archive in a timely manner. Minutes must include all discussion points, the number of members in attendance, and the names of the members present at each meeting. Minutes must also include all formal motions submitted and submissions to the Executive Board. Reference the PDF version of the Executive Board Meeting for November 2016 if necessary.
   ii. It is the Secretary’s duty to maintain an official list of all active members.
   iii. It is the Secretary's duty to maintain a regularly updated roster of all active committees and their personnel.
   iv. It is the Secretary’s duty to take attendance at all SPS meetings and events
      1. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board member who leads an SPS event to take attendance and give that attendance list to the Secretary in the case where the Secretary does not attend the event.
   v. It is the Secretary's duty to maintain the listserv in general, as well as advertise signups.
vi. It is the Secretary's duty to choose an executive board member, other than the Vice President, to fulfill their duties upon absence, including (but not limited to) taking minutes at Executive Board Meetings.

vii. It is the Secretary's duty to maintain the SPS Google Drive, and delegate oversight of the Drive to other officers as needed.

d. Treasurer

i. It is the Treasurer's duty to maintain finances of the club.

ii. It is the Treasurer's duty to obtain, apply for, and maintain financial standing and membership with the Student Union.

iii. It is the Treasurer's duty to present the Executive Board with an annual budget at the beginning of the year and upon approval of said budget by the Executive Board, petition for the UNC Physics and Astronomy Department Chair for their approval, all generally within the first month of the fall semester.

iv. It is the Treasurer's duty to coordinate with the department to obtain the purchasing card and to adhere to the department's rules and regulations regarding purchases with it.

v. It is the Treasurer's duty to provide reimbursements only when absolutely necessary.

e. Outreach Coordinator

i. It is the Outreach Coordinator’s duty to facilitate outreach in the local community and in the department.

1. Outreach events are specifically defined as any event that involves the collaboration of SPS with an external entity.

2. Outreach events include, but are not limited to, the Diverse Careers in Physics Panel with ViP, volunteering with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and the Boys and Girls Clubs, and collaborations with the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

ii. The Outreach Coordinator is ex officio one of the Co-Chairs of the SPS Select Committee on Outreach.

1. In the event that the Outreach Coordinator is unable to serve as one of the Co-Chairs of the SPS Select Committee on Outreach, the Advisor to the Co-Chairs of the SPS Select Committee on Outreach will appoint a Co-Chair, with the SPS Executive Board's approval.

iii. It is the Outreach Coordinator’s duty to evaluate the financial cost, traveling and time abilities, and other parameters surrounding the outreach activities.
iv. It is the Outreach Coordinator’s duty to prepare the table at FallFest for SPS.

v. It is the Outreach Coordinator's duty to investigate various activities the club can attend, and to evaluate the financial cost, traveling and time abilities, and other parameters surrounding an outreach activity.

vi. It is the Outreach Coordinator's duty to create carpool sign-ups or collect money when necessary for each outreach activity.

vii. It is the Outreach Coordinator’s duty to see to the completion of the proper advertising of all SPS outreach activities.

f. Events Coordinator

i. It is the Events Coordinator's duty to rally and organize events within SPS and the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

   1. To distinguish from the Outreach Coordinator, the Events Coordinator is specifically responsible for organizing intra-SPS events.

ii. It is the Events Coordinator's duty to host on- and off-campus social events between members and other related organizations.

iii. It is the Events Coordinator's duty to evaluate the financial cost, traveling and time abilities, and other parameters surrounding these activities.

iv. It is the Event Coordinator's duty to investigate various activities the club can attend, and to evaluate the financial cost, traveling and time abilities, and other parameters surrounding an event.

v. It is the Event Coordinator's duty to create carpool sign-ups, or collect money when necessary for each activity.

vi. It is the Event Coordinator’s duty to see to the completion of the proper advertising of all SPS events.

g. Room Manager

i. It is the Room Manager's duty to keep the UNC Physics Room in functioning and adequate quality, including, but not limited to, recycling, trash, and compost.

ii. It is the Room Manager's duty to report when devices and chairs are broken and/or threatening to the quality of users within the UNC Physics Room to the Executive Board.

iii. It is the Room Manager’s duty to update the UNC Physics Board outside of Room 247 at the beginning of every year, and to maintain the quality of the photos displayed.

iv. It is the Room Manager's duty to keep track of textbook donations and available material for checkout from the UNC Physics Room.
v. It is the Room Manager’s duty to maintain the Room Budget and supplies, and to apply them as needed to the UNC Physics Room.
vi. It is the Room Manager’s duty to maintain the SPS/ViP-owned computers and the associated hardware and software in the UNC Physics room.

vii. The Room Manager is responsible for cooperating with Visibility in Physics in managing the UNC Physics room.

SECTION 6. ELECTIONS.

A. General elections are to be held within 2 weeks of the last day of classes of the spring semester.
B. In the event that an officer leaves office or is removed from office, a special election for that position is to be held within 2 weeks of that officer’s departure.
C. Elections are to be conducted by the President.
   a. If the President would like to nominate themselves for an Executive Board position then the election is to be conducted by a member of the SPS Executive Board who is not running for office, determined by the SPS Executive Board.
D. Only active members are eligible to vote.
E. Elections are won via a plurality.
   a. In the event of a tie, the executive board will vote on the contested position(s) among the tied candidates.
   b. Counts and voter identification are to remain confidential.

SECTION 7. OPERATIONS.

A. General Body Meetings
   a. General body meetings are to be held on a weekly basis, with the first general body meeting of the semester happening within 3 weeks of the first day of said semester.
   b. The planning for a general body meeting is to be done by the Executive Board. All Executive Board members are eligible to plan and run meetings. The officer(s) involved in planning a general body meeting is(are) referred to as the Planner(s).
      i. If the Planner(s) is not designated officially, it is assumed to be the President.
   c. The requirements for planning a meeting are as follows:
      i. Construction of a schedule
         1. Reserving the room for the meeting in a timely manner
2. Creating a tentative schedule that must be approved by the President. This should ideally be completed at a minimum of two weeks in advance.

ii. Invitation of the appropriate guest speakers
   1. The Planner(s) must initiate contact with the appropriate speakers within a timely manner. Please be courteous when inviting the speakers.

iii. Proper publicity of the event
   1. The following ideally should be initiated by the Planner:
      a. Sending a reminder in advance of the Meeting.
      b. Writing on the whiteboard in the SPS Room in advance.
      c. Posting on the most active SPS social media platform

iv. The entirety of the meeting must be within one hour.

d. All members of the UNC-CH community are invited to attend, with the specific intention of targeting these meetings to the UNC Physics and Astronomy Undergraduate Cohort.

B. Required Semester Events
   a. The following events have been deemed necessary to occur on a semesterly basis in order to uphold the values and mission of this club. It is the responsibility of the President to ensure that this is accomplished by the Executive Board. The officer(s) involved in planning a required semester event (generally either the Outreach Coordinator, the Events Coordinator, or both) is(are) referred to as the Planner(s).
      i. Plan a minimum of 2 academic events spread throughout the semester.
      ii. Plan a minimum of 2 social events spread throughout the semester.
      iii. Plan a minimum of 1 volunteering-based event for that sweet, sweet Sean extra credit.
   b. It is the Planner's role to publicize these events. The Planner may defer to the President, but must ensure that the President will send an email reminder in a timely manner.

C. Executive Board Meetings
   a. Executive Board Meetings are to be held on a weekly basis, unless decided otherwise by the Executive Board
   b. Executive Board Meetings are planned by the Vice President.
      i. The Vice President must complete the meeting’s agenda and make it accessible to the Executive Board within 24 hours of the planned Executive Board Meeting.
   c. Executive Board Meetings are chaired by the Vice President.
d. All Executive Board Members are required to attend Executive Board meetings unless a valid excuse is provided at least 24 hours in advance; extenuating circumstances will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and will only be approved with confirmation from the Vice President.

e. Voting procedure
   i. The Executive Board makes decisions by means of voting.
   ii. Voting is officiated by the Vice President.
   iii. Debate, voting, and points of order can be initiated by a motion of any present officer upon recognition by the Vice President.
      1. Voting can only occur if all officers are present (else see SECTION 7.C.e.iii).
      2. A vote requires a simple majority (>50%) to pass, unless designated otherwise in the SPS Constitution.
   iv. If, within an Executive Board Meeting, all board members are not present for a vote, the vote will either
      1. Be pushed to the beginning of the next Executive Board Meeting, or,
      2. Conducted within 24 hours on a platform in which all Executive Board Members are present and can provide discussion points as well as change their vote within the 24 hour period. This option should only be used for time-sensitive votes at the Vice President’s discretion.

f. The minutes are to be made accessible to the Executive Board by the Secretary within 24 hours of adjournment.
   i.

D. SPS Committees
   a. The President has the ability to start committees with SPS Executive Board approval by vote from the Executive Board.
      i. Committees are to be led by two Co-Chairs, who are nominated by the SPS President and approved by the Executive Board, with joint oversight responsibilities.
      ii. Committees are advised by an Advisor to the Co-Chairs, who is responsible for the overall efficacy and performance of the committee and reports the committee’s progress in their mission to the executive board.
      1. The SPS President is the Advisor to the Co-Chairs of each SPS Committee ex officio.
      a. The President may, with Executive Board approval, defer the status of Advisor to the Co-Chairs to another Executive Board member for a given SPS Committee.
2. In general, it is expected that the Advisor to the Co-Chairs ensures the annual renewal of a committee given that their mission is ongoing.

   iii. Committees may be populated from the pool of SPS members.

b. It is the Advisor to the Co-Chair’s duty to ensure that a charter has been drafted for their respective committee and is adhered to.

c. Committees can be dissolved by a vote of the Executive Board, unless it is a “Permanent Committee”.

d. Committees may be given the title of “Permanent Committee” through the SPS Constitution amendment process (see SECTION 8).

e. List of Permanent Committees:
   i. The SPS Select Committee on Outreach

E. Presidential Appointments

a. The President has the ability to appoint Presidential Appointments with SPS Executive Board Approval.

b. Presidential Appointments are active members of SPS that are not on the Executive Board charged with executing a specific task, determined at their appointment.

   i. Examples of this would be Presidential Appointments to aid the Events Coordinator in seeing through events that require more personnel to manage them than just the Events Coordinator themselves, such as Physics Pearls Seminars and attending the SESAPS Conference in the fall or other conferences.

c. Upon completion of the task that they were charged with, the Presidential Appointment will be relieved of duty.

   i. At most, the terms of Presidential Appointments coincides with the term of the President who appointed them. It is the decision of the subsequent President and subsequent Executive Board to reinstate a prior President’s Presidential Appointments.

F. The Joint Executive Board Meeting

a. After the general elections and before the standing Executive Board is relieved of duties, a meeting consisting of the standing Executive Board and the Executive Board-elect is to be held.

b. The purpose of the meeting is to effectively transfer the responsibilities and roles of the standing Executive Board to the Executive Board-elect.

c. The meeting is to be led and organized by the standing Vice President.

d. All standing officers and officer-elects are required to be present at this meeting.

e. The standing Executive Board will be relieved of duties and the Executive Board-elect will officially become the Executive Board either at the
adjournment of this meeting or after the Spring Commencement, whichever comes last.

SECTION 8. AMENDING THE SPS CONSTITUTION.

The SPS Constitution can only be amended in the following instances:

A. At the Joint Executive Board Meeting between the standing Executive Board and the Executive Board-elect for the following academic year.
   a. Amendments are to be approved by $\frac{2}{3}$ majority rule.

B. The constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting of the organization by a two-thirds vote of active membership, provided the amendment has been submitted to members in writing at least one week prior to the business meeting.
   a. The executive board will have one week to veto such an amendment by means of a unanimous vote.

C. Amendments to the Code of Conduct (see SECTION 3.) should be consulted with Visibility in Physics.