

Bylaws of the Berkeley Lab Postdoctoral Association (BLPA)

November 11th, 2019

History

The Berkeley Lab Postdoctoral Association (BLPA) was founded in March 2016 to support postdocs at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL).

Revision History

Section 1: January 2019

Creation.

Article I: General

Section 1: Mission

The mission of the Berkeley Lab Postdoc Association is to provide a central hub for all postdocs working at LBNL. The primary goal is to enrich the postdocs' professional and personal lives through various events and activities. Examples being professional development and networking opportunities, social events, public outreach for promoting STEM, creating a growing network of association alumni, and strengthening ties with local and national postdoc associations.

Section 2: Non-Discrimination and diversity statement

These Bylaws, the Board, the elected officers, and all Legislative Committees, shall not discriminate against any individual or organization on account of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. BLPA seeks to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all postdocs in the membership, leadership, and activities of BLPA.

Section 3: Conflict of Interest

- A. The members of the Board are expected to avoid any actual or apparent conflict between their individual personal or professional interests and the interests of BLPA. The members of the Executive Team, the Board, and the Committees shall act at all times in the best interests of BLPA. This means setting aside personal self-interest and performing their duties in transaction of the affairs of BLPA in such a manner that promotes confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the Executive Team, the Board, and the Committees.
- B. This Conflict of Interest policy is in place to protect both the individual and BLPA from accusations of improper conduct. As such, all members of the Executive Team, the Board, and the Committees are expected to respect the Conflict of Interest policy and should feel personal responsibility for self-monitoring.

Section 4: Dissolution of the organization

BLPA will be dissolved when its mission is accomplished.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: Members

All LBNL employed and affiliated postdocs are Members of BLPA.

Section 2: Volunteers

Volunteers must be Member of BLPA and the Board can assign specified tasks to them.

Section 3: End of membership

BLPA membership ends when members are no longer LBNL, employed or affiliated, postdocs anymore.

Article III: Legislative Branch

Section 1: Members of the board

- A. BLPA Board shall be composed of 20 total seats.

- B. All members of BLPA who
 - 1. are a BLPA Volunteer; and
 - 2. have attended at least one Committee and one Board meeting; and
 - 3. have co-lead a BLPA event or activity

are eligible to run for vacant Board seats.

Section 2: Responsibilities

- A. The Board holds the overall responsibility for BLPA's operations.
- B. Board members must attend all of the scheduled Board meetings. Excused absences should be coordinated with the Secretary in advance of the meeting. Excused absences will not be considered a missed meeting.
- C. In addition to attending board meetings, board members should take an active part in at least one Committee and must significantly contribute to BLPA activities and the well-being of postdocs at LBNL. Examples of significant contributions include: helping at one or more BLPA activities or serving on the Executive Team.
- D. Board members must ensure that pertinent information is disseminated to the postdoctoral population at large. They will communicate concerns to the Board from those postdoc that they represent, and hold informal meetings with postdocs as necessary.
- E. Board members must inform postdocs of special events and help organize as needed.

Section 3: Term expiration

- A. Appointments to the Board are for one year or until the next Board election, confirmed by a letter of appointment.
- B. Members who are no longer able to execute their tasks shall notify the Co-Chairs in writing.
- C. If a member fails to attend 3 meetings in a row, without prior notification to the Secretary, they will be notified in writing by the Co-Chairs that they are no longer an active member of the Board.
- D. Board member appointment ends automatically when Board members are no longer employed or affiliated LBNL postdocs. The Board can vote to extend the appointment up to six months or until the next Board election if it is needed.

Section 4: Meetings of the board

- A. The Co-Chairs and the Executive Team may call meetings of the Board. Adequate public notice must be given for each meeting.
- B. Quorum for Board meetings shall consist of at least half of the non-vacant seats. If a quorum is not present, following reasonable notification for a second meeting, proposed motions may be voted upon with fewer members than a full quorum attending.
- C. Votes that concern BLPA members will be done anonymously by paper voting slips. Board members can abstain from voting. Votes that concern missions, plans, and other impersonal items can be done by show of hands, or as the Board sees fit.
- D. The Co-Chairs shall share responsibility of Presiding Officer at each Board meeting.
- E. At least one Board meeting shall be scheduled each month. Additional Board meetings can be called as need arises. The Board shall be given adequate notice of planned meetings.
 - 1. The majority of meetings shall take place on the main site of LBNL.
 - 2. All BLPA Volunteers are invited to attend meetings, however, only Board members are eligible to vote.
 - 3. It is recommended that Board Meetings do not last longer than 1.5 hours.
- F. Order of business. Agendas and supporting documents will be distributed in advance of all scheduled meetings.
 - 1. Determination of quorum by the Co-Chairs.
 - 2. Approval of previous Board meeting minutes by the Board, should there be comments on the draft.
 - 3. Reports of committees.
 - 4. General orders.
 - 5. Voting motions shall carry if they receive a majority vote.
 - 6. Determination of topics for the next meeting's agenda. Additional agenda items can be recommended to the Co-Chairs by any BLPA Volunteer up to one week before the meeting.

Section 5: Committees

The Board shall have the power to create Legislative Committees for specific purposes, to vest in them all appropriate powers of the Board, and to determine their composition.

- A. Committees shall be comprised of Volunteers and Board members. Committees shall be presided by a Board member, appointed by the Board. It is recommended that all Committees have at least two board members involved.
- B. The duties of the Committee and its power to act on certain decisions shall be outlined at its formation and shall be approved by the Board.
- C. The Board will retain final responsibility of the Committee's actions and decisions.
- D. Committees will submit a plan of action and a budget proposal to the Board, who will review it. The Board can also decide to allocate a budget upon installment of a Committee.
- E. All Committees shall regularly report to the Board at the Board meetings. Status reports from Committees may also be requested on an ad-hoc basis by any Board member.
- F. A Committee will go out of existence when its task is complete, or can be terminated or merged with another Committee by majority vote of the Board after discussion.
- G. Committees of structural importance will become Standing Committees with their own guidelines.
- H. Any Board member may propose a Committee to the Co-Chairs, Leadership, or Board. The Board will then discuss and vote on the formation of the Committee at the next meeting.

Section 6: Standing committees - Communication

- A. Objectives and mandate of the Communication Committee:
 - 1. Enhance communication between Board and Lab-wide postdoc community.
 - 2. Foster networking and collaborative communication across divisions.
- B. The Communication Committee should appoint a **Webmaster**. The Webmaster is responsible for maintaining the BLPA website. To this end, the Webmaster will update the Executive Team and Board members' contact information and member profiles, maintain an agenda of activities, post important documents and photographs of events and keep the website up-to-date by adding new information, and removing dated informations.
- C. The Communication Committee should appoint an **Editor**. The Editor is responsible for editing and sending the newsletter.

- D. The annual operating budget of the Communication Committee shall be set and agreed upon by the Board as part of the Treasurer's budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year (Article IV Section 4B).

Section 7: Standing committees - Social

- A. Objectives and mandate of the Social Committee:
 - 1. Create and support a postdoc community through social events.
 - 2. Foster networking among postdocs in a social context.
- B. The annual operating budget of the Social Committee shall be set and agreed upon by the Board as part of the Treasurer's budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year (Article IV Section 4B).

Section 8: Standing committees - Outdoors

- A. Objectives and mandate of the Outdoors Committee:
 - 1. Create and support a postdoc community through outdoor or sport activities.
 - 2. Foster networking among postdocs in a healthy environment.
- B. The annual operating budget of the Outdoors Committee shall be set and agreed upon by the Board as part of the Treasurer's budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year (Article IV Section 4B).

Section 9: Standing committees - LINC

- A. Objectives and mandate of the Lab-Industry Networking Connection (LINC) Committee:
 - 1. Educate postdocs at the Lab about careers beyond academia.
 - 2. Facilitate effective networking between postdocs and industry partners.
 - 3. Provide postdocs with a platform for practising skills acquired through the Lab's professional development workshops.
- B. LINC broadly defines industry to include a diverse suite of non-academic entities including, and certainly not limited to, multinational corporations, startups, management and technical consulting agencies, nonprofits, IP law firms, and venture capital firms.
- C. The annual operating budget of the LINC Committee shall be set and agreed upon by the Board as part of the budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year (Article IV Section 4B).

Section 10: Leave of absence from board

A Board member shall be permitted to take a leave of absence from BLPA Board during parental leave, sick leave, family matters, or other extenuating circumstances. A Board member on leave shall retain their position on the Board upon their return, but their seat is not counted towards quorum during their period of absence. The Board can appoint a substitute to serve on any Committees or in any position that requires attendance while the Board member is away on leave; however, the Board member will resume all of these positions once they is back from leave. Notice for a leave of absence should be submitted to the Co-Chairs and the Secretary, should define the estimated period of absence (start and end dates) and identify any positions that would require a substitute during this absence; such requests do not require a vote of approval from Board or Leadership.

Article IV: Executive Branch

Section 1: Membership of executive team

- A. All members of the Board are eligible to run for vacant Executive Team seats.
- B. The Executive Team consists of two **Co-Chairs**, the **Committee Coordinators** of the 4 Standing Committees, a **Treasurer**, and a **Secretary**. The Co-Chairs and the Committee Coordinators of the 4 standing committees form the Leadership Team.
- C. In the event that a position on the Executive Team cannot be filled, the Co-Chairs must take on the responsibilities of that role until a nominee is found or delegate the tasks to a member of the Board. If either or both of the Co-Chair positions cannot be filled, the Leadership Team will share the extra responsibilities and may delegate additional responsibilities among the Board. Significant decisions should be discussed and approved by a simple majority vote of the Board.
- D. The Executive Team shall be in charge of the Board and make sure the Board decisions are executed. The Executive Team shall have those powers and responsibilities listed in these Bylaws. Unless otherwise specified, all Executive Team decisions shall be made by consensus.
- E. The Leadership Team has the discretionary power to handle incoming requests from BLPA members or outsiders. They shall inform the Board of such decisions, or approach the Board when uncertain about how to handle them.
- F. The Executive Team shall ensure that the following information is available to all members of BLPA: these Bylaws, the approved minutes of Board meetings, the names and titles of all elected and appointed Board members.

Section 2: Responsibilities: Co-Chairs

- A. Oversee the operations of the Board and BLPA Committees. This includes coordinating with the Treasurer and Secretary to produce the Association Annual Report, the financial statement and budget proposal (Article IV Section 4B) and to schedule, set the agenda (Article IV Section 5B), and preside over Board and Leadership meetings.
- B. Serve as the primary contact for LBNL administration, the Postdoc Manager, and sponsors.
- C. Serve as the liaison to other postdoctoral Associations, especially at the meetings of the Bay Area Postdoctoral Association (BAPA) and at the annual meeting of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA).
- D. Run the monthly postdoc orientation to welcome the new postdocs at LBNL.
- E. Outline the current status of BLPA and summarize its goals for the upcoming year in an address to the Board, to be given between January and February.

Section 3: Responsibilities: Committee Coordinators

- A. Oversee the operations of the Committee. This includes coordinating with the Executive Team and to schedule, set the agenda, and preside over Committee meetings.
- B. Schedule and coordinate events on a monthly basis, checking for any coinciding event with other Committees.
- C. Report regularly to the Co-Chairs and monthly at the Board meetings.

Section 4: Responsibilities: Treasurer

- A. Manage the BLPA budget. The Treasurer is responsible for financial oversight, compliance and disbursement, in accordance with approved budget allocation limits and the Lab policy.
- B. Draft, negotiate (with the Co-Chairs), and present (with the Co-Chairs) an annual budget proposal to the LBNL Postdoc Manager, due September 1st. The Treasurer will report to the Board the approved budget.
- C. Present annually to the Board the financial statement of the previous year and the budget proposal (Article IV Section 4B). The Board shall approve these documents by majority vote.

- D. Prepare a quarterly financial report of revenues and expenses of the account to the Board, which the Co-Chairs can present to the Postdoc Manager upon request.

Section 5: Responsibilities: Secretary

- A. Record minutes at each Board meeting. Distribute minutes to Board members within seven days after each meeting. Ensure that approved minutes become generally accessible.
- B. Create the Board meeting agenda document for dissemination to Board members with input and assistance from the Co-Chairs and Leadership Team.
- C. Organize, handle and coordinate BLPA documents, including a record of Board meeting attendance. Refer to the Bylaws at elections. Schedule rooms for Board meetings. Handle letters of appointment and welcome packet for new members of the Board. These letters shall be signed by the Co-Chairs and can be sent electronically.
- D. Ensure that necessary materials are available for board elections (ballots, writing utensils). Tabulate votes and report voting totals to the Co-Chairs and ensure that the Co-Chairs report voting results during the meeting in which voting took place.
- E. Ensure that information from Board meetings is communicated to all Postdocs. This includes, but is not limited to: providing the Webmaster with documents to post on the website and sending approved minutes.
- F. Review and update Bylaws in consultation with the Leadership Team annually in January (Article VIII Section 4A).

Section 7: Term expiration

- A. Appointments to the Executive Team are for one year or until the next Board election, confirmed by a letter of appointment.
- B. A position in the Executive Team of BLPA shall become vacant upon resignation or disqualification. A member of the Executive Team can resign by submission to the Board of a written statement of resignation.
- C. No Board member can hold more than one Leadership position simultaneously; the Co-Chairs, Treasurer, and Secretary must be four distinct officers.
- D. Officers who are nominated and run for a second position on the Leadership team must resign from their previous position immediately upon election.

- E. Officer appointment ends automatically when officers are no longer employed or affiliated LBNL postdocs. The Board can vote to extend the appointment up to six months or until the next Board election if it is needed.

Article V: Guidelines for Committee Meetings

Section 1: General

- A. Committee members may meet in Committee meetings whenever needed.
- B. Committee meetings are led by the Committee Coordinator who determines the agenda upon gathering input from all members. The agenda with accompanying documentation shall be distributed prior to the meeting.
- C. The Committee Coordinator or an assigned secretary shall take notes during the meeting, and distribute the draft minutes within seven days after the meeting among the members. All members shall provide their feedback.
- D. Meetings can take place in person or via web-based communication platforms and can be rescheduled when multiple Committee members indicate in advance they cannot attend. It is recommended that Committees meet in preparation of Board meetings.

Section 2: Decisions

- A. Decisions at Committee meetings are based on consensus and must be supported by all active members present.
- B. If opposing views exist the Committee is advised to defer the decision and appeal to the Co-Chairs or Board for advice and resolution.
- C. Decisions must preferably be taken during face-to-face meetings, either in person or via a web based communication platform. If rapid action is required and a face-to-face meeting is not possible, the responsible member shall notify each member prior to action.

Article VI: Elections

Section 1: General

- A. BLPA holds Board elections.

- B. The Board appoints an Election Committee in December that will be responsible for organizing the elections.
- C. Board elections shall occur in January/February. The positions will be effective in March of the same year.
- D. The positions shall be advertised to all BLPA members.
- E. In the case that a Board position becomes vacant mid-term, the Board can elect a Volunteer for that position.
- F. The Co-Chairs shall present the election results to the Board, BLPA and Postdoc Manager.

Section 2: Campaign regulations

- A. Members interested in running for a Board position shall notify the Election Committee.
- B. Eligible Postdocs shall
 - 1. be a BLPA Volunteer; and
 - 2. have attended at least one Committee and Board meeting; and
 - 3. have co-lead a BLPA event or activity.
- C. Candidates shall submit a written statement to the Election Committee so that it can be shared with Board members and Leadership Team prior to voting.
- D. The Election Committee shall share the names of the candidates with the Board and postdoc community prior to elections.

Section 3: Voting

- A. Every member can vote and shall carry one vote. Results depend on a majority of casted votes.
- B. In the case of a tie, elections are adjourned and the Board shall call for runoff elections.

Section 4: Invalidation of election results

The Board shall have power to invalidate the results of an election if the election was not done in accordance with the Bylaws.

Article VII: Finances

Section 1: General

- A. The Treasurer shall maintain all financial records and distribute the budget proposal and budget among the Leadership Team and the Board (Article IV Section 4B).
- B. Any Board member may request insight into financial documentation by approaching the Co-Chairs or Treasurer.
- C. The fiscal year of BLPA shall begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

Section 2: BLPA operating budget

- A. No funds shall be expended, encumbered, or otherwise distributed by BLPA other than in accordance with the procedures for the authorization of expenditures or investments contained in these Bylaws.
- B. All funds expended by BLPA shall be used for the basic operation expenses of BLPA, or for programs initiated by and under the control of BLPA and its agencies (including LINC and requests from the Postdoc Manager).
- C. No funds shall be expended as salaries or wages by any BLPA member, department or agency.
- D. At the end of the funding period (annually), unspent funds may be carried forward to the next fiscal period upon discussion and approval of the following year's budget proposal.
- E. Any funds specifically deposited in one funding period (e.g., fiscal year) for an event in a later funding period (e.g., the subsequent fiscal year) may be automatically rolled-over. The Treasurer will confirm the roll-over ahead of time.

Article VIII: Review and Conflict Resolution

Section 1: Conflict resolution

- A. It is the policy of BLPA to provide postdocs with an opportunity to resolve BLPA related disputes in a fair and collegial manner. These guidelines establish a formal process for BLPA members, including Board members and officers, to request review and redress of

certain disputes arising out of their relationships within BLPA. This section does not deal with conflict between postdocs and their Principal Investigators (PIs) or colleagues.

- B. Conflicts that cannot be resolved at the local level should be brought to the attention of the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs will listen to the complaints and hear everyone involved. They should attempt to achieve a satisfactory solution by referring to these Bylaws. The Co-Chairs may seek advice from the Postdoc Manager.
- C. For disagreements that remain unresolved after the Co-Chairs are consulted, a grievance process will be initiated when the BLPA member files a written grievance with the Co-Chairs. The parties in the grievance process shall be the person(s) filing the grievance and the person(s) responsible for the act or omission that gave rise to the grievance.
- D. In response to the written grievance, the Co-Chairs will seek advice from the Advisory Board. Should the dispute involve the Co-Chairs, Board members may approach the Advisory Board directly.
- E. The advice from the Advisory Board will be communicated to the Board, which will formally decide how to implement advice.

Section 2: Advisory board

A. Purpose

1. Provide advice to the Board and facilitate continuity of leadership.
2. Intervene in conflict resolution as an independent and neutral actor.
3. Help the Co-Chairs and Board to navigate through unforeseen situations which are not adequately covered by these Bylaws.

B. Membership

1. The Advisory Board shall consist of former BLPA Board members.
2. Advisory Board members are nominated and appointed by the Board for 5 years, open to renewal.
3. Advisory Board members shall notify the Co-Chairs when they are no longer able to execute their functions, whereupon the Co-Chairs shall seek replacements.

C. Operation

1. The Co-Chairs of the Board will approach the Advisory Board. In case of conflict resolution, the Co-Chairs will approach the Advisory Board with a written statement of grievance filed by the complainant, as well as a written account of attempts at reconciliation. The Advisory Board shall review the conflict and issue

advice on future actions. Review may include meeting with the postdocs involved, or soliciting feedback. The advice shall be two-fold:

- i. Advice aimed at helping the Board resolve the current conflict
 - ii. Advice aimed at preventing similar grievance from occurring again.
2. The Advisory Board is free to decide its mode of operation, but will communicate a timeline to the Co-Chairs upon receipt of the request.
 3. The Co-Chairs will provide an annual update of affairs to the Advisory Board.

Section 3: The untimely removal of an appointed officer

- A. For the purpose of this guideline, an “appointed officer” shall be taken to mean any position whose occupant must be approved by the Board.
- B. Appointed Officers can be removed by the Board for failure to execute their responsibilities. Any individual or Committee subject to possible disciplinary action by the Board must be given written notice of the intended action at least 72 hours before the meeting at which the disciplinary action would be approved, so that they are allowed to speak in defense at the meeting. The Board will vote by 2/3 majority.

Section 4: Review

- A. The Board shall review these Bylaws annually in January (or as needed) under direction of the Secretary (Article IV Section 5E) and Leadership Team or as an ad hoc committee.
- B. BLPA policies may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a 2/3 vote of the Board.
- C. Proposed changes to these Bylaws can be made at any time following discussion at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, and should be submitted in writing to the Co-Chairs and presented for discussion at the next scheduled Board meeting.
- D. Proposed changes must be submitted to the Board at least two weeks in advance to the Board meeting at which the vote shall occur, to allow for ample time for review.

ARTICLE IX: External Communications

Section 1: Announcements on behalf of Board

In the event that a Board member wishes to make a statement on behalf of the Board, the member should present the written statement to the Leadership Team. If the Leadership Team consents that the statement reflects the spirit and/or goals of the Board, they will share the

statement with the Board prior to the next meeting. The Board will then vote to approve the release of the statement to the postdoc community, which requires approval by majority. If the statement requires expedience (cannot or should not wait until the next Board meeting), the Leadership Team may distribute the statement to the Board electronically with a deadline of at least 24 hours for approval. The statement may be released once a majority of Board members approve.

Section 2: Communication with the media

In the event a Board member is contacted by a member of the media external to LBNL (journalists, bloggers, etc.) to solicit opinions, the Board member should notify the Co-Chairs. It is highly recommended that the Co-Chairs consult with Postdoc Manager about how to respond. BLPA does not set limitations for interactions with the media. However, Board members are advised to think carefully about the experiences they can speak to and to critically interrogate the motivations of those seeking comment. Any statement made must clearly be the opinion of the individual Board member(s) and not as Board or BLPA of the LBNL postdoctoral community as a whole without prior approval and consent (as outlined in Article IX Section 1).