

Bylaws of the Student Governance Organization (SGO) at the School of Biomedical Informatics (SBMI) at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Revision date: October 11, 2019

File location (SBMI SGO Team Site on UT-Share):
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1b3OuBhCU2LfjLqDWwLHw5MTUtGsc4884>

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Preamble

The bylaws establish the Student Governance Organization at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Biomedical Informatics (SBMI) and the procedures for the conduct of its business.

ARTICLE 1: Name

The organization shall be known as the Student Governance Organization (hereinafter referred to as “SGO”).

ARTICLE 2: Mission Statement

The purpose of SGO shall be to improve the student experience at SBMI by providing a unified student voice to faculty and administration, representing students to administration in decision and policy changes that affect students, and to promote social exchange of students.

ARTICLE 3: Membership

Section 1: The Student Governance Organization shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, veteran status or any other basis prohibited by law.

Section 2: All registered students in good academic standing at SBMI are members of SGO.

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Section 3a. Faculty Advisor

A Faculty Advisor must be appointed by the officers of SGO at the beginning of their term to serve a one-year renewable term. He/she functions to facilitate and maintain communication between the Dean, SBMI administration and faculty. Furthermore, the faculty advisor will work to assist with and provide administrative direction as necessary to forward the cause of the SGO. The Faculty Advisor has privileges of the floor, but does not have voting rights. The Faculty Advisor will meet with the SGO no less than once a semester.

Section 3b. SBMI Office of Academic Affairs

The SGO will serve as representative of the student body in ongoing communication and collaboration with the SBMI Office of Academic Affairs.

Section 3c. Dean

The SGO will serve as representative of the student body in communication and collaboration with the SBMI Office of the Dean. There shall be at least one meeting per calendar year between SGO and the Dean.

Section 3d. SBMI Faculty Governance Organization

The SGO will serve as representative of the student body whenever the SBMI Faculty Governance Organization seeks student representation or input.

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ARTICLE 4: Officers

Section 4a. School Representatives

The elected officers of the SGO shall be President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Event Chair and SBMI Representatives in the Student InterCouncil (SIC). Any student interested in running for a SGO officer position must be in good academic standing at SBMI at the time of the election and continuously throughout their term. Furthermore, SGO officer duties require a commitment of at least one year, physical presence at the Houston campus, and significant knowledge of SBMI policies and procedures. All candidates wishing to run as SGO officer must: (a) have completed at least one semester of enrollment at SBMI, (b) be enrolled in at least one in-person course at the Houston campus, and (c) have no plans to graduate for the year following the election. Representation begins the last day of the Spring semester after the election takes place.

- a. The President shall be a full-time student, serve at least a one year term, and commit to being available up to six months after his/her term in an advisory capacity. The President will be the primary spokesperson for the SBMI student body and preside over SGO meetings. The President, along with the Treasurer, will approve all expenditures from and deposits to the SGO account. He/she will also oversee the activities of all the SGO Committees.
- b. The Vice President shall be a full-time student, serve at least a one year term, and assume the duties of the President in his or her absence. The Vice President will also prepare the agenda for SGO meetings, act as parliamentarian, and lead or co-lead at least one SGO Committee.

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- c. The Treasurer shall be a full-time student and serve at least a one year term, along with the President, approve all expenditures and income to the SGO account. The Treasurer will also help prepare encumbrance, purchase, and reimbursement forms for expenditures from SGO account, and is responsible for tracking the SGO account balance. The Treasurer will also lead or co-lead at least one SGO Committee. Since this position benefits from continuity, it is recommended that SGO Treasurers agree to serve for at least two years.
- d. The Secretary shall be a full-time student and serve at least a one year term. The Secretary will help create and serve as editor of SGO correspondence, social media communication, and website content. The Secretary will also assist in recording, preparing, and distributing meeting minutes and assist in all duties as necessary to contribute to the work of SGO. The Secretary will also lead or co-lead the Communications Committee. Since this position benefits from continuity, it is recommended that SGO Secretaries agree to serve for at least two years.
- f. The Social Event Chair shall be a full-time student, serve at least a one year term, and lead the SGO Social Committee in planning and hosting social events for students. The Social Event Chair will work with the President and the Treasurer to budget SGO funds for the events, and work with the Treasurer to arrange for payment for social event expenses. The Social Event Chair will also work with the Secretary to communicate information about social events.

At the end of his/her term, all SGO officers are responsible for compiling all pertinent information and correspondence during his/her term of office and conveying this information to the Officer Elect by June 1.

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The student body will elect 3 representatives into the UHealth Student Inter-council (SIC) with special terms: One representative shall be elected for a 2 year term and two representatives shall be elected for a one year term. Students can run for both SIC representation and SGO officer presentation concurrently.

Commented [RMK1]: InterCouncil

Section 4b. Committees

The planning and implementation of SGO projects will be conducted through Committees. Any SBMI student in good academic standing can contribute to any Committee. Membership in SGO Committees shall be limited to SGO student members and SGO officers. Non-officer members of Committees have the right to vote on Committee motions. However, Committees will be led by SGO officers. The SGO President, Vice President and Treasurer will lead and/or co-lead at least one Committee. The Social Event Chair will lead the Social Committee. The Secretary will lead the Communications Committee.

The following is a list of standing committees:

- a. Academics Committee shall be responsible for working alongside SBMI faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs to organize learning opportunities that add to the SBMI learning experience, such as journal clubs, workshops, and seminars.
- b. Professional Development Committee shall work with the SBMI faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs to plan, implement, and disseminate information about opportunities for students to prepare for new/advanced and successful careers in biomedical informatics.

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- c. Communication Committee shall be led by the Secretary, and share resources and information with the student body, including maintaining the SGO website and social media communication.
- d. Social Committee shall plan, implement, and market opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction, and other activities to enhance the student experience.

Ad hoc committees can also be established by majority SGO officer vote.

Section 4c. Election of Officers

SGO and SIC general election shall be held no later than the first week of April to decide new SGO officers and SIC representation. Said elections shall be administered under the advisement of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in accordance to the voting procedures outlined in these bylaws. Voting in general elections will be by electronic ballot. The election outcome for each position shall be determined by majority student vote.

Section 4d. Vacancy & Resignation

When a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall fill the unexpired term. When a vacancy occurs in the office of the Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Event Chair, and SIC representation before the end of the unexpired term, SGO officers will hold a special session to appoint representation. The following are the guidelines for the procedure to tackle vacancies:

- a. Students interested in an officer position must apply for their preferred positions by the deadline assigned to the application. After the application

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deadline, the election will take place during which students can vote for students in each position. The majority leader in the results will be elected into that position.

- b. If there is more than one applicant for any position and no applicants for other positions, the positions will be offered to applicants that did not get elected into a position.
- c. If SIC representation positions are vacant, they will be filled with existing SGO officers. If there are still vacancies in the position, an election will be held.

Any SGO officer may resign by submitting a letter to the SBMI Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the SGO Faculty Advisor, and the SGO. Officers who graduate, who are dismissed or who take a leave of absence from SBMI during their term of office will be expected to tender their resignation within thirty (30) days of graduation or program departure.

Section 4e. Grievances

Any student member of SGO may present a grievance against a SGO officer at any time.

Grievances must be presented in written form and copies presented to the President of the SGO, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, and the SGO Faculty Advisor. In the event that the President is named in the grievance issue, it should be presented to the highest-ranking officer of SGO not named in the grievance. The rank order of the SGO officers shall be President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and then Social Event Chair. This highest-ranking SGO officer will also chair that portion of the meeting at which the issue is acted upon. Grievances shall be distributed to all SGO officers, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, and the SGO Faculty

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Advisor at least five days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting at which the issue is to be acted upon. Should a grievance be presented less than five days before the next regular meeting of the SGO, the issue will not be acted upon until the first regular meeting following. While SGO officers named in a grievance issue are encouraged to attend this meeting, their presence is not necessary for action to be taken. The unnamed officers of the SGO, in consultation with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the SGO Faculty Advisor, may impose any lesser penalty or take other appropriate action in lieu of removal from office where deemed warranted.

ARTICLE 5. Meetings

Section 5a. Regular Meetings

Regular SGO meetings shall be held on at least once in the Fall semester and once in the Spring semester. The SGO officers and the SGO Committees will decide their own meeting schedules. Any SBMI student is welcome to attend any SGO officer or SGO Committee meeting, but will not have the right to vote on any motions, unless they are a member of a SGO Committee and voting on a motion presented in that Committee.

Invitations to SGO officer meetings will be extended to SIC representative and the School of Biomedical Informatics Representative from the Brownsville Regional Campus Graduate Student Association. These representatives will serve in an ex officio capacity and will not vote on motions.

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Section 5b. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the SGO President or by written request, but must be scheduled at least 72 hours in advance and on a regular school day. Attendance at special meetings is strongly encouraged.

Section 5c. Agenda

The agenda for regular meetings shall include call to order, introduction of guests, and determination of the presence of a quorum, review and approval of minutes of previous meetings, SIC reports, Committee reports, unfinished business, new business, announcements, and adjournment.

The President of the SGO shall be responsible for final approval of the SGO meeting agendas. The Chair of each SGO Committee will be responsible for final approval of their corresponding Committee meeting agendas.

Section 5d. Quorum

A quorum shall be called when the majority of the SGO officers are present or if the rules of order are suspended. Meetings may be held without quorum but no motions may be introduced or passed.

Section 5e. Voting

Voting may be by voice, by written ballot or by electronic ballot.

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Section 5f. Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority, but may be suspended by the SGO President with a two-thirds vote of concurrence by the SGO members present.

Section 5g. Minutes

The SGO Secretary shall keep record of meeting minutes and distribute them after the meeting to SGO officers for review and approval in a timely manner. Minutes are approved by majority vote of SGO officers. If the Secretary is not present, he/she may appoint someone to record the minutes in his/her place.

Section 5h. Visitors

Visitors may attend meetings, make presentations, and have the privileges of the floor (except the vote) upon invitation of the SGO.

ARTICLE 6: Finance and Budget

Operating funds for the SGO shall come from a portion of the Student Services Fee collected each term through the registration process. The portion designated for use by the SGO shall provide the source of funds for the budgetary planning and fiscal operation of the SGO. No financial obligations shall be incurred by any officer or committee except as authorized within annual budgets, or under authority of special interim action, approved by the SGO. The fiscal year shall conform to the academic year. At a time no later than the first regularly scheduled meeting, the SGO President and Treasurer shall present the proposed budget to SGO officers. The budget shall be accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of the SGO officers.

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ARTICLE 7: Student Referendums

An SGO member, including officers, may request a referendum on issues pertaining to students. The issue of a referendum shall be placed on a SGO meeting agenda and a majority of the voting SGO members present shall vote to hold the referendum. The referendum will then be held in accordance with the procedures for a general student election. Referendum shall be passed if approved by a two-thirds majority of those students voting.

Article 8: Jurisdiction

The SGO shall be advisory to the Dean of SBMI. It may elaborate a position or positions on matters within the school, including regional campuses, or on matters generated within the SGO. Its recommendations, if any, shall be forwarded to the Dean of the SBMI or appropriate designate in writing.

ARTICLE 9: Amendments and Adoptions

Proposed amendments to the bylaws must be submitted for inclusion on the agenda for a SGO officer meeting and for distribution to all SGO officers prior to the meeting in which they are to be considered. Amendments to the bylaws shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of SGO officers, along with approval by the SGO Faculty Advisor and the Office of Academic Affairs.

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