

Constitution of Synapse: Transmitting Awareness in Neuroscience (SYNAPSE)

Updated as of **August 18, 2025.**

Article I: Name and Purpose

1.1 The official name of the Campus Group will be “Synapse: Transmitting Awareness in Neuroscience”

1.2 The campus group may be referred to by the acronym **SYNAPSE**.

1.3 The purpose, objectives, mission and/or mandate of the organization is to promote discussion, inspire interest, and bring awareness in the fields of neuroscience and neuropathology. SYNAPSE will enhance the educational, recreational, social, or cultural environment of the University of Toronto Scarborough by upholding the following values:

1.3.1 To embrace knowledge in neuroscience and neuropathology;

1.3.2 To take initiative to learn beyond the classroom;

1.3.3 To encourage interaction and exchange of ideas between students and faculty from all disciplines, as well as the general public, concerning neuroscience and neuropathology;

1.3.4 To welcome interest in neuroscience for all students, regardless of educational pursuits;

1.3.5 To promote discussion and encourage all levels of inquiry;

1.3.6 To take part in the growing and innovative fields of neuroscience and neuropathology.

Article II: Membership

2.1 The group shall maintain a list of group members.

2.2 Voting membership is open to all registered students of the University of Toronto.

2.3 Voting membership is open only to registered students of the University of Toronto.

2.4 Non-voting membership is open to University of Toronto staff, faculty, alumni, and to persons from outside the University. Unless otherwise stated, non-voting members do not hold any rights awarded to voting members.

2.5 The membership fee will be \$0 per year.

Article III: Rights of Members

3.1 All members may apply for a full refund of their membership fee within one (1) month of becoming a member.

3.2 All voting members have a right to attend all general meetings of members.

3.3 All voting members have a right to cast votes at all general meetings of members.

3.4 All voting members have a right to stand for election unless otherwise stated in this document.

3.5 All voting members have a right to cast votes in all group elections and referenda.

3.6 All voting members have a right to propose and vote on amendments to this constitution. The rights prescribed in Article Three are not awarded to non-voting members as described in Article Two.

Article IV: Executive Committee

4.1 The term for all positions on the Executive Committee shall be from May 1st to April 30th.

4.2 The Executive Committee shall be comprised of **8** voting members.

4.3 All voting members of the Executive Committee must be currently registered students of the University of Toronto.

4.4 Non-voting members may hold only non-voting positions on the Executive Committee.

4.5 The maximum amount of non-voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be one (1) position or ten per cent (10%) of the positions on the Executive Committee, whichever is greatest.

4.6 Persons holding non-voting positions on the Executive Committee cannot serve as an officer, financial authority, signing authority, primary contact, or secondary contact.

4.7 No person may serve as a financial authority or signing authority for the group if they are currently serving as a financial authority or signing authority for another recognized student group at the University of Toronto.

4.8 The Executive may appoint Directors or Coordinators for various committees who do not hold executive decision-making authority and are not eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee.

Article V: Elections

5.1 All voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be filled through an annual election.

5.2 All voting group members shall be eligible to seek nomination to and cast a ballot for each voting position.

5.3 All non-voting group members shall be eligible to seek nomination only for non-voting positions on the Executive Committee.

5.4 Non-voting group members shall not be eligible to cast a ballot for any elected position.

5.5 The nominee winning the plurality of votes cast in the election for each position shall be deemed the winner.

5.6 On the condition that multiple candidates are to be elected for a single position, the nominees winning the largest share of the votes cast shall be deemed the winners until all positions are filled.

5.7 The elections must be held in a nonbiased manner. No individual who is seeking election may participate in planning or administering the election.

5.8 For all unfilled positions, the remaining officers will share the duties and responsibilities until someone can be found to fulfill the positions(s) through a by-election and vote of simple majority (50% + 1)

Article VI: Termination of Membership

6.1 The Executive Committee may revoke the membership of any member of the club who commits an act negatively affecting the interests of the club and its members, including non-disclosure of a significant or continuing conflict of interest.

6.2 A vote to revoke membership must be held at a meeting of the Executive Committee.

6.3 A two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee is required to approve any motion to revoke membership.

6.4 Any member facing removal shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Executive Committee to the general membership.

6.5 In the case of an appeal, a simple majority vote at a meeting of the general membership shall be required to sustain the revocation of membership.

6.6 Following a termination of membership, the member will be removed from the club's membership and will lose any privileges associated with being a member of the club.

6.7 Executive Committee members are subject to the same termination of membership process as general members.

Article VII – Amendments

7.1 All constitutional amendments shall require a 2/3 majority vote to be passed at a general meeting.

7.2 All voting members may propose and vote on amendments to the constitution.

7.3 The Executive Committee shall submit the revised constitution to staff in the Student Life programs office at the University of Toronto Scarborough within two (2) weeks.

7.4 Amendments to the constitution shall take effect only once the revised constitution has been approved by staff in the Student Life programs office at the University of Toronto Scarborough.

Article IX: Finances

6.1 The funds of the organization shall be expended pursuant to the operating budget approved by the general membership at a valid general meeting.

6.2 Notwithstanding section 6.1, the executive committee may not approve any unbudgeted expenditure of the organization's funds above \$100.00 without the approval of the general members at a valid general meeting.

6.3 All Budgets shall be prepared by the Vice-President of Operations in accordance with the organization's priorities as determined by the executive committee in consultation with general members at a valid general meeting.

6.4 The Vice-President of Operations shall present a proposed operating budget for the next fiscal year to the general membership for its consideration at the final general meeting.

6.5 The operating budget shall be the major budget for the fiscal year and provide for all expenditures of the organization for the subsequent year.

6.6 The operating budget shall be approved by a majority vote of the general members present and voting at a valid general meeting.

6.7 The banking business of the organization, or any part thereof, shall be transacted with such bank, trust company, or other firm or body corporate as the Executive may designate, appoint, or authorize from time to time, and all such banking business, or any part thereof, shall be transacted on the organization's behalf by one or more Officers or other persons as the Executive may designate, direct, or authorize from time to time and to the extent thereby provided.

6.8 The President, the Vice-President of Operations, and the Vice-President of Scientific Outreach, and only in special circumstances, the Vice-President of Communications, shall be the sole signing authorities of banking instruments for the organization.

6.9 SYNAPSE will ensure that proper and accurate financial records are maintained and passed on to incoming executives following each year's elections.

6.10 SYNAPSE will accept full financial and production responsibility for all activities it sponsors, plans, or executes.

Article X: General Meetings

7.1 The purpose of General Meetings is to provide a forum for executives to overview the activities of the organization and solicit feedback from members, to engage in policy-making, to propose amendments to the constitution, and to report on the financial status of the organization.

7.2 General meetings will be facilitated by the President, who will be responsible for:

7.2.1 Formulating the agenda with approval of the executive team for each general meeting at the previous executive meeting;

7.2.2 Ensuring appropriate conduct and leading the meeting in an efficient, reasonable manner;

7.2.3 Moderating the discussion at meetings according to the agenda;

7.2.4 Suspending members from participating in meetings for constitutional or procedural violations.

7.3 The procedure at meetings of members shall be governed in accordance with the process outlined in Appendix A.

7.4 There shall be a minimum of one (1) general meeting held each month. The date of each subsequent general meeting will be confirmed at the preceding general meeting and will be reiterated to members via email a minimum of two (2) calendar days prior to the meeting.

7.5 In cases where general membership is characterized by little to no involvement in the Administration or in executive processes, the requirement outlined in section 7.4 to have a minimum of one (1) general meeting held each month may be voided.

7.6 General meetings may be called to order by the President, through a petition signed by three (3) executive members, or by a petition signed by five (5) non-executive general members.

7.7 General meetings are open to registered members of the organization only. Quorum will first be established by the presence of a simple and clear majority of the executives.

7.8 For quorum to remain valid, the number of non-executive general members present at a general meeting must exceed the number of executives present at all times.

7.9 All executives are expected to make brief progress reports on their activities at every general meeting.

7.10 Minutes of all general meetings must be recorded and maintained for reference purposes.

7.11 Members must contact the President a minimum of one week before a general meeting to inform them of new business they wish to discuss. The President will then add the discussion item to the agenda upon approval of the executive team.

7.12 Any question at a valid general meeting shall be decided by a show of hands.

7.13 The President presiding over a meeting of members may, with the consent of the majority of members, decide to adjourn these meetings from time to time.

Article XI: Executive Meetings

8.1 The purpose of executive meetings is to provide a forum for the organization's executives to discuss and make decisions on day-to-day matters affecting the organization.

8.2 Executive meetings will be facilitated by the President of the organization. The President shall be responsible for:

8.2.1 Formulating and distributing an agenda for each meeting;

8.2.2 Ensuring appropriate conduct and leading the meeting in an efficient, reasonable manner;

8.2.3 Moderating the discussion at meetings according to the agenda.

8.3 The frequency of executive meetings occurring between May 1 and August 31 will be left to the discretion of the executive committee.

8.4 Executive meetings may be called to order by the President or through a petition signed by two other executive members.

8.5 Executive meetings are restricted to executive members only. Quorum will be established by the presence of a simple and clear majority of the total executives for the organization.

8.6 Minutes of all executive meetings must be recorded and maintained for reference purposes.

8.7 Executives must notify the President a minimum of one (1) calendar day before an executive meeting to inform them of new business they wish to discuss. The President will then add the discussion item to the agenda.

8.8 Each executive member of the organization shall be entitled to one (1) vote at a valid executive meeting.

8.9 Any question at an Executive Meeting shall be decided by a show of hands.

8.10 Whenever a vote by show of hands occurs, a declaration by the President that the vote has been carried, carried by a particular majority, or failed shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

8.11 In case of an equality of votes at an Executive Meeting, the motion will be recorded as having failed.

8.12 The President may, with the consent of the majority of executives, decide to adjourn these meetings from time to time.

Article XII: Emergency Meetings

9.1 Emergency meetings can be called for extenuating or unforeseen circumstances that may arise from time to time.

9.2 These meetings must abide by the respective rules outlined in sections VII and VIII depending on the nature of the meeting.

9.3 Notice of these meetings must be provided a minimum of 48 hours in advance through email.

9.4 Less notice for emergency meetings may be provided at the discretion of the President in agreement with a minimum of five (5) general members.

9.5 In cases where general membership is characterized by little to no involvement in the Administration or in executive processes, the requirement outlined in section 9.4 that less notice for emergency meetings may be provided at the discretion of the President in agreement with a minimum of five (5) general members may be voided.

Article XIII: Elections

10.1 SYNAPSE will not be hosting elections.

Article XIV: Amendments

11.1 The organization may make, amend, or repeal the constitution or certain sections therein.

11.2 Notice of a meeting called to consider such a resolution shall be given as follows:

11.2.1 Notice of the full text of the proposed constitutional amendment shall be given to each member at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the meeting called to consider the change;

11.2.2 A summary of the rationale for the proposed amendment shall be given to each member at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting called to consider the change.

Article XV: Transition

12.1 All outgoing executives are required to transfer all organizational resources used relative to a particular role over the course of the preceding year to new executives upon leaving the position.

12.2 All outgoing executives are responsible for providing a detailed report to incoming executives that stipulates the status of ongoing projects in their portfolio and evaluations of previous projects and programs that they lead.

12.3 All outgoing and incoming executives will participate in a joint training session occurring as soon as reasonably possible each year to assist with the transition between new executive teams.

Article XVI: Emergency Powers

13.1 In the case of extenuating circumstances, the executive shall be afforded the ability to act without direction from the organization's members.

13.2 An extenuating circumstance is defined as any instance that may jeopardize the immediate functioning of the organization including but not limited to: executive vacancies, unexpected cancellations, removal from position, or lack of response from members.

13.3 Emergency powers may only be used for such a period of time as is needed to address an extenuating circumstance.

13.4 General members have the ability to remove emergency powers where appropriate through submission of a signed petition from at least two thirds of the entire general membership.

Article XVII: Food Handling on Campus

14.1 SYNAPSE will conform to Provincial and Municipal Health Regulations when events which include the sale and/or service of food products are held on the University of Toronto Scarborough campus.

Article XVIII: Precedence of University Policies

15.1 SYNAPSE will abide by all pertinent University of Toronto policies, procedures, and guidelines. Where the University's policies, procedures, and guidelines conflict with those of SYNAPSE, the University's policies, procedures, and guidelines will take precedence.

Article XIX: Legal Liability

16.1 The University of Toronto Scarborough does not endorse SYNAPSE's beliefs or philosophy, nor does it assume legal liability for the group's activities on or off campus.

Article XX: Banking

17.1 SYNAPSE agrees to provide the name of the bank, the branch number and address, transit number, bank account number, and a list of all signing officers for all bank accounts opened in the organization's name to the Department of Student Life, University of Toronto Scarborough.

Appendix A: General Meeting Rules of Order

I. Call to Order

1. The President may call the meeting to order only if a quorum of executives and non-executive general members is present in person. If a quorum does not exist, the meeting is not qualified to conduct business. A general member may not appear by proxy or mail ballot.
2. The meeting must be open to all applicable general members. General members must receive notice of the meeting in accordance with the constitution.

II. Review of the Agenda

1. The first draft of the agenda is prepared by the President prior to the meeting. Agenda items should ordinarily appear in the order set forth in these rules of order.
2. The agenda belongs to all general members. The agenda may be modified only by a majority vote. This power should only be used when necessary as proper functioning of meetings and the organization requires advance planning.
3. At this point in the agenda, general members may add or delete items from the agenda and may change the order of presentation.
4. When possible, changes to the agenda should be done by acquiescence of all general members. Formal voting on the agenda is only necessary where it appears to the President that there is a disagreement.

III. Approval of Previous Minutes

1. The minutes need not be read aloud, but they should be entered into the organization's official minute ledger upon approval by the general membership.
2. The minutes are prepared by the President or another appointed executive.
3. Minutes should state precisely each motion considered by the general membership, and identify the general members voting in favour, against, or abstaining, and whether the motion was carried. Minutes need not reflect the comments made, except in those instances when the member desires to make his/her comments recorded.

IV. Executive Reports

1. Executives may report their findings or recommendations to the general membership at this point of the agenda.
2. The full report should be presented and then general members, in turn, may ask questions or comment. It is not appropriate to make motions or discuss items of business during this portion of the meeting.

3. This time should also be used for any inquiries or comments to be made to the general membership.

V. Open Forum

1. It is the custom and practice of most organizations to allow general members an open forum to ask questions and speak about their concerns to an executive after a report has been provided.

2. Strict time limitations should be imposed by the President and these limitations must be enforced. Each general member should address the President regarding an issue and must speak courteously and to the point.

VI. Old and New Business

1. All items that were tabled during previous meetings must be revisited during the business portion of the agenda occurring after executive reports.

2. Except in the case of emergency business, all new items of business are heard only after all of the old items have been addressed by the general membership.

3. All business must be conducted in the form of motions or resolutions adopted by a vote of the general membership.

VII. Motions and Deliberations

1. When an item of business is to be discussed, the President announces the item to be discussed and opens the floor to discussion.

2. No general member may speak until recognized by the President. No general member may interrupt the speaker who has the floor.

3. The President may impose reasonable time limitations. All time limitations must be uniformly imposed upon all of the general members. The speaker shall be given a one-minute warning before time runs out.

4. The President's role is to recognize each general member in turn. Discussion shall be limited to the item of business at hand, and the President shall have the authority to take the floor from a speaker who does not limit discussion to the item of business at hand.

5. No general member may speak to an issue for a second time until all other general members have had the opportunity to speak to it for the first time. Likewise, no general member may

speak to an issue for a third time until all other general members have had the opportunity to speak to it for a second time.

6. When it appears to the President that all general members have had the opportunity to fully discuss the matter at hand, the President should announce that the item of business is ready for a vote.

VIII. Voting

1. There are 3 basic motions for each item of business:

- a. A motion to adopt a specific action by the board.
- b. A motion to postpone the item to another meeting (including fact-finding assignments to a person or committee).
- c. A motion to remove an item from consideration.

2. The general membership is limited to discussing one item of business at a time, but there are no limits to the number of motions that may be considered as to how to dispose of that item of business.

3. After the general membership has had the opportunity to discuss each motion presented for consideration, the President will call each motion presented to a vote.

4. The fact that a motion has been adopted or failed does not prevent the item of business from being added to the agenda in the future, and all motions may be reconsidered at any time by the general membership.