

The Biotechnology And Computer
Science Association (BACSA)
Constitution

2024 - 2025

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1. Name of Organization

- 1.1. The official name of the organization will be “Biotechnology and Computer Science Association”.
- 1.2. The organization may be referred to by the acronym “BACSA”.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of BACSA will be to provide undergraduate students with academic and industry-oriented skills and experience in the merging of the fields of Biotechnology and Computer Science.
- 2.2. BACSA will enhance the educational, recreational, social, or cultural environment of the University of Toronto Scarborough by providing a variety of opportunities for the students to learn, improve their skills, and meet others. They will then be able to apply these experiences to their other endeavors at the University.
- 2.3. BACSA fundamentally serves a non-profit function within the University of Toronto Scarborough, and will not engage in activities that are essentially commercial in nature.
- 2.4. BACSA operates as an independent entity working within the University of Toronto Scarborough community subject to the values and policies of the University.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Membership is open to all students, staff, faculty, and alumni of the University of Toronto Scarborough.
- 3.2. The term of membership will be from September 1 – August 31 each year.
- 3.3. Each member shall be afforded the following rights through membership in BACSA:
 - 3.3.1. The right to participate and vote in group elections and general meetings;
 - 3.3.2. The right to communicate and to discuss and explore all ideas;
 - 3.3.3. The right to organize/engage in activities/events that are reasonable and lawful;
 - 3.3.4. The right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or sexual orientation;
 - 3.3.5. The right to be free from censorship, control, or interference by the University based on the organization’s philosophy, beliefs, interests, or opinions unless and until these lead to activities that are illegal or which infringe on the rights and freedoms already mentioned above;

- 3.3.6. The right to distribute on campus, in a responsible way and after being approved by at least one of the presidents, published material provided that it is not unlawful;
- 3.4. Each member shall possess the following responsibilities relative to participation in :
 - 3.4.1. Support the purpose of the organization;
 - 3.4.2. Uphold the values of the organization;
 - 3.4.3. Contribute constructively to the programs and activities offered by the organization;
 - 3.4.4. Attend general meetings;
 - 3.4.5. Abide by the constitution and subsequent official organizational documents;
 - 3.4.6. Respect the rights of peers and fellow members;
 - 3.4.7. Abide by University of Toronto policies, procedures, and guidelines;
 - 3.4.8. Abide by the Laws of the Land, including but not limited to the Criminal Code of Canada.
- 3.5. The organization values and respects the personal information of its members. The organization secures its member's information at all times and will not supply names or other confidential information to third parties without their approval.
- 3.6. The organization will protect the privacy of member information and must use it only for the delivery of service and not for commercial gain.

4. Executive

- 4.1. The executives of the organization shall include a President or two Co-Presidents, a Vice-President of Communications, a Vice-President of Research, a Vice-President of Logistics, and a Vice-President of Finance.
- 4.2. The broad responsibilities of each executive position are as follows:
 - 4.2.1. President (and/or Co-Presidents) is the official spokesperson of the organization and provides direction for all components of the organization in a manner consistent with the organization's constitution and policies.
 - 4.2.2. Vice-President Research will be in charge of supporting all academic and research-oriented activities and submissions. Including, but not limited to, providing support to students during their research projects, and leading the skills workshops.
 - 4.2.3. Vice-President Communications acts as a liaison between the organization and other student clubs, societies, organizations, and groups on and off campus. VP Communications is also in

charge of marketing, outreach, and supporting the written reports of the student's research.

- 4.2.4. Vice-President Finance oversees the organization's finances, such as budgeting, providing receipts and cheques where necessary, finding funding for the club, and managing sponsors' contributions.
- 4.2.5. Vice-President Logistics manages the necessary operations to organize the events and activities. This includes but is not limited to scheduling, coordinating between teams, and finding venues.
- 4.3. Only student members of the organization may hold executive positions.
- 4.4. The executive positions collectively will form a committee that acts as the primary steward of the organization.
- 4.5. This committee is collectively responsible for the day-to-day decision-making of the organization including, but not limited to, monitoring finances, event planning and execution, member services, and advocating on behalf of members to Administration and student government.
- 4.6. The term of each executive will last from May 1 following their election to April 30 of the following year.
- 4.7. Any executive of the organization may resign, provided that such resignation is made in writing and delivered to the President (or at least one Co-President). Unless any such resignation is, by its terms, effective on a later date, it shall be effective on delivery to the President, and no ratification by the organization shall be required to make the resignation official.
- 4.8. Any vacancy of executives shall be filled by the President or designate of the organization until a by-election is held, a permanent appointment occurs, or a hiring process is conducted.
- 4.9. If the President resigns, a notice of such resignation must be submitted in writing and delivered to the executive committee at a valid executive meeting. Unless any such resignation is, by its terms, effective on a later date, it shall be effective on delivery to the executive committee, and no ratification by the organization shall be required to make the resignation official.
- 4.10. Any vacancy of the President shall be filled by another executive committee member appointed by a simple and clear majority of the executive committee until a by-election is held, a permanent appointment occurs, or a hiring process is conducted.

5. Removal of Members and Executives

- 5.1. The process for removing a member or executive may be initiated when a committee of no less than three (3) non-executive general members and one (1) executive appointed by the general membership to investigate a complaint determines that:
 - 5.1.1. A member or executive has engaged in unlawful actions or activities;
 - 5.1.2. A member or executive has violated the Constitution;
 - 5.1.3. A member or executive has violated University of Toronto policies, procedures, or guidelines;
 - 5.1.4. A member or executive has violated the rights of a fellow member;
 - 5.1.5. A member or executive has not fulfilled their organizational responsibilities;
 - 5.1.6. Other criteria deemed to be appropriate by the Executive Committee in consultation with and approved by a majority of the general membership.
- 5.2. The process for removing a member or executive may also be initiated when:
 - 5.2.1. A petition calling for a vote and bearing the signatures of a majority of the general membership is submitted to any member of the executive.
 - 5.2.2. A motion for a removal vote is put forward by any member of the executive and passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the executives. The individual facing a potential removal vote is entitled to vote on the motion if they are an executive or be given an opportunity to explain themselves if they are a non-executive general member.
- 5.3. The removal of members and executives will be facilitated by a three-tier procedure that operates as follows:
 - 5.3.1. First Tier:

The executive or member will be warned both verbally and in writing that their behavior constitutes grounds for removal from the organization and that it should cease effective immediately.
 - 5.3.2. Second Tier:

Initiated because the member or executive has violated section 5.1 after receiving a first-tier warning relative to a particular action or behavior.

The President (or Co-Presidents) will be responsible for contacting the executive or member and facilitating training or suggesting best practices on how to correct the issues of concern.

The President (or Co-Presidents) must address all complaints in

writing by formulating an action plan and timeline to correct any issues involving executives or members within fourteen (14) calendar days.

The executive or member accused of violating section 5.1 will be given fourteen (14) calendar days from receiving the President's (or Co-Presidents) written response to demonstrate progress or correction of behavior.

5.3.3. Third tier:

Initiated because the member or executive has violated section 5.1 after receiving second tier warning relative to a particular action or behavior.

The removal vote must take place at a valid general meeting of the membership. A representative supporting the motion for removal and the executive or member facing removal (or an individual they designate), may speak for up to five minutes each.

The removal of an executive or member requires a majority vote of all of the members present at an executive meeting. The executive or member facing removal is entitled to vote on the motion.

6. Finances

- 6.1. All Budgets shall be prepared by the Vice-President of Finance following the organization's priorities and planned goals as determined by the executive committee.
- 6.2. The Vice-President of Finance shall present a proposed operating budget for the next fiscal year to the President or co-presidents to then be discussed with all the executive members.
- 6.3. The funds of the organization shall be expended according to the operating budget approved by at least 2/3 of the executive members, one of them having to be the President or one co-president.
- 6.4. The operating budget shall be the major budget for the fiscal year and provide for all expenditures of the organization for the subsequent year. However, It can be modified according to the organization's needs, and following sections 6.1 to 6.3.
- 6.5. 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.

- 6.6. The President (or Co-Presidents) and the Vice-President of Finance shall be the sole signing authorities of banking instruments for the organization.
- 6.7. BACSA will ensure that proper and accurate financial records are maintained and passed on to incoming executives following each year's elections.
- 6.8. BACSA will accept full financial and production responsibility for all activities it sponsors, plans, or executes.

7. 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, engage in policy-making, and propose amendments to the constitution.
- 7.2. General meetings will be facilitated by a Chairperson selected by the general membership from the executive committee. The Chairperson shall be responsible for:
 - 7.2.1. Formulating and distributing an agenda for each meeting no later than two (2) days before the 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 shall be governed by following the process outlined in Appendix A.
- 7.4. There shall be a minimum of one (1) general meeting held each academic term (Fall/Winter). The date of each subsequent general meeting will be confirmed via email a minimum of two (2) calendar days before the meeting.
- 7.5. 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.
- 7.6. 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.
- 7.7. For a 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.
- 7.8. All executives must make brief progress reports on their activities at every general meeting.

- 7.9. Members must contact the Chairperson a minimum of 48 hours before a general meeting to inform them of new business they wish to discuss. The Chairperson will then add the discussion item to the agenda.
- 7.10. Each member of the organization shall be entitled to one (1) vote at a general meeting except the Chairperson who shall only vote in the event of a tie.
- 7.11. Any question at a valid general meeting shall be decided by a show of hands.
- 7.12. Whenever a vote by show of hands occurs, a declaration by the chairperson that the vote upon the question has been carried, carried by a particular majority, or failed shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 7.13. In case of an equality of votes at a valid general meeting, the Chairperson of the meeting shall have the deciding vote.
- 7.14. The Chairperson presiding over a meeting of members may, with the consent of the majority of members, decide to adjourn these meetings from time to time.

8. Executive Meetings

- 8.1. The purpose of executive meetings is to provide a forum for the organization's executives to discuss and make decisions affecting the organization.
- 8.2. Executive meetings will be facilitated by the President (or Co-Presidents) of the organization. The President (or Co-Presidents) 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. There shall be a minimum of one (1) executive meeting held every three (3) weeks during the period from September 1 to April 30. The date of each subsequent executive meeting will be confirmed to executives via email or Slack a minimum of two (2) calendar days before the meeting.
- 8.4. Executive meetings may be called to order by just one President or through a petition from three (3) 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 six (6) hours 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 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 or co-presidents may decide to adjourn these meetings from time to time.

9. Emergency Meetings

- 9.1. Emergency meetings can be called for extenuating or unforeseen circumstances that may arise.
- 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 24 hours in advance through email or Slack.
- 9.4. Less notice for emergency meetings may be provided at the discretion of the President in agreement with a majority of executive members.

10. Elections

- 10.1. Executive elections will be held before March 31 each year.
- 10.2. Candidates for executive positions shall be selected through an application process subject to meeting a set of minimum qualifications for holding a particular position. These qualifications will be established by the outgoing executive team each year before the commencement of the application submission period.
- 10.3. Only student members who meet the minimum qualifications to hold an executive position shall be permitted to participate in an election and hold executive positions.
- 10.4. All screening of candidates will be conducted by a committee composed of a majority of executive general members who will assess each candidate's qualifications against pre-established criteria for holding the positions.

- 10.5. Notification of the acceptance of applications for executive positions will be sent via email to all general members a minimum of twenty (20) calendar days before the election period will be held.
- 10.6. All application periods must commence a minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days before the election period will be held. The application period must end a minimum of seven (7) days before the election period.
- 10.7. Successful candidates will be permitted to give a recorded short speech that will be posted on BACSA's social media. At the end of each speech, the candidate must mention the option to ask questions in the comments section, which must be replied to by the candidate. The length of each speech and the question/answer period will be left to the discretion of the executive members.
- 10.8. Elections will be conducted online, and the platform will be sent to all members via email. Voters shall remain anonymous, and the ballot will be overseen by the selection committee.
- 10.9. This committee will be composed of executives who are not running for a position. If only one of the executives is not running for a position, then the committee will be composed of two (2) non-executive general members and one (1) executive.
- 10.10. Successful candidates will be determined by accrual of the most number of votes tallied from amongst the general membership.
- 10.11. The final results of the election must be presented to the membership for ratification of the process only. The results themselves should not be brought into question; only the process through which these results were tabulated.
- 10.12. If an error in the process is found, the election should be re-held with a new election oversight committee without executive members in it.
- 10.13. Candidates who run for a position unopposed must receive a simple and clear majority of the total eligible votes to be declared the winner of that election.

11. 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 before 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 fourteen (14) days before the date of the meeting called to consider the change.
- 11.3. Amendments to the constitution require the approval of two-thirds of the members present at a valid executive meeting.

12. Transition

- 12.1. All outgoing executives are required to transfer all organizational resources used relative to a particular role over 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 they lead.
- 12.3. All outgoing and incoming executives will participate in a joint training session occurring no later than the end of May each year to assist with the transition between new executive teams.

13. Food Handling on Campus

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

14. Precedence of University Policies

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

15. Legal Liability

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

16. Banking

- 16.1. BACSA 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

1. Call to Order
 - 1.1. The Chairperson 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.
 - 1.2. The meeting must be open to all applicable general members. General members must receive notice of the meeting in accordance with the constitution.

2. Review of the Agenda
 - 2.1. The first draft of the agenda is prepared by the chairperson prior to the meeting. Agenda items should ordinarily appear in the order set forth in these rules of order.
 - 2.2. 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.
 - 2.3. At this point in the agenda, general members may add or delete items from the agenda and may change the order of presentation.
 - 2.4. When possible, changes to the agenda should be done by the acquiescence of all general members. Formal voting on the agenda is only necessary when it appears to the chairperson that there is a disagreement.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes
 - 3.1. The minutes need not be read aloud but they should be entered into the organization's official minute ledger upon completion.
 - 3.2. The minutes are prepared by either the secretary or some other individual appointed by the executive team to act as recording secretaries. Any general member may suggest changes to the minutes before the general membership adopts them. The suggested changes should be set forth in the minutes for the record, and then the general membership should adopt or reject such changes.
 - 3.3. Minutes should state precisely each motion considered by the general membership, and identify the general members voting in favor, 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.

4. Executive Reports
 - 4.1. Executives may report their findings or recommendations to the general membership at this point of the agenda.

- 4.2. 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.
 - 4.3. This time should also be used for any presentations to be made to the general membership.
5. Open Forum
 - 5.1. 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.
 - 5.2. Strict time limitations should be imposed by the Chairperson and these limitations must be enforced. Each general member should address the Chairperson regarding an issue and must speak courteously and to the point.
6. Motions and Deliberations
 - 6.1. When an item of business is to be discussed, the Chairperson announces the item to be discussed and opens the floor to discussion.
 - 6.2. No general member may speak until recognized by the Chairperson. No general member may interrupt the speaker who has the floor.
 - 6.3. The Chairperson 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. By vote of a majority of the general membership, time limits may be extended.
 - 6.4. The Chairperson is to recognize each general member in turn. Discussion shall be limited to the item of business at hand, and the Chairperson shall have the authority to take the floor from a speaker who does not limit discussion to the item of business at hand.
 - 6.5. 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.
 - 6.6. When it appears to the Chairperson that all general members have had the opportunity to fully discuss the matter at hand, the Chair should announce that the item of business is ready for a vote.