

# Mechanical Engineering Graduate Association (MEGA) Constitution



Revision: 11/3/2023

# **1. Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Association is to:

- enrich the graduate student experience through academic, social, community outreach, career & professional development, and health & wellness programming targeted specifically to its members,
- represent the interests of its members with a unified voice to the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the greater Columbia University community,
- communicate information relevant to the interests of its members,
- and assist the Department of Mechanical Engineering as needed in executing departmental initiatives.

# **2. Membership**

All graduate students enrolled in the Columbia University Department of Mechanical Engineering are considered to be members of MEGA. Any Columbia University student who is working towards their graduate degree with a research advisor from the Department of Mechanical Engineering is also considered a member of MEGA. Any other Columbia University graduate student may petition to the executive board for membership.

# **3. Executive Board**

## **3.1. Positions**

The executive board is composed of: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Social Chair, Communications Chair, PhD Career Development Chair, MS Career Development Chair, Student Advocacy Chair, and DEI/Outreach Chair.

## **3.2. Meetings**

The executive board will meet every week unless half of the executive board is unavailable or in case of a university holiday. (Scheduling of meetings will be under Bylaws - Article I, Section I). For a meeting to be valid, the aforementioned process must be followed and at least half the executive board must be present. Meetings are open to all individuals who are members of MEGA as defined under Article III. All members of MEGA and its executive board will sign-in to indicate attendance at weekly meetings. At least once a semester, the President will hold a town hall meeting. Town hall meetings are open to all members.

## **3.3. Voting**

For a vote to be considered valid, the vote may be taken at any valid weekly meeting or over email. For a vote to be taken by email, all executive board members must vote.

The votes cast by an executive board member are to be shared amongst the executive board but kept private from all others. MEGA members who are not in the executive board will not be allowed to vote during the weekly meetings.

### **3.4. Elections and Terms**

The Vice President will administer all elections. Before an election is held, an email will be sent to all members who are eligible to fill the open position(s). Interested members must reply in writing with a short (250 word maximum) platform to be distributed to the voting body. Interested members will have no less than five business days to respond. Members may only run for one position.

The election will take place over a period of five business days. All members may vote for the committee chair positions. Only doctoral students may vote for the doctoral positions. For the purposes of voting, MS/PhD program students are considered doctoral students. The candidate receiving the plurality of votes is awarded the executive board position. Any candidate running unopposed is automatically awarded the executive board position.

All elected executive board members must sign the MEGA code of conduct and the financial non-disclosure agreement before they may perform any of their duties.

Eligibility requirements and election details vary by position and are listed below:

#### **Doctoral Board Positions**

- Eligibility – Doctoral board positions may only be held by any doctoral student member. Only candidates who have previously held a MEGA executive board position may run for President, unless no such candidate exists. In that case, the position of President is open to all doctoral students.
- Term – October 1st to September 30th
- Election – The general election for the executive board will be held during the last two weeks of September
- Vacancy – If the President position becomes vacant, the Vice President is required to assume the position. For all other positions, if the position becomes vacant with less than one semester remaining in the term, the position is filled through appointment by the executive board. Vacancies greater than one semester are filled through a special, general election.

#### **Committee Chair Positions**

- Eligibility – Social and Career Committee chair positions may be held by any graduate student member. The Student Advocacy Committee chair is only open to doctoral students in their fourth or fifth year of study.
- Term – October 1st to September 30th
- Election – The general election for the executive board will be held during the last two weeks of September
- Vacancy – If a position becomes vacant with less than one semester remaining in the term, the position is filled through appointment by the executive board. Vacancies greater than one semester are filled through a special, general election.

### **3.5. Impeachment**

If an executive board member is found to be negligent in their outlined duties, they will be notified and placed on a probationary period of four weeks. At the end of the probationary period, the other members of the executive board will vote to remove the negligent board member. If expulsion occurs, the position is filled by the election vacancy rules. In the case of an egregious violation of conduct, the impeachment process may be accelerated, at the discretion of MEGA's faculty advisor.

## **4. Committees**

MEGA has three permanent committees: Social, Career and Professional Development, and Student Advocacy. Each committee is run by its respective chair. A committee may organize itself as best suited to its mission and form any number of subcommittees, at the discretion of the Committee Chair. All committees are open to any member except the Student Advocacy Committee. The Student Advocacy Committee is open only to fourth and fifth year doctoral students.

## **5. Funding**

### **5.1. Budget**

MEGA is allocated funds by the Department of Mechanical Engineering annually. The Treasurer is responsible for preparing MEGA's annual budget for the following year. The budget must be submitted to the department by June 15 for approval.

### **5.2. Purchases**

All large purchases (over \$50) must be made under the oversight of the Treasurer. Small purchases may be made by any MEGA officer. The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining a continuous ledger of all income and expenditures, so copies of receipts from all purchases must be submitted to them.

## **6. Amendment Process**

Amendments to the MEGA constitution may be proposed by an executive board member only. The author of the amendment must present in writing the proposed changes and an explanation for the change to the executive board for debate. The executive board must vote on the proposed amendments during weekly meetings. Approval requires a two-thirds vote during the weekly meetings or by email. Refer to Article VI for more details on the Voting procedure.