1 Name

The name of this organization is “Society of Physics Students” (henceforth referred to as “SPS”)

2 Non-profit

SPS is a non-profit organization. This means that no individuals will profit as a result of any revenue the group generates. However, this does not restrict the payment of wages, salaries or incentives by the group for services rendered.

3 University of Minnesota Policy

SPS will comply with all University policies and procedures, as well as local, state, and federal laws and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, the Board of Regents Policy on Diversity, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action as they relate to group membership and access to programs. It is the responsibility of all members to abide by these rules. If any member does not adhere to this policy, is the responsibility of the officers to determine the appropriate course of actions.

4 Membership

Membership in SPS is open to anyone, regardless of race, color, creed, ethnicity, gender, major, academic standing, etc. The voting membership is comprised of those members who have paid the membership dues valid for the semester the election is held. However, no more than 1/3 of members can be non-University students as mandated by University Policy.

5 Officers

5.1 Election Process

The University of Minnesota Society of Physics Students is registered as a Campus Life Organization, which means SPS and its officers represent the physics department and the university in a way that a typical student group does not. As a result, the officers of SPS in particular must take their role seriously and execute their office with integrity. The officers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and registered for at least six credits, as defined by student group policy. They must also have the time and interest available to be engaged in SPS activities, to attend both officer and membership meetings, and generally be aware of what’s going on in their area of responsibility. The positions are split into two categories as such:

5.1.1 Operations Officers

This category consists of Activities Director, Communications Officer, Membership Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator, and Project Manager. Being an officer in one of these positions does NOT NECESSARILY mean being the one who does all the work, but it DOES mean taking responsibility for all the work. Ideally, the officer will coordinate a group of people who are interested in helping out, and while the officer will do some of the work, they will also delegate some to members of the group. Besides sharing the workload, this approach also gives us a way of identifying people who could become future officers. In order to be successful, however, these officers must have self-motivation, dedication to their role, and the skill to balance their own work with delegation to other members of their team.

5.1.2 Executive Officers

This category consists of President, Vice President, Treasurer. These positions have more responsibility and require more experience and dedication than the other positions. By the nature of the positions, these officers might delegate some tasks to facilitate the effectiveness of their position but generally not to the degree of the operations officers. This means there will be a lot more work for them to do directly.
5.2 Officer Roles

5.2.1 President

President is the officer with the broadest scope, who steers the group as a whole and represents it among the university at large (e.g. SUA, SESB, Physics Department, Tesla Works, AXE, SWE, etc.). The president communicates the vision, purpose, and perspective of the group to the other officers and members and so an effective president must themselves understand the vision and purpose of the organization and how it fits into the larger life of the physics department and the university. It is also important for the president to guide the officers in setting creative but realistic goals and projects and then help keep the group on track to accomplish them.

The president tries NOT to get bogged down in the internal details of the organization but a good leader must be aware of those details in order to identify systematic problems that need to be fixed. On the other hand, the president DOES get heavily involved in EXTERNAL details such as our standing and status with the university, our presence in the physics department, visibility among physics majors and faculty, seeking out funding sources for special projects, and our standing with the national SPS organization. The President should also actively search for grants and other ways to subsidize outreach, trips, and events for SPS.

5.2.2 Vice President

Where the president worries about external details more than internal, the vice president is the opposite. The role of the vice president is to coordinate the work of the other officers. Therefore, a qualified vice president must have a very detailed understanding of the roles and workloads of the other officer positions. Not only does the vice president keep the officers on task and maintain project schedules by avoiding duplication of efforts and unnecessary delays, but they must also facilitate the coherence of the officers in their work and in using the experience of one officer to help another, for example. Importantly, the vice president assists the others in learning to balance the work they do with the work they delegate to their teams. In the event that an office becomes prematurely vacant, or if an officer is not fulfilling their duties, it will be the vice president’s responsibility to initiate the process of replacing them and to make sure the work of that person is covered by someone else in the meantime.

The vice president also runs the weekly one-hour officer meetings, which must be carried out efficiently with a clear agenda. Officer meetings will be open to the general membership in order to keep everyone informed of current activities and discussions among the officers and also to encourage members to become more involved in the activities of the organization. When the need arises, the officers may also have private meetings, which will also be led by the vice president.

5.2.3 Communications Officer

The primary work of the communications officer is to keep the members and officers aware of all pertinent information. To keep members informed, this involves periodically updating the SPS website (sps.physics.umn.edu), the bulletin board outside Tate 133, the chalkboard outside Tate S50, and sending out weekly emails. To keep officers informed, this includes posting the minutes of officer meetings to the officers’ web page as well as archiving any information for the use of future officers. The communications officer must remain aware of what is going on in SPS (e.g. through officer meetings, by working directly with other officers, and by soliciting feedback from members) to make sure that the most current and relevant information is always available to members who want to get involved. They are also in charge of making sure pictures are taken at SPS events and made available on the internet, and they should coordinate with the secretary how best to document and archive the yearly activities of the chapter. The communications officer does not need to have any prior expertise in particular technologies (e.g. web design) if they are willing and able to learn what is needed to be effective.
5.2.4 Treasurer

Just as the secretary keeps track but not necessarily control of information, the treasurer does the same with all of the finances of the organization. They must coordinate with the other officers who are responsible for raising and spending money to ensure an efficient and well documented cash flow, while maintaining central control of the literal funds, such as the money that comes in from membership dues and snack sales, but also the budget and fund raising accounts with the university. The treasurer also produces and maintains reports as needed for the officer and membership meetings to identify good and bad trends in group finances. They are the officer primarily responsible for coordinating the revision, approval, submission, and tracking of the annual budget with the Physics Department and faculty adviser.

5.2.5 Activities Director

The role of the activities director is to cultivate community among SPS members and to coordinate events and activities within the organization which facilitate the cohesion and bonding of the membership (e.g. bowling, movies, cookout, etc). They also coordinate the improvement and maintenance of the SPS room (e.g. furniture, cleanliness, snacks, etc.). They are also in charge of coordinating the planning of the annual member trip. The activities director should have a frequent presence in the SPS room.

5.2.6 Membership Coordinator

The focus of the membership coordinator is the recruiting and orientation of new members and maintenance of membership information. This includes coordinating events that seek to connect new people to SPS, ensuring the timely collection of annual membership dues, maintaining the member database and access to the SPS room, and following up with new members to make sure they have received their SPS magazine, physics email account, and other such amenities. The membership coordinator should have a frequent presence in the SPS room.

5.2.7 Outreach Coordinator

The outreach coordinator organizes one of the most important aspects of the SPS mission: connecting us as a group to the outside world and organizing opportunities for us to promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) in society. This includes coordinating volunteers and demonstrations for the annual Math and Science Family Fun Fair, scheduling talks by professors, and reaching out to local K-12 schools to set up opportunities for an SPS group to visit them to talk about science and do demonstrations. The person best suited for the outreach coordinator position will be very organized and able to take the initiative required to manage and delegate the many little tasks involved in big projects. They must see events to their completion and enlist enough people so the job is not overwhelming.

5.2.8 Project Manager

The Project Manager maintains the current demos, looks for new and innovative demos, and secure funding for more demos. The project manager coordinates the effort to produce demos for the any large events SPS participates in (Science and Family Fun Fair, CSE Expo, pop-up Northrop, etc.).

6 Dissolutions of the Group

On the dissolution of the group, any money left in the account(s) will be dispersed this way:

- Any money left in department accounts will be returned to the department
- Other grant money will be returned to the organization that endowed the grant
- Any demos will be donated to (in order of priority) The Physics Force, the Bell Museum, Tesla Works, local high schools.
- Cash reserves will be donated to The Physics Force
7 Ratification

We, the officer, hereby ratify this document as the constitution of the Society of Physics Students of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

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