



Bylaws of the
Biology Teaching Assistant Project (BioTAP)

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These bylaws were ratified by the members of the Transitional Executive Committee in September, 2022: Adam Chouinard, Beth Schussler, Dan Johnson, Kelly McDonald, Erin Shortlidge, Bill Wischusen, Miriam Ferzli, Ryan Coker, Olena James, Lori Kayes, and Frank Castelli (in chronological order on record).

Article I: Name

1.1 The organization shall be known as the Biology Teaching Assistant Project, hereinafter and otherwise known as “BioTAP.”

Article II: Goals

2.1 The Biology Teaching Assistant Project (BioTAP) works at the interface of research and practice to inform the teaching professional development (TPD) of graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants (TAs) in higher education. The vision of BioTAP is for all institutions to provide sufficient and effective TPD to TAs, so that they can in turn deliver the most effective, inclusive, and evidence-based teaching and learning environment possible for their students.

2.2 To do so, our mission is to build a collaborative network of TA-TPD providers, share resources to support TPD offerings, foster research to generate empirical findings about effective TPD, and advocate for TPD programs for graduate and undergraduate instructors at all institutions.

Specifically, the BioTAP organization exists to further the following goals:

1. Establish a national network of TA-TPD stakeholders for the purposes of communication and collaboration
2. Provide resources to improve institutional TA-TPD program offerings and assessment
3. Facilitate new empirical research on effective and inclusive TA-TPD practices
4. Organize an annual conference to disseminate TA-TPD research and insights
5. Catalyze the adoption of effective, inclusive, and evidence-based TA-TPD practices

Article III: Membership

3.1 BioTAP is open to any individual or institution interested in the research or practice of teaching professional development (TPD) for graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants or instructors, regardless of race/ethnicity, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or any other characteristic. The principles guiding Membership are as follows:

1. The Executive Committee determines the form and amount of member dues (pursuant to Article XII) for a given Administrative Term (as defined in Article IV).
2. Members are those individuals who apply to join the organization for a given term, and who satisfy any dues requirements for said term.
3. Members are eligible to serve in leadership roles within the BioTAP organization (i.e. to serve as Officers, as defined in Article VI).
4. Members are eligible to propose amendments to the Bylaws (pursuant to Article XIII).
5. Members will receive yearly organizational reports (pursuant to Article X).
6. Members may attend the annual BioTAP conference for reduced or eliminated fees.

3.2 It is the responsibility of all Members and elected Officers of BioTAP to conduct themselves professionally at all times in a manner that demonstrates personal integrity and the ethical, respectful, and inclusive treatment of all of its members.

Article IV: Administrative Term and Fiscal Year

4.1 The “Administrative Term” (herein periodically referred to generally as a “term”) is defined as an annual period of service of the organization. Both the Administrative Term and the Fiscal Year are defined as the calendar year (January 1st through December 31st). Note that Officers serve a “term of office” that spans multiple Administrative Terms (see [Article VI](#)).

Article V: Administration Overview

5.1 The administration of BioTAP will be carried out by the Executive Committee (see [Article VIII](#)), consisting of the President, Past-President, President-Elect, and Treasurer, as well as the Chair of each Standing Committee (Education, Networking, and Conference; see [Article IX](#)).

5.2 Leadership decisions within the Executive and Standing Committees will be made through the process of dynamic governance in order to establish unanimous consensus (see [Article X](#)).

5.3 The administration should be able to appropriately represent the diversity of BioTAP membership, institution-types, geographic regions, programming, and other such constituencies or considerations that might exist in the future of the BioTAP community.

5.4 Serving as their representatives, the Executive Committee will enact the mission of BioTAP in coordination with its Members. While establishing and managing the policies and affairs of BioTAP, the Executive Committee will support innovation and improvement from the broader membership in a collaborative manner. In this spirit, Members are able to submit motions (see [Article X](#)) and amendments to the bylaws (see [Article XIII](#)) to the Executive Committee.

5.5 If and at which time an Executive Director is hired by BioTAP, the Executive Director will act as the Chief Executive Officer of the organization. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of policies set forth by the Executive Committee, as well as program management, financial development, and the accomplishment of annual goals and objectives. Guidance and direction are to be provided by the Executive Committee.

Article VI: Officers

6.1 Officers are defined as BioTAP Members appointed to any elected position (Acting President, President-Elect, Past-President, Treasurer, and all members of the Standing Committees). All Officers must be Members in good standing of the BioTAP organization.

6.2 A single year of an elected Officer's term of office coincides with the timing of an Administrative Term of the organization (as defined in Article IV).

6.3 A Member elected as President serves for a three-year term, serving sequentially as the President-Elect (Year One), Acting President (Year Two), and then Past-President (Year Three). Over this three-year term, they cannot hold another office in the organization. After their three-year presidential term is completed, they may then serve in another elected position.

6.4 The Treasurer and all Standing Committee members are also elected to a three-year term of office.

6.5 The Executive Committee shall establish the categories, duties, and terms of office of all appointed positions. They can, via amendment of these Bylaws, establish different positions or change appointment terms or conditions.

6.6 No Member can run simultaneously for two elected offices, and no member can hold two offices simultaneously.

6.7 Officers may serve for multiple terms of office, though they should run for multiple terms only in consultation with the Executive Committee. In guiding these decisions, the organization seeks to balance the need for its work to be done in a maximally effective manner with the need to provide leadership opportunities for junior members.

Article VII: Roles and Responsibilities of Officers

7.1 The Acting President (the second year of an individual's term as a President) is a member of the Executive Committee; they serve in the chief leadership role of BioTAP, responsible for supervising and directing the conduct and business of the organization. In consultation with the Executive Committee, the Acting President shall provide direction and guidance for the formulation of organizational policies and procedures. The Acting President shall be responsible for ensuring that all affairs of BioTAP are conducted in a manner consistent with the Bylaws. The Acting President shall call and preside over both Executive Committee and General Membership meetings. In their role as lead executive, the Acting President is responsible for overseeing that all legal and financial responsibilities of the organization are being met in a timely, accurate, and ethical manner. The Acting President shall fulfill other duties as needed, as assigned by consensus of the Executive Committee.

7.2 The President-Elect (the first year of an individual's presidential term) is a member of the Executive Committee. In this role, they will become more familiar with BioTAP governance, and will coordinate communication among Committees. As part of their onboarding process, the President-Elect will also serve in a secretarial role: they shall take and keep minutes of all

Executive Committee meetings, and they will coordinate with the Chairs of the Standing Committees to ensure that meeting minutes and other important committee documents are being properly produced and stored. The President-Elect has the ultimate responsibility to collect, organize, and archive all important BioTAP documents for posterity. The President-Elect shall fulfill other duties as needed, as assigned by consensus of the Executive Committee.

7.3 The Past-President (the third year of an individual's presidential term) is a member of the Executive Committee. Due to their experience, they provide important leadership continuity and should provide guidance to the Executive Committee accordingly. During their term as Past-President, they are responsible for running elections for the upcoming Administrative Term. The Past-President shall fulfill other duties as needed, as assigned by consensus of the Executive Committee.

7.4 If the Acting President is absent or unable to preside over an Executive Committee or General Membership meeting, the Past-President or President-Elect shall decide which of them will run the meeting (and which will be responsible for minutes).

7.5 If one of the Presidents is unable to fulfill the term of their office, the Executive Committee can appoint either of the remaining Presidents to replace them, or hold a Special Election if needed (see [Article XI](#)).

7.6 The Treasurer is the chief fiscal officer of the organization and member of the Executive Committee. The Treasurer shall oversee the receipt of all moneys paid to BioTAP as well as the deposit of all such moneys in a bank in the name of the BioTAP organization. The Treasurer shall oversee all payments, shall keep (or oversee the management of) a complete set of financial records, and shall present financial reports to the remaining Executive Committee as required. At minimum, the Treasurer shall prepare a summary of the previous year's financial transactions prior to the end of the Administrative Term. At the end of their term of office, the Treasurer shall turn over all funds and financial records to their successor. The Treasurer shall fulfill other duties as needed, as assigned by consensus of the Executive Committee.

7.7 The remaining Officers consist of the members of the Standing Committees. As such, they will be held responsible for the duties of their committee (see [Article IX](#)). While all committee members are elected Officers of BioTAP, only the Chair of each Standing Committee will serve as a member of the Executive Committee; the Chair shall represent the interests of their appointed Committee to the Executive Committee (and vice versa).

7.8 The Executive Committee may remove from office any elected Officer, including a member of the Executive Committee, if either that person has not fulfilled their duties, or if the Executive Committee determines that the removal is deemed to be in the best interest of BioTAP. The

removal of an Officer shall require unanimous consensus of the Executive Committee (not including the Officer in question, if their office is included among the Executive Committee).

Article VIII: Executive Committee

8.1 The charge of the Executive Committee is to serve as the chief governing body of BioTAP. It is composed of the Acting President, Past-President, President-Elect, Treasurer, and the Chairs of all Standing Committees (as outlined in Article V).

8.2 Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Acting President, or by any simple majority of the total membership of the Executive Committee.

8.3 The Executive Committee shall authorize the signing of instruments, documents, and contracts pertaining to the business of BioTAP. The signing Officers shall be the President, President-Elect, Past-President, and the Treasurer, unless an agent is otherwise authorized by the Executive Committee (pursuant to Article XII).

8.4 The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice annually to deal with relevant business and ensure appropriate progress toward organizational goals (pursuant to Article X). Each year, they shall submit an annual report to all Members outlining significant activities over the past year, membership numbers, current organizational finances, vision for the upcoming year, and any other important updates. The exact form of the annual report is up to the Executive Committee, but there must be some form of written record available to Members for posterity.

8.5 The resignation of any member of the Executive Committee shall be submitted in writing to the Acting President. Should a resigning member submit only a verbal resignation, the Acting President shall confirm the resignation in writing to the resigning member with a copy to the Executive Committee.

8.6 Any vacancy on the Executive Committee that occurs during a term of office shall be filled by appointment for the remainder of the term. Vacancies filled by appointment shall require consensus of the remaining members of the Executive Committee. If consensus via dynamic governance cannot be established in support of an individual Member, the appointment will be decided by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

8.7 The Executive Committee shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining a “Policies and Procedures Manual” containing any detailed description of the logistics necessary to guide the day-to-day operation of the organization. All policies and procedures must conform to the organization’s Bylaws and they must be kept on record in perpetuity, to ensure organizational cohesion during leadership transitions.

Article IX: Standing Committees

9.1 The “Standing Committees” of BioTAP are those that are envisioned to serve in perpetuity, to form the core governmental structure, and whose differing charges are intended to address the full scope of the organization’s goals. There are three Standing Committees: the Education, Networking, and Conference Committees.

9.2 The Education Committee is responsible for providing resources, activities, and advocacy that align with our mission to help enhance Teaching Professional Development (TPD) for graduate or undergraduate instructors (TAs) at diverse institutions. In addition, the committee will consult with BioTAP Members (or other TPD stakeholders) about “best practices” for TPD offerings, assessment, or program transformation. Lastly, the Education Committee will be responsible for establishing and curating the content of the “TPD Catalyst” repository (in collaboration with the Networking Committee). In the broadest sense, the Education Committee should take on duties that advance organizational goals related to identifying and disseminating scholarly findings and strategies concerning the research and practice of TA-TPD.

9.3 The Networking Committee is responsible for enhancing communication among Members, recruiting new BioTAP Members, and finding new ways to network with other organizations with similar interests. This committee oversees the BioTAP website, social media account(s), and all forms of internal and external communication. Lastly, the Networking Committee will be responsible for the logistics of implementing and maintaining the “TPD Catalyst” repository (in collaboration with the Education Committee). In the broadest sense, the Networking Committee should take on duties that help expand the reach of BioTAP, improve communication and collaboration within BioTAP, and facilitate communication between the BioTAP network and other TPD stakeholders.

9.4 The Conference Committee is responsible for planning and running all aspects of the BioTAP conference. This conference may be virtual or in-person, and the exact timing and programming will be determined by the Committee. The scope of this Committee is narrower; but as an essential and annual function of BioTAP (and one that requires a great deal of logistical coordination), these duties warrant a dedicated Committee.

9.5 While each Standing Committee has distinct charges, they are expected to communicate, support one another, and coordinate their efforts in a synergistic manner as they work toward the same shared goals of BioTAP. Much of this cross-committee communication will fall to the Chairs of each Standing Committee, in their role as members of the Executive Committee.

9.6 Standing Committees may be altered in name or charge (or additional Committees may be formed) through amendment of the Bylaws. In such a case, the Executive Committee should be revised so that it continues to include the Chair of all Standing Committees. In considering

Committee structure, care should be taken to allocate tasks to the appropriate existing Standing Committee (based on their broad charges), rather than forming additional Standing Committees and thus altering the governmental structure.

9.7 Any Committee may form a Sub-Committee as needed, to work on specific tasks or divvy up duties in a given time period. Additionally, the Executive Committee may choose to create a “Task Force” to address specific BioTAP needs or objectives. Any Member of the organization may serve on a Task Force (by appointment). Task Forces for specific objectives are recommended as an effective way to form collaborations within and among the Standing Committees, or to recruit additional help from the broader membership, without resulting in governmental reorganization due to the creation of new Standing Committees.

9.8 At the outset of an Administrative Term, each Standing Committee will elect their own Chair and Vice Chair (via the mechanism described in [Article XI](#)). As noted, the Chair of each Standing Committee will serve as their representative on the Executive Committee.

9.9 As with any Officer (see [Article VII](#)), a committee Chair may be removed by the Executive Committee if they determine that the work of the Committee is not being done in a satisfactory or timely manner. Committee members may be removed if they are not participating in the activities of the committee, or for disrespectful behavior toward other BioTAP Members at any time (after an investigation of such a charge).

9.10 Committees must submit to the Executive Committee a yearly report of their activities, budget needs, progress toward BioTAP goals, and a vision for the future.

Article X: Meeting Requirements and Parliamentary Procedures

10.1 A quorum, defined as a two-thirds majority of committee members, must be present for any meeting of the Executive or Standing Committees. In the absence of a quorum, the meeting must be rescheduled until greater representation can be assured. Exceptions to this rule may be made by the Acting President (for the Executive Committee) or Chair (for Standing Committees), if those presiding Officers deem there has been sufficient communication with the absent members and said members have waived their right to consensus concerning the agenda items.

10.2 The Executive and Standing Committees shall meet as needed to conduct their work, with the understanding that some committees will meet more regularly over the year and some will have their work concentrated at certain times. At minimum, all committees must hold at least two (2) meetings per year, to ensure progress toward their respective charges.

10.3 Meetings of the Executive and Standing Committees will be run according to the principles of dynamic governance. The exact process for facilitating meetings and establishing consensus

may be decided by each Committee (and may be informed by the Policies and Procedures Manual; see Article VIII). However, decision-making must abide by two basic principles of dynamic governance. First, the aim is to establish total committee consensus through iterative discussion. Second, objections to motions must be made in good faith: any objecting Officers must specify concrete and constructive suggestions for changes they would need to see enacted in order for them to support the motion.

10.4 At minimum, the Executive Committee must hold at least one (1) General Membership Meeting per year (i.e. all Members are welcome to attend), to update the full membership on organizational affairs and progress toward each of the organization's stated goals (i.e. Article II). General Membership Meetings shall be facilitated by the Acting President in accordance with a protocol determined in consultation with the Executive Committee.

10.5 During General Membership Meetings, attending Members must at minimum be allowed to inquire about BioTAP business and propose motions for the Executive Committee to consider. Such motions may also be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee outside of formal meetings. During the General Membership Meeting, the Acting President and other Officers reserve the right to request revision, table, or approve any proposed motions.

10.6 Any and all BioTAP meetings may be held electronically or in any manner that is deemed equitable and allows sufficient access to all parties. The rules governing electronic (and other) meetings shall be established by the Executive Committee and documented in the "Policies and Procedures Manual."

Article XI: Nominations and Elections

11.1 Each year, the Executive Committee shall determine the exact timing of the upcoming election cycle. Each election must have distinct and sequential stages for soliciting nominations, casting votes, and preparing for a successful transition by the end of the Administrative Term.

11.2 For each election, nominations for Officers will first be solicited by the Past-President. In consultation with the Executive Committee, the Past-President is then charged with developing a final slate of Officer candidates and preparing the ballot for elected offices. The Past-President must request nominations for Officers from the membership with at least two full weeks (14 days) for nominations, meaning that nominations must be called at least four full weeks (28 days) prior to the designated close of the voting period (see 11.3).

11.3 Upon receiving nominations, the list of final candidates and a corresponding ballot shall be presented to the membership not less than two full weeks (14) days prior to the voting deadline. The ballot shall also include spaces for write-in candidates.

11.4 Elections shall be completed by electronic ballot. The Executive Committee will keep a formal, up-to-date record of logistics for running elections (e.g. survey software used, survey template, permissions sharing, etc.) for use or modification by the Past-President responsible in a given term.

11.5 Valid electronic ballots must be received by the date specified by the Executive Committee. Elections shall be decided by a majority of votes cast. The Past-President shall announce the election results at a time designated by the Executive Committee, which must be at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the Administrative Term, to allow for a successful transition.

11.6 Concerning the Standing Committees, these Officer positions will be filled in order of the number of votes received per candidate until all committee vacancies are filled. In the case of a tie for the final slot(s), the acting Executive Committee will vote on the candidates in question.

11.7 At the outset of a new Administrative Term, the current Past-President will oversee the election of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the newly-formed Standing Committees. Committee members may only vote for the Chair of their own Committee. The Past-President shall send electronic ballots to all members of each Standing Committee. The committee member receiving the highest number of votes shall be named Chair; the member receiving the second-highest number of votes shall be named Vice Chair. These positions must be filled no later than 30 days into the new Administrative Term.

11.8 No error or omission in the transmission of the electronic ballots shall invalidate an election where such error or omission was made in good faith and for no improper purpose.

11.9 In the event that an elected Officer is unable to fulfill their term, and the Executive Committee is unable to appoint a suitable replacement for those duties, the Executive Committee may choose to hold a Special Election to fill the position. These will be run in the same manner as regular elections, with the timing set by the Executive Committee.

11.10 In all respects, elections must be attentive to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, to identify and mitigate biases in the election process as much as possible. In advance of an upcoming election cycle, the full Executive Committee should review protocols through a critical lens to ensure appropriate inclusion and representation of the diverse membership of BioTAP.

Article XII: Dues and Finances

12.1 Categories of membership, along with the dues and benefits for each category, shall be established by consensus of the Executive Committee at least sixty (60) days prior to the upcoming Administrative Term. Dues are encouraged to be kept as low as possible, to avoid their being a cause of inequity.

12.2 The Executive Committee may authorize any Officer(s) or agent(s) to enter into contracts or to execute and deliver instruments in the name of (or on behalf of) BioTAP. The limits of such authority must be specified in the authorization, and any such arrangements are to be undertaken only with the explicit permission and oversight of the Treasurer.

12.3 All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money in the name of BioTAP shall be signed by such Officer(s) or agent(s) of BioTAP as authorized by the Executive Committee.

12.4 All funds of the organization not otherwise employed shall be deposited promptly in such bank(s) or depository as the Executive Committee may select.

12.5 The continuing (or retiring) Treasurer shall prepare a summary of the Administrative Term's financial transactions by the end of the term and make it available to the Executive Committee.

12.6 The Acting President and Treasurer shall propose an annual budget for the upcoming year to the Executive Committee for its approval. The budget must be approved by consensus of the total membership of the Executive Committee.

12.7 Any Executive Committee member with a financial Conflict of Interest, or who has a question about a potential Conflict of Interest, must bring the issue to the remaining Officers of the Executive Committee for discussion. The remaining Executive Committee is authorized to remove an offending Officer if they should fail to disclose a potential Conflict of Interest.

Article XIII: Amendments

13.1 Amendments can be made to these Bylaws by consensus of the Executive Committee through dynamic governance (pursuant to Article X).

13.2 The Executive Committee shall review the Bylaws yearly to ascertain whether changes need to be made. This should be done early in a new Administrative Term, to account for changes in leadership positions due to the recent election cycle.

13.3 Proposed amendments to the Bylaws can also be brought to the Executive Committee by the action of any five (5) Members of the organization; these members should contact the Executive Committee with concrete suggestions for their amendments in writing.

Article XIV: Indemnification of the Executive Committee

14.1. BioTAP shall indemnify each member of the Executive Committee individually, as well as their successors, assigns, heirs and personal representatives, against any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities of any kind or nature whatsoever that any of them at any time sustain or incur by reason of any act or thing connected with serving in their position, and each such person's legal representatives, against liabilities, expenses, counsel fees and costs

reasonably incurred by said person or said person's estate in connection with, or arising out of, any action, suit, proceeding or claim in which such person is made a party by reason of such person's being, or having acted as an officer in good faith and in a manner such person reasonably believed to be in and not opposed to the best interest of BioTAP.

14.2. The indemnification herein provided for shall apply also in respect of any amount paid in compromise of any such action, suit, proceeding or claim asserted against a member of the Executive Committee or Director (including expenses, counsel fees and costs reasonably incurred in connection therewith), provided the Executive Committee shall have first approved such proposed compromise settlement and determined that the Director or Officer involved acted in good faith and in a manner such person reasonably believed to be in and not opposed to the best interest of BioTAP; but in taking such action any Director or Officer involved shall not be qualified to vote thereon.

14.3. BioTAP, if it becomes liable for indemnity herein, shall be liable to pay 100% of any loss (including costs, charges, and expenses) in excess of the coverage provided by any liability insurance company having coverage for such person for said loss.

Article XV: Dissolution of the Organization

15.1. In the event of dissolution, the assets of BioTAP shall be distributed to an organization closely aligned with the mission and values of BioTAP, as determined by consensus of the acting Executive Committee.