

Public Health Association Constitution
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

Article I – Organization

Preamble: We, the students of the Master of Public Health Program at Virginia Tech hereby enact this constitution for the purpose of establishing an orderly set of standards by which we shall govern ourselves.

In accordance with the University motto “Ut Prosim,” we, the students of the MPH program at Virginia Tech, formed the Public Health Association at Virginia Tech in order to teach others, gain experience, and improve public health across campus and the community at large.

Section 1: Name: The name of the organization shall be the Public Health Association at Virginia Tech, abbreviated as PHA@VT.

Section 2: Affiliation: The Public Health Association at Virginia Tech is affiliated with the following:

1. Master of Public Health Program at Virginia Tech
2. Department of Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech
3. Center for Public Health Practice and Research
4. The Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

Section 3: Purpose: The purpose statement of the Public Health Association shall be to fulfill the following objectives:

- Further the professional competencies of students at Virginia Tech through service and educational activities related to public health
- Offer professional skill-building opportunities to students pursuing an education or career in the field of Public Health
- Foster a sense of community among students, faculty and alumni
- Assist in the growth of the One Health initiative at Virginia Tech, and in surrounding communities
- Collaborate with the college and other stakeholders to promote key public health issues on campus

Article II – Law

Section 1: Supplemental Law: With a majority vote, the Active Body shall have the right to approve a directive into the organization’s constitution. All such directives can be repealed by a majority vote. The Secretary shall be responsible for compiling and maintaining these laws.

Article III – Officers

- Section 1:** Eligibility to Office: A member that is eligible for office must:
1. Be an enrolled student in the Master of Public Health Program.
 2. Knowingly be able to fulfill officer duties as outlined in Section 6.
- Section 2:** Election Process: There shall be an election for officer positions once every year. The election process shall follow the processes described within these laws. Reference Article VIII Section 2 for details on term lengths for individual positions.
- Section 3:** Term Length: The length of the term shall be from the date of installation until the installation of the succeeding officer.
- Section 4:** Vacation of Office: An office will be vacated if an officer steps down from his or her office, is removed from his or her office, or leaves or graduates from the program.
- a. If the President's office is vacated, the Vice-President shall assume the position, duties, and responsibilities of the office until a replacement is elected in a special election. The election shall follow the same guidelines in this constitution and shall occur within two weeks of the vacation of office.
 - b. If any other office is vacated, a special election will take place following the same guidelines in this constitution.
 - c. If an officer has failed to commit to the duties of his or her office, the general members may move to recommend a removal from office. If the motion passes with at least three-fourths of the votes, the officers must recommend the officer in questions' removal from office to the faculty advisor(s).
- Section 5:** Officers: The only elected officers of the Chapter shall be as follows:
1. President
 2. Vice President
 3. Treasurer
 4. Secretary
- Section 6:** Duties of the Officers: The duties of the Chapter officers shall be as follows:
- a. The President shall be the executive officer of PHA@VT and shall preside at meetings. He or she shall be responsible for the condition of PHA@VT and the proper discharge of the duties of its officers. He or she shall appoint members to the appointed offices.
 - b. The Vice-President shall assist the President in the performance of his or her duties and shall act as President in the absence of the latter.
 - c. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection and disbursement of the organization's money and for keeping a systematic financial record of PHA@VT's finances. The treasurer shall also prepare a budget, organize

any fundraisers, and update the President, Advisor, and other officers of the financial state of the organization.

- d. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the PHA@VT meetings and shall be responsible for the documents and records of the organization. He or she will maintain a record of membership and alumni relations, along with contact information.

Section 7: Executive Council Committee: The elected officers of the organization shall sit on the Executive Council of PHA@VT. The Executive Council shall be responsible for all chapter activities and meetings. The Executive Council shall meet at least once per month to discuss and organize the agenda.

Article IV – Appointed Chair Positions

Section 1: Appointed Chairs: The President shall appoint any member in good standing to the following positions, as well as any other officers he deems necessary to the organization. Each Chairman shall have the right to establish a committee of members to assist in the duties of the office.

1. Alumni Relations Chairperson
2. Historian
3. Faculty Liaison
4. Graduate Seminar Liaison
5. Academic Mentorship Chairperson
6. Social Chairperson
7. Service Chairperson

Section 2: Duties of the Appointed Chairs: The duties of the Chapter chairmen shall be as follows:

- a. Alumni Relations Chairperson: The Alumni Relations Chairperson shall collaborate with the Secretary to maintain a record of MPH alumni. The Chairperson shall facilitate alumni engagement opportunities throughout his or her term (e.g., MPH/PHA funding opportunities, MPH alumni reunions, in-person or virtual speaking engagements with current students, etc.). The Chairperson shall attend 100% of events/programs that he or she has planned; if unable to attend an event, the Chairperson must immediately designate a substitute and share the substitute's contact info with affected alumni and event attendees. The Chairperson shall also develop an alumni newsletter in order to send MPH news to alumni (on a semester basis if time allows). If the Center for Public Health Practice and Research has an alumni newsletter, the Chairperson may collaborate with CPHPR on this project.
- b. Historian: The Historian shall maintain photographic and video records of PHA meetings and events. If possible, the Historian shall attend 75% of all PHA events during his or her term. The Historian may designate a substitute photographer/videographer for any events that he or she cannot attend. The Historian shall collaborate with other Chairpersons in order to use photos/videos for PHA recruitment and alumni communication. The

Historian may also collaborate with the Secretary to maintain a record of PHA membership.

- c. Faculty Liaison: The Faculty Liaison shall serve as a mediator between PHA and MPH faculty, including the PHA faculty advisor Susan West Marmagas. The Chairperson shall be responsible for initiating communication and collaboration between the two parties (PHA & MPH faculty). The Chairperson shall promote faculty interests within PHA (e.g., announcing research or assistantship opportunities with faculty). The Chairperson shall also promote PHA interests to faculty (e.g., advocating for conference funding).
- d. Graduate Seminar Liaison: The Graduate Seminar Liaison shall assist with planning and hosting of MPH graduate seminars, a program led by faculty member Kaja Abbas. The Liaison shall research potential speakers and invite them to speak at seminar, and he or she shall assist Dr. Abbas with logistics and event planning for each seminar. The Liaison shall attend 75% of all graduate seminars during his or her term, and may designate a substitute when he or she cannot attend. If designating a substitute for a seminar event, the Chairperson must immediately notify and provide the substitute's contact information to Dr. Abbas and any affected speakers. The Liaison shall also assist Dr. Abbas with setup/cleanup of each seminar, and related activities such as taking seminar guests to dinner. The Liaison shall also lead marketing/promotional efforts to increase student attendance at seminars.
- e. Academic Mentorship Chairperson: The Academic Mentorship Chairperson shall establish academic assistance programs within PHA, and shall promote campus-wide resources to MPH students (e.g., academic resources like the Writing Center and CommLab, and stress-reduction resources like Cook Counseling, etc.). The Chairperson shall establish a peer mentoring/study program within PHA, and invite PHA students to participate. If the Chairperson establishes regular meetings for this program, he or she shall attend 75% of all meetings during his or her term. The Chairperson shall designate a substitute if he or she cannot attend a regular meeting. The Chairperson shall remind PHA members of MPH academic standards, and offer resources/advice to students who request additional academic assistance.
- f. Social Chairperson: The Social Chairperson shall organize multiple social and/or professional development events throughout his or her term. The Chairperson shall plan events based on PHA members' suggestions and personal interests. The Chairperson shall assist with PHA recruitment and retention by inviting MPH students to PHA events and following up on potential new members. The Chairperson shall collaborate with other officers, chairpersons, and liaisons to organize special programs and events (e.g., collaborate with the Treasurer to organize a fundraiser, collaborate with the Alumni Relations Chair to organize a student/alumni networking event). The Chairperson shall attend 100% of events that he or she has planned; if unable to attend an event, the Chairperson must

immediately designate a substitute and share the substitute's contact info with event attendees.

- g. Service Chairperson: The Service Chairperson shall organize multiple service opportunities throughout his or her term. The Chairperson shall plan service opportunities based on PHA members' suggestions and observed community needs (particularly needs related to public health). The Chairperson shall establish and lead PHA/MPH teams for major community service events (e.g., The Big Event, Relay for Life). The Chairperson shall collaborate with other officers, chairpersons, and liaisons to organize special programs and events (e.g., collaborate with the Treasurer and Alumni Relations Chairperson to organize an alumni philanthropy event that is tied to a local service project for current PHA members). The Chairperson shall attempt to quantify the impacts of PHA service events and report back to PHA. The Chairperson shall attend 100% of service events that he or she has planned; if unable to attend an event, the Chairperson must immediately designate a substitute and share the substitute's contact info with event attendees.

Section 3: Vacation of Office: An appointed chairperson shall vacate his office if he or she fails to fulfill his or her duties. In this situation, the President shall have the right but not the obligation to appoint a replacement chairman.

Article V – Eligibility to Membership

Section 1: Requirements:

1. Virginia Tech enrolled undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff.
2. Virginia Tech alumni, defined as those who have graduated from the Master of Public Health program.
3. Associate status may be granted to any person not in the above categories who wishes to participate in organization activities. Subject to approval of the President.

Article VI – Classes of Membership

Section 1: Classes of Membership:

a. Active Member:

a. An active general member shall be defined as active given the following:

- (1) He or she is an undergraduate or graduate student, faculty, or staff member.
- (2) He or she is current with organization finances: including but not limited to payment of dues or cost of organization materials.
- (3) Active general members have voting rights.

- b. Alumni
 - a. An alumni member shall be defined given the following:
 - (1) He or she has graduated from the Master of Public Health Program.
 - (2) Alumni members do not have voting rights.
- c. Associate Member
 - a. An associate member shall be defined given the following:
 - (1) Any person who does not fit into any of the above classes of membership that desires to participate in organization events.
 - (2) Associate members do not have voting rights.

Article VII – Formal Organization Meetings

Section 1: Overview:

- 1. The President shall preside as chairman of the meeting. In his or her absence, the Vice-President, or an appointee if s/he is unavailable, shall serve as chairman.
- 2. Formal organization meetings shall be defined as meetings where voting takes place on issues related to the organization.

Section 2: General Meeting:

- 1. In order for business to take place, meeting shall require a quorum of fifty percent of the active members.
- 2. Minutes shall be presented by the Secretary from the previous formal organizational meeting.

Article VIII – Elections

Section 1: Qualifications for Voting: Only active members of PHA@VT may vote.

Section 2: Officer Elections: PHA@VT shall conduct elections once every year for officer positions.

- a) Election Date: The date of the election must be set at the beginning of the academic year, to be held regularly in the Spring semester.
 - i. The date of the election shall be set in order to allow the new officers to run the last meeting of the year.
- b) Nominations: All candidates must be officially nominated for the office and must be recorded as a nominee by the Secretary.
 - i. Nominations may only be accepted from active members of PHA@VT.
 - ii. Only Active members who meet the officer eligibility requirements and may be nominated for candidacy.
 - iv. Nominations shall be collected on the election date, but shall be closed finally before the election begins. At this time, the Secretary shall create a final list of candidates.

1. At the desire of the candidate, his name may be removed at any time before or during the election.
 2. No name shall be added to this list at any time after the elections are opened by the President.
- vi. An eligible active member may nominate himself for any office.
- c) Elections: The election for the Chapter shall be as follows:
- a. Active, alumni, associate members and the general public may be present.
 - b. The President shall be chairperson of the meeting.
 - c. The only candidates for an office shall be those who have been nominated in the correct way. The candidates' names shall be listed in the front of the room for all to see.
 - d. Each candidate may speak for up to two minutes, except when the time limit is changed by a two-thirds vote.
 - e. Discussion for each position shall ensue after the speeches and shall be limited to ten minutes, unless there is a two-thirds vote to extend the discussion by a specified amount of time.
 - f. The votes shall be cast on pieces of paper provided by the Secretary. Each eligible voter receives one slip of paper per vote.
 - g. The President and the Secretary shall be the tellers and shall tally the votes in a private room, provided that neither officer is a candidate in the current vote. If a candidate would be a teller in the vote, the President shall choose a replacement teller.
 - h. When there are three or fewer candidates, a plurality shall elect the officer. When there are four or five candidates, the two candidates who receive the greater amount of votes shall run-off in a second vote in which a majority elects the officer. When there are greater than five candidates, the three candidates who receive the greatest amount of votes shall run-off in a second vote in which a plurality shall elect.
 - i. The number of votes cast shall be recorded by the Secretary.
 - j. The outcome of the vote shall be announced by the President.
- d) Installation: Candidates elected to office shall be installed into their office positions immediately following the election process.

Article XII – Finances

Section 1: Accounts:

- a. The Treasurer shall be the main account holder of the organization bank account. The President and Advisor shall also be on the account. No other individual is to be listed on the account. These officers shall be removed from the account within seven days of the installation of the succeeding officers.

- b. The treasurer shall keep a record of all bank transactions.

Section 2: Budget and Policies:

- a. The Treasurer shall present a tentative budget at the beginning of every academic year.

Section 3: Dues:

- a. Dues are defined as the amount of money due per member, which shall be set at \$20 per year. Members who join in the second semester of an academic year shall pay a pro-rated amount of \$10.
- b. Dues shall be collected in one payment annually.
- c. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of dues.

Article XIII – Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1: Previous Notice: Any proposal of an amendment to the constitution shall be submitted in writing to the PHA@VT President. The President shall make the submitted proposal available to all active members and shall announce planned vote on the proposal at least two weeks prior to the vote.

Section 2: Voting: With a quorum present, the proposal must be voted on during a formal meeting and must receive two-thirds approval from the Active Body to pass.

Section 3: Empowerment: Any amendment to this constitution shall be in full force on and after its passage in accordance with this article, unless otherwise provided.