

Article I: Biochemistry Graduate Student Association (BSA)

Article II: We, the people of the Biochemistry Student Association (BSA), strive to create an environment where both graduate students and post-doctoral fellows have a base of support within the department. We hope to accomplish this by enhancing the academic experience of graduate school/post-doc fellowships with opportunities for exchanging scientific thought in a supportive environment, participating in public speaking/presenting events at our bi-monthly colloquium and annual student symposium, and networking through seminar presentations and small group interactions with invited guests. Additionally, we seek to promote a collaborative environment among members of the department (students, fellows, and faculty) with periodic social events. We also provide academic support for younger graduate students by helping them prepare for their qualifying exams by setting up mock exams. Overall, the BSA seeks to expand the experiences of students, fellows, and even the faculty in our department.

Article III: Membership in the organization automatically includes all students that join the biochemistry graduate program following selection of their lab after the first year of graduate school. Additionally, post-doctoral fellows that are members of primary faculty in the biochemistry department are also automatically considered active members of this association. Membership termination occurs when fellows or students graduate from the program and, subsequently, leave Vanderbilt. There are no dues that are required of students to be active in this organization.

Article IV: Officers of the BSA serve as a liaison between the students and fellows in the BSA and the administration for the duration of one academic year. To facilitate our mission, the BSA operates the following committees: Colloquium Committee, Social Committee, Qualifying Exam Prep Committee, Retreat Committee, Social Media Committee, and Wellness Committee. All officers will serve for an academic year. At the end of the year, the outgoing president will ask for volunteers to serve as the following year's BSA officers. If the positions of President, Vice-President, and Post-Doc Liaison are volunteered for by more than one individual, those positions will be elected by the members of the BSA at the end of the year. All volunteers for the various committees will be assigned as Officers for the committee in which they volunteered. If the number of volunteers is overwhelming, it will be up to the outgoing President and Vice-president to determine if an election is needed to fill the positions on each committee. The position of adviser of the organization will automatically fall to the faculty member that currently serves as the Director of Graduate Studies in the Biochemistry Department. If any officer is unable to fulfill their duties in the organization, the remaining officers will serve to temporarily fulfill the remaining duties until a new officer is selected.

Duties of the BSA officers include the following: coordinating bi-weekly colloquia (specifically securing speakers and refreshments), organizing and participating in mock qualifying exams for graduate students in the department, planning and organizing departmental retreats and social events, sending out a monthly newsletter, advocating for biochemistry student/postdoc wellness, and efficiently training subsequent officers for their positions in the BSA.

Article V: Meetings of the BSA occur regularly on the first Tuesday of each month at 4pm. Meetings are announced via email and reminder emails are sent the day of each meeting. There is no requirement for recording minutes of each meeting and open to all BSA members, not just officers. Occasionally, special meetings (i.e. social events) are arranged that do not fall on the first Tuesday of the month. To inform the BSA of these special meetings, notices are placed on the departmental website as well as on flyers placed around the department. Emails informing the BSA of these meetings are also sent on the morning of such events.

Article VI: The administrative board is not appointed by members or officers of the BSA. Instead, the positions fall to the administration of the department. These individuals are responsible for handling the finances of the BSA and have sole administrative authority.

Article VII: If students, post-docs, or faculty have any questions concerning the organization that need to be addressed, they will first go to officers of the BSA. If the officers are unable or unwilling to answer said questions, the adviser of the organization may be contacted by the individual or by the BSA officers.

Article VIII: Amendments to the constitution will be made if there is a majority vote among the officers and adviser to the organization.