

## **Structure of APSA Local Chapters (LC)**

**Purpose of this document:** Based on our experience with over two years of trial and error running a successful local chapter (LC) of APSA at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, we have developed a structure for LCs to help them be both efficient and effective. We are sharing this suggested structure with you in this document. We intend for these suggestions to help you in molding your LC into an organization that is well run and strategically planned to specifically foster physician-scientist education at your institution.

### **1. Officers**

- a. Positions: The duties of each officer position should be clearly defined within the LC Constitution
  - i. President\*
    1. LC Presidents are encouraged to hold an Institutional Representative (IR) position in APSA ([Apply Here](#)). This will ensure continuity between LCs and the national APSA Chapter as well as a means for the bilateral dissemination of important information. If the President and IR are not the same person, the President should establish a relationship with the IR to that information to and from National APSA can be bilaterally shared.
  - ii. Vice President
  - iii. Treasurer\*
  - iv. Secretary
    1. In addition to keeping minutes at both officer and membership meetings, a special responsibility of the Secretary deserves mention. This special responsibility is to oversee Event Committee Chairs (see below), which includes:
      - a. Contacting chairs periodically to check on progress made toward organizing each event
      - b. Keep a record of all events planned, dates, and deadlines, and ensure that the events are successfully planned and executed
  - v. School of Medicine (SOM) Liaison
    1. This position may only be held by a student enrolled in the MD or DO program (not an MD/PhD or DO/PhD program).
  - vi. Resident/Fellow Liaison
- b. Officer's Meetings
  - i. Officers should meet before each Membership Meeting to discuss/evaluate:
    1. Events held since the prior Officer's Meeting
    2. Progress of ongoing events and those in the planning phase
    3. Future events to be planned
    4. Plan for the next Membership Meeting
  - ii. 1x/month is ideal for an Officer's Meeting
- c. Elected officers should be members of National APSA

\*To accommodate schools with a small group of aspiring physician-scientists, only the positions of President and Treasurer are required for LC formation. After 12 months of LC establishment, it is expected that all LCs will have recruited members to fill all possible officer positions.

## **2. Membership**

- a. To enhance and reward active participation, we encourage each LC to distinguish between General Members and Active Members. General Membership should be defined as any person interested in being a member of the APSA LC. These members should receive all correspondence sent to the LC membership, and be included in any activities and events planned. To achieve the status of Active Membership, each person should go beyond simply attending a few of the APSA LC sponsored events. Active Members should meet specific requirements that are specified by each LC and outlined in the LC constitution and should include the planning and running of the chapter events, as well as attending Membership Meetings and events. Distinguishing between Active Members and General Members encourages greater participation and input from the membership, thus preventing the LC from being run solely by the officers. It should be the goal of all APSA LCs to have an active, member-run organization so that each LC can meet the needs of all of its members.
- b. General Members
  - i. Requirement for General Membership should be granted to anyone who shows interest in being a member.
  - ii. These members should be included on chapter emails, but are considered after active members in circumstances of limited attendance, etc.
  - iii. Officers should make concerted efforts to give general members opportunities to become more active and attain Active Member status
- c. Active Members
  - i. Must meet certain pre-specified requirements set by each LC, which should be formalized with inclusion in the LC constitution
  - ii. Example Requirements:
    1. Attends a specified percentage of Membership Meetings each year
    2. Helps plan at least 1 LC-sponsored activity
    3. Attends at least 1 LC-sponsored activity
  - iii. Active Membership Benefits
    1. These should be clearly stated for each chapter
    2. Example of Benefits:
      - a. Discounted National APSA membership
      - b. First preference for attending LC-sponsored events that are limited to a small number of participants (ex. roundtable discussions)
      - c. Eligible to run for Officer Positions
      - d. Eligible to vote for Officer Positions
- d. Members, especially Active Members are encouraged to become National APSA members.

## **3. Membership Meetings**

- a. One of the goals of APSA in supporting the establishment of APSA LCs is to provide a framework to bring together physician-scientist trainees at the local level. Membership meetings should be designed to encourage networking between aspiring physician-scientists, as well as to establish a forum for trainees to strengthen scientific presentation skills by giving short research presentations. Holding monthly membership meetings will allow the LC to reach these goals and maintain a strong, active membership.
- b. Meeting Structure

- i. Frequency: 1x/month is preferred
  - ii. Length: 50 - 60 minutes suggested, or as needed
  - iii. Location: central location to allow both medical students (MD and/or DO) and MD/PhD or DO/PhD students, as well as residents, to attend
- c. Meeting Topics
  - i. Review activities from last month
  - ii. Update members on any events scheduled for the next month and any long term/ongoing projects or events
  - iii. Research Presentation
    - 1. Purpose
      - a. Provide opportunities for members to strengthen scientific presentation skills
      - b. Share research interests with members
      - c. Open the door for vertical mentoring
    - 2. Important: *This does NOT need to be a basic science talk or publishable work.* It can be raw data, or preliminary data generated in a summer project.
  - iv. "This is Me" Presentation:
    - 1. These short (2-3 min) presentations are meant to be an informal way of introducing members to each other.

#### **4. Strategic Planning Session & Mission Statement**

- a. Each LC should have a Strategic Planning Session at the beginning of each academic year. This meeting should take place once the newly elected officers have officially started their term. At the first Strategic Planning Session, a chapter Mission Statement should be drafted.
- b. The purpose of this meeting is to develop a Strategic Plan for the upcoming year. This meeting should establish the following:
  - i. Mission Statement
    - 1. Once drafted, the mission statement may be revised each year to meet the needs of each individual LC
  - ii. Events/Programming
    - 1. Events to be planned for the next year should be decided upon during this meeting and should fulfill the goals established in the LC Mission Statement
    - 2. Planning of events 1 year in advance will allow the establishment of Event Committees to ensure the successful planning and execution of each event
    - 3. During the year events may be added or removed. However, this planning session should set the foundation for the LCs activities for the year and guide the direction of the LC. Drafting a strategic plan will allow LCs to identify and discuss areas of weakness for either the LC itself of the institution as a whole as far as the training of aspiring physician-scientists. This allows the LC to try to fill any gaps in a codified and strategic way.
- c. The newly instated officers should be in attendance. This meeting may also be open to outgoing officers and General/Active Members.
- d. The use of SMART goals ([Examples Here](#)) is an effective and tangible means for developing a strategic plan

## **5. Event Committees**

- a. Purpose: Each event planned by an APSA LC should have an Event Committee that oversees the planning and execution of the event. Depending upon the number of events each chapter plans to sponsor, this is a way to engage each chapter member by giving everyone a specific and important role in the LC's programming.
- b. Once the Strategic Planning Session is completed each year, Event Committees for each event-to-be-planned should be established. The membership should be encouraged to volunteer as Committee Chair or Committee Member (see below) for event(s) he/she is interested in planning. Participation in at least one Event as either Chair or Committee Member is required for Active Membership.
- c. Positions
  - i. Committee Chair
    1. Chair will oversee planning and execution of the event. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the Committee Members are assigned responsibilities and execute those responsibilities during the planning and execution of the event. The Chair should also update the chapter Secretary of progress and inform the Secretary of any difficulties in planning the event.
  - ii. Committee Members
    1. # of committee members should be determined for each event based on the projected amount of work required to plan & execute event.
    2. 2-3 members minimum should be included.
- d. Once an LC Event Committee is formed, they should meet quickly to establish the following details regarding the event:
  - i. The event date: this will set the stage for how quickly the committee must work to plan the event.
  - ii. Roles for each committee member based on the structure and format of the event being planned
  - iii. A plan of action for each committee member based on their role
- e. The LC Secretary should contact Committee Chairs each month for an update on progress on event planning
- f. Committee Chair should announce upcoming events at monthly Membership Meetings

## **6. Contributions to National APSA Standing Committees**

- a. Each LC should encourage its members to join APSA Standing Committees to participate in APSA on a national level.
- b. For more information, see APSA's website (<http://www.physicianscientists.org/>)

## **7. Minimum requirements to be considered an LC by APSA National**

- a. These must be met to qualify for benefits offered to LCs
- b. Requirements include:
  - i. Submit appropriate paperwork
    1. **Primary Application** ([Click Here](#))
    2. **Secondary Application** ([Add link once online](#))
    3. **Yearly Update** - we will ask each LC to submit a short summary about happenings within their LC each year. This is simply to keep up with LCs across the country so that we can feature some on the website as well as share ideas between LCs.
  - ii. President, Treasurer, and SOM officers required to establish an LC; addition of Vice President and Secretary required 12 months after LC establishment.