Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience By-Laws

These by-laws govern the Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience, which is an interdisciplinary program of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tennessee. The Program’s activities are also governed by policies of the College and of the University and applicable state and Federal regulations. Any provision within these by-laws that conflicts with College or University policies or with state or Federal regulations shall have no effect.

I. Mission statement

The Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience is an undergraduate major that provides a unique science education and excellent foundation for advanced studies in neuroscience. The Program draws upon the resources and expertise of a diverse faculty, including representatives from biology, chemistry, engineering, medicine, and psychology. Our goal is to enhance neuroscience education at UTK by providing a structured curriculum and a diverse set of undergraduate research opportunities. The Program is intended to increase opportunities among faculty and students for collaborative teaching and research in the neurosciences and enhance community awareness of the societal importance of brain sciences.

II. Program membership

Members of the Program faculty are full-time faculty members of the University of Tennessee, individuals with adjunct appointments with the University of Tennessee, or individuals in associated organizations such as the UT Graduate School of Medicine and Oak Ridge National Laboratories.

Faculty/mentor membership is conferred following a formal application and a vote by the entire Program faculty. The application materials include a curriculum vita. In the application process, a faculty member is asked about their willingness to serve on Program committees and to serve as research mentors to students in the Program.

Active membership in the Program stipulates active participation as a mentor, teacher, or Program participant on an ongoing basis. Faculty rolls will be reviewed every three years after a member has joined the Program. Continued membership in the Program requires that faculty fulfill at least three of the following in a given year:

1. Serve as a research advisor for a Neuroscience Program student
2. Teach in a course included in the Neuroscience Program major requirements
3. Participate as an active member of a Neuroscience Program standing committee
4. Regularly attend Neuroscience symposia
5. Attend poster presentations/talks given by Neuroscience students
6. Regularly attend Neuroscience Program faculty meetings

Members who have not fulfilled these minimum requirements during a three-year period will be notified in writing that their active membership has lapsed and will be removed from the active Neuroscience Program faculty rolls. They will have the opportunity to petition this decision if they desire to remain in the Program. The Executive Committee will handle petitions on an individual basis. A faculty member
may re-apply for active status in the Neuroscience Program at any time.

The Program’s Chair shall inform the Dean of the College (or an Associate Dean designated by the Dean) of any changes in the Program’s membership.

III. Program governance

A. Program Chair

The Chair oversees the day-to-day functioning of the Program, manages the Program’s budget, insures that Program activities are conducted in accord with these bylaws, and prepares an annual report for the Dean of the College summarizing the Program’s activities and objectives. The Chair is appointed by the Dean of the College from a slate of one or more candidates approved by the Executive Committee. The Chair ordinarily serves as Chair for a term of three years, and can be reappointed for subsequent terms by mutual agreement of the Chair and the Dean of the College. The Chair has the authority to make decisions regarding expenditure of Program funds and to represent the Program in matters involving other departments, persons, and agencies. The Chair takes the lead role in development activities for the Program. Committee and faculty recommendations are normally followed by the Chair, although circumstances may require the Chair to exercise his/her own judgment. The Chair shall inform the faculty as fully as possible of all decisions which concern them individually or the Program as a whole. The Chair is a member of the College’s Interdisciplinary Studies Committee. Specific additional administrative duties of the Chair may be enumerated in the Chair’s letter of appointment.

B. Associate Chair

The Associate Chair is appointed by the chair for a renewable, two-year term. The Associate Chair is responsible for those administrative functions that are delegated by the Program Chair. The Associate Chair provides minutes of faculty meetings and is responsible for official recording of Program faculty votes. The Associate Chair may also be responsible for activities such as advising students in the Program and maintaining an updated list of research laboratory opportunities for the students.

C. Standing committees

1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee provides advice to the Chair regarding the administration of the Program and the allocation of the Program’s budget. This committee also oversees the Program’s curriculum and proposes changes to it; these proposals are transmitted to the appropriate divisional Curriculum Committee(s) of the College for further review and approval. The Executive Committee reviews the Program by-laws on a regular basis and approves amendments to them. The Executive Committee helps the Chair produce the annual report of Program activities and objectives. Additional duties that may be distributed among Executive Committee members include organizing seminars and colloquia; organizing retreats or other group activities; and Program communication (e.g., website, newsletter, etc.).

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once each semester. The Chair shall prepare an agenda for each Executive Committee meeting and shall distribute it by electronic mail to members of the Executive Committee at least 10 days before the date of the Executive Committee meeting. If a majority of the Executive Committee believes that a meeting should be called, they can do so without permission of the Program Chair. In this case, one member of the Executive Committee shall distribute an agenda by
electronic mail to members of the Program, members of the Executive Committee, and the Program Chair, at least 10 days before the date of the Executive Committee meeting.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Program Chair, the Associate Chair and 3-5 other faculty. The distribution of faculty within the Executive Committee should reflect the breadth and diversity of the Program. Executive Committee members shall be appointed by the Program Chair. Members shall serve a renewable 2 year term.

The Chair shall insure that minutes of all Executive Committee meetings are sent to the Program members and to the Dean of the College (or to an Associate Dean designated by the Dean) in a timely fashion.

D. Ad hoc committees

Ad hoc committees will be created and members assigned to it as needed by the Program Chair in consultation with the Program faculty. An ad-hoc committee shall not last longer than 1 year.

E. Definition of quorum and majority; voting procedures

Unless otherwise specified in these by-laws, decisions of Program faculty, standing committees and ad hoc committees require a simple majority of the votes cast at a meeting or cast electronically.

IV. Program dissolution

The Executive Committee may choose to dissolve the Program. Program dissolution by the Executive Committee can only be considered at a meeting of the Executive Committee during the nine-month academic year, and requires the approval of a two-thirds majority of the Committee. Dissolution of the Program will be effective on July 31.

V. Amendments

These by-laws shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee at least once every three years.

Amendments to these by-laws can be suggested by any member of the Program faculty. The text of the proposed amendments must be distributed by electronic mail to Executive Committee members at least 10 days before the date of the Executive Committee meeting. Once the Executive Committee considers an amendment, it will be presented to the full Program faculty for a vote. Again, the amendment must be distributed by electronic mail to Program members at least 10 days prior to the faculty meeting. Program faculty decisions can only be made if a quorum is present. A quorum consists of three-fifths of the Program faculty. A member who at the time of the meeting is unavailable for a period of five or more days will not be counted as a Program member for purposes of establishing a quorum.

The Chair shall inform the Dean of the College (or an Associate Dean designated by the Dean) of any changes in these by-laws.

VI. Statement of Adoption

These by-laws for the Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience were adopted in 2012.