

College of Arts and Sciences
The University of Tennessee

Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Program Concentration in Neuroscience Bylaws

These bylaws govern the undergraduate Interdisciplinary Program Concentration in Neuroscience (referred to below as the Neuroscience Program), which is an interdisciplinary program (IDP) in the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tennessee Knoxville (UTK). 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 bylaws that conflicts with College or University policies or with State or Federal regulations shall have no effect.

I. Mission statement

The Neuroscience Program is an undergraduate major that provides a unique science education and excellent foundation for advanced studies in Neuroscience. The Neuroscience 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 Neuroscience 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. Neuroscience Program faculty

Neuroscience Program faculty may include full-time faculty members of UTK, individuals with adjunct appointments with UTK, or individuals in associated organizations such as the UT Graduate School of Medicine and Oak Ridge National Laboratories. Members are designated as either "Core faculty" or "Affiliated faculty" as described below.

Core faculty designation requires active participation on an ongoing basis in all three of the following activities:

1. Serve as a research mentor for a Neuroscience Program student
2. Teach a course included in the Neuroscience Program major requirements
3. Serve as an academic advisor for Neuroscience program students

The Core faculty will comprise the program's Steering Committee (see below). Core faculty status will be reviewed at least every three years. Members who have not fulfilled these minimum requirements during a three-year period will be notified that their Neuroscience Program Core faculty status has lapsed. They will have the opportunity to petition this decision if they desire. The Steering Committee will handle petitions on an individual basis. A faculty member may request Core faculty status in the Neuroscience Program at any time.

Affiliated faculty members include those faculty members who do not regularly fulfill all three of the core services of the Neuroscience Program listed above, but who still participate in the Program. In addition to the 3 activities listed above, participation in the Program may include:

1. Participate as an active member of a Neuroscience Program standing committee

2. Regularly attend Neuroscience symposia
3. Attend poster presentations/talks given by Neuroscience students
4. Provide guest lectures in courses within the Neuroscience Program major requirements

Affiliated faculty members are kept informed of Neuroscience Program activities, but they do not have the right to vote on Neuroscience Program matters. Their status will be reviewed at least every three years. Affiliated faculty who no longer participate in at least two of the activities listed above during a three year period will be notified that their Affiliated faculty status has lapsed. Alternatively, Affiliated faculty will be notified if their increased participation in the Neuroscience IDP warrants their designation as Core faculty. A faculty member may request Affiliated faculty status in the Neuroscience Program at any time.

The Program's Chair shall inform the Dean of the College by way of the Director of Interdisciplinary Programs of any changes in the Program's Core faculty membership.

III. Program governance

A. Program Chair

The Steering Committee will elect a chair, whose name will be sent to the Director of Interdisciplinary Programs for the Dean's approval. The Chair will serve a term of up to three years, and can be removed at any time by the Dean. The Chair must be a member of the tenured faculty. Depending on the workload, measured by the number of majors/minors being served, the Neuroscience Program Chair may receive compensation consisting of course release and/or a stipend.

The Chair oversees the day-to-day operations of the Program, insures that Program activities are conducted in accordance with these bylaws, and prepares an annual report for the Director of Interdisciplinary Programs summarizing the Program's activities and objectives. It is the Chair's responsibility to know and follow all College of Arts and Sciences policies regarding IDPs. The Chair has the authority to make decisions regarding expenditure of Program funds in accordance with the College of Arts and Sciences IDP financial policies, 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. Steering Committee recommendations are normally followed by the Chair, although circumstances may require the Chair to exercise his/her own judgment. The Chair shall inform the Core faculty as fully as possible of all decisions that concern them individually or the Program as a whole. The Neuroscience Program chair will inform the Steering Committee each semester on the numbers of majors/secondary majors/and minors who have declared, based on data generated by the College as received from the registrar. The Neuroscience Program chair will meet with the Director of Interdisciplinary Studies at least once each semester. The Neuroscience Program chair will attend Department Head meetings in the College as requested by the Director of Interdisciplinary Programs, or will select a representative from the Steering Committee to attend in his/her place. Those who attend will be expected to share relevant information regarding the Neuroscience Program with other IDP Chairs and Department Heads. The Neuroscience Program Chair will work with the Steering Committee to participate in the SACS assessment, as described below under "*Best Practices in Teaching*".

At the end of the second year of a Chair's term, the Neuroscience Program Chair and Steering Committee will jointly elect the future Chair, with the intention that that individual will serve as Chair "in waiting" for one year in preparation for service as Chair. The "Chair in waiting" may be the paid Associate Chair for programs larger than 25 enrolled majors and minors.

B. Associate Chair

The Associate Chair is appointed by the Chair for a renewable, three-year term. The Associate Chair should be tenured and a member of the Core faculty. When chosen, their name shall be reported to the IDP Director for approval by the Dean. The Associate Chair is responsible for those administrative functions that are delegated by the Program Chair. The Associate Chair provides minutes of Steering Committee meetings and is responsible for official recording of Steering Committee votes. The Associate Chair is expected to teach at least one Neuroscience Program Core course each year.

C. Standing committees

1. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall consist of the Program Chair, the Associate Chair and all Core faculty members. The Steering 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 may propose changes to it; these proposals are transmitted to the appropriate divisional Curriculum Committee(s) of the College for further review and approval. The Steering Committee reviews the Program bylaws on a regular basis and approves amendments to them. The Steering Committee helps the Chair produce the annual report of Program activities and objectives. Additional duties that may be distributed among Steering Committee members include organizing seminars and colloquia; organizing retreats or other group activities; and Program communication (e.g., website, newsletter, etc.).

The Steering Committee shall meet at least once each semester. The Chair shall prepare an agenda for each Steering Committee meeting and shall distribute it by electronic mail to members of the Steering Committee at least 10 days before the date of the Steering Committee meeting. If a majority of the Steering 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 Steering Committee shall distribute an agenda by electronic mail to members of the Steering Committee, including the Program Chair, at least 10 days before the date of the Steering Committee meeting. The Chair shall insure that minutes of all Steering Committee meetings, having been approved by the Steering Committee members, are sent to the IDP Director (or other person designated by the Dean) in a timely fashion.

i. Course Scheduling. The Steering committee should meet each fall, as soon as the semester starts, to begin course scheduling for the following academic year. Core and Affiliated faculty who commit to teaching courses within the Neuroscience Program curriculum should consider that those commitments are as firm as those they make to their home departments. Collaboration with Department Heads will be needed. Lecturers may not advise students or teach 400-level courses, with the exception of senior or distinguished lecturers, or lecturers appointed to fill an unplanned faculty absence. Exceptions must be approved by the Director of Interdisciplinary Programs.

ii. Best Practices in Teaching. The Neuroscience Program will conform to all departmental practices and policies, including collecting syllabi for courses taught each semester and observing the teaching of new lecturers if they are not associated with a department. The Neuroscience Program Chair and Core faculty will all participate in the SACS assessment loop by having learning objectives, doing assessments of these objectives on some rotating schedule, using the results of those assessments to inform curricular changes, and producing the required annual reports.

D. Ad hoc committees

Ad hoc committees may be created and members assigned to it as needed by the Neuroscience Program Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee. An ad-hoc committee shall not last longer than one year.

E. Definition of quorum and majority; voting procedures

Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, decisions of Program Core 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 Steering Committee may choose to dissolve the Neuroscience Program. Program dissolution by the Steering Committee can only be considered at a meeting of the Steering 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 of that year.

V. Amendments

These bylaws shall be reviewed by the Steering Committee at least once every three years.

Amendments to these bylaws can be suggested by any member of the Core faculty. The text of the proposed amendments must be distributed by electronic mail to Steering Committee members at least 10 days before the date of the Steering Committee meeting. Steering Committee decisions can only be made if a quorum is present. A quorum consists of three-fifths of the Steering Committee. 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 Steering Committee member for purposes of establishing a quorum.

The Neuroscience Program Chair shall inform the Dean of the College by way of the Director of Interdisciplinary Programs (or other person designated by the Dean) of any changes in these bylaws.

VI. Statement of Adoption

These bylaws for the Neuroscience Program were adopted in 2012, and amended on April 13, 2017.