

# **SOCIETY OF HISPANIC PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS CONSTITUTION**

The University of Texas at Austin Chapter



Revised 06.06.2022

“SHPE changes lives by empowering the Hispanic community to realize their fullest potential and impacts the world through STEM awareness, access, support and development.”

# Title

The name of this organization shall be the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, The University of Texas at Austin Chapter, hereinafter referred to as UT-SHPE. UT-SHPE will be an affiliated chapter of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Inc. (SHPE Inc.). UT-SHPE possesses the right to adopt its own rules and procedures within the framework of SHPE Inc., The University of Texas at Austin, and the Equal Opportunity in Engineering (EOE) Program.

# Preamble

In order to support prospective and enrolled Hispanic students in their pursuit of a degree in STEM, and to develop themselves as academics, professionals, and as leaders we, the members of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, the University of Texas at Austin Chapter do hereby ordain and establish this constitution and its bylaws.

# Article I – University Compliance

This organization is a recognized student organization at The University of Texas at Austin and shall comply with all campus policies as set forth in the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

# Article II – Prohibition of Hazing Policy

State law and Sec. 14-103(3) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities define hazing as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.

# **Article III – Membership**

## **Section 1 – Scope of Membership**

- I. Membership into UT-SHPE shall be open to students and faculty/staff of The University of Texas at Austin regardless of race, national origin, creed, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, handicap, or veteran's status.
- II. Membership is limited to students and faculty/staff of The University of Texas at Austin.

## **Section 2 – Membership Status**

- I. Membership shall be granted upon completion of a membership application and initial payment of dues in the amount specified in the Bylaws. A member will retain membership status and the privileges associated with it unless:
  - A. Such status is resigned at the request of the said member.
  - B. Deemed so through an Executive Proposal (Art. V, Sec. 4) requiring two-thirds supermajority support of a voting body consisting of both the Executive Board and the Board of Directors, as well as with the approval of the Chapter Advisor..

## **Section 3 – Membership Privileges**

- I. Members shall have the privilege of voting in General Elections and on amendments to the Constitution.
- II. Members shall have the privilege of running for office so long as they are eligible as outlined in the Bylaws.
- III. Members shall have the privilege of applying for appointed positions and committees. IV. Members shall have the privilege of priority, over non-members, to attend SHPE socials or receive stipends towards a regional/national SHPE Conference.
- IV. Members shall have the privilege to call for the resignation of any officer by two-thirds supermajority vote of the present members at a General Meeting.
  - A. Upon such a vote, the officer in question shall deliver resignation at the next Officer Board meeting.

## **Section 4 – Membership Restriction**

- I. In accordance with Sec. 6-202(a)(2) and Sec. 6-302 of the Institutional Rules on Student

Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, this organization restricts membership to students, faculty members, and staff members of the University.

## **Section 5 – Eligibility of Membership**

- I. In accordance with Sec. 6-202(a)(3) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, this organization may not deny membership on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, except that a registered student organization created primarily for religious purposes may restrict the right to vote or hold office to persons who subscribe to the registered student organization's statement of faith; and a registered student organization may restrict membership based on the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

## **Section 6 – Membership Removal**

- I. If we deem a member not following or respecting our chapter's mission and vision, the following course of action will be followed.
  - A. For the initial interaction, an Executive Board member will reach out to the particular member through electronic communication or in-person communication. The intent of this interaction is to share officer interest in helping the member to proceed on track to follow SHPE's Mission and Vision.
  - B. If improvement is not evident and not following our Mission and Vision continues, a second conversation will be scheduled with student of interest.
  - C. If after the second conversation improvement is not seen, the officer team (Top Eleven: Executive Board and Board of Directors) will proceed to engage in communication and vote on the member's removal.
    1. If 2/3 majority is reached, the particular member will be removed from participating in any SHPE-related events and lose all benefits of membership.
    2. If 2/3 majority is not met, the member will continue the role of member, but with limited accessibility to chapter's benefits until significant improvement is seen.

# **Article IV – Officers**

## **Section 1 – Executive Board Members**

UT-SHPE shall maintain a body known as the Executive Board by an election process as outlined in the Bylaws. The Executive Board shall be comprised of the following positions:

- I. President
- II. Vice President Internal
- III. Vice President External
- IV. Secretary
- V. Treasurer

## **Section 2 – Hierarchy to the Presidency**

- I. Should the President be unable to fulfill the duties of their office, those duties shall fall first to the Vice President Internal and External, according to the individual responsibilities of the President and their relevance to each position until a replacement is elected.
  - A. If necessary, those duties will then fall to the Secretary, followed by the Treasurer.

## **Section 3 – Executive Board Duties & Requirements**

- I. The Executive Board shall work in a collaborative and transparent fashion with the entirety of the officer board.
- II. Decisions made by the Executive Board should include the input of all primary stakeholders in the decision and the input of every stakeholder should be considered and challenged equally, regardless of one's title.
- III. The duties of the Executive Board shall be as outlined in the Bylaws.
- IV. The Executive Board is required to adhere to the standards, and policies set forth by the University, EOE, and the guidelines outlined in the Bylaws.
- V. Be responsible for ensuring the organization adheres to the rules and regulations set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Section 4 – Executive Proposals & Voting**

- I. In order to take official action, the Executive Board must vote to pass on a particular issue or policy through the use of Executive Proposals.
- II. At such times when the Executive Board votes on an Executive Proposal, the voting body shall consist of:
  - A. All members of the Executive Board present.
  - B. The Director(s) empowered (Art. VI, Sec. 4) to vote on the Executive Proposal in question.
  - C. The Chapter Advisor, when considering “The Nuclear Option” (Art.VIII, Sec. 3).
- III. Each member of the voting body shall have one equal vote.
  - A. Ties result in a failure of the Proposal.
  - B. A simple majority is needed to pass a given Proposal unless stated otherwise.

## **Section 5 – Executive Board Meetings**

- I. The Executive Board shall meet whenever sessions are called by the President. A. Executive Board meetings shall be open to the general membership unless voted on to be a closed session as outlined in the Bylaws.
- II. Members of the Executive Board should attend all Executive Board meetings.
  - A. If a member of the body should miss more than two regular meetings of the Executive Board or general meetings without making arrangements with the President, then that member shall be counseled by the President.
  - B. A fourth such absence shall result in removal from office and replacement.

## **Section 6 – Replacement of Executive Board Officers**

- I. The Executive Board shall be re-elected annually via a General Election, as outlined in the Bylaws, held in the Spring Semester.
- II. An individual may serve no more than 2 years, or 4 academic long-semesters, in a given position on the Executive Board.
- III. Should any Executive Board officer (Art. VI Sec. 1) (besides the President) be unable to fulfill the duties of their office before the determined Election Day, a Special Board Election shall be executed as outlined in the Bylaws.
  - A. In the case of a President, a General Election shall be executed instead.

## **Section 7 – Pillars**

UT-SHPE is an educational, non-profit organization with the following pillars:

### **I. Academic Development**

- I. To help students overcome the challenges they arrive with and encounter to reach their fullest potential. To seek opportunities for all students to use their skills and knowledge for the purposes of furthering their education and the field of STEM.

- A. Includes: University Resources, Research Initiatives, and Graduate School Programs

### **II. Chapter Development**

- II. To empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to positively impact our communities. To enable community members to support one another, take collective action, and generate solutions to common problems.

### **III. Community Outreach**

- I. To pursue efforts that connect our organization's mission, vision, and practices to the public. We shall seek to engage with our community and empower it through K-12 STEM outreach, education, and volunteering initiatives.

### **IV. Leadership Development**

- I. To encourage and expand the capacity of individuals to perform in leadership roles within organizations and society. To develop skills that facilitate execution of an organization's strategy through building coalitions, growing the capabilities of others, planning, and execution.

### **V. Professional Development**

- I. To provide opportunities for individuals to build their network and develop skills for the purpose of advancing their career. To prepare members for the transition from a student to the workforce.

## **Section 8 – Board of Directors**

UT-SHPE shall maintain a body known as the Board of Directors by an election process as outlined in the Bylaws. The Board of Directors shall be comprised of the following positions:

- I. Director of Academic Development
- II. Director of Chapter Development
- III. Director of Community Outreach
- IV. Director of Leadership Development
- V. Director of Professional Development

## **Section 9 – Board Hierarchy**

- I. The Board of Directors is a body that represents the Pillars of UT-SHPE and as such, each Director is considered as a co-equal to one another.

## **Section 10 – Board of Directors Duties & Requirements**

- I. The Board of Directors shall work in a collaborative and transparent fashion with the entirety of the officer board.
- II. Decisions made by a Director should include the input of all primary stakeholders in the decision and the input of every stakeholder should be considered and challenged equally, regardless of one's title.
- III. The duties of the Board of Directors shall be as outlined in the Bylaws. IV. The Board of Directors is required to adhere to the standards, and policies set forth by the University, EOE, and the guidelines outlined in the Bylaws.
- IV. Be responsible for ensuring the organization adheres to the rules and regulations set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Section 11 – Board of Directors Voting Jurisdiction**

- I. Each member of the Board of Directors may be empowered to be eligible to directly vote on Executive Proposals if the following conditions are met:
  - A. The Executive Proposal in question is directly related to the duties and/or responsibilities of the individual Director:
    1. Committees that fall under the Director.
    2. Bylaw changes that directly alter the Director(s) responsibilities.
  - B. They have been granted the authority through unanimous vote by the Board of Directors.



1. Only one Director may be empowered through this method for a given Executive Proposal.
2. This procedure may not be used when a Director is already on the voting body for a given Executive Proposal.

## **Section 12 – Board of Directors Meetings**

- I. The Board of Directors shall meet whenever sessions are called by the body as required. A. Board of Directors meetings shall be open to the general membership (Art. III) unless voted on to be a closed session as outlined in the Bylaws.
- II. Members of the Board of Directors should attend all Board of Directors meetings. A. If a member of the body should miss more than two regular meetings of the Board of Directors or General Meetings without making arrangements with the Board as a whole, then that member shall be counseled by the President.
  - A. A fourth such absence shall result in removal from office and replacement.

## **Section 13 – Replacement of Board of Directors Officers**

- I. The Board of Directors shall be re-elected annually via a General Election, as outlined in the Bylaws, held in the Fall Semester.
- II. An individual may serve no more than 2 years, or 4 academic long-semesters, in a given position on the Board of Directors.
- III. Should any Board of Directors officer (Art. VI Sec. 1) be unable to fulfill the duties of their office before the determined Election Day, a Special Board Election shall be executed as outlined in the Bylaws.

## **Section 14 – Appointed Committees & Chairs**

- I. Ad-hoc committees & chairs may be appointed through Executive Proposals (Art. V, Sec. 4) (as outlined in the Bylaws) to serve under a member of the Executive Board or the Board of Directors.
  - A. Such appointees are not members of the Executive Board (Article V) or the Board of Directors (Article VI). An example of such a committee includes the Regional Leadership Development Conference (RLDC) Committee.

## **Section 15 – Duties of Appointed Committees & Committee**

## **Chairs**

- I. The duties of appointed committees and chairs shall be as outlined in the Bylaws.

## **Section 16 – Replacement & Removal of Committee Chairs**

- I. Should any committee member, or chair, be unable to fulfill the duties of their position, or resign, the officer responsible for supervising that Committee (as outlined in the Bylaws) shall appoint another member to assume those duties via an Executive Proposal.
  - A. The duties of the member, or chair, of the subject shall fall to the supervising officer for that committee until a new member, or chair, is appointed.
- II. The removal of a committee member shall be conducted as outlined in the Bylaws.

## **Article V – General Body Meetings**

### **Section 1 – Meeting Frequency**

- I. The general membership (Art. III) of this organization shall meet fortnightly and whenever special sessions are called by the President.

### **Section 2 – Meeting Content**

- I. The General Meetings shall follow the content outlined in the Bylaws.

## **Article VI – University Advisor**

In accordance with Sec. 6-101 (14) and Sec. 6-101(15) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities, this organization may have a University Advisor who is at least twenty-one years of age, is not enrolled as a student at the University, and serves as either: a. a part-time or full-time employee of the University. b. a representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization. c. serves as either. i. a part-time or full-time employee of the University. ii. a representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization (registered student organizations only).

# **Article VII – Finances**

Treasurer will have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of this organization. Propose a draft budget to the executive board at the start of the SHPE fiscal year that is balanced across the Pillars. Finalize an itemized budget in coordination with the Executive Board, a month prior to the end of the ordinary fiscal year. Establish a firm, non-negotiable budget for national/regional conference stipends, in compliance with the Executive Board, by no later than two months before national/regional conferences. To this end, the Treasurer shall make disbursements and keep written accounts of all transactions. Treasurer will work with the Sponsoring Department, Cockrell's Dean of Students, Engineering Student Life for requesting and spending of funds that are allocated to this student organization's account. Ensure all paid members fill out the Paid Membership Survey to maintain a record of both old and new members to help improve our retention rate and help us calculate our chapter demographics. Treasurer will continuously work with the Secretary for memberships dues that are a total of \$15 for Fall and Spring Semester. Act as the supervising officer of such committees formed for the purpose of fundraising. Present a monthly budget report to the Executive Board in an open platform for all officers and members to review. Present the Executive Board with an accurate and up-to-date account of local and national membership. Provide the President with an up-to-date account of all corporate contributions, creating a list of potential sponsors and work extensively with the President with matters pertaining to the Corporate Solicitation Packet (CSP).

# **Article VIII – Elections**

## **Section 1 – Eligibility Requirements**

1. All elected and appointed positions must be a paid local SHPE member.
2. All nominees must meet the academic requirements as outlined by EOE policy (Art. 3, Sec. 1).

## **Section 2 – Officer Board Nominations and Elections**

1. The election of the Board of Directors shall take place during the Elections General Meeting in the Fall. The election of the Executive Board shall take place during the Elections General Meeting in the Spring.

## **Sub-Section A – Nominations and Pre-Election Procedures**

1. Upon a vacancy of an Executive Board or Board of Directors position (or as a consequence of the semi-annual Election cycle), a nomination process shall be opened for the position at least one week prior to an Election Meeting.
2. Prior to the nominations, the President shall appoint and approve an Election Committee (Art. VII, Section 7) to preside during the nomination and election process.
  1. These individuals must be members who are not running for an elected position.
  2. These individuals maintain their right to vote in the election.
3. Nominees are responsible for completing a form accepting their nomination, whose names will then be available to the entire membership at least 3 days prior to the Election Meeting.
  1. This form should collect the contact information of each nominee for the purpose of communicating important information pertaining to the elections to each individual.
4. Once the nominations have been closed, the contact information of the nominees must be sent to EOE to check for Academic eligibility (Art. III, Sec. 1).
  1. If a nominee is ineligible, they shall be notified and barred from running in the election.
5. Nominee presentations must be submitted to [shpe@engr.utexas.edu](mailto:shpe@engr.utexas.edu) prior to the day in which the elections are held.

## **Sub-Section B – Election Procedures**

1. Nominees will have 3 minutes to present during the elections meeting.
  2. Nominees must wait outside the room while the other individuals running for the same position are presenting.
    1. An appointed member of the Elections Committee will be in charge of monitoring the other nominees while they are waiting outside.
  3. Following the presentation of all nominated individuals for a given position, the floor will be opened for write-in candidates.
    1. If no write-in candidates emerge, continue onto the next step (IV).
    2. Otherwise, repeat the Election Procedures outlined above for the write-in candidate.
- After the conclusion of all candidate presentations, the President shall select 3 questions submitted by the membership. Each candidate will be presented with an opportunity to answer the questions before the members.
1. Nominees will be selected in a random order to return to the floor.
    1. Once called to return to the floor, the chosen nominee will have 1 minute to respond to each question.

2. The current President will determine whether certain questions are inappropriate.

### **Sub-Section C – Voting Procedures**

1. Votes shall be cast online using an Election Google Form, created by the President for the Election to be monitored and maintained by the Election Committee.
  1. Questions to candidates will be submitted by members through a Questions Google Form created by the President.
  2. Each election shall have its own Election/Questions Google Form.
2. Voting will be opened following the end of nominee and write-in candidate presentations for all positions being elected.
3. The voting form will be closed at the end of the Elections Meeting.
  1. Or, in the case of a Special Board Election, after all members of the voting body have cast their votes.

### **Sub-Section D – Vote Counting Procedures**

1. Upon the closure of the voting form, the Election Committee shall convene to review the results.
2. The first step of this review will consist of collecting the UT EIDs of all voters in the database and cross-referencing them with the eids on the Paid Member Survey. 1. Should any UT EIDs not have a match within the Paid Member Survey, the vote associated with that UT EID will be recorded by the Election Committee and not used in the final count.
3. Once the voting records have been cleaned of non-members, the final results will be tallied and checked by at least 3 times by (at least) 2 different individuals on the Elections Committee. Each vote tally will be audited by the other 2 members to ensure consistency. UT SHPE utilizes [Ranked-Choice Voting](#) for its elections and shall tally votes in the following manner:
  1. Sum up the votes for individual candidates based on a ballot's highest rank.
    1. If there is a candidate that has obtained a majority (>50%) of all votes, that candidate is the winner.
    2. If not, proceed to step (B).
  2. If no candidate has secured a majority (>50%) of all votes, drop the candidate with the lowest share of the vote and re-allocate their voters by the next highest rank on their ballot and repeat step (A).
    1. Repeat this process as needed until a candidate obtains a majority (>50%) of all votes.
4. Once all tallies have reached consensus, the Election Committee shall present the results to

the President for certification.

1. The President will certify election results by reviewing the tallied outcomes, the candidate with a majority (>50%) of all votes shall be declared the winner. If no candidate secures a majority, the top two candidates shall enter into a run-off election.
5. Upon certification, the Election Committee shall be dissolved and the President shall preserve the results.

### **Sub-Section E – Result Announcement Procedures**

1. Once the election results have been certified by the President, they shall notify each of the candidates of the result (whether they have won or not) via a phone call.
  1. Should the candidate not pick up, a voicemail must be left to detail the results of the election.
  2. If the above options are not possible, the candidate may be notified via other channels of communication.
2. Upon notifying each candidate of the results, the winners of the election shall be announced via all forms of social media, as well as the newsletter, thus concluding the election cycle.

## **Article IX – Revisions to the Constitution & Bylaws**

### **Section 1 – Amending the Constitution**

- I. Amendments to this constitution may be made through the following procedure:
  - A. A member of the Officer Board, of their own will, or at the request of a general member, must make an Executive Proposal for the consideration of an amendment.
  - B. The amendment must subsequently be approved or denied for consideration by a voting body consisting of the Executive Board and the Board of Directors.
    1. A two-thirds supermajority vote is required for the consideration of an amendment to the Constitution.
  - C. If the amendment has been approved for consideration, the amendment must then be detailed to and then voted on by the general membership (Art. III) for ratification.
    1. A simple majority vote is required for the ratification of an amendment to the Constitution.

## **Section 2 – Amending the Bylaws**

- I. The Bylaws to this Constitution must be reviewed on a semi-annual basis. A. This review shall take place after new officers are elected through a General Election and shall be attended by the outgoing and incoming Officer Boards.
- II. Amendments to the Bylaws must pass with a two-thirds supermajority vote via an Executive Proposal.

## **Section 3 – The Nuclear Option**

- I. The Constitution & Bylaws may also be altered through a “Nuclear” Executive Proposal which must pass with unanimous support of a voting body consisting of both the Executive Board and the Board of Directors, as well as with the approval of the Chapter Advisor.