

***Constitution of the Researchers and Postdocs Association
of Aeronautics and Astronautics (RPA^3)***

Article I: Mission Statement

The group formally titled **Researchers and Postdocs Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics (RPA^3)** establishes a sustained organization to support early career researchers (**Post Doctorates and non-PI Research Staff**) within the **MIT Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AeroAstro)**.

RPA^3 serves all AeroAstro postdoctoral trainees and research affiliates, serves as a *liaison* between its members and AeroAstro administration and faculty, and provides opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and outreach. RPA^3 seeks to advance a sense of community among and advocates on behalf of its members, and will encourage mutually beneficial initiatives and collaborations for early career researchers within AeroAstro and across the broader MIT community.

Article II: Membership

1. Any member of the MIT community who has attended at least one club activity or one meeting is eligible to become a member of this Association.
2. To register as a member one has to complete a sign up form adding them to the Association's *listservs* mailing list.
3. Membership shall be terminated upon leaving MIT or upon inactivity to a full semester of hosted events.
4. This Association will not discriminate based on any characteristic listed in MIT's Nondiscrimination Statement.
5. If this Association charges any monetary dues, there will be exceptions made for members that cannot afford these dues.

Article III: Officers and Executive Committee

1. The RPA^3 shall have at a minimum two officers:
 - a. President
 - i. The President shall be the official representative of RPA^3 to the MIT Community and the Department. The President synthesizes the Association's vision and coordinates its implementation.
 - ii. The President shall preside over all Executive Committee meetings.

- iii. The President shall be responsible for determining the schedule and agenda of Executive Committee meetings, and for publicizing this information to the Executive Committee.
 - b. Treasurer
 - i. The Treasurer shall be responsible for managing the budget and finances of the Association.
 - ii. The Treasurer must approve all disbursements from the Association's accounts, including reimbursements to members.
 - iii. The Treasurer shall be responsible for tracking attendance to the Executive Committee meetings and to all events hosted by the Association. In case the Treasurer is not able to join the event, the treasurer shall appoint another officer of the Executive Committee to track attendance in their place.
2. For each of the officers listed above, there shall be a vice officer. Respectively:
 - a. Co-President
 - i. The Co-President shall support the President in the leading efforts in vision and management of RPA³. This officer also manages the *listservs* mailing list and on-boards new members.
 - ii. The Co-President shall be the acting President in case the President steps down or loses their eligibility requirements before the next election. Should there not be a Co-President to a leaving President, the acting President shall be filled with a vote of the sitting Executive Committee.
 - b. Vice Treasurer
 - i. The Vice Treasurer shall support the Treasurer in managing the budget and finances of the Association.
 - ii. The Vice Treasurer shall be the acting Treasurer in case the Treasurer steps down or loses their eligibility requirements before the next election. Should there not be a Vice Treasurer to a leaving Treasurer, the acting Treasurer shall be filled with a vote of the sitting Executive Committee.
3. Additional officers are:
 - a. Professional Development Chair
 - i. The Professional Development Chair guides the prioritization and implementation of professional development initiatives.
 - b. Community Development and Diversity (CDD) Chair/s
 - i. The Community Development and Diversity Chair/s guides the prioritization and implementation of community development initiatives and engages other organizations internal and external to the department and the Institute to foster community and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for underrepresented groups in STEM. The CDD chair/s should be involved and act as liaison between the PostDoctoral Association Diversity, Equity and

Inclusion committee (PDA-DE&I), the AeroAstro Department Diversity, Inclusion and Innovation Committee (AA-DI&I) and RPA³ members. This role can be fulfilled by one chair or up to two co-chairs.

- c. Advocacy Chair
 - i. The Advocacy Chair leads the initiatives related to policy and management affecting postdocs and non-PI research staff.
 - d. *Liaison* to the PostDoctoral Association (PDA *Liaison*)
 - i. The *Liaison* to the PostDoctoral Association attends monthly/biweekly meetings of the PostDoctoral Association, summarizes their relevant content to the Executive Committee, and promotes inter-department initiatives.
 - e. Founding/Innovation Chairs
 - i. The two Founding Chairs have been responsible for the startup activities of the Association. These chairs shall not be renewed upon termination, but shall be replaced with up to five Innovation Chairs. The Innovation Chairs are responsible for proposing novel activities and strategies to actuate the Association's vision.
4. All officers collectively are referred to as the *Executive Committee*.
 5. Eligible members for the Executive Committee shall meet all of the following requirements:
 - a. Be appointed in DLCs affiliated with MIT AeroAstro. Note that this explicitly waives the requirement of the member being directly affiliated with AeroAstro.
 - b. Be appointed as non-PI research staff. This includes but is not limited to Postdoctoral Associates, Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Scientists, Research Engineers, Visiting Engineers, Visiting Scientists, Visiting Scholars, and Research Affiliates.
 - c. Have attended and/or volunteered for at least four Executive Committee meetings or hosted events.
 6. In exceptional cases the 'research staff' requirement shall be waived for eligibility for the offices of III.3 with the approval of the sitting Executive Committee. However, under no conditions shall the 'non-PI staff' requirement be waived.
 7. Temporary PI status granted to usually non-PI appointments shall not affect eligibility for the Executive Committee.
 8. The same person shall not serve as President and Treasurer at the same time. However, both the President and the Treasurer may also serve as one of the additional chairs of III.3.
 9. Election of Executive Committee
 - a. Election of officers shall occur yearly within the end of the Fall semester.

- b. Any member of RPA³ is eligible to vote.
- c. Voting shall occur following either one of the following models. The operative Executive Committee is in charge of deciding before each election which of the two options are applied for the next election.
 - 1. Online: The candidates shall address the members with a paragraph to be sent by email by the Executive Committee at least two weeks before election day. The voters shall vote on election day using an online voting platform (e.g. Google Form), which allows the options of abstaining from vote. Each voter's vote shall be secret, although a record shall be kept of the members who voted to ensure the validity of the election.
 - 2. In person: The candidates shall address the members during an election meeting on election day. The voters shall vote during the election meeting. Each voter's vote shall be secret, although a record shall be kept of the members who voted to ensure the validity of the election.
- d. For the election to be valid, it must be announced to the RPA³ mailing list at least two weeks prior to the election date. A reminder shall be sent closer to election day.
- e. For each office in III.1 and III.3, each voting member shall rank any number of candidates in order of the voter's preference.
- f. For each office in III.1 and III.3, the winning candidate shall be determined as follows. If a candidate wins a majority (51%) of first-preference votes, he or she is declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. First-preference votes cast for the failed candidate are eliminated, lifting the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any candidate has won a majority of the adjusted votes. The process is repeated until a candidate wins an outright majority.
- g. The Co-President and Vice Treasurer shall be determined applying the procedure III.9.f on the votes for the President and Treasurer offices, respectively, after eliminating the first-preference votes cast for the winning candidate and lifting the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots.
- h. In case of a tie between two people running for the same office, the candidates who received the maximum number of votes shall run again in a one-preference ballot, which must be advertised as a new election. In case of a second tie, a vote by the sitting Executive Committee shall determine the winner in a special meeting. The interested candidates shall abstain from this Executive Committee vote if they are already part of the sitting Executive Committee.
- i. Within one week from election day, the sitting Executive Committee shall assess the validity and the outcome of the election and, in case of valid election, immediately notify the members of the election outcome.
- j. The new Executive Committee shall be operative from the day the Executive Committee has assessed the validity of the election.

- k. The maximum office term for any given officer in the Executive Committee is two terms, not necessarily consecutive, each term of office running from one election to the subsequent valid election.
10. Removal: Officers may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the members for violating the values or policies of RPA³ or MIT.
11. The Executive Committee can sign letters and petitions as ‘The Executive Committee of the Researchers and Postdocs Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics at MIT’ if all the members of the Executive Committee agree on it.

Article IV: Meetings

1. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at least once a month but preferably bi-weekly.
2. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be presided over by the President, unless absent, and in that case the Co-President shall preside. In the absence of the President and the Co-President, the Treasurer shall preside.
3. Either the President or the Co-President shall take minutes notes during the meeting and make them available to the Executive Committee after the meeting. In the absence of both the President and the Co-President, the Treasurer shall take minutes notes.
4. All decisions shall be made by a plurality vote of all members of the Executive Committee present.
5. Quorum for a decision of the Executive Committee shall be two-thirds of the members of the Executive Committee.
6. The meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to all members of the MIT Community.

Article V: Ratification

1. Ratification of this Constitution shall be presented to the Executive Committee.
2. Ratification of this Constitution shall be voted by the members of the Association in an either online or in person voting. For the physical voting to be valid, it must be announced to the RPA³ mailing list at least two weeks prior to the voting date. A reminder shall be sent closer to voting day. For the online voting to be valid, the voting must be announced to the RPA³ mailing list, and a two week voting window must be made. A supermajority (66% of the total voter turnout) is necessary for ratification of the constitution.

Article VI: Amendments

1. Amendments to this Constitution shall be presented by any member of the Association.
2. Amendments to this Constitution shall be voted by the members of the Association in an either online or in person voting. For the physical voting to be valid, it must be announced to the RPA^3 mailing list at least two weeks prior to the voting date. A reminder shall be sent closer to voting day. For the online voting to be valid, the voting must be announced to the RPA^3 mailing list, and a two week voting window must be made. A supermajority (66% of the total voter turnout) is necessary for amending the constitution.

Article VII: Commitment to Equal Opportunity

The RPA^3 agrees to abide by [MIT's non-discrimination policy](#) and the [Massachusetts state hazing law](#). Specifically, discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, nationality or ethnicity will not be tolerated. The Executive Committee is responsible for actively ensuring that the events, the meetings, and the members of RPA^3 abide by these rules and regulations.