

UPPDA Town Hall

March 11, 2026

Agenda & Ground Rules

- **Agenda**

- Overview of Governing Changes
- Open Floor & Ratification
- About the Executive Board Positions
- Q&A

- **Ground Rules**

- Listen actively – respect others when they are talking.
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but please refrain from personal attacks.
- Keep comments to 4 minutes or less.

Major Governing Changes

Structural & Language Alignment

Organizational Status: The UPPDA is a representative body within the University's Shared Governance structure.

Bylaw Formatting: Transitioned from "Constitution" to "Bylaws" with language and formatting to mirror the University's Staff Council.

Governance & Ethics

Administrative Independence: The new bylaws remove any direct oversight by the OACD or Faculty Advisory Board; the UPPDA is an independent voice in its advocacy.

Professional Standards: The Code of Professional Conduct and The Pitt Promise have been formally incorporated.

Major Governing Changes Cont'd

Executive Board & Leadership

Vice President Position: The previous Diversity & Inclusion Chair role has been converted into a formal Vice President position.

Institutional Representation: All Executive Board Officers are now expected to serve as primary liaisons to at least one University Senate committee (and hopefully one Board of Trustees committee).

Expanded Portfolios: Roles and responsibilities have been significantly detailed for the UPPDA and for each officer, specifically outlining their duties across Pitt.

Certification of Service: A formal process has been established to certify the satisfactory completion of a volunteer's or officer's term.

Major Governing Changes Cont'd

Organizational Continuity & Operations

Revised Transition Cycle: The service cycle has been expanded to 16 months, including a mandatory Shadow Phase (May 1–31) and a 3-month Advisory Phase.

Operations Manual: The Vice President is tasked with maintaining an internal UPPDA Operations Manual (EB handbook) to codify administrative workflows and preserve institutional memory.

Digital Handover: Requirements have been added for the transfer of all administrative credentials and OneDrive data by the end of each term on May 31.

Major Governing Changes Cont'd

Meetings & Membership Engagement

Meeting Frequency: Minimum of 2 Town Halls and 4 Faculty Advisory Board meetings annually.

Virtual Participation: All formal UPPDA meetings must provide a hybrid or fully virtual format and allow unlimited teleconference participation.

Parliamentary Procedure: The UPPDA will formally follow *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* for official business with the EB operating under "Small Board Rules" for agility.

UPPDA Volunteers: A new structure for UPPDA Community Ambassadors and Standing Committees (including a dedicated Symposium Committee) has been created to broaden university-wide engagement.

Major Governing Changes Cont'd

Core Annual Programming

The following events are now codified as essential UPPDA mandates:

- Fall Postdoc Picnic
- National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW)
- Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium
- Annual NPA Conference Attendance & Representation

Open Floor & Potential Ratification

*Questions, comments, concerns,
objections, etc?*

What's it like to serve on the EB?

Time Commitment

Minimum 5 hours per month (likely more)

Expectations

Attendance at meetings

Lead committee meetings

Maintain organized records

Work together & support each other

Represent the interests of the ALL Pitt Postdocs

Peak Periods:

August-September (NPAW)

March-May (symposium, elections & transition)

President

Chief executive and primary spokesperson for the UPPDA

Focus on organizational strategy, institutional advocacy, and maintaining the UPPDA's standing within the University's leadership and Shared Governance structures

Core Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership: Set the overarching direction for the UPPDA and ensures all activities align with the mission of University-wide inclusion

Official Representative: Act as the primary liaison to University leadership and the University Senate Council; approves all official public statements

Fiscal Management: Manage UPPDA funds and budget allocations

Symposium Oversight: Oversee the high-level planning and successful execution of the flagship Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium

Reporting: Present formal updates to the Membership and the University on organizational activities, strategic initiatives, and fiscal health

Time Commitment

Estimated: 8-10 hours per month (varies by project cycle)

Meetings: Executive Board (monthly, 1hr); Senate Council (monthly, ~1hr +/- 30min); OACD (monthly, 30min); VP for Grad Studies (monthly, ~30min); OACD Career Orientation (monthly, ~5-10min); Faculty Advisory Board (quarterly, 1hr); Town Halls (semesterly + as needed, 1hr)

Vice President (new)

High-level Chief Operations Officer and Advocacy Lead

Primary architect of the UPPDA's institutional memory and interfacing with University Senate committees

Core Responsibilities

University Senate Oversight: Manage all postdoc representation across the University Senate; match EB Chairs & UPPDA Volunteers to committees and collect monthly policy updates

DEI & Ethics Lead: Integrate DEI into all strategic planning; serves as the primary contact for the Code of Conduct and The Pitt Promise

Operational Continuity: Maintain the UPPDA Operations Manual; codify workflows and maintain the registry of certified volunteers

Presidential Partnership: Jointly manage the UPPDA budget and funds; assume Presidential duties as needed

Community Engagement: Lead the Community Ambassador program to ensure representation across all Pitt units

Time Commitment

Estimated: 6-8 hours per month (varies by project cycle)

Meetings: Executive Board (monthly, 1hr); Senate Committee (monthly, ~1hr +/- 30min); Faculty Advisory Board (quarterly, 1hr); Town Halls (semesterly + as needed, 1hr)

Communications Chair

Goal: *Keeping postdocs informed, connected, and engaged with UPPDA initiatives*

- **Coordinate Communication**
 - Manage postdoc distribution list (new)
 - Monitor UPPDA email and route inquiries to the appropriate person
- **Digital Communications Management**
 - Manage the UPPDA's digital presence - circulate announcements, opportunities, highlights in newsletter and on our website and social media platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram)
 - Maintain communication channels (Slack, WhatsApp)
- **Event Promotion & Outreach**
 - Design flyers for marketing & generate registration links to promote UPPDA events and initiatives

Follow us & get involved →

Scan here!



Networking Chair

- Lead the networking committee (currently 5 members)
- Create connection and collaborations between postdocs
 - National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week
 - Happy Hour social
 - Fall Picnic
 - All external/volunteer activities of the UPPDA
- Serve at the University Senate Library Committee
 - New: Library tour
- Communicate through the Slack channel

Advocacy Chair

- **Core Focus:** Institutional change, data-driven advocacy, and postdoc welfare
- **Key Responsibilities:**
 - Lead the Advocacy (& Inclusion) Committee
 - Direct the **Annual Postdoctoral Survey** and data analysis
 - Draft formal proposals for institutional improvements to present to the EB and University leadership
- **Committee Service:** Senate Benefits and Welfare Committee

International Chair

Core Focus

- Lead the **International Chair Committee**, coordinating initiatives to support engagement and representation of international postdoctoral scholars within UPPDA.
- Collaborate with the **Office of International Service (OIS)** and large ethnic student organizations on campus.
- Host seminars for international postdocs.
- Serve (with committee members) as point of contact for international postdocs seeking information or assistance.

International Chair Cont'd

Time Commitment

- Approximately **1–2 hours per week** for planning, coordination, and communication.
- Additional **2–4 hours per week during podcast recording, editing, and event preparation periods.**

Initiatives | Worked Toward

- Creating a **storytelling and outreach platform (Postdoc Panthers Podcast)** to highlight the diversity, experiences, and achievements of postdocs at Pitt.
- Strengthening **international community engagement** by providing a space where postdocs can discuss science, culture, career journeys, and life beyond the lab.
- Encouraging participation of postdocs in **UPPDA initiatives, community activities, and collaborative discussions.**
- Initiated the **Postdoc Peer Network (PPN)**, a buddy-style peer mentoring program designed to support newly arrived international postdocs with cultural adjustment, navigating university systems, and building early community connections.

Career Development Chair

Key Contributions

- Led the **Career Development Committee (currently 5 members)**
- Assisted other board members in planning networking opportunities
- Helped coordinate the **LCEOM seminar series**, creating opportunities for postdocs to present research and engage with the broader academic community
- Contributed to organizing the **Postdoctoral Research Symposium** and successfully **secured sponsorship support** for the event
- Promoted engagement and participation in UPPDA

Career Development Chair Cont'd

Time Commitment

- Approximately 1 hours per week, with additional time (~2 hours per week) during major event planning periods

Initiatives I Worked Toward

- Expanding career exploration opportunities for postdocs interested in industry, policy, and non-academic careers
- Strengthening connections between postdocs and biotech and industry professionals via career panels

Q&A

Questions, comments, concerns?

Scan here!

Follow us & get involved →

