The University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, San Francisco Graduate Program in Bioengineering

By-Laws

UCSF Administrative Home: Bioengineering and Therapeutic Sciences

Revision date: 5/28/2024

Graduate Council Approval: Approved June 21, 2024

Article I. Objective

A. Degree offered by the program: PhD

B. Discipline:

The UCSF-UC Berkeley Joint PhD Program in Bioengineering aims to provide students with methods of cutting-edge engineering to tackle some of the most pressing problems in biology and medicine. Sub-disciplines include biomaterials, cell and tissue engineering, BioMEMS and devices, neural systems engineering, imaging and instrumentation, systems biology, and computational biology.

C. Mission of the Program:

The purpose of this Program is to establish and administer a graduate program of instruction and research leading to the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Bioengineering, in conformity with the regulations of the Graduate Divisions of the University of California, San Francisco, and the University of California, Berkeley.

The Program achieves its purpose by serving two important roles. The first role is as the primary graduate program for the Department of Bioengineering at UC Berkeley and the Department of Bioengineering and Therapeutic Sciences at UCSF. Financial support for this component comes from multiple sources, with the academic and administrative support on both campuses. The second role is as a multidisciplinary program that provides a forum for qualified faculty across the broader Berkeley and San Francisco campuses to participate in graduate education in bioengineering.

By combining activities on the two campuses and across a wide range of different departments, the Program provides a forum for coordinating interest in many different areas of bioengineering. The maintenance of high-performance standards in instruction and research is overseen by an Executive Committee, which provides collective representation to the University Administration, as well as to other individuals and organizations. The structure and operation of the Program has been designed to be broad enough to permit consideration of all academic aspects of bioengineering that affect the progress of this discipline on the Berkeley and San Francisco campuses.

Article II. Membership

A. Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Program:

Members of the group are expected to demonstrate commitment to the program by actively participating in program activities such as teaching, mentoring, community and outreach events. Memberships are reviewed annually.

Core membership in the Program shall be limited to faculty members on the Berkeley and San Francisco campuses who hold an eligible Academic Senate Membership and are qualified to mentor and train bioengineering graduate students.

Affiliate membership shall be limited to qualified faculty on either campus who contribute to the activities of the Program but who either do not satisfy the criteria for being active Core members or who are not members of the Academic Senate and are therefore unable to serve as mentors for bioengineering graduate students.

B. Voting Rights

1. Graduate Program Matters will be determined by a vote of the Executive Committee members. All members of the executive committee will have an equal vote.

C. Application for Membership

1. Application for membership:

a. Core membership for faculty from UC San Francisco, or from UC Berkeley departments other than Bioengineering, shall be governed by the Program's Executive Committee. Nominations are initiated by the submission of a written request to the Chair of the Executive Committee and include letters of support from two current Core members. Once approved as Core members, faculty shall be required to remain active by satisfying at least three of the criteria under section C.2 per academic year (sabbatical excluded). The Executive Committee will evaluate members activity on an annual basis, requiring that members demonstrate appropriate qualifications to mentor and train graduate students in Bioengineering.

b. Affiliate membership in the Program shall also be at the discretion of the Executive Committee and is limited to faculty who are actively participating in at least one of the criteria described under section C.2 on an annual basis.

c. Nominations for membership shall be considered by the Executive Committee as an ongoing process but effective dates for new members or for removing inactive members shall be July 1 of each year. The Executive Committee shall notify the nominee or the inactive member of the committee's decision. Faculty wishing to have their status reconsidered may appeal to the Executive Committee. A current membership roster shall be maintained on the program website.

d. Core members may serve as inside members (or Chairs) of qualifying and dissertation committees. Affiliate members may serve as outside members on Qualifying Examination and Dissertation committees.

e. Reinstatement:

i. A person may request to be reinstated to core or affiliate member status at the discretion of the Executive Committee. To be eligible, however, such an action should not jeopardize the configuration of a student's approved committee. For instance, a faculty member cannot be inside and outside members of a dissertation committee at the same time.

2. Anticipated contributions required for membership

a. Faculty in the Department of Bioengineering at UC Berkeley are granted Core Membership status in the Program by virtue of their departmental affiliation. These faculty are expected to contribute in all the ways described below as part of their ongoing academic responsibilities. The Chair of the Department shall be responsible for monitoring the activity of these individuals in the Program and for ensuring adequate participation in appropriate committees.

b. Mentoring and teaching in the lab:

i. Faculty Mentors shall provide students in their labs research and career mentorship with an established individual development plan (IDP).

ii. A thorough evaluation of student progress should be conducted yearly prior to the mandatory progress report that is received and maintained by the Graduate Group.

c. Participation in program service activities, examples of which may include:

i. Service on the Executive Committee

ii. Service on the Admission Committee

iii. Service as a Graduate Advisor.

iv. Any other service activity to the Program that is approved by the Executive Committee

v. Service on one or more Bioengineering qualifying exam committees and one or more Bioengineering dissertation committees for a student for whom they are not a dissertation advisor.

vi. Service as an instructor of record of a course appropriate for Bioengineering graduate students.

vii. Participation in student interviews and visit days

viii. Attendance of the Annual Bioengineering Program Retreat/Conference or other annual Program meeting.

3. Compliance with University policies and Program values

Program faculty are expected to comply with all university policies and uphold the values of the training program, including but not limited to the University Code of Conduct (APM-016); UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment; the UC Policy on Discrimination, and the Harassment and Affirmative Action in the Workplace; scientific misconduct and/or financial improprieties.

D. Emeritus Status

1. Faculty who have served more than 15 years as Core member of the graduate group will be assigned emeritus status when no longer participating in group activities.

E. Review of Membership

1. Each faculty member's contribution to the program shall be reviewed once every year.

2. Obtaining relevant information

a. Each faculty member shall submit relevant documentation supporting their membership on an annual basis. Relevant documentation includes but is not limited to

i. Self-reported survey data

ii. Documentation of completed training materials/ coursework related to the mentorship of students

iii. Documentation of correspondence supporting the mission of the BioE community outside of the general faculty contributions listed above in Article

II section C.2.

2. Violations of program expectations for faculty conduct

The Graduate Program Directors, Executive Committee, and Program Coordinators are in frequent communication with trainees, faculty, the Graduate Division, and the University administration to monitor for compliance with all membership policy requirements.

Violations can include reports from the Bias Response Team or other communications from the Graduate Division, and communications from the University administration about faculty violations of the University Code of Conduct. Violations of the University Code of Conduct are available to view at https://ophd.ucsf.edu/. The Executive Committee will promptly revoke program membership at any time upon learning about faculty conduct detrimental to the program or the safety and welfare of its members.

Examples of evidence of this type of detrimental conduct include (but are not limited to),

a. Official findings by the University that a faculty member has violated Title VII.

b. Official findings by the University that a faculty member has violated Title IX,

c. Legal determinations of guilt (including settlements out of court) that may not have resulted in a University sanction

d. In addition, faculty may also be put on suspension or removed from the program for conduct that has not resulted in a university or legal sanction but nonetheless has been determined by the Executive Committee to be detrimental to the program or the safety and welfare of its members.

i. This may include serious or sustained actions that create a hostile work environment such as a pattern of racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks or behavior, or a significant lack of professionalism or integrity. The Executive Committee will develop a course of action on a case-by-case basis. For example, faculty who are found to have violated Title VII or IX will be removed from the program immediately and are generally not eligible to reapply whereas the plan of action to address less severe violations may include interventions by the program leadership, mediation, additional training, etc. before a decision to suspend or remove a faculty member from the program is reached. In any of these cases, the program may seek guidance from University offices and resources, such as the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of the Ombuds, and the Graduate Division.

F. Membership Appeal Process

Faculty may appeal the decision to withdraw or withhold membership to the graduate group at any time by submitting a detailed letter of appeal to the program chair outlining their objections to the decision made by the Executive Committee. The Program Chair will then decide whether the appeal shall be considered for vote at the next Executive Committee meeting time permitting.

Article III. Administration

The administration of the program and its activities will be vested in the Co-Chairs and an Executive Committee.

A. Co-Chair of the Graduate Group

1. Co-Chair appointment process

a. Two Co-Chairs (one UCSF and one Berkeley) will be voted on by the members of the Executive Committee of the BioE Graduate Group.

b. One faculty from Berkeley or UCSF will take turns at chairing the Group and the Executive Committee.

B. Terms of service for Co-Chairs

1. Two years. The faculty will first elected as Co-Chair and automatically becomes Chair in the following year.

C. Duties of the Bioengineering Joint Program Chair

1. The program chair shall be responsible for

a. Communication of major changes and initiatives to students and faculty

b. Scheduling or delegating scheduling of executive committee meetings, including drafting agendas, approving agenda items, assigning time limits per agenda item, scheduling a pre-executive committee meeting to assess agenda topics of relevance to the group

c. Calling executive committee meetings to order and keeping meetings running according to goals outlined in the agenda.

d. Presenting new items of business to the executive committee

e. Holding and counting votes during executive committee meetings

f. Other duties not mentioned above

D. UCSF Graduate Program Director

1. Director appointment process

a. The Program Director is selected by the UCSF faculty members of the Graduate Group.

2. Director terms of service

a. UCSF Program Director role for the purposes of the UCSF graduate division may differ from the Co-Chair role in that the UCSF Program Director.

3. Duties of the UCSF Program Director

a. The director shall be responsible for

i. Communication (or delegation of communication) of needs, objectives, and goals of the executive committee between UCSF graduate division and program managers, executive committee, and other faculty.

ii. Resolution of (or delegation of resolution of disputes including those related to students and faculty of concern at UCSF).

iii. The decision-making of (or delegation of decision-making of) non-joint, UCSF-focused aspects of the program, such as the decision to place a current student on academic probation, UCSF-based event planning decisions, and budgetary decisions involving UCSF funds, exceptional academic approvals and others not explicitly stated here.

iv. Attending UCSF meetings requiring program directors, explicitly or implicitly

v. Other duties that may not be mentioned above

Article V. Committees

A. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of seven voting members and two non-voting ex officio members. The seven voting members include

    a. Five at-large members elected from the core membership of the graduate program; and

    b. Two members (one per campus) designated by the Chairs of the Department of Bioengineering at Berkeley and the Department of Bioengineering and Therapeutic Sciences at UCSF to represent their respective faculty.

2. To ensure balanced representation from each campus, not more than four of the seven members shall have a primary appointment on any one campus.

3. Apart from the seven voting members, two non-voting ex officio members are the respective Head Graduate Advisers (or equivalent) of the UC Berkeley and UCSF Campuses.

4. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month except during the summer break or during the month when the Admissions Committee meets.

B. Election of faculty members of the Executive Committee:

1. The five at-large Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected from within the Program by core members and are elected for two-year terms, with the exception of the Chair (as defined in Article III-F-1), who will succeed automatically and without election to the office of Chair after serving a two-year term as Co-Chair and remain on the Committee for the two-year term of that office.

2. The election of the Chair, Co-Chair and Executive Committee members shall be reported to the Graduate Deans of both campuses for final approval. Eligibility to fill vacancies will be defined as needed to satisfy the requirement in III- A that no more than four members may come from a given campus.

3. Election of members to the Executive Committee shall be by secure ballot and shall be held in odd-numbered years and completed at least three weeks before the end of the spring semester of the Berkeley campus (on or before June 1).

4. The Executive Committee shall resolve ties in election results.

5. Election results shall be announced to the membership by mail, which may include electronic mailings.

6. Following the final approval by the Graduate Deans of both campuses, newly elected members shall assume their duties on July 1.

7. The two non-elected members may be appointed by the Department Chairs at UC Berkeley and UCSF at any time and may serve any number of consecutive terms.

8. It is recommended that changes in the appointments of the two non-elected members occur in even-numbered years, for purposes of continuity.

C. The principal duties of the Executive Committee shall be:

1. Nominate from among the at-large membership of the Executive Committee a Chair and a Co-Chair. The Chair and Co-Chair must hold primary appointments on different campuses.

2. The term of office for the Chair and Co-Chair will be two years each, to be served consecutively. The offices of Chair and Co-Chair must alternate between faculty members whose primary appointment is on different campuses.

3. A member of the Program once appointed to the position of Co-Chair will spend two years as Co-Chair and succeed automatically to the position of Chair, spending a further two years in the office of Chair without the need to run for re-election to this committee.

4. Represent the Program in official matters pertaining to the Program, both within and outside of the University.

5. Continue the activities of the Program and encourage the development of the Graduate Program in Bioengineering.

6. Review membership in the Program and, by additions and deletions as defined in Article II, maintain a broad and active group in this field. After review of faculty membership, the Executive Committee shall make the list of core and affiliate members available to the Graduate Deans of the two campuses.

7. Establish and maintain liaisons with groups interested in bioengineering on other campuses of the University as with related groups on the San Francisco and Berkeley campuses.

8. Nominate from the Program one or more Graduate Advisers on each campus to oversee the programs of individual students. Graduate Advisers will be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Division of the campus on which they serve.

9. Appoint an Admissions Committee to review applications to the program in Bioengineering and make recommendations to the Deans of the Graduate Divisions with respect to admission of students to the program. The Admissions Committee shall include members from both campuses. Admissions will conform to the policies of both campuses regardless of the campus on which the student is registered.

10. Appoint such additional standing committee(s) or ad hoc committee(s) as it deems necessary to properly administer the activities of the Program.

D. Admissions Committee

1. The Admissions Committee is led by two co-chairs from each of the campus with a term of 3 years.

2. Membership of the committee will be determined by the number of applications and interest areas of the applicants with an approximately equal number of faculty from each campus, and a mixture of newer group members and longer-serving members to balance continuity with turnover.

3. Student members of the committee are elected by the Bioengineering student group.

Article VI. Student Representatives

A. Student representatives shall be elected by a body of their peers within the Bioengineering Association of Students (BEAST).

B. Elections of student representatives shall happen annually

C. Student representatives shall bring items of concerns related to the student body to the program administration for consideration in future executive committee meetings by contacting program managers at least two weeks prior to the next executive committee meeting.

D. Student representatives may discuss concerns, present feedback, and invite guest speakers to the executive committee meetings with prior approval from the executive committee cochairs.

Article VII. Graduate Advisers

A. UCSF Graduate advisor duties are outlined in the UCSF Graduate Advisor's guide, and any questions or concerns related to the role of Graduate advisors may be directed to the Head Graduate Advisor on each campus.

Article VIII. All Program Faculty Meetings

A. The Chair shall call meetings of the Program as are deemed necessary or desirable by the Executive Committee; at least one Program meeting per year. Typically, this meeting is held at the Annual Conference and Retreat

B. The Chair shall call a special meeting of the Program any time it is requested by ten or more Program members in writing, with a limit of four such meetings per year.

C. Minutes of meetings shall be made available to Program members within fourteen calendar days following the executive committee approval.

    1. The Co-chair is responsible for taking minutes at meetings or delegating this duty and circulating them for approval before the next executive committee meeting.

D. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted procedures. In the event of adjournment of a meeting before the business of the Program is completed, that business shall be considered at the next meeting.

Article IX. Quorum

A. In program executive meetings, >51% of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum and shall be empowered to take action on matters.

Article X. Amendments

Changes in these By-laws shall be made by approval of at least two-thirds of the core faculty who choose to vote, either by email vote or at a meeting, provided that notice of such proposed change shall have been sent to the members at least two weeks prior to the date of voting.

All amendments and revisions must be submitted to the Graduate Council for review and approval; changes in the bylaws will become effective upon approval by the Graduate Council.