

EmPOWER Bylaws Outline Draft

Updated: November 2019

Article I: About EmPOWER

Empathic Peers Offering Wisdom, Encouragement, and Resources (EmPOWER) is a College of Engineering (CoE) program to promote mental health and wellness among engineering graduate students. EmPOWER's activities include a graduate student mentoring network, where senior and first-year students in each department are paired to create a support system for first-year students and provide mentoring opportunities for senior students. At the department level, EmPOWER hosts monthly de-stressing events (such as movie nights, craft making, and hikes), as well as personal development workshops. EmPOWER also organizes CoE-wide social events, and workshops focused on professional development.

Article II: EmPOWER Mission Statement

EmPOWER's goal is to support CoE graduate students by providing Peer Mentors and resources to assist all CoE students in surviving and thriving in graduate school, including de-stressing events, personal and professional development opportunities, and mentorship.

Article III: Membership

1. Steering Committee:
 - a. Each department of the College of Engineering will be represented on the steering committee by one Lead Mentor, or selected liaison from a department's EmPOWER peer mentors. The departments in the College of Engineering are as follows:
 - i. Biomedical Engineering (BME)
 - ii. Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering (CBE)
 - iii. Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE)
 - iv. Computer and Information Sciences (CIS)
 - v. Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE)
 - vi. Materials Science and Engineering (MSE)
 - vii. Mechanical Engineering (ME)
 - b. The steering committee will be led by the Chair and Vice Chair, to be elected as outlined in Article VI.
 - c. Other positions on the steering committee include the Past Chair and Faculty Advisor.
2. Eligibility, Active Standing and Tenure
 - a. All members, with the exception of the Faculty Advisor, including Peer Mentors, Lead Mentors, the Chair and Vice Chair must be actively enrolled in a UD
 - b. graduate program.
 - c. In order to be eligible for the **Vice Chair** position, a representative must be a rising 3rd or 4th year graduate student and have been a Peer Mentor or Lead Mentor for at least one year. The representative should also commit to serving

one year as Chair and one year as Past Chair (see Article V Section 2(c)). The Vice Chair term is one year.

- d. The **Chair** position is automatically assumed by the previous year's Vice Chair. The term of the Chair is one year.
 - e. **Lead Mentors** must be at least 2nd year graduate students. The term of the Lead mentor is one year, after which the Lead Mentor can run for re-election if he/she chooses to do so.
 - f. **Peer Mentors** must be at least 2nd year graduate students. The term of any Peer Mentor is at least one year, with no maximum tenure. Membership as a Peer Mentor is renewed on an annual basis in late spring.
 - g. **Mentees** must be in their first year of their graduate program.
2. Rights of members
- a. Mentorship Program
 - i. Mentees have the right to request a change of mentor, or opt out of the program altogether at any time. Mentees should discuss with the Lead Mentor in the respective department to initiate this process.
 - ii. Peer Mentors have the right to request a change of mentee(s) if they feel the mentor-mentee assignment is a poor fit. Mentors should discuss with the Lead Mentor in the respective department to initiate this process.
 - iii. The Mentor serves in a professional capacity as a Peer resource to the mentee while this student navigates early graduate school life. Under no circumstances should the mentor engage in counseling or therapy-type discussions with the mentee. The mentor is not a mandated reporter. If the mentor experiences uncomfortable interactions with their mentee at any time, he/she is encouraged to report these to the Faculty Advisor who will determine the appropriate next steps toward seeking professional help or terminating offending members as outlined in Article III(3)b.
3. Resignation and Termination
- a. Resignation
 - i. If a **Peer Mentor** would like to resign, they should provide two weeks' notice to the Lead Mentor of his/her department in order to pair his/her mentees with new mentors.
 - ii. If a **Lead Mentor** would like to resign, they should provide four weeks' notice to the Faculty Advisor and the Chair/Vice Chair arrange an election in their department to find a replacement Lead Mentor, sent out within 2 weeks of resignation.
 - iii. If the **Vice Chair** would like to resign, they should provide four weeks' notice to the Faculty Advisor and an election for Vice Chair will be held to find a replacement.
 - iv. If the **Chair** should resign for any reason, the **Vice Chair** will assume his/her role for the remainder of the year, and continue in the role of Chair for the following year. The Vice Chair position will remain unfilled for the

remainder of the year, and election of a new Vice Chair will occur at the start of the new one-year cycle.

- b. Termination
 - i. Any Peer Mentor, Lead Mentor, Vice Chair, Chair, or Past Chair shall be immediately terminated upon violation of the University of Delaware Code of Student Conduct.
 - ii. Peer Mentors, Lead Mentors, Vice Chairs, or Chairs may be removed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of all steering committee members present during a steering committee meeting, as overseen by the Faculty Advisor. Any member of the steering committee may initiate a call for removal from office. The person being considered for termination may not vote.
 - iii. The Faculty Advisor has executive authority to remove any member of any position from office at any time for actions perceived to be inconsistent with the mission of EmPOWER.

Article IV: Standard Operating Procedures

1. EmPOWER meetings
 - a. CoE-wide meetings: EmPOWER Steering Committee Meetings shall be held two to three times per semester and one to two times each during the winter and summer session. One meeting will be organized at the end of the academic year to review survey results (see Article IV (3)c) and discuss changes for the next academic year.
 - b. Department-wide meetings: At least one meeting shall be arranged by the Lead Mentor of each respective department at the beginning of the semester to introduce mentors to mentees in their respective department. Outside of this, meeting time/frequency in each department will vary and is left to the discretion of the Lead Mentor and Peer Mentors of that department.
2. EmPOWER events
 - a. Department-wide Events: Each Peer Mentor team must plan at least four department-wide events for their respective department throughout the academic year, though one activity per month (9 events per academic year) is strongly recommended.
 - b. COE-wide Events: The Steering Committee shall plan one or two college-wide events per semester. These may be social events, or personal/professional development-focused events. The events and audience will be decided as outlined in Article VII(1)a.
 - c. Notice of COE Meetings/Events:
 - i. It is the responsibility of the Chair to set a date for the next steering committee meeting, providing at least one month's notice. COE-wide events will be advertised by the Chair, Vice Chair or Lead Mentors to their respective departments at least two weeks in advance with follow-up reminders closer to the date of the event.

- ii. The meeting agenda must be distributed to all voting members at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting time.
 - d. Quorum
 - i. At least three quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of voting members AND either the Faculty Advisor or Chair must be present in order to hold a Steering Committee Meeting.
 - e. Voting at Meetings
 - i. CoE Steering Committee Meetings:
 1. Voting members include the Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair, and Lead Mentors, each of whom get one vote per voting item.
 2. In order for voting to take place, the meeting quorum ($>\frac{3}{4}$) must be met and the Faculty Advisor must be present. All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority of voting members present at the meeting during which the vote takes place. Ties shall be broken by the Faculty Advisor.
 3. Members must be present at the meeting to vote. Members who call into meetings may also vote.
- 3. Recordkeeping
 - a. Minutes
 - i. COE Meetings: The Vice Chair is responsible for keeping meeting minutes, as well as sending summaries and action items to the committee promptly (within a few days) after the meeting's conclusion.
 - ii. Department Meetings: Lead Mentors are responsible for keeping minutes for department-wide EmPOWER meetings, as well as sending summaries and action items to the Peer Mentors promptly (within a few days of the meeting's conclusion).
 - b. Events and attendance
 - i. The Faculty Advisor, Vice Chair, Chair, and Lead Mentors should make every effort to attend all CoE-wide EmPOWER events, as well as all Steering Committee meetings. Extensive absences as determined by the Faculty Advisor may be grounds for termination. **In the event that a Lead Mentor is terminated, the vice chair or chair would step in as Lead Mentor for the respective department until a new Lead Mentor is found, and would organize an election to find the next lead mentor as soon as possible.**
 - ii. The Vice Chair is responsible for recording Steering Committee meeting attendance and CoE-wide event attendance.
 - iii. The Lead Mentor or primary Peer Mentor organizers are responsible for recording attendance at their respective department-wide events.
 - c. Assessments
 - i. The Chair with the assistance of the Vice Chair shall disseminate two rounds of survey-style assessments to each departments' EmPOWER

members per year, one at the end of each semester. **Lead mentors will have access to the surveys prior to their dissemination and are free to add to them as they wish.**

1. A request for feedback on the quality of mentorship received shall be sent only to the mentees at the end of the fall and spring semesters.
2. At the conclusion of the spring semester, a request for feedback on overall effectiveness of EmPOWER events (departmental and CoE-wide) shall be sent to both mentors and mentees.
 - a. This shall assess how well the organization is accomplishing its Mission as stated in Article II.
 - b. This shall request constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvement of the organization on the CoE and departmental levels.

Article V: Governing Structure and Responsibilities

1. General Role of CoE Steering Committee
 - a. The CoE steering committee is responsible for directing the CoE-wide and to some extent the departmental EmPOWER initiatives, including but not limited to organizing COE-wide events, ensuring consistency between department-wide EmPOWER programs, and disseminating and analyzing Assessments per Article IV(3)c.
2. Specific role of the Faculty Advisor, Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair, Lead Mentors, and Peer Mentors
 - a. The Faculty Advisor shall be an active UD Engineering faculty member. The Faculty Advisor is the senior-most member of the steering committee and shall:
 - i. with the Chair, ensure funding is available for COE-wide activities
 - ii. solicit nominations and hold elections for Vice Chair and Lead Mentors during the end of the spring semester.
 - iii. break tied votes at COE Steering Committee meetings
 - iv. exercise executive power to remove offending members when necessary
 - b. The Chair is to be automatically filled by the previous Vice Chair. The Chair position is the second year in the 3 year Vice Chair/Chair/Past Chair progression. The Chair shall:
 - i. lead steering committee meetings.
 - ii. manage or delegate management of the EmPOWER website and monitor the website's content
 - iii. send out feedback polls to the mentees at the conclusion of both the fall and spring semesters, and to the Peer and Lead Mentors at the end of the spring semester.
 - iv. be responsible for the CoE EmPOWER finances
 - c. The Vice Chair is to be filled by a single representative. In order to be eligible, a representative must be 3rd year or older, and have been a Peer Mentor or Lead

Mentor previously. The Vice Chair position is the first year in the 3 year Vice Chair/Chair/Past Chair progression. The Vice Chair shall:

- i. Make every effort to attend all COE steering committee meetings, and shall lead meetings if the Chair is not present.
 - ii. take minutes of the meetings, and send a summary with action items to the rest of the steering committee promptly following the conclusion of the meeting.
 - iii. Monitor attendance at steering committee meetings and COE-wide events
 - iv. Manage the EmPOWER calendar
 - v. amend the current Bylaws to reflect any changes voted upon by the Steering Committee as outlined in Article VIII(1).
 - vi. Act as a treasurer for allocating purchases using GSO Graduate College funding
- d. The Past Chair is automatically filled by the previous Chair. The Past Chair is a primarily advisory role to the current Chair. In the event of Chair resignation, the Past Chair shall meet with the Vice Chair and Faculty Advisor, and may possibly reassume the role of Chair or Co-chair with the current Vice Chair if the current Chair resigns. The Past Chair position is the final year in the 3 year Vice Chair/Chair/Past Chair progression.
- e. The Lead Mentors are elected by the Peer Mentors of each department after the election of the new Vice Chair. The election to elect Lead Mentors is held by the Faculty Advisor. Each Lead Mentor shall:
- i. make every effort to attend all steering committee meetings and CoE-wide EmPOWER events; serve as a liaison between the COE EmPOWER steering committee and his/her department's EmPOWER program
 - ii. plan CoE-wide EmPOWER events with the rest of the Steering Committee
 - iii. disseminate survey for matching mentors to mentees and (with or without the help of the Peer Mentors), assign mentee-mentor pairs
 - iv. facilitate departmental EmPOWER events with the help of the Peer Mentors
 - v. lead meetings with the Peer Mentors in their department
 - vi. take minutes at department-wide meetings, and send a summary with action items to the Peer Mentors within a few days of the conclusion of the meeting.
 - vii. send an attendance summary of each event to the Chair
 - viii. be responsible for the respective department's EmPOWER finances and budget
- f. Applicants for the position of Peer Mentor shall be approved by the incoming Lead Mentor in the respective department on an annual basis. Past Peer Mentors may automatically renew membership on an annual basis after consulting with the lead mentor. Each Peer Mentor shall:

- i. Serve as a dedicated resource to all new students his/her department
- ii. Directly work with their assigned mentees to facilitate the transition to full time graduate students, including checking in on the students periodically, inviting them to EmPOWER events, preparing mentee goodie bags ahead of finals and generally serving as a helpful resource for any questions the mentees have.
- iii. With the Lead Mentor, help organize de-stressing events in his/her home department, including: preparing a budget, organizing logistics, advertising the event, monitoring attendance and providing feedback after the event.

Article VI: Election Process and Voting

1. Election of Lead Mentors

- a. At the conclusion of the spring semester, the Faculty Advisor shall solicit applications from the Peer Mentors of each department for the Lead Mentor position. After two weeks, the Faculty Advisor shall distribute a “ranked choice” election ballot to the Peer Mentors (including the current Lead Mentor) in the respective department to elect a new Lead Mentor. Voting shall take place over a one week time period. The winner of the election will be the person with the highest score based on the results of the ranked choice poll. If there is a tie, the tie will be broken by the Faculty Advisor.

2. Election of Vice Chair

- a. At the conclusion of the spring semester, the Faculty Advisor shall solicit applications from the Lead and Peer Mentors for the Vice Chair position. After two weeks, the Faculty Advisor shall distribute a “ranked choice” election ballot to the Lead Mentors. Voting shall take place over a one week time period. The winner of the election will be the person with the most votes. The winner of the election will be the person with the highest score based on the results of the ranked choice poll. If there is a tie, the tie will be broken by the Faculty Advisor.

3. Selection of Peer Mentors

- a. While not formally elected, those wishing to fill Peer Mentor positions will be required to obtain 5 signatures from actively matriculated students within their respective department. They will also need to submit a short written statement on why they desire to be a Peer Mentor. These materials will be submitted to the incoming Lead Mentor of their respective department.
- b. These applications will undergo review by the incoming Lead Mentor for their respective department; if that Lead Mentor has concerns about the fitness of any applicant to hold a mentoring position, the Lead Mentor can decline the applicant. Any applicant who has been declined is free to appeal the decision at which point the Faculty Advisor is responsible for determining whether or not to approve the application. ¶

~~4. Removal of Members~~

- a. Any EmPOWER representative (mentee, Peer Mentor, Lead Mentor, Vice Chair, Chair, or Past Chair), should discuss with the Chair or Faculty Advisor any grievances against an EmPOWER mentor or Steering Committee member.
- b. Officers (Vice Chair, Chair, Lead Mentors) or Peer Mentors may be removed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote from the steering committee, with oversight of and administration of the vote by the Faculty Advisor. Ties shall be broken according to Article IV(2)e.

Article VII: Event Guidelines

1. CoE-Wide Events

a. Approval

- i. All CoE-wide events will require approval by a simple majority vote from the steering committee. Ties shall be broken according to Article IV(2)e.
- ii. The events for the coming semester shall generally be proposed and voted on at the first Steering Meeting of the semester. Modifications to events, including cancellation or addition of events, shall happen on an as-needed basis.
- iii. The Chair and Faculty Advisor each have executive authority to cancel any CoE-wide event at any time (for example, if there is concern for inclement weather or an unanticipated major conflict).

b. Advertising

- i. Advertising for CoE events will be permitted via the EmPOWER website, email, and printed materials
- ii. Printed materials and an invitation email template shall be submitted to the Faculty Advisor, Chair and Vice Chair for final approval at least three weeks prior to the event.
- iii. Initiation of event advertising should occur at least 2 weeks prior to the planned event. Reminder emails about the event shall be sent once a week leading up to the event, as well as one day prior to the event and once the morning of the event.
- iv. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be responsible for performing or delegating the assembly and distribution of all advertising materials

c. Attendance

- i. All currently ~~enrolled matriculated~~ CoE students who are in good standing are permitted to attend general CoE-wide EmPOWER events.
- ii. Events designed for active Peer Mentors and mentees will only be open to those groups, per the discretion of the Steering Committee.

d. Waivers

- i. Participants waive the right to hold EmPOWER responsible for any personal injury or damage to or loss of property during any EmPOWER event. This includes but is not limited to motor vehicle crashes while driving to or from EmPOWER events, physical injury during EmPOWER sponsored events such as hiking or boating, or allergic reactions to food provided during EmPOWER events.

- ii. For each event, the Steering Committee should evaluate whether a signed waiver will be required of participants. [A waiver can be found on the UD student organizations website.](#)
- 2. Departmental Events
 - a. Approval
 - i. The proposed departmental events for each semester shall be drafted by the Lead Mentor and Peer Mentors from each respective department. The process for determining which events will be proposed is left to each department to decide.
 - ii. This list will be sent by the Lead Mentor to the Faculty Advisor for final approval prior to the start of the semester.
 - iii. The Faculty Advisor has the power to veto any proposed event.
 - b. Advertising
 - i. Advertising for department-wide events will be permitted via the CoE EmPOWER website, email, printed materials, social media, and any other avenues deemed useful and appropriate by the Lead Mentor of that department
 - ii. Event advertising should be initiated at least 2 weeks prior to the planned event
 - iii. The Lead Mentor shall be responsible for performing or delegating the assembly and distribution of all advertising materials
 - c. Attendance
 - i. All currently matriculated students within the department who are in good standing are permitted to attend departmental events.
 - ii. Events designed for active Peer Mentors and mentees only will be open only to those group, per the discretion of the Lead and Peer Mentors for that department.
 - d. Waivers
 - i. Participants waive the right to hold EmPOWER responsible for any personal injury or damage to or loss of property during any EmPOWER event. This includes but is not limited to motor vehicle crashes while driving to or from EmPOWER events, physical injury during EmPOWER sponsored events such as hiking or boating, or allergic reactions to food provided during EmPOWER events.
 - ii. For each event, the Lead mentor should evaluate whether a signed waiver will be required of participants. A waiver can be found on the UD student organizations website.

Article VIII: Amendments to Bylaws

- 1. Any member of the steering committee (Lead Mentor, Chair, Vice Chair) or the Faculty Advisor may propose an amendment to the Bylaws
 - a. Proposals shall be in writing and must be placed on the agenda prior to the meeting.

- b. These may be discussed and voted on at any Steering Committee meeting with a quorum of members present
- c. A vote from $\frac{3}{4}$ of the steering committee shall be required to approve any amendments to the Bylaws. Ties shall be broken according to Article VI(2)e.
- d. Amendments shall go into effect immediately following approval where possible.
- e. The Vice Chair shall be responsible for modifying the active Bylaws document to reflect any approved amendments.
- f. The current bylaws document will be publically available on the coe-empower website.

Article IX: Example Timeline for EmPOWER Events and Action Items:

- July
 - Lead mentors send out surveys to mentors and mentees for matching purposes.
 - Lead mentors meet with Peer Mentors in their respective departments to plan department-wide events for the year.
- August
 - Mentor/Mentee matching is completed
 - First Mentor/Mentee events held at Department NSOs
- September - November
 - Department-wide and CoE-wide events held
- December
 - Department-wide and CoE-wide events held
 - Peer Mentors assemble “goodie bags” for Mentees ahead of final exams
 - Chair & Vice Chair disseminate initial round of feedback surveys as described in Article IV(3)c.
- January - March
 - Department-wide and CoE-wide events held
- April
 - Department-wide and CoE-wide events held
 - Second round of feedback surveys disseminated by Chair and Vice Chair as described in Article IV(3)c.
 - Final Steering Committee Meeting with outgoing committee; review of feedback surveys at this meeting
 - Faculty Advisor solicits Vice Chair applications
- May
 - New Vice Chair elected by Lead Mentors
 - Final Department-wide and CoE-wide events held for the year
 - Lead mentor applications solicited by Faculty Advisor
 - Faculty Advisor holds elections for new Lead Mentors
 - New Lead mentors elected by Peer Mentors
- June
 - First meeting with incoming steering committee members

- Peer Mentor applications solicited
- Peer Mentor applications approved by Lead Mentor