



## AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

### STUDENT CHAPTER HANDBOOK

#### The AIBS Mission, Vision, and Goals

The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) is a nonprofit scientific association dedicated to advancing research and education in biology, focusing on the biology of organisms and their interactions from molecular to environmental levels of organization, and seeking natural explanations for the evolution and diversity of life on earth.

Founded in 1947 as a part of the National Academy of Sciences and an independent organization since the 1950s, AIBS today is sustained by a robust membership of some 5,000 biologists and 200 professional societies and scientific organizations, including many science museums and academic departments of biology; the combined individual membership of AIBS member societies and organizations exceeds 250,000.

AIBS disseminates scientific information through its journal, *BioScience*, and other print and electronic outlets; convenes scientific meetings; cooperates with other organizations concerned with the biological sciences; provides representation for biologists in the public arena; promotes unity and effectiveness of effort among all those who are devoting themselves to the biological sciences and their applications; and fosters the relations of the biological sciences to other sciences, to the arts and industries, and to the public good.

#### Should You Start an AIBS Student Chapter?

- Do you have an interest in the biological sciences?
- Are you committed to AIBS's mission, vision, and goals?
- Do you want to connect with students with similar interests, both at your institution and at other institutions?
- Do you want to become part of the larger community of biologists?
- Do you want access to great benefits and resources, including a subscription to a scientific journal and program funds?
- Are you already a member of an established biology club that wants access to all these resources?

If so, apply to start an AIBS student chapter today!

AIBS student chapters exist to:

- Provide advice, encouragement, and career resources for students in the biological sciences.
- Introduce students and faculty to resources offered by AIBS.
- Facilitate educational and outreach activities to promote camaraderie among biology students while advancing interest in and enhancing understanding of the biological sciences throughout the community.
- Build relationships and networking opportunities with AIBS members and student chapters at other institutions.

### **Benefits for AIBS Student Chapters**

- Each chapter receives up to five free personal subscriptions to the AIBS journal, *BioScience*.
- Chapter members are invited to attend AIBS events held in Washington DC and elsewhere.
  - Event registration fees are waived for each chapter's dues-paying student chapter representative (SCR) to AIBS.
  - Funding is available from AIBS through a competitive program (the application deadline is the end of December of the preceding year) to pay the travel and accommodation expenses for one chapter's SCR to attend one AIBS event each year:
    - the AIBS annual meeting
    - the meeting of the AIBS Council of member societies and organizations
    - another AIBS meeting, conference, or symposium
- Funding is available from AIBS through a competitive program (the application deadline is the end of December of the preceding year) through which chapters may submit proposals for AIBS to fund activities, such as invited speakers, field trips, conferences, fundraisers, community events, or other research, education, or outreach projects.
  - Seed funds of a few hundred dollars per project are awarded to support the chapter activities.
  - A tally of how the funds were spent is submitted to AIBS with the annual chapter report the following June.
- Each chapter receives a certificate or plaque welcoming the group as an AIBS student chapter.
- A section in *BioScience* is available for chapters to publish reports on their activities.
- Chapters are listed on the AIBS website, with links to chapter websites.
- An electronic discussion list connects AIBS student chapter members with each other and with the broader AIBS community, linking individuals or institutions seeking, for example, to recruit graduate students or summer interns.

## Requirements and Standards of Conduct for AIBS Student Chapters

Chapters represent AIBS on their college or university campus and are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity according to the following AIBS requirements and standards.

### *Advance the AIBS mission, vision, and goals*

AIBS student chapters and their members must adhere to the AIBS mission, vision, and goals, fully stated online ([www.aibs.org/about-aibs/mission\\_statement.html](http://www.aibs.org/about-aibs/mission_statement.html)) and summarized elsewhere in this handbook as a dedication to advancing research and education in biology for the welfare of society and seeking natural explanations for the evolution and diversity of life on earth.

### *Observe the AIBS code of ethics*

AIBS believes that a code of ethics is basic to the conduct of science and essential to the maintenance of an honorable and respectable profession. As scientists in training, the members of AIBS student chapters shall conduct their professional lives in accordance with the ethics standards stated below (see also [www.aibs.org/about-aibs/ethics\\_statement.html](http://www.aibs.org/about-aibs/ethics_statement.html)).

- Conduct research and teaching in a manner that is consistent with accepted scientific and teaching methods, maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all professional endeavors.
- Comply with all laws and regulations that apply to the treatment of study organisms and other aspects of professional conduct.
- Expose scientific fraud and other forms of professional misconduct whenever it is found.
- Be civil and respectful in professional interactions, avoiding discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age. Treat colleagues, students, and employees fairly.
- Be constructive and professional in evaluating the work of colleagues, students, and employees.
- Provide recognition of past and present contributions of others to science, and present one's professional opinions only on those topics for which one has training and knowledge.
- Promote the free and open exchange of information, and avoid withholding information to substantiate a personal or scientific point of

view.

- Be candid about potential conflicts of interest in the conduct of professional duties.
- Do not speak on behalf of AIBS without written permission from its president.

**Note:** AIBS reserves the right to rescind student chapter status if AIBS determines, in its sole authority, that a chapter or its representatives acting on its behalf show disregard for AIBS student chapter requirements and standards of conduct.

### **Additional Requirements**

- The chapter is formed on the campus of an accredited institution that offers programs of study in the biological sciences. The institution must recognize the chapter as a student organization.
- The chapter selects a faculty advisor who is a faculty or academic staff member in a biological discipline.
- The chapter selects one of its members to serve as the student chapter representative (SCR) to AIBS. The SCR must enroll as an individual dues-paying member of AIBS at the prevailing student rate each year. The remaining chapter members are not required to enroll as dues-paying members of AIBS, nor is the chapter required to pay chapter dues to AIBS. The chapter may, at its discretion, collect fees from its own members to support chapter activities.
- The chapter uses “[Name of Institution] AIBS Student Chapter” in its name.

### **How to Form a Student Chapter**

There is no minimum number of people needed to start a chapter, although six is recommended. If you are having trouble finding interested students, the following tips may be useful:

- Partner up with any existing biology-related club or organization on campus.
- Advertise on campus bulletin boards.
- Contact faculty in the biology department, who may know students who may be interested.
- Make an announcement in your science classes, and ask faculty members to make announcements in their biology courses.

Once you have organized an interested group of students and an advisor, please send a letter on institutional letterhead, mailed or sent as an attachment via email, to:

Susan Musante  
Education and Outreach Program Manager  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
1444 Eye St. NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005  
phone: 202-628-1500 x249  
fax: 202-628-1509  
[smusante@aibs.org](mailto:smusante@aibs.org)  
[www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org)

Make sure that your letter includes:

- A brief explanation of why chapter status is being sought.
- An indication of acceptance of the AIBS mission and chapter requirements, stated above.
- The names and signatures of the chapter's president, student chapter representative, and faculty advisor.
- Up to five names and mailing addresses to which the chapter's five complimentary *BioScience* subscriptions are to be sent. Note: SCR receives a subscription to *BioScience* as part of his/her paid AIBS individual membership.
- Email addresses of those students who wish to be added to the electronic discussion list.

Each chapter submits a written report to AIBS at the end of June each year describing the chapter's activities over the last 12 months, such as invited speakers, conferences, fundraisers, community events, trips, and other research, education, or outreach projects.

Tips and suggestions for activities:

- Visit a local science museum, zoo, nature center, or research institute.
- Host a lecture series, featuring professors from your institution or local or regional professionals in the biological sciences.
- Connect with a local school or youth center and develop ways for members to serve as mentors to young students interested in science.

### **Student Chapter Bylaws**

Each AIBS student chapter should have a written set of rules that serve as the primary bylaws for the chapter. These describe duties of officers, chapter

procedures, and general governance. Feel free to use the following draft bylaws as a guide when constructing your own:

## **Bylaws of the [Name of Institution] Student Chapter of the American Institute of Biological Sciences**

### Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the [Name of Institution] Student Chapter of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

### Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this student chapter is to promote the mission of the American Institute of Biological Sciences at our institution, and to serve as a resource for students interested in the biological sciences.

### Article III. Membership

Membership is open to any full-time student interested in the biological sciences.

### Article IV. Officers

The officers of this chapter shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a student chapter representative to AIBS. The officers shall be elected at the first meeting in [month] from nominees chosen by [nominations from the floor, a nominating committee, etc.]. They shall take office in [month] and shall hold office for one year or until their successors are duly elected.

### Article V. Duties of Officers

**President:** Presides over chapter meetings, represents chapter at any outside meetings and functions. Takes lead in planning all chapter events and activities.

**Vice president:** Presides over chapter meetings in the absence of the president. Works closely with president in planning chapter events and activities.

**Secretary:** Records and keeps meeting minutes, chapter roster, and all chapter paperwork.

**Treasurer:** Collects and records dues and funds. Prepares budget for any chapter activities.

**Student chapter representative:** Dues-paying member of AIBS. Acts as main liaison between AIBS and student chapter.

## Article VI. Faculty Advisor

The individual identified during initial chapter application will continue to serve as faculty advisor. In the event of a vacancy, the chapter officers will work to identify and select a new advisor. The advisor's duties will be to advise the chapter both in its local activities and in its relations with AIBS. The advisor shall be kept informed of all chapter activities and shall advise the chapter on any policy matters.

## Article VII. Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held [on the first Tuesday of each month, once a month, etc.]. Special events may be arranged through chapter officers. There shall be at least \_\_ activities per year.

## Article VIII. Annual Reports

The chapter officers are responsible for drafting an annual report, to be submitted to the AIBS Education and Outreach Program Manager no later than the 5th of June each year.

**Please complete this page, detach and return to the address at the bottom of the page. Chapters that do not meet this requirement may lose their status as official AIBS Student Chapters.**

We have received and reviewed the American Institute of Biological Sciences Student Chapter handbook. We hereby acknowledge and accept the AIBS mission and goals as stated therein, and agree to observe the AIBS code of ethics. Furthermore, we understand that any action taken by the chapter that is in violation of these policies may result in loss of chapter status.

**Name of Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)      \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)      \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Chapter president:** \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)      \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)      \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Student Chapter Rep:** \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)      \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)      \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Return completed sheet to:**

Abraham Parker  
Education and Outreach Program Associate  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
1444 Eye St. NW Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005  
[aparker@aibs.org](mailto:aparker@aibs.org)