

Official Constitution and Bylaws of the Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology (WSCB) is a statewide chapter deriving from the National Society for Conservation Biology. Together, SCB is a nation of more than 6,000 members strong; spanning from renowned research institutions and are conservationists and/or Department of Interior professionals looking to get involved with conservation while remaining nonpartisan. The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter promotes the science and practice of conservation throughout Wisconsin through networking events, lectures, fundraising for conservation-based groups, outreach, education, conservation related certifications, and volunteer work, while also maintaining the connection to the national chapter. The purpose of the Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter is to promote professional development and build a foundation in conservation practices that supports our members with their future goals in this diverse field.

As stated on the WSCB page of the SCB website: “The Wisconsin Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology continues Wisconsin’s deep legacy of conservation, building on the groundwork laid by influential environmentalists such as Aldo Leopold and Gaylord Nelson, among many others.

WSCB is a statewide chapter of the international professional organization, the Society for Conservation Biology. We are a non-profit organization (Taxpayer ID #33-0147824) with tax-exempt status granted under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Our mission is to foster collaborative relationships among conservation professionals, NGO and agency leaders, higher education faculty, and students throughout the state of Wisconsin. Through an open platform centered around awareness of conservation issues in Wisconsin and worldwide, we aim to:

- Promote an interdisciplinary and integrative approach to conservation biology
- Advance and articulate conservation and science-based positions on matters of public policy
- Develop professional skills and leadership opportunities for conservation practitioners and students
- Engage with a wide audience on important conservation issues
- Promote engagement in society and chapter activities

This document of the constitution and bylaws is specific to the opportunities and needs of the WSCB Student Chapter at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This document has been updated August of 2022.



Article I. **MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1 Student Chapter Membership

Any member of the Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter must be a University of Wisconsin – Madison Student. Members may be of undergraduate or graduate standing. Members do not need to be in the Conservation Biology Major to participate. Any student of any study may join. Membership is voluntary, meaning no meetings or events are required; members may be as involved as they wish. There is no fee to join WSCB. Per the University of Wisconsin – Madison Center for Leadership and Involvement, at least 75% of members must be students at the university.

Section 2 Voting Member

Any current member of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) who has an interest in the objectives and the activities of the Chapter may vote. Our primary voting opportunity is held in the spring semester when the following year's Executive Board is being chosen. Only voting members may be elected to the Chapter's Board of Directors and vote on official matters affecting the Chapter. If the Chapter assesses dues, all voting members shall be responsible for payment.

Section 3 Expulsion/Grounds for Termination of Membership in the Chapter

Chapter membership shall terminate upon the occurrence of any of the following events: (1) Upon member's notice of such termination delivered to any Executive Board member as long as the president is also notified. (2) Upon a chapter member's lapse of membership with WSCB. Or (3) upon a determination by WSCB's Executive Board that the member has engaged in conduct materially and seriously prejudicial to the interests of purposes of WSCB.

Section 4 Non-Discrimination Clause

Student organizations that select their members or officers on the basis of commitment to a set of beliefs (e.g., religious or political beliefs) may limit membership, officer positions, or participation in the organization to students who affirm that they support the organization's goals and agree with its beliefs, so long as no student is excluded from membership, officer positions, or participation on the basis of his or her race, color, creed other than commitment to the beliefs of the organization, religion, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, or, unless exempt under Title IX, sex.

This policy is in addition to other requirements for the official recognition of student organizations set forth in UW System or institutional policy documents, except that, to the extent that such UW System or institutional policy documents are inconsistent with this policy statement, they are superseded.



Article II. **BOARD OF DIRECTORS (EXECUTIVE BOARD)**

Section 1 Voting Board Members

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter shall be governed by a Board of Directors (Executive Board) with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 directors, each of whom must be a voting member of the Chapter. All Officers must be UW-Madison Students enrolled at least half time (6 credits for undergraduates and 3 for graduates).

One Executive Board Officer will have the role as the Chairperson of the Conservation Committee. This will be the Certification Coordinator, unless decided otherwise by the Executive Board. The Executive Board for the upcoming school year will be voted on towards the end of the spring semester. Any UW-Madison student may apply for a position, whether they have been involved with WSCB in the past or not. Current or past officers may also re-apply. Once all applications are submitted, a voting forum will be posted on social media and emailed to members for voting.

If an Officer vacates their position, the rest of the Executive Board shall decide whether the duties of that Officer will be split up between remaining Officers or if the position shall be open for applications for the remaining school year. This is not the case for the President (See Section 5).

Section 2 Ex-officio (non-voting) Board Members

With the exception of the Chairperson of the Conservation Committee, Committee Chairpersons serve as ex-officio Board Members and represent those Committees to the Board (Article V). Ex-officio Members shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board.

Section 3 Terms of Office

Terms of office for Executive Board Officers are one year. Specifically, from the end of one spring semester to the next. Current or previous Executive Board Officers may re-apply during spring elections like other applicants. If an Executive Board Officer is only available for one semester, that must be approved by the other Executive Board Officers. The President must be available the entire year. If in a rare case the president is not able to complete the school year, the Vice President will take on the duties and official title of the President unless decided upon otherwise by the other Executive Board Officers.

Section 4 Actions of the Executive Board

All actions and decisions of the Executive Board shall be by majority vote at meetings. All decisions must be made by students. All Executive Board Officers are not limited to their specified position and may collaborate and share duties as long as their assigned position is held as a priority.

Section 5 Vacancies



If in a rare case the president is not able to complete the school year, the Vice President will take on the duties and official title of the President unless decided upon otherwise by the other Executive Board Officers. In all other vacancies by other Officers, the rest of the Executive Board shall decide whether the duties of that Officer will be split up between remaining Officers or if the position shall be open for applications for the remaining school year.

Section 6 Removal

Executive Board members may be terminated by a majority vote at a meeting at which the rest of the Executive Board is present. The WSCB Advisor will also be involved in the decision.

Section 7 Student Leadership

Leaders of the Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter will be students and members of the Student and Wisconsin chapter. The president of the Student Chapter will have a seat on the board of directors of the Wisconsin Chapter.

Article III. DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

Section 1 President

The President is responsible for organizing and presiding over meetings, working with the Treasurer on finances, assisting the Secretary with Social Media and the Website (if needed), checking and sending emails to members, and being the primary contact. The President, along with the Treasurer, will have a WSCB Debit Card.

Only the President may officially represent the Chapter on Chapter business, including representing the Chapter to SCB, unless the President designates a representative for a specific purpose. The President also ensures that each Executive Board Officer is aware of and able to perform their responsibilities.

The president is also in charge of following standard compliance procedures to become a Registered Student Organization of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and updates the Chapter constitution and bylaws as necessary, as well as addressing accommodations for accessibility. The President coordinates attendance of the Fall and Spring Student Organization Fairs and organizes the design and purchasing of any WSCB merchandise, including stickers, pins and t-shirts.

Section 2 Vice-President

The Vice-President shall receive reports from committees, arrange meetings and other activities, and perform the duties of the President when the latter is absent. The Vice-President oversees elections and may check and respond to emails.

The Vice-President is in charge of obtaining any supplies needed and reserving spaces for meetings and activities. The Vice-President shall update the Wisconsin Involvement Network (WIN) WSCB website by timely adding events and pictures.



When there is no Treasurer selected, the Vice-President shall collaborate with the President to fulfill the Treasurer Duties; the Vice President will be granted access to a Debit Card.

Section 3 Secretary

The Secretary records meeting minutes and keeps WSCB's plans organized and updated, including the Annual Organizational Plan (Article VII). The Secretary administers correspondence between the Chapter and the Society and maintains historical records and a roster of members.

The Secretary is the primary social media manager and keeps the website updated. The Secretary is responsible for keeping our social media accounts active both on Instagram and Facebook, and any other social media created in the future. Social media posts should be *at least* twice a month. Social media posts can include: WSCB updates, meeting information, fundraiser opportunities, volunteer opportunities, certification opportunities, member accomplishments, photos from meetings, or other media seen to fit WSCB at UW-Madison.

Section 4 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall collect dues (if any), maintain accounts, be the head of fundraising, apply to grants, and collect and distribute funds for all activities. The Treasurer will keep finances organized and updated. The Treasurer, along with the President, will have a WSCB Debit Card. The Treasurer must go over finances with the President at the end of each semester.

At each Chapter Meeting, the Treasurer shall report to the Board and the membership the financial activities and status of the Chapter. The Treasurer will also ensure that the Chapter complies with all SCB financial and fundraising guidelines per the Chapter Handbook (Article XI, Section 2).

Section 5 Events Coordinator

The Events Coordinator shall organize guest speakers for meetings, volunteering events, local conservation education opportunities, and field trips.

Section 6 Certification Coordinator

The Certification Coordinator shall find and promote opportunities for professional certifications and ensure that members are consistently informed on upcoming events. These include Chainsaw, Firearm Safety, Crosscut Saw, Prescribed Fire, SCUBA, and others. These should be updated on the website with the help of the Secretary if needed.

The Certification Coordinator promotes fundraising to acquire student scholarship opportunities for certification and assists members in academic class selection and career exploration. The Certification Coordinator is also the chairperson of the Conservation Committee and is responsible for sharing current conservation news and updating such on the website (see Article V, Section 2).



Section 7 Student Duties

The student chapter will have a similar hierarchy of positions – including President, Vice president, Secretary, Treasurer, Events Coordinator, and Certification Coordinator. The President will be a Board of Directors member and is responsible for going to the meetings with the other board members. The president is the liaison between the Wisconsin Chapter and the students. Other position duties are the same as the state chapter.

Article IV. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1 Nominations

Nominations for Executive Board Officers shall be solicited by the Vice-President. Nominees must inform the Vice-President of interest. It is not required that nominees are current or previous members of WSCB. All UW-Madison students are eligible to run for one Executive Board position.

Though previous club experience is not required, it may be beneficial in the running. A list of nominees shall be submitted by the Vice-President or President to the Chapter membership, at least 10 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Nominations and Elections occur near the end of the spring semester.

Section 2 Balloting

At each Annual Business Meeting (end of spring semester), ballots shall be received from voting members by the Vice-President and shall be counted by the Vice-President. The President shall appoint a replacement to count ballots if the Vice-President has been nominated. The candidates receiving the largest number of votes on the ballots shall be declared elected to the Board.

If there are few applications or there is no competition for a position, the sole applicant who applied shall get the position they have applied for. In some cases with very few applicants and a common interest for a single position, the current Executive Board may decide on the best fit for that position, and offer other open positions to the others. In cases like this, positions may be debated and decided upon by the applicants.

Section 3 Special Elections

A special election to elect Executive Board members may be held at any time during a period of inactivity (Article XII) to reactivate the Chapter or a specific Officer position.

Section 4 Student Elections

Elections will take place towards the end of the spring semester for the next school year. Elections will run in the same fashion as the state Chapter and may be held in person and/or virtually.



Article V. COMMITTEES

Section 1 Formation of Committees

The Board and the Chapter membership may at any time decide to form a Committee to address a particular issue. Committees shall be chaired by a voting Chapter member appointed by the President and approved by the Board. The term of a committee chairperson shall expire when the term of the President appointing such person expires, and the new President shall either appoint a new committee chairperson or reappoint the existing committee chairperson, subject to approval by the Board. The Committee Chairperson shall be responsible for appointing the other members of the Committee. Committees shall be made up of interested individuals of the Board and the Chapter membership. Committees should address findings and queries to the Vice-President of the Board. All Committees shall, at all times, be accountable to the Board. Committee progress and activities shall be reviewed at the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 2 Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee shall be a standing committee that shall keep Chapter members informed about current conservation issues on a local, regional, or global scale. The Chairperson of the Conservation Committee (The Certification Coordinator, unless decided upon otherwise) will report at Chapter meetings.

Section 3 Additional Standing Committees

The Board and the Chapter membership may create additional Standing Committees for the purpose of achieving long-term goals of the Chapter. Standing Committees might include the following: Education, Public Advocacy, Membership Development, Fundraising, Outreach, and Events.

Section 4 Ad-hoc Committees

The Board and the Chapter membership may create Ad-hoc Committees as they deem necessary and prudent. Ad-hoc Committees are developed to fulfill short-term needs and projects of the Chapter. Ad-hoc Committees are normally focused and active for the duration of the project. Examples of Ad-hoc Committees include the following: Special Programs, Meetings/Symposia, Career Development, Board Nominations, and Financial Audit.

Article VI. FINANCES

Section 1 Funding

The Chapter shall be supported by annual dues, grants, contributions, and/or fundraising activities. The membership shall decide whether to assess dues and, if so, the amount and frequency.



Section 2 Decision-making Procedures

Funds of the Chapter shall be under the supervision of the Executive Board and shall be handled by the Treasurer. The procedures for making financial decisions (annual dues, grants, contributions, and/or fundraising) shall be determined by the Executive Board, in compliance with all guidance contained in the Chapter Handbook (Article XI, Section 2).

Article VII. ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter shall develop an Annual Organizational Plan at the Annual Business Meeting. The Organizational Plan is a working document for Chapter activities throughout the year and shall include, but not be limited to, the following: Current standing committees and their purpose; Ad-hoc committees and their purpose; and Proposed events and plans for the coming year. This Plan or its contents shall be posted on the Chapter's website and/or distributed through the Chapter's main communication venue. The Organizational Plan will be created and maintained by the Secretary.

Article VIII. QUOTA AND PROXIES

A quorum of 50% of the voting Chapter membership or 10 voting Chapter members, whichever is lower, is required for any vote of the Chapter membership. If specified by the Executive Board, voting Chapter members who are absent may file an absentee ballot or vote by proxy. Voting may be done via online or in-person forums.

Article IX. MEETINGS

Section 1 Notice and Meeting Logistics

Notices for all meetings shall be posted on the Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter website, all social media accounts, and emailed to members at least one week in advance.

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter and SCB business will be discussed at all meetings in addition to any scheduled program. If specified by the Board, meetings may be held in person, by telephone or videophone conference call, or by other electronic means.

Section 2 Annual Business Meeting

An Annual Business Meeting shall be held annually on approximately the same date each year (near the end of the spring semester). Elections of the Executive Board Officers will take place at this meeting. The frequency, time, and proposed content of Regular Meetings for the year shall be decided by the membership at this time.



Section 3 Regular Meetings

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter shall hold Regular Meetings throughout the year. The business portion of any meeting will be run by the President. The Chapter's bylaws, Chapter Agreement, and Chapter Handbook will be available at each meeting. The Chairperson of the Conservation Committee must be appointed by the close of the first Regular Meeting of the year. There will be at least one meeting or event per month of the academic year.

Article X. PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

The Chapter may engage in Public Policy Advocacy subject to the conditions described below.

Section 1 Definition and Limitations

Public Policy Advocacy is defined in the Chapter Handbook (Article XI, Section 2). Public Policy Advocacy by the Chapter shall not include participation or intervention (including the publication or distribution of statements) in any political campaign in support of or in opposition to any candidate for public office, or that provides a selective benefit to any political party or candidate, and the Chapter shall not engage in such participation or intervention.

Section 2 Membership Input

Procedures for membership involvement in position statements are contained in the Chapter Handbook (Article XI, Section 2). New Proposed Positions must be made available for comment to the chapter members with the following: (1) a statement of the relationship of the Position to the objectives of SCB; (2) a statement of the need for the Position; (3) scientific documentation concerning the related circumstances; (4) examples of possible recipients or targets (including any legislative or regulatory bodies) of the Position; and (5) the strategy and initial list of actions to be taken in relation to the Position.

Section 3 Policy Development and Approval

Chapters will adhere to the development and approvals processes required by the Society before publishing, publicizing, or adopting any new policy statement. These processes are outlined in the Chapter Handbook (Article XI, Section 2).

Section 4 Recordkeeping and Reporting

All expenditures of chapter funds for lobbying and grassroots lobbying shall be recorded by the Chapter Treasurer and reported to the EO. Refer to the Chapter Handbook for the most up-to-date reporting requirements (Article XI, Section 2).



Article XI. AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CHAPTER AND SCB

Section 1 Chapter's Relationship with SCB

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter's relationship with SCB is governed by a Chapter Agreement entered into by the Chapter and SCB.

Section 2 Chapter Handbook

The Executive Office of SCB maintains a Handbook to support Chapters in their work and also to inform them of current operational policies of the parent organization. This Handbook can be found on the Chapters website and at the EO, and is part of the Chapter Agreement. The Chapter shall adhere to all policies set forth within the Handbook to maintain compliance with SCB policies as such policies may be updated from time to time by SCB. It is the responsibility of the Chapter to obtain the most current version from the SCB website or EO.

Section 3 Annual Registration

The Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology Student Chapter shall register annually during the Annual Registration period to confirm that the Chapter is currently active and in good standing. If the Chapter is unregistered for two consecutive years, then SCB may terminate the Chapter Agreement in accordance with the terms of that Agreement.

Article XII. SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF SCB CHAPTER STATUS

Chapter's status as an SCB Chapter may be suspended due to inactivity or terminated in accordance with the Chapter Agreement.

Article XIII. AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Section 1 Procedure

Proposals to modify the Chapter constitution and bylaws must be approved by a majority of the voting Chapter members present and voting at any scheduled meeting of the Chapter. The constitution and bylaws must also be approved by the Center for Leadership and Involvement as well as the club advisor.

Section 2 Conformance

No amendment to this constitution and bylaws shall be enacted that results in a conflict with the bylaws of SCB. Proposed amendments to the Chapter bylaws must be approved by SCB's Board of Governors before becoming effective.

