

NIH Fellows Committee

Bylaws

Revised February 2008

1. General

- a. These bylaws and additional policies and procedures will take effect on September 1, 2007.
- b. Each current member of the Fellows Committee must be familiar with these bylaws and agree that their activities as members are bound by them.
- c. When significant changes are made in the bylaws, all members of the Fellows Committee must have ready access to the revised text.

2. Organization

The NIH Fellows Committee consists of two members from each of the Institutes and Centers of the NIH. The committee is organized as follows:

- a. Co-chairpersons:
 1. Two co-chairpersons will be elected by the membership of the committee. It is recommended that there be one clinical and one basic science co-chair.
 2. The co-chairpersons should be elected for an annual term. Therefore, if one of the co-chair leaves in the middle of his/her term, the replacement would be co-chair for a full year from the month that he/she started.
 3. Each co-chairperson will serve in that position for a period of 12 months.
 4. One co-chairperson will serve as chair for each scheduled meeting. The co-chairpersons may share this responsibility equally if they desire.
 5. The co-chairs will be either IC-appointed or at-large FelCom representatives.
- b. Secretaries:
 1. The co-chairpersons shall solicit volunteers to serve as membership and administrative secretaries. If more than one member volunteers, the position will be filled by a simple majority vote by the membership of the committee.
 2. The membership secretary shall be responsible for keeping meeting attendance, communicating with members regarding unexcused absences, notifying SDs of vacancies on the committee, welcoming new members, and following-up with members who renew their terms.
 3. The administrative secretary shall be responsible for keeping the minutes of meetings and posting them on the FelCom web page. The administrative secretary shall also be responsible for keeping the FelCom membership list and subcommittee lists updated on the FelCom web page.
 4. The membership and administrative secretaries shall be considered a team and perform the duties of the other when one secretary cannot attend a monthly meeting.
 5. FelCom members serving as secretaries are exempt from the requirement of serving on subcommittees.
 6. The secretaries will be reappointed as necessary.
 7. The secretaries will be either IC-appointed or at-large FelCom representatives.
- c. FelCom officers consist of the basic science co-chair, clinical co-chair, administrative secretary, and membership secretary

3. Membership

- a. All postdoctoral level intramural NIH fellows are eligible for membership on the NIH Fellows Committee.
- b. There are two types of FelCom representatives:
 - 1. IC-appointed representatives are those that are selected and appointed by the Scientific Director, Clinical Director, or Training Director of their IC. Each IC is encouraged to appoint up to 2 representatives per year, preferably one basic science and one clinical.
 - 2. At-large representatives are those that have volunteered to become involved in a FelCom subcommittee or as a FelCom liaison; their appointment to FelCom will be done through the Postdoctoral Services Director of the Office of Intramural Training and Education.
 - 3. Both IC-appointed and at-large representatives agree to miss no more than a total of 4 FelCom meetings per year and must notify the membership secretary if they are going to be absent from a meeting. Additionally, both IC-appointed and at-large representatives agree to one year commitment to FelCom.
 - 4. Both IC-appointed and at-large FelCom representatives have voting rights if the above terms have been satisfactorily met.
- c. Special volunteers are fellows that have volunteered to help with a specific FelCom subcommittee only for a defined length of time, but do not have to abide by the one-year commitment and absentee policy. Special volunteers do not have voting privileges. Special volunteers are not required to attend FelCom meetings.

4. Appointment

- a. Appointments to the Fellows Committee will be made upon recommendation by the appropriate Scientific Director for IC-Appointed Representatives. At-Large representatives may request appointment through the Postdoctoral Services Director of the OITE.
- b. Appointments are for a period of 12 months. Members may have an appointment renewed for an additional year. Members must notify the appropriate SD or OITE, the Felcom membership secretary, and the FelCom Co-chairpersons two months prior to the expiration of a term to allow sufficient time for selection of a replacement. This notification should occur at the time of a scheduled committee meeting. Fellows who are unable to complete their term for any reason should immediately notify the appropriate SD “in writing”. If a FelCom representative is elected to an officer’s position during their time of appointment, their Institute/Center may appoint an additional representative during this time. This is to ensure the FelCom officers have sufficient time to devote to their position, yet the Institute/Center still has adequate representation on FelCom.
- c. Method of Appointment for IC-Appointed Representatives: To ensure that every fellow has the opportunity to serve as his/her Institutes/Centers (IC's) representative, the following method of appointment will be followed:
 - 1. Two months prior to the end of a term or immediately for unexpected vacancies, a standardized memo will be sent to each fellow of the particular IC notifying them of the vacancy. This standardized memo will be forwarded by the current

- representative with instructions for those interested in filling the position. Interested fellows must respond no later than fifteen working days after the memo is sent.
2. After all potential members have responded, the current representative(s) from the particular IC will take the list to the SD, who will then appoint a new member.
 3. If no interested fellows are identified, the appropriate Scientific Director will be notified in writing by the membership secretary and will be asked to appoint a new member within one month following the date of notification.
- d. Continued Appointment: To remain in good standing members must attend or be excused from all scheduled monthly meetings. Excused absences (see below) should be coordinated with the membership secretary & co-chairpersons, preferably in advance.
1. Excused absences include but are not limited to annual, sick, or maternity leave; attendance at scientific meetings, or patient care. Excused absences will not be considered a missed meeting.
 2. If a member has two unexcused absences, he/she will be notified in writing by the membership secretary that he/she is no longer in good standing and are being considered for dismissal from the Committee. If the individual does not respond or provide good reason for the absences, immediate removal from the Committee will be warranted, along with a letter sent to the appropriate SD indicating the need for a replacement.

5. Responsibilities

- a. NIH Administration: All levels of the NIH administration should be accessible to representatives of the Fellows Committee.
- b. Scientific Directors: Scientific Directors should
 1. Ensure that their IC has 2 representatives appointed to the Committee at all times.
 2. Support the IC's representatives to the Fellows Committee as required.
- c. Office of Intramural Training and Education: The Office of Intramural Training and Education should offer logistical support (staff permitting) to Committee-sponsored special events:
- d. Fellows Committee Co-Chairpersons
 1. Communicate with all levels of the NIH administration involved in policy decisions regarding fellows.
 2. Ensure that NIH Fellows Committee members are notified of the time and location of monthly meetings.
 3. Conduct scheduled monthly meetings of the Fellows Committee in accordance with the guidelines herein.
 4. Ensure that information from Fellows Committee meetings is communicated to all NIH fellows. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Minutes of monthly meetings and subcommittee reports are posted on the Felcom website
 - ii. Items of special interest to all NIH fellows such as Fellows Committee sponsored events distributed via electronic bulletin board, *NIH Record* and *Catalyst*, and outside the Office of Intramural Training and Education
 - iii. Committee members who have two unexcused absences notified of their dismissal from the committee.

- e. Fellows Committee Members
 1. Attend all scheduled meetings.
 2. Participate on at least one SubCommittee
 2. Ensure that pertinent information is disseminated to the fellows in their IC.
 3. Communicate concerns to the committee from those fellows whom they represent.
 4. Coordinate distribution of information through specific SubCommittees
- f. Secretary: Secretarial duties will be divided between the administrative and membership secretaries. The membership secretary shall be responsible for keeping attendance, communicating with members regarding unexcused absences, notifying SDs of vacancies on the committee, welcoming new members, and following-up with members who renew their terms. The administrative secretary shall be responsible for keeping the FelCom membership list and subcommittee lists up to date on the FelCom web page as well as keeping and posting the minutes for the monthly FelCom meetings.

6. Conduct of Meetings

- a. **Time and Place:** The regular meetings of the NIH Fellows Committee shall be held on the first Thursday of every month at 4:00 p.m. unless otherwise determined by the NIH Fellows Committee or by the co-chairpersons. If available, videoconferencing will be provided at the monthly meetings
- b. **Quorum:** Fifty percent or more of the current eligible voting membership of the committee shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be necessary to vote on proposed motions and to amend the Committee's Bylaws. The requirement for a quorum shall be effective in January 2001.
- c. **Order of Business:**
 1. The chair shall call the meeting to order.
 2. Special announcements from the Office of Intramural Training & Education or the Committee secretaries will be made.
 3. Program. Presentations from other organizations for distribution to NIH fellows will be made.
 4. Reports of FelCom SubCommittees will be announced.
 5. General orders or unfinished business will be presented.
 6. New business will be addressed.
 7. Announcements will be made.
 8. Adjournment of the meeting will be last.
- d. **Motions:** A motion may arise as a result of a special representative's or committee's report or under unfinished or new business. The steps to be taken are as follows:
 1. A member makes a motion.
 2. Another member seconds the motion.
 3. The chair states the question on the motion and presents the motion for consideration by the assembly.
 4. Members debate the motion.
 5. The chair puts the question to a vote.
 6. The chair announces the result of the vote. In cases where no opposition to the motion is expected, the chair may save time by obtaining general or unanimous

consent. To obtain general consent, the chair states "If there is no objection . . ." If no member calls out "I object", the chair announces the action as decided upon.

- e. Debate, Assignment of the Floor: Before a member can make a motion or speak in a debate, he or she must obtain the floor by being recognized by the chair. While a motion is open to debate, the floor should be assigned as follows:
 - 1. The member who made the motion may claim the floor first.
 - 2. No one is entitled to the floor a second time in debate on the same motion, as long as any other member who has not spoken on this motion desires the floor.
 - 3. If the chair knows that persons seeking the floor have opposite opinions on the question, he or she should let the floor alternate between those favoring and those opposing.
- f. Voting: Motions shall carry if they receive a majority vote. All regular members present who are in good standing may vote. The chair may choose whether or not to vote and can vote (but is not obliged to) whenever their vote will affect the result, such as to break or cause a tie. A motion receiving a tie vote will be rejected.

7. Subcommittees

- a. Subcommittees shall be created by nomination and majority vote of those present at the regular monthly meeting, to investigate and recommend action on matters that concern the NIH Fellows Committee.
- b. The subcommittees will be comprised of volunteers from the NIH Fellows Committee membership and any special volunteers. Each subcommittee will have at least one chair who is an IC-Appointed or At-Large Representative who will report to the FelCom co-chairs. Subcommittee chair positions will be for a term of one year and upcoming vacancies will be announced at the FelCom meeting one month before the end of the term. Replacement for the co-chair positions will be decided upon by the current subcommittee.
- c. The duties of a subcommittee and its power to act on certain decisions shall be outlined at its formation and shall be approved by the Committee.
- d. There will be two types of subcommittees that may be formed:
 - 1. Standing subcommittees:
 - 2. Ad hoc subcommittees:
 - i. At its formation, an ad hoc subcommittee shall be given a specific period of time to complete its task.
 - ii. If the ad hoc subcommittee cannot complete the task within the appointed time, the co-chairs may consider extending the appointment time or dissolving the subcommittee with the approval of the NIH Fellows Committee "membership".
 - iii. All subcommittees shall report to the co-chairs during the monthly meeting of the NIH Fellows Committee membership.
- e. All subcommittees shall submit a written report to the co-chairs before the monthly meeting of the NIH Fellows Committee membership. The written reports will be compiled by the co-chairs and distributed at or before the NIH Fellows Committee meeting. Time permitting, and depending on the content/impact of the progress report, the subcommittees shall give an oral report to the NIH Fellows Committee membership.

f. Current SubCommittees include the following:

i. **Career Development Committee:**

The goal of the Career Development Subcommittee is to educate NIH fellows regarding the career opportunities that are available within and outside of the NIH system. Through a year long seminar series, this subcommittee provides fellows with information regarding survival skills for their post-graduate work as well as skills needed for making the transition from training positions to various professional areas of interest. It is also the intent of the subcommittee to provide extensive information regarding varied career interests that include the pursuit of academic tenure-track positions, industrial positions, administrative positions, and alternative careers. This subcommittee also assists other subcommittees and NIH entities that involve or require career development for NIH fellows.

ii. **Clinical Fellows Committee:** The Clinical Fellows Committee (ClinFelCom) is co-chaired by the Clinical Chair of FelCom and the FelCom MEC representative. The other members of ClinFelCom include all of the clinical fellows on FelCom, the two FelCom GMEC reps and the DCTA reps. ClinFelCom holds quarterly meetings with the Director of the Clinical Center to address issues of concern related to Clinical Fellows, clinical fellowships, patient care, and clinical research at the Clinical Center. Prior to each meeting, the co-chairs solicit agenda items from the Clinical Fellows community at large. All clinical fellows are invited to attend Quarterly meetings, and attendance is required for clinical fellows on Felcom.

iii. **Distinguished Clinical Teacher Award Committee:** The Fellows Committee will solicit nominations from all NIH fellows for the Distinguished Clinical Teacher Award. The following process will occur:

1. In June of each year, notices will be placed in the *NIH Catalyst* and *NIH Record*, and posted on bulletin boards throughout the NIH campus soliciting nominations for the award.
2. Nominations will be no more than a single page in length detailing the nominees' contributions to clinical teaching. These should be typed, signed by the submitting fellow, and submitted to the Office of Intramural Training & Education.
3. Nominations for the award will be accepted for 4 to 6 weeks following the solicitation.
4. The co-chairpersons will review the submissions and present their findings to the committee membership. The co-chairpersons may suggest an overwhelming choice or may suggest a vote by the membership if several nominees appear equally deserving.
5. Following selection, the Office of Intramural Training and Education will notify the recipient regarding the details of the presentation.
6. The award will be presented by the co-chairpersons.

iv. **Fellows Award for Research Excellence (FARE) Committee:**

FARE is the acronym for the Fellows Award for Research Excellence, begun in 1995 to provide recognition for the outstanding scientific research performed by intramural postdoctoral fellows. The award is sponsored by the NIH Fellows Committee, the Scientific Directors, the NIH Office of Research on Women's

Health, and the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education, and is funded by the Scientific Directors and the Office of Research on Women's Health. Fellows submit an abstract of their research, which is peer reviewed in a blind study section competition. Winners of FARE awards will each receive a \$1000 stipend to attend a scientific meeting at which they will present their abstract, either as a poster or a seminar. FARE winners are asked to present their work at a dedicated poster session on the day of the FARE awards presentation ceremony. FARE winners serve as judges for the following year's FARE competition (please see the [FAQ page](#) for more information). FARE applications are accepted every year in April.

v. **Job Fair Committee**

The Job Fair subcommittee is responsible for organizing the annual FelCom Job Fair that occurs concomitantly with the NIH Research Festival (http://researchfestival.nih.gov/job_fair.html). The Job Fair subcommittee solicits the NIH fellows' community for organizations that they would like to see present at the Job Fair. The subcommittee spends several months contacting potential employers and organizations requesting their participation and also assembles an online repository of job opportunities that are available to the NIH community year round. [The Office of Intramural Training and Education](#) provides essential support during the Job Fair organization process, acting as a liaison between the NIH Director of Intramural Training and the public for purpose of both official communication and advertising in peer- reviewed journals.

vi. **Mentoring Committee**

The mission of the Mentoring Subcommittee is to provide support to fellows to successfully complete their fellowship and receive the best possible training at NIH. The mentoring subcommittee is committed to ensuring that the mentoring system at NIH provides assistance to strengthen mentor-mentee relationships, allowing fellows to successfully conduct independent research, improve their scientific and personal communication skills, and develop and achieve their career and training goals throughout their fellowship at NIH. To achieve this mission, the mentoring subcommittee conducts a series of seminars on mentoring experiences and expectations. The Subcommittee also gathers information on mentoring experiences of fellows at NIH in order to identify areas for improvement.

vii. **Publications & Publicity Committee**

1. *NIH Catalyst and Record*: To better disseminate information to all NIH fellows, the Fellows Committee shall have reserved space in each issue of these publications.
2. The Publications & Publicity Subcommittee will share submissions with FelCom during the monthly meetings and by electronic list-serv.
3. No formal vote will be required on these items. If a regular member objects to any of the proposed items, they will be removed from the list. The co-chairperson may then recommend that the item be discussed at a later date if necessary.

viii. **Social Activities Committee**

The Social subcommittee is responsible for promoting the social interaction of NIH fellows. These include three categories of events:

FelCom Friday — monthly happy hours at local bars or restaurants usually held on the first Friday of each month. FelCom Fridays generally start at 5:30 p.m. and are open to all NIH fellows, other fellows, co-workers, friends, and family. Flyers are distributed by email on Fellow-L and individual IC email lists the week before the event. Balloons are usually brought to the happy hour to mark the FelCom gathering.

Annual Fellows Social — This annual party is usually held in the fall on a Friday night at the FAES house. It is open to all NIH fellows, other fellows, faculty, co-workers, friends, and family. A minimal admission fee is typically charged to cover expenses.

Other social activities — The social subcommittee also organizes other activities at various times throughout the year. Past events have included Ten-Pin Bowling Night. We are always open to suggestions from fellows!

ix. **Visiting Fellows Committee**

The NIH Visiting Fellows Committee (NIHVFC) is composed of NIH post-doctoral visiting fellows (VFs) from all around the world. It is a self-governing body serving the interest of visiting fellows in their transition to life at the NIH, by working to make their experience here worthwhile; as well as creating the opportunities for visiting fellows to maintain continuity in their research upon returning to their home countries. NIHVFC also plans to encourage the establishment and maintenance of strong institutional links of VFs with NIH after they complete their training and go back to their home countries.

x. **Web Page Committee**

The Web Page subcommittee ensures that the Felcom web page is accurate and updated regularly so that the NIH fellows' community will have access to all the information gathered by Felcom subcommittees and liaisons. If you have suggestions for links that you feel would be of use to the entire NIH fellows' community, please send your suggestions to any member of the subcommittee and they will be happy to discuss your ideas. Also, if you find any information that is incorrect, please don't hesitate to let us know.

xi. **WALS Committee**

1. The WALS subcommittee was formed to improve fellow participation in the nomination and quality of nominations of WALS speakers and to increase fellow opportunity to interact with WALS speakers.
2. The WALS Subcommittee is not responsible for arrangement of the visits by fellow-nominated WALS speakers; this responsibility lies with the sponsoring IC.

8. Other Policies and Procedures

Committee membership will also include representation on NIH-wide committees. Liaisons to these committees will serve a term of two years and will notify FelCom one month before the end of their term at the monthly meeting. Replacement liaisons will be open to all NIH fellows

and will be voted on at the FelCom meeting by the voting representatives. The NIH-wide committees are as follows:

- a. **Medical Executive Committee (MEC) Liaison:** The NIH Fellows Committee clinical co-chair will submit a nomination to the Medical Executive Committee Chair for one [two] members of the Fellows Committee to serve as the fellows' representative on the Medical Executive Committee.
 1. This representative will be a Clinical Fellow.
 2. Member will serve in the position for a period of 12 months.
 3. In general, the chair will request a volunteer to serve in this position 1 to 2 months prior to the end of the current representative's term.
 4. The MEC Felcom representative(s) will attend all MEC meetings and will provide reports to FelCom detailing relevant content of meetings.
- b. **Animal Research Advisory Committee Liaison:**

The Director NIH has delegated authority to the Deputy Director for Intramural Research (DDIR) to effect compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies regarding the humane care and use of animals in the intramural research program. Dr. Michael M. Gottesman, Deputy Director for Intramural Research (DDIR) serves as the Institutional Official for the NIH Intramural Research Program. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Chairs constitute the Animal Research Advisory Committee (ARAC) which meets regularly and advises the DDIR on trans-NIH animal care and use issues.
- c. **Committee on Scientific Conduct and Ethics Liaison:** The Committee on Scientific Conduct and Ethics is composed of a broad spectrum of scientists from the ICs. The committee was established in September, 1995 with three charges:
 1. To develop and/or refine existing guidelines for the conduct of research, to develop procedures to protect both whistle blowers and scientists accused of scientific misconduct, and to develop a model for binding arbitration.
 2. To develop effective mechanisms for research ethics training for the NIH scientific community, including the ethics column in *The NIH Catalyst* <<http://catalyst.cit.nih.gov/catalyst/>>
 3. To develop a course to train principal investigators in leadership, mentoring, and handling of conflict skills.
- d. **Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) Liaison:**

The NIH Fellows Committee clinical co-chair will submit a nomination to the Graduate Medical Education Committee Chair for one [two] members of the Fellows Committee to serve as the fellows representative on the Graduate Medical Education Committee.

 1. This representative will be a Clinical Fellow.
 2. Member will serve in the position for a period of 12 months.
 3. In general, the chair will request a volunteer to serve in this position 1-2 months prior to the end of the current representative's term.
 4. The GMEC Felcom representative(s) will attend all MEC meetings and will provide reports to FelCom detailing relevant content of meetings.
- e. **Human Subjects Research Advisory Committee Liaison:**

This committee meets every other month on Friday at 3:00. The HSRAC is responsible for advising the NIH Deputy Director for Intramural Research on the policies and procedures regarding the conduct of human subjects research in the NIH Intramural

Research Program. The HSRAC is comprised of the Deputy Director for Intramural Research, who is the chair, the Director of the Office for Human Subjects Research, the 14 NIH IRB Chairs, the Director of the Clinical Center, and the Chief of the Clinical Center Department of Bioethics. The FelCom representative to the HSRAC must attend all meetings and report back any issues/concerns that are relevant to fellows at NIH. <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/guidelines.htmlg>. **NIH Training Directors**

Committee Liaison: The NIH Training Directors Committee representative duties will include the following:

- i. Attend the NIH Training Director's Committee Meetings and report on their discussions to Felcom.
- ii. Represent the interests of Felcom and the NIH fellows community
- iii. Attend the monthly Felcom meetings

f. **Child Care Board Liaison:**

The NIH Child Care Board is charged with promoting affordable, accessible, quality day care for NIH employees and advises the NIH regarding child care services and policies. The Felcom liaison provides a conduit between the board and Felcom to make sure the board is aware of issues pertaining to NIH fellows, and to keep fellows abreast of the child care situation at NIH.

g. **Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences Board Liaison:** The Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences will include an ad hoc member representing FelCom. Duties will include the following:

- i. Report on the two annual board meetings regarding issues pertinent to FelCom and the post-doctoral community
- ii. Communicate any issues raised in ad-hoc FAES meetings pertinent to FelCom
- iii. Communicate any issues raised at FelCom meetings to the FAES Executive Director and/or Board

h. **Women Scientist Advisory Board Liaison:**

In 1991, Dr. Bernadine Healy, Director of NIH, established a Task Force to examine the status of intramural women scientists. The Task Force, which included 15 intramural scientists and was chaired by Dr. Hynda Kleinman, issued a final report in November 1992. Among the recommendations was that each IC should have a Woman Scientist Advisor (WSA). These recommendations were unanimously approved by the Scientific Directors at their meeting of November 4, 1992. The activities of the IC-specific WSA (<http://www1.od.nih.gov/oir/sourcebook/comm-adv/wsa.htm>) include holding regular meetings with the Scientific Director in order to advise him/her about issues relevant to women scientists; attending Lab/Branch Chief meetings to serve as a representative of women scientists; informing the Institute's women scientists on issues which will affect them and solicit their opinions; organize meetings for the women scientists to discuss issues of general concern or to present programs of general interest; serve on IC tenure-track, tenured scientist, or lab/branch chief search committees; attend monthly WSA committee meetings where issues of concern to all NIH women scientists are discussed. Additionally, the WSA Committee organizes and promotes a lecture series featuring NIH intramural women scientists.

i. **National Postdoctoral Association Liaison:** The liaison to the National Postdoctoral Association will include the following:

- a. Attend the monthly Felcom meetings
- b. Provide a report regarding upcoming NPA activities.
- c. Advertise major NPA events (i.e., Annual Meeting and receptions at various scientific meetings).
- d. Communicate with the NPA Executive Director on a regular basis regarding any information she would like to have communicated to the NIH fellows (i.e., quarterly NPA newsletter)
- e. Must be a member of the NPA and serve on an NPA Committee

9. Review of Bylaws

- a. Co-chairpersons of the Fellows Committee shall review these bylaws at least annually to ensure currency.
- b. Co-chairpersons will announce the review period to committee members to allow input from all members.
- c. Proposed changes to the bylaws can be made at any time following discussion at a regularly scheduled committee meeting pending the vote of the committee membership.
- d. Proposed changes should be submitted in writing to the co- chairpersons and presented for discussion at the next scheduled committee meeting.
- e. All proposed changes will be discussed and approved by the majority of a quorum of members of the Fellows Committee.