

BYLAWS of the Molecular Plant Sciences Program

November 16, 2017

Approved by 2/3 of MPS faculty on January 15, 2018

1. Preamble

- 1.1. The Molecular Plant Sciences (MPS) Program is an interdepartment and intercollege graduate program offering a dual major PhD degree. The College of Natural Science is the lead college, with strong participation by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The objectives of the MPS program are to train students for careers involving research, teaching, and policy in all aspects of molecular and cellular plant biology as it impacts sustainable food production, renewable energy, responses to biotic and abiotic stress, discovery of new pharmaceuticals, and biodiversity.
- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures by which the MPS faculty and graduate students participate in the academic governance of the MPS program.
- 1.3. If, in any matter, specifications or omissions place these Bylaws in conflict with University or College policies, as promulgated in their Bylaws, the latter shall take precedence.

2. Director of the MPS program

2.1. Director

- 2.1.1. The Director is the chief administrator, responsible for the overall operation of the MPS program. The Director's function is to achieve the objectives stated in the preamble. The Director shall be advised by the MPS Executive Committee (MPS EC), relevant standing and *ad hoc* committees, and/or the MPS faculty and graduate students as a whole, and shall weigh seriously any recommendations made at their meetings or through voting processes. The Director or his/her designate shall be an *ex officio* member of all MPS committees.
- 2.1.2. Duties
 - 2.1.2.1. Develop long-range plans for the MPS program involving matters of graduate student training and budget.
 - 2.1.2.2. Serve as administrative liaison between the MPS program and MSU colleges, departments and other graduate programs and recruitment entities, including such entities as the Biomolecular Sciences (BMS) gateway and the Plant Science Fellowship Initiative (PSI).
 - 2.1.2.3. Prepare annual budget requests and supervise budget expenditures.
 - 2.1.2.4. Supervise the support staff of the MPS program.

2.1.2.5. Organize or oversee MPS program functions including, but not limited to: graduate student recruitment and admission, definition of graduate student requirements, progress of graduate students through their programs, support of graduate student research, MPS core courses, seminars, retreats, a meeting with all graduate students at least once per year, a meeting of the MPS faculty at least once a semester, and any personnel issues within the realm of the MPS program.

2.1.2.6. Work with MPS faculty and departmental chairs to ensure that required and other relevant courses are available to MPS students, to extend course offerings in new directions relevant to the MPS program, to identify program needs and opportunities, and assist in recruiting new faculty that will enhance the MPS program.

2.1.3. Appointment and Review

2.1.3.1. The Director will normally serve a five-year term. The MPS Executive Committee (or a designated search committee) will solicit nominations for the new Director from the entire MPS faculty and student membership and establish a slate of candidates based on expertise, disciplinary and administrative diversity, and willingness of the candidates to serve. All procedures involved in selection of a new Director must be in accord with College and University bylaws. The MPS faculty shall be kept informed of any proceedings concerned with the selection of a new Director. A Director can be re-elected. The first election for Director will be held in Spring, 2019.

2.1.3.2. Under extraordinary circumstances, the MPS faculty may request a review of the Director at any time from the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences.

2.1.3.3. Upon recommendation of the Dean that a new Director be found, or upon retirement, or death of the Director, a new Director shall be appointed in accordance with 2.1.3.1.

2.1.3.4. In the event that no person holds an appointment as Director, or upon incapacitation of the Director, the Dean of the College of Natural Science shall appoint an Acting Director. The Acting Director shall perform the duties of the Director until a new Director is elected.

2.1.3.5. In the event that the Director is temporarily absent from the University, the Director will designate an Acting Director from the MPSEC.

3. Membership and Membership Review

3.1. Membership

3.1.1 Any tenure-track or tenured MSU faculty member with an active interest in molecular plant science research is encouraged to apply for MPS faculty status. The prospective MPS faculty member should provide to the Director a brief letter

and a c.v., stating their interest in joining the MPS program and describing their research interests and background.

3.1.2. The MPS Executive Committee will make a recommendation on the candidate to the Director. The Director will be responsible for notifying the candidate of the decision and outlining the rights and responsibilities of MPS faculty members.

3.2 MPS Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

3.2.1. MPS faculty members will have the right to vote in MPS elections and at MPS faculty meetings.

3.2.2. MPS faculty members will supervise students in the MPS program and serve as major professor (advisor) on their Guidance Committee. They are expected to ensure that the rules of the MPS academic program are followed, including that a student's program fulfills the requirements, expectations, and guidelines of the MPS program as well as those of the home department.

3.2.3. MPS faculty members are expected to participate in teaching graduate seminars and other relevant courses (with approval of her/his department), attend MPS faculty meetings and other MPS activities such as the MPS symposium, seminar series and student enrichment activities. Members are also expected to serve on MPS committees.

3.3. Membership Meetings

3.3.1 The Director shall call an MPS faculty meeting at least once a semester at a time of maximum convenience for the MPS faculty.

3.3.2. The MPS Office shall notify members of the MPS faculty of the time, place and agenda of the proposed meetings at least one week prior to the meeting.

3.3.3. Each MPS faculty member in attendance shall have a vote on matters brought up at the meeting.

3.3.4. Action may be taken when at least 25% of the MPS faculty members are present at the meeting. A email ballot of the complete MPS voting faculty shall be required if requested by more than one-third of those present. Mail ballots shall be conducted by the Graduate Secretary of the MPS program. Action shall be taken on the basis of a majority vote of the returned ballots. The tally will be made within ten calendars days after the last ballot is sent out.

3.3.5. In lieu of membership meetings, the Director in consultation with the MPSEC may initiate action as decided by ballots distributed through e-mail or mail, administered and tallied by the MPS Graduate Secretary.

3.4. Membership Review. The Director and MPSEC may periodically review the MPS faculty and their interest in the program.

4. MPS Committees

4.1. MPS Executive Committee (MPSEC)

4.1.1. Membership

The MPSEC shall consist of the MPS Director, six MPS faculty, and one MPS graduate student. Faculty members can be nominated for consideration for membership on the EC by other MPS faculty including self-nominations. The graduate student member shall be chosen by the MPS graduate students in an election organized by the current student member. The grad student member will serve for one year, renewable. The elections shall normally be held in the spring term, according to procedures described below, and members shall take office on June 1. Faculty MPSEC members shall serve renewable three-year terms. Of the six faculty members, at least two shall be from CANR and two from CNS and no more than two from a single department based on the candidate's major academic affiliation. The MPSEC will organize the slate of nominees into groups representing appropriate college and departmental diversity. Two members will be elected each year for 3-year terms starting in Spring, 2018.

4.1.2. Functions

4.1.2.1. The MPSEC shall serve to represent the faculty in providing advice to the Director on policy matters relating to the MPS program.

4.1.2.2. Regular meetings of the MPSEC shall be scheduled by the Director to discuss matters as defined above. In addition, the scheduling of a meeting may be initiated by an MPSEC member or at the request of any MPS faculty member or graduate student for the purpose of discussion of a specific matter defined under 4.1.2.5.

4.1.2.3. The MPSEC shall participate directly or indirectly by forming an *ad hoc* committee of MPS faculty in the selection and review of the Director.

4.1.2.4. The MPSEC, together with the Director, shall schedule faculty meetings at least once a semester and shall prepare the agenda.

4.1.2.5. The MPSEC shall consider matters initiated by individual faculty members on subjects of concern to them and brought to the attention of the committee. If a suggested solution from the MPSEC or Director does not satisfy the faculty member, he/she may request that the matter be brought before the MPS faculty at a faculty meeting. The matter will then be placed on the agenda by the MPSEC.

4.1.2.6. The MPSEC shall draw up a set of MPS program Bylaws for approval by the faculty and make recommendations for changes to the bylaws to the faculty when the committee deems it desirable.

4.1.2.7. The MPSEC shall be responsible for the initiation and performance of periodic reviews, at intervals not exceeding four years, of course offering and requirements

in the MPS program, and advise the Director of desirable changes. In performing this function, the EC shall work closely with the Director, affected and concerned individual faculty, and the faculty and graduate students in the MPS program.

4.2. MPS Graduate Committee

4.2.1. Membership

4.2.1.1. The MPSEC will serve as the MPS Graduate Committee.

4.2.2. Functions

4.2.2.1. The Graduate Committee shall coordinate with the graduate secretary, departments of MPS faculty, and other admissions programs on campus to attract the best possible applicants and new students.

4.2.2.2. The MPS Graduate Committee shall evaluate applications for admission to the MPS Graduate program and make recommendations to the Director as to whether or not the applicants should be admitted. The prospective MPS student must also be admitted by one of the participating (primary) departments. The Graduate Committee shall help the Director in identifying the best-qualified candidates, recruiting them, and procuring assistanships and other funding for them by working with the various funding sources.

4.2.2.3. The Graduate Committee shall track the progress of every graduate student to insure that they are making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree including coursework performance and an annual meeting with their guidance committee.

4.2.2.4. At the end of each student's graduate career, the Graduate Committee shall evaluate each MPS graduate student's record and recommend to the MPS Director that the student be granted the MPS dual major Ph.D. certification if all program requirements are satisfied. Each home department will separately evaluate whether a student fulfills its own requirements.

4.3. MPS Seminar/Symposium Committee

4.3.1. Membership

4.3.1.1. The Seminar /Symposium Committee shall consist of at least three MPS faculty members selected by the Director in consultation with the MPSEC and an MPS graduate student elected by the graduate students. The committee shall reflect the disciplinary and administrative diversity of the MPS program. Seminar Series/Symposium Committee members shall serve renewable one-year terms. The Chair of the MPS Seminar Committee will be an ex officio member of the MPSEC.

4.3.2. Function

4.3.2.1. The Seminar /Symposium Committee shall assist the Director in choosing a seminar or symposium format for the year, and in selecting appropriate topics and presenters. In doing so, the Seminar /Symposium Committee shall solicit suggestions from both MPS faculty and students.

4.3.2.2. The Seminar /Symposium Committee shall assume responsibility for the organization and execution of the seminar series/symposium.

5. Grievance Procedures

5.1. Any MPS faculty member or MPS graduate student may initiate a grievance, alleging violation of existing policies or established practices by an administrator, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan State University Faculty Grievance Procedure or Michigan State University Graduate Student Grievance Procedure.

5.2. The MPS Director or MPSEC shall meet with the parties involved in an effort to resolve the grievance informally.

5.3. In the event that the grievance is not resolved by the parties, a grievance hearing will be arranged by the Faculty Grievance Official (FGO) or Graduate Student Grievance Official pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Faculty Grievance Procedure or Graduate Student Grievance Procedure.

5.4. In the event a grievance is initiated at the MPS program level, the Model Academic Unit Grievance Procedure will apply.

6. Bylaws

6.1. Initial Approval

6.1.1. The MPS program bylaws, as drafted by the MPSEC, shall become effective upon approval by the Dean of the College of Natural Science and a two-thirds majority vote of the MPS faculty.

6.2. Interpretation

6.2.1. The Dean of the College of Natural Science shall be the final authority with regard to the interpretation of these bylaws.

6.3. Amendments or Revisions

6.3.1. Any voting faculty member, student, or any group thereof, may request in writing that the MPSEC initiate procedures to amend or annul any part of these bylaws. The MPSEC shall research and discuss the proposed amendment and shall forward the request, together with its recommendation, to the faculty at a regular or special meeting so that it can be considered further, and amended if necessary. Following passage of a motion for approval of the request, or its amended version, the amendment shall be submitted to the voting faculty. Upon approval by a two-thirds majority of all voting faculty and the Dean of the College of Natural Science, the

amendment becomes a part of the bylaws, or the section whose annulment was desired, shall become void.

6.4. Review of bylaws

- 6.4.1. In accordance with the provisions of the University bylaws for Academic Governance, the membership of the MPS program shall review the MPS bylaws at regular intervals not to exceed five years. The MPSEC shall have the responsibility of ensuring that these reviews are carried out and shall have delegated authority by the Dean of the College of Natural Science to establish the procedures of the review process.