Bylaw Amendment Synopsis

- Updated to include governance best practices, changes brought about by 2014 governance reforms, and to align with other unit bylaws and current internal procedures at APS.

- Revised composition of Executive Committee to comply with Council’s resolution to include Student/Early Career members as voting members of GPER's leadership.

- Updated Article VIII – Appointed Committees to include a new Awards Selection Committee (Section 4), at unit’s request; to include language clarifying whether Chair of GPER or Chair of Committee appoints members; and reworded Program Committee language to represent more accurately how the unit appoints members and handles programming duties.

- Updated Article XIII – Procedure of Amendment of Bylaws to include language regarding special elections.

- Note: the GPER does not require contested elections but endeavors to nominate at least two candidates for each open position on the Executive Committee. They have chosen not to change their current language regarding elections because they are a smaller unit and have just added two additional seats to their Executive Committee to comply with the Council resolution regarding Early Career/Student representation.
**GPER Bylaws**

*Approved by Council: September 23, 2021*

*Ratified by GPER Membership: TBD*

**Preamble**

In the following text, “Society” shall signify the American Physical Society; “Council” and “Board” shall signify the Council of Representatives and the Board of Directors of the Society, respectively.

**Article I - Name**

This Topical Group of the American Physical Society shall be called the Topical Group on Physics Education Research *(GPER)*.

**Article II - Objective**

The objective of the Topical Group on Physics Education Research (GPER) shall be the advancement and diffusion of knowledge concerning the learning and teaching of physics. This knowledge is based on studies ranging from individuals to institutional practices, from neural and cognitive processes to social and contextual components of education, from basic research to educational practices in physics. The objectives of this research include the integration of scientific knowledge and analysis methods across disciplines to address the dynamical complexities and uncertainties of learning and teaching physics.

**Article III - Enabling Constitutional Provision**

Article VIII of the Constitution and Bylaws, and associated Policies and Procedures of the Society, as said governing documents may be subsequently revised or amended, is hereby incorporated in these Bylaws by reference.

**Article IV - Membership**

The members of the GPER shall consist of members of the Society who have indicated, in accordance with procedures established by the Board and Council, their desire to join the GPER and who retain membership from year to year by the payment of designated dues or by other method established by the Board.

**Article V - Executive Committee**

...
1. **Governance**: The GPER shall be governed by an Executive Committee, which shall have general charge of the affairs of the GPER including changes to the areas of scientific inquiry of the GPER.

2. **Composition**: The voting members of the Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the GPER, and four Members-at-Large, including one Early Career Member-at-Large and one Student Member-at-Large. Members-at-Large shall be elected to two-year staggered terms, with two terms expiring each year. The Early Career Member at large shall have completed their terminal degree within the 5 years prior to the election. The Student Member-at-Large shall be a graduate student, as defined by the APS, at the time of the election. In addition, one representative from the Executive Committee of the American Association of Physics Teachers Topical Group on Physics Education Research (PERLOC), one representative from the Executive Committee of the APS Society Forum on Education (FEd), and one representative from an officially designated graduate student organization (if such organization is not represented among the Members-at-Large) will be non-voting ex officio members.

3. **Executive Committee Meetings**: The Executive Committee shall meet at least once each year. The Chair of the GPER shall preside over the Executive Committee meetings. A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

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**Article VI - Officers**

1. **Officers**: The Officers of the GPER shall be a Chair, a Chair-Elect, a Vice Chair, a Past Chair, and a Secretary/Treasurer.

2. **Duties of the Chair**: The Chair shall have overall responsibility for the operations of the GPER and shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and Business Sessions of the GPER at which his or her attendance is possible. The Chair shall notify the Executive Committee of matters requiring the decision of said Committee and shall prepare the agenda, in collaboration with the Secretary/Treasurer, of Executive Committee meetings and Business Sessions. The Chair shall keep the Council and Society Corporate Secretary of the Society informed of the activities and needs of the GPER. The Chair shall oversee appointment of members to the Program and Fellowship Committees and shall form other ad-hoc committees as necessary.

3. **Duties of the Chair-Elect**: The Chair-Elect shall act in place of the Chair if the latter is unable to perform his or her duties. The Chair-Elect shall chair the Program Committee. The Chair-Elect shall perform such other functions as may be explicitly provided in the Bylaws.

4. **Duties of the Vice Chair**: The Vice Chair shall act in place of the Chair-Elect if the latter is unable to perform his or her duties. The Vice Chair shall oversee the regular Electronic Communication (e.g., unit newsletter and emails) with membership of GPER, in collaboration with the Secretary/Treasurer, and shall...
5. **Duties of the Past-Chair**: The Past-Chair shall chair the Nominating Committee. The Past-Chair shall perform such functions as may be explicitly provided in the Bylaws.

6. **Duties of the Secretary/Treasurer**: The Secretary/Treasurer shall maintain the records of the GPER including minutes of Executive Committee meetings and Business Sessions, activities of the GPER, membership lists, and website, including requesting website updates due to change of Executive Committee membership, unit representatives, and bylaws changes. The Secretary/Treasurer shall, in collaboration with the Chair, prepare the agenda of Executive Committee meetings and Business Sessions. Minutes of Executive Committee meetings and Business Sessions shall be submitted to each member of the Executive Committee and to the Corporate Secretary of the Society within two weeks after each meeting. Following elections, such minutes are to include the results of the election and a roster of the current Executive Committee membership. No later than December 1 of each year, the Secretary/Treasurer shall also call for each committee to provide brief documentation of the major outcomes of that committee (e.g. awards granted, fellowships nominated), and that documentation shall be entered into the GPER archives no later than January 1 of the following year.

The Secretary/Treasurer shall have responsibility for all funds in the custody of or placed at the disposal of the GPER and, with the concurrence of the Chair, shall authorize disbursements from such funds for expenses in a manner that is consistent with the general policies of the Society and the GPER. Financial records shall be kept on an annual basis consistent with the fiscal policies of the Society. The approval of the Executive Committee shall be required for disbursements in excess of $1000 per expenditure unless otherwise specifically delegated by the Executive Committee. The Secretary/Treasurer shall present a financial report at each meeting of the Executive Committee and at the annual Business Session of the GPER.

The Secretary/Treasurer shall perform such other functions as may be explicitly provided in the Bylaws.

**Article VII - Election and Tenure of the Officers and Executive Committee Members**

1. **Qualifications**: Officers and Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee must be members of the GPER and must retain membership throughout the period of election and tenure in office.
2. **Ballot:** The Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee shall be elected by electronic ballot as hereinafter provided.

3. **Nomination and Election of the Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and Members-at-Large:** Not later than June 1, the Nominating Committee Chair, in collaboration with the Secretary/Treasurer, shall invite all members of the GPER to suggest to the Nominating Committee candidates for election for Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer during the final year of the term of the current Secretary/Treasurer, and for the open Member-at-Large positions.

   The Nominating Committee shall consult with the Chair before approving the nomination of any candidate for a second consecutive term. Not later than September 1, the Nominating Committee shall submit to the Secretary/Treasurer nominations for each post to be filled on the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee, in collaboration with the Forum on Education, shall endeavor to nominate a diverse set of candidates that includes female candidates, members from groups underrepresented in physics, and researchers representing various stages of career and working environments.

   The Secretary/Treasurer shall poll the GPER membership by electronic ballot, stating a closing date of not later than December 1. Ballots shall be returned to and counted by the Secretary/Treasurer or his or her designate. In the case of elections when the Secretary/Treasurer is a candidate on the ballot for election to another term, the election shall be administered by a process determined by the Executive Committee, to avoid a conflict of interest. Election shall be decided by a plurality of those voting. If there is a tie, the Executive Committee shall decide the election, with the Chair voting only in the case of a tie among the other Executive Committee members. The Secretary/Treasurer shall communicate the results of the election to the Chair and the Society Corporate secretary prior to December 15 and shall publish the results in a manner designated for official announcements.

4. **Official Year:** The official year shall be the calendar year.

5. **Vice Chair, Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past Chair:** The member elected as Vice Chair shall serve in that office for one year, then for one year as Chair-Elect, then for one year as Chair, and then for one year as Past Chair. The Past Chair shall not be eligible for the office of Vice Chair (or Chair-Elect if a vacancy in office occurs) in the year following his or her term of office.

6. **Terms of Office:** The terms of office of the Officers and Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee shall coincide with the calendar year, beginning January 1 and ending December 31. The Secretary/Treasurer shall serve for a term of three years and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The tenure of a Member-at-Large of the Executive Committee shall be two years.

7. **Vacancies in Offices:** If a vacancy occurs in the office of Chair, the Chair-Elect shall succeed and complete the term and shall serve as Chair also in the following year. The Vice Chair shall serve simultaneously as Chair-Elect during
the remainder of the term and shall continue to serve as Chair-Elect in the following term.

If a vacancy occurs in the office of Chair-Elect otherwise than through advancement to Chair, the Vice Chair shall become Chair-Elect. In this case, and also if the office of Vice Chair becomes vacant for other reasons, the office of Vice Chair shall remain vacant for the remainder of the term. In the next scheduled election, candidates for both Chair-Elect and Vice Chair shall be nominated.

If vacancies occur in the offices of both the Chair and the Chair-Elect, the Vice Chair shall become Chair and shall complete the term. In this case a special election shall be held to fill the offices of Chair-Elect and Vice Chair. The members so elected shall continue to serve as officers in the normal succession order.

Vacancies in any other elected office shall be filled (or left unfilled) by the Executive Committee until such time as the vacancy can be filled by regular election procedures.

8. **Non-voting Representatives:** Representatives of PERLOC, FEd, and officially designated graduate student organizations will be chosen by their respective Executive Committees. The FEd and PERLOC representatives shall serve for a term of one year, and the graduate student representative shall serve for a term of up to two years. Non-voting representatives are not required to be members of the GPER and the PERLOC representative is not required to be a member of the APS.

**Article VIII - Appointed Committees**

1. **Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee shall be chaired by the Past Chair and shall include three members of the GPER appointed by the Nominating Committee Chair for two-year terms, and one member appointed by the APS for a one-year term. The Chair shall ascertain through the Society Corporate Secretary the identity of this member. If the Past Chair is unable to serve, the GPER Chair may nominate a member of the Executive Committee as a replacement. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates according to Article VII.3 of these Bylaws.

2. **Program Committee:** The Program Committee shall be chaired by the Chair-Elect and shall include any other members of the GPER whose assistance the Program Committee Chair chooses to obtain during his or her term, with the concurrence of the GPER Chair. The Program Committee shall be responsible, in cooperation with the Executive Committee for arranging sessions of Society meetings sponsored by the Group, and from time to time may organize special meetings and workshops. The Program Committee may also appoint members of the Program Committee to jointly co-organize meetings that are co-sponsored...
with other societies or organizations. It shall also have the responsibility of assisting the Executive Officer in arranging meetings of the Society.

3. **Fellowship Committee**: The Fellowship Committee shall be chaired by the Vice Chair (or his or her replacement as selected by the GPER Chair, if the office of the Vice-Chair is vacant) and shall include three members appointed by the GPER Chair, to two-year terms. The Fellowship Committee shall solicit nominations for APS Fellowship, shall review the qualifications of such candidates, and shall submit its recommendations to the Society Honors Program Manager.

4. **Awards Selection Committee**: The Awards Selection Committee shall be chaired by an elected Member-at-Large, other than the Student Member-at-Large, in the second year of his or her term. Members shall include the Committee Chair, an elected Member-at-Large in the first year of his or her term, and two GPER members appointed by the Awards Selection Committee Chair. The Awards Selection Committee shall solicit applications for GPER grants, prizes and awards, review qualifications and recommend recipients to the GPER Executive Committee for approval before submitting recommendations to the Society Honors Program Manager.

5. **Terms of Office of Appointed Committee Members**: The terms of committee members appointed or recommended by an incoming Chair shall commence on January 1 of the year in which he or she assumes office.

6. **Ad Hoc Committees**: The Chair shall appoint other ad hoc committees as necessary, which shall serve only during his or her term as Chair.

**Article IX - Meetings**

1. **Annual Business Session**: Each year the GPER shall hold a Business Session during one of the regular meetings of the Society. This Business Session shall be chaired by the Chair of the GPER and be devoted to affairs of the GPER. All transactions at the Business Session are to be considered as advisory to the Executive Committee. No program sponsored by the GPER shall be presented simultaneously with the Business Session.

2. **Other Meetings**: Special scientific meetings of the GPER may be initiated by the Executive Committee and arranged by the Program Committee, subject to coordination with the Society Director of Meetings and rules and regulations specified in the Society Constitution and Bylaws. The rules of the Society shall apply to scientific sessions of invited or contributed papers held in conjunction with a meeting of the Society. The Program Committee shall have the responsibility for all arrangements concerning such sessions.

3. **Papers at Meetings**: Programs of meetings of the GPER may provide for the inclusion of both invited and contributed papers. When a meeting of the GPER is held in conjunction with a meeting of the Society, the rules of the Society shall...
apply to submitted papers. When a meeting of the GPER is not held in conjunction with a meeting of the Society, the Executive Committee shall prescribe the main theme of the meeting. The Program Committee Chair shall fix the deadline date for receipt of titles and abstracts in consultation with the Society Director of Meetings and shall designate the rules for their submission.

Article X - Dues

Dues for maintenance of membership in the GPER shall be established by the Board.

Article XI - Regular Communication

GPER shall provide regular email communications with the membership. These email communications will provide updates on the activities of GPER and the Executive Committee. The preparation and distribution of email communications will be overseen by the Vice Chair. The frequency and timing of these communications shall be determined by the Vice Chair, subject to approval of the Executive Committee.

Article XII - Official Announcements

Official announcements shall be made in the APS News (at the discretion of the APS News Editor), in special mailings to the membership, or in such other publications as the Executive Committee may direct.

Article XIII - Procedure of Amendment of Bylaws

Proposal of an Amendment to these Bylaws may be made by the Council, by the Society’s Governance Committee, by the Executive Committee, or by a petition to the Chair signed by not fewer than ten percent of the members of the GPER. However initiated, a proposed Amendment must be reviewed by the Society’s Governance Committee and approved by Council before further action can be taken. Following Council approval, the Secretary/Treasurer shall distribute copies of the proposed Amendment to all members of the GPER not less than three weeks before the Annual Business Session and opportunity shall be given for discussion. If a special election is not held to ratify the amendment, at the time of the next regular election the Secretary/Treasurer shall again distribute copies of the proposed amendment accompanied by ballot forms to the members of the Section. Adoption of the Amendment shall require a two-thirds vote by those voting.