

CONSTITUTION
of the
SCIACCESS ZENITH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
at
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

ARTICLE I ***Name, Purpose, and Non-Discrimination Policy of the Organization***

Section I: Name

The SciAccess Zenith Mentorship Program at Ohio State (“Zenith”)

Section II: Purpose

Our organization provides primarily virtual mentorship for blind and low vision (BLV) students (grades 8-12) from Ohio, across the country, and around the world. BLV students who are interested in space science will have the opportunity to meet others who share their passion for astronomy, physics, and aerospace engineering, and will be paired with mentors from Ohio State’s undergraduate and graduate programs.

Section III: Objectives

Weekly academic presentations, cohort discussions, one-on-one mentor meetings, pod activities, 3D prints, and sonified data will give students the opportunity to learn about accessible space science. Program will be broken up into three academic phases: Astronomy and Astrophysics (Phase I), Physics (Phase II), Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering (Phase III). Our organization promotes academic growth for BLV students by providing access to higher education resources and connections. One-on-one student-mentor pairs will then form into “pods” based on age group and interest. Pods will meet at the conclusion of the weekly cohort meeting and may include social and/or academic activities. Pods may also feature junior-mentors drawn from previous cohorts of students who choose to return.

Section IV: Non-Discrimination Policy

This organization and its members does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, programs, admission, and employment. Mentees for this program will be briefed on these values at the beginning of each cohort semester.

ARTICLE II ***Membership Qualifications and Categories of Membership***

This club is open to both undergraduate and graduate students in good standing from any major who are interested in providing mentorship. No prior experience necessary or expected. Blind and low vision students are encouraged to join. Students majoring

in space-related disciplines (astronomy, physics, aerospace, etc.) are especially encouraged to participate as well. Membership begins at the beginning of each semester due to the formal mentoring program. However, interested members should contact Zenith at any time to get on the mailing lists for the following semester. No dues shall be collected in order to join.

ARTICLE III *Organization Leadership Framework*

The following should be referred to as a guide for the minimum number of positions available to run the organization. Each new eboard may choose to add or modify positions as they see fit.

Section I: President

The President is expected to organize all official events and meetings, and to be the primary leader at these assemblies. The President is responsible for running and scheduling e-board meetings and completing the annual registration requirements. They may delegate any of these tasks as needed.

Section II: Vice President

The Vice President is to act as President in the event of their absence. The Vice President is to assist the President in facilitating communication between e-board members and advisors and completing the annual registration requirements. The Vice President will assist in organizational planning where needed.

Section III: Secretary

In the event of the absence of the President and Vice President, the Secretary will assume the responsibilities of President. The Secretary is responsible for taking notes during general and e-board meetings and managing branding for the student organization. The Secretary is also responsible for the production of certificates of graduation for mentees following program completion. The Secretary is responsible for assisting communications between the eboard and mentors, facilitating mentor-mentee communication, and administrating/collecting mentor check-in forms.

Section IV: Treasurer

The Treasurer is to keep accurate records of all organizational funds for long-term financial security, including those acquired and those spent on equipment or educational activities. The Treasurer is to veto any use of funds that would result in a negative amount in the treasury. The Treasurer is also responsible for putting in orders for 3D models in coordination with See3D, a nonprofit partner, and the Department of Astronomy.

Section V: Outreach Chair

The Outreach Chair (OC) has two major components. At the beginning of each semester, the OC is to create and oversee a team of general members reaching out to

schools serving BLV students and disability advocacy institutions in order to advertise the mentorship program to them with the goal of attaining more signups. The OC is responsible for communicating recruitment materials to the SciAccess Initiative to be posted on SciAccess social media accounts. Once the mentorship program has begun, the OC's duties shift to managing the Zenith email accounts and mailing list. This includes regular emails to mentees and mentors regarding upcoming meetings, announcements, and deadlines. The OC should be on constant lookout for opportunities, resources, and events to pass along to the mentors and mentees via these emails.

Section VI: Programming Chair

The Programming Chair (PC) will oversee the development of lesson plans for students, and is expected to take the lead in developing a program calendar at the beginning of each semester. Additionally, the PC will be in charge of creating a program calendar, creating weekly cohort and pod meeting agendas, and creating assignments for these events. The PC will also oversee the symposium at the end of the semester and should monitor mentor check-in forms to ensure that the program is progressing as expected.

Section VII: Operations Chair

The Operations Chair (OPC) will find and communicate with speakers to give lectures during general meetings, communicating with See3D for the production of 3D models to be used by mentees, send out and go over assignments, and help facilitate pod meetings, and oversee the organization of a symposium at the end of the semester. They can request assistance from other members of the eboard. If necessary, the Operations Chair and Programming Chair can be combined into one position.

ARTICLE IV *Election Procedure*

Elections will be held through a process in which a general e-board application is released to all club members. The sitting e-board will then address what vacancies (due to graduation or resignation) need to be filled, and choose replacements accordingly from the pool of applicants.

- Once elected, e-board members serve until graduation, or until they choose to step down*.
- Transitions should be as smooth as possible**; the e-board is expected to keep a log of issues and adjust election procedure accordingly for future e-board members to reference.
- If a current e-board member wishes to fill a vacancy (switch positions) they may apply along with general applications***. If this is the case, general applications will be accepted for *both* the vacant role and the role that the current e-board member would be vacating.

- Should a current e-board member take a vacant e-board role (switch positions), their previous position will be filled from the pool of applications previously collected.
- For the above two reasons, it should be made clear within e-board applications that applicants may be chosen to fill the originally vacant role or the role newly vacated, should a current e-board member take the originally vacant role.

* Past executive board members may be requested to stay on in an ex-officio (non-voting) capacity for advising the new officers.

** Changing of the guard – the changeover of power should take place in the month of May for a spring selection of officers. This must occur no later than 2 weeks after the official spring commencement date.

*** Any executive board member running for a change in office must recuse themselves from discussion for any office they are running for.

ARTICLE V *Executive Committee*

The executive board consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Outreach Chair, Programming Chair, and Operations Chair with additional chair members to be allocated at the discretion of the executive board. All e-board members are generally responsible for the following:

- Overseeing meetings and scheduling events.
- Acquiring equipment/facilities.
- Devising a program schedule at the beginning of each semester.
- Communicating with the SciAccess Initiative where applicable, if/when there are events to collaborate on.
- Communicating with local BLV organizations where applicable to create partnerships on a semester basis.

Executive board members should not be overcommitted to other organizations.

Zenith requires more time and dedication than typical organizations due to its nature.

If an e-board member finds that they are not able to dedicate the time needed to do their job properly they should offer to step down. This will not be seen as a failure, just an acknowledgement of how important this organization is to those involved.

ARTICLE VI *Method of Removing Members and Officers*

General membership may not be revoked except in exceptional cases of harassment, extensive disruption of the group, or repeated failure to complete mentor duties. If such a situation arises, officers in conjunction with the advisor will decide whether it is appropriate to revoke general membership. Causes for removal include but are not limited to:

- Failure to regularly meet with the assigned mentee.
- Failure to be reached by executive board members.
- Inappropriate conduct when working with mentees.

Officers are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on the organization and the University. Officers are expected to complete their duties as assigned and to continue to organize regular meetings and events. In the event of an officer failing to meet expectations or is unable to do the work assigned, the officer may be evaluated by the rest of the e-board in a formal meeting. They may decide to bring suggestions to the officer or have the officer step down from their position and hence should be replaced through the election procedures in Article IV. A temporary officer can be appointed by a vote of the e-board until an election can be scheduled.

ARTICLE VII *Advisor(s)*

The primary advisor must be a full-time member of the University faculty or administrative professional staff in the Department of Astronomy. Primary advisor responsibilities include completing advisor training once every two years, approving the organization's online registration information each year, reviewing the organization's CSA funding requests, and reviewing reservations of space or equipment, as requested by the University department granting the reservation.

The organization should also choose a co-advisor who has the time to help the leadership overcome day-to-day challenges and general development of the executive board. The co-advisor may or may not be a full-time member of the University faculty or administrative professional staff in the Department of Astronomy.

Alongside this co-advisor, Zenith is encouraged to maintain several additional topical advisors drawn from the Departments of Astronomy, Physics, and/or Aerospace Engineering professors, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students to assist mentors and mentees with more complex educational topics and higher-level questions. These topical advisors may serve as speakers for the program, recruiters for mentors, or connections to network with.

ARTICLE VIII *Meeting of the Organization:*

At least two meetings are required per 16-week academic semester, excluding summer. The organization will meet each week with the entire mentor/mentee cohort. In addition, mentors are required to meet with their mentees once a week and to attend regular mentor check-in meetings with the e-board or fill out check-in forms regularly.

ARTICLE IX *Method of Amending Constitution:*

Proposed amendments should be presented at a general meeting of the organization, and voted upon in a subsequent meeting. A majority of at least three-quarters (a quorum of at least four being present) is required to make the proposed amendment. Amendments proposed at the meeting for approving the Constitution at the beginning of the year can be voted on at the same meeting.

ARTICLE X *Method of Dissolution of the Organization:*

In the event of dissolution of this organization, if any outstanding assets and debt exist, members will be notified at least two weeks prior to a meeting to decide the distribution of this balance.

ARTICLE XI *Social Media Conduct:*

The organization has no current social media presence. However, should it acquire one, the responsibilities of managing said presence are to be delegated at the beginning of the year to one or more members of the executive board. If Zenith acquires social media accounts, a position of Social Media Chair will be defined and the person selected will be in charge of managing all social media accounts. This should be a singular person who is dedicated to Social Media. Posts and attachments to posts on any account must present a tasteful representation of the club and any member of the executive board can request that a post be removed or otherwise not posted.

ARTICLE XII *Founders Statement*

This organization was founded in collaboration between Anna Voelker, Michaela Deming, and Caitlin O'Brien. The first year a formal partnership with the Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB) was formed. This program, historically, has partnered with See3D as a 3-D printing partner for creation of materials used to teach mentees. This organization is the first established chapter of the SciAccess Zenith Mentorship Program and became an established student organization at Ohio State after one semester of operation.