



# CONSTITUTION OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATICS STUDENT GROUP

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## **A brief history of Public Informatics**

The concept of informatics was discussed as early as 1967, with its first mention in the United States occurring in 1973. The terminology of informatics gained wider usage in the medical and public health fields in the 1980's as researchers generated innumerable data points for study. The term Urban Informatics is first used by tech culture writer Howard Rheingold in 2003, but appeared more widely in the fields of public policy, administration and planning around 2010. The future of Public Informatics is expected to include opportunities for student in a number of fields relating to the urban environment, public service, and data analytics.

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## Article I. General Provisions

### A. Name of Organization

(the) Public Informatics Student Group (hereafter referred to as PISG).

### B. Mission of Organization

PISG creates exploration within the student body by applying and using information, computing technology, and data in the contexts of public service and the urban environment.

### C. Membership of Organization

PISG is an interdisciplinary student organization at Rutgers University. Although the organization is geared towards students at the Edward J. Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy, any Rutgers students or faculty with interest in the organization's mission may become a member. Members must attend at least one meeting or event per semester to retain membership.

## Article II. Governing Bodies

### A. Composition

1. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Membership and Outreach Coordinator comprise the Executive Committee which oversees the planning of events for the organization's members.
2. The members of the Executive Committee make up the Plenary Council, hereafter referred to as "The Council".
3. PISG will engage and work with multiple faculty advisors and the Assistant Director of Student Services. The Director /Executive Director of the MPI program or such other person shall serve as the lead faculty advisor. All institutional and governance issues will be facilitated by the Assistant Director of Student Services.

### B. Authority

1. Ultimate authority and oversight over all policies and decision making pertaining to the PISG shall reside collectively with the Council, subject to the stipulations and constraints of this Constitution.
2. The President shall provide clarification regarding the proper interpretation of this Constitution upon Request.

3. Should there be a dispute as to the proper interpretation of this Constitution, the Council shall be presented with both interpretations, and it shall conduct a procedural vote to determine which interpretation is correct.

## C. Meetings and Procedures

1. The Council must plan a minimum of one professional and two educational events per year for the members of the PISG.
2. Each registered member of the PISG will receive an invitation by email at least seven days prior to each member event (I.e. conference, networking event, etc.). These events may also be open to the general public.
3. The Council Shall meet at least once each month from September to May while the University is in Session. The purpose of these meetings is for event planning and delegation of responsibilities.
4. The Secretary will provide council meeting notes and make them available to all PISG members upon request.
5. Only the elected Council Members will receive ongoing invitations to council meetings.
6. Any PISG member may attend council meetings, however, any members not on the Executive Committee must request to be invited to the upcoming council meeting. The request must be placed with the President for each subsequent council meeting invitation.

## D. Voting

Election of the executive committee shall occur in the month of November for the term beginning in January of the following calendar year. Any member who has attended at least two events and/or meetings within the past year is eligible to vote. Any member who has attended at least two events and/or meetings within the past year is eligible be nominated and voted into office with only the exception being the president. The position of president must be held by a student who has taken at least three credits within the school within the past academic year, and is enrolled in at least three credits within the school during the fall semester after they assume office. All eligible members must be given at least one week (7 days) notice of the election and be given all reasonable opportunities to vote. All eligible members possess one vote. Elections are won by a simple majority. In the event of a tie, the members of the current Executive Committee who are not up for reelection may make the tie-breaking decision.

## Article III. Officers

### A. Authorities and Delegation

The elected officers of the Executive Committee must uphold the duties listed below from the time they enter office in January through the following calendar year. There should, whenever possible, be an odd number of elected officers.

### B. Elected Officers

1. The President shall:

Chair the Executive Committee, schedule and oversee council meetings; provide leadership, planning, and guidance to the student group; act as the liaison to the Bloustein Graduate Student Group (BGSA), attending BGSA meetings when required act as the primary point of contact for PISG members; and assist the Council in event planning and recruitment.

This president is also the de facto Vice President of Public Informatics for BGSA. In this role the Officer will be responsible for attending all Bloustein School steering committee meetings, as well as representing the interests of their respective academic programs at executive committee and BGSA meetings. This Officer shall also be responsible for planning and running listening sessions for Public Informatics programs during the spring semester.

2. The Vice President shall:

Serve as the President at their discretion, or in their absence; and act as the primary contact for internal University organizations and offices; assist the Council in event planning and recruitment.

3. The Treasurer shall:

Oversee funding disbursements and refunds from all funding sources; solicit and manage donations; provide the Council with a list of any income or expenses within a reasonable timeframe; and assist the Council in event planning and recruitment as needed.

4. The Secretary shall:

Take council meeting notes and distribute a summary of proceedings to all PISG members within a reasonable time after each event; ensure the distribution and collection of post event questionnaires; and assist the Council in event planning and recruitment as needed.

5. The Membership and Outreach Coordinator shall:

Maintain a list of all current PISG members; manage email lists, social media accounts, any member and non-member outreach; and serve as the primary officer in charge of event planning and recruitment.

### C. Appointed Officers

From time to time the Council may require an additional officer to complete some specific function. The appointment of an additional officer may be conducted at a Council meeting by any member of the Council under the following rules and procedures:

1. A clear description of the to-be-appointed officer's duties and responsibilities must be shared with the Council in writing and added to the meeting notes by the secretary. Any member who has attended at least one event or meeting within the past year is eligible be appointed, attendance at current meeting is acceptable. The council must vote unanimously for an appointment to be confirmed.
2. The appointed officer has no vote on the council, and assumes no duties or responsibilities not specified in their appointment. The term limit of this appointment will run from the date of the appointment until the last day of the calendar year, but may run shorter if specified otherwise. All members should be notified within at least one week (7 days) notice of the appointment.

### D. Annual Elections

Elections should be held in the month of November in accordance with Article II, Section D. At least one week (7 days) before the beginning of the voting period, the Council shall announce the start of the nomination period, by notifying the members electronically, through circulars, and/or the posting of the information in a common area and call for nominations, indicating the requirements for a valid nomination, and the date and time by which nominations must be presented to them, i.e. the end of the nomination period.

As soon as possible after the closing of the nomination period, the secretary shall post a list of those nominated for the executive committee. The notice of nominees shall also contain information on where ballot papers are to be obtained, where the ballot box will be located, and the date and time at which voting will end. The nomination and voting processes may be conducted on-line if a system is available that meets the specifications determined by the Council. Ballot papers must then be placed in the ballot box. An electronic ballot box is acceptable. At the close of the election period, the Council shall count the votes cast, and post the results as soon as possible.

## **E. Accession to Office**

Officers may abdicate their position by providing a written statement informing the Council of their intention at least one week (7 days) prior to the next Council meeting. During the next Council meeting the remaining officers shall vote on a replacement with the President holding the tie-breaking vote.

## **F. Vacancies**

In the event of vacancies in the Executive Committee, the remaining council members shall vote on a replacement with the President holding the tie-breaking vote.

## **G. Officer Misconduct and Removal from Office**

The Council holds the right to revoke membership of an individual should they violate any of the following provisions:

1. They act in a manner that is threatening to the safety or wellbeing (physical or emotional) of other members or event attendees.
2. They violate the University Code of Student Conduct.
3. They do not satisfy minimum requirements for membership listed in Article I.

Section C.

4. Under scenario one, the revoked member may petition the Council and a vote will be provided in which all members may partake in a vote to uphold or deny the decision. Any Officer of the Executive Committee may be removed from their position under the following circumstances:

1. The Officer acts in a manner that is threatening to the safety or wellbeing (physical or emotional) of other members or event attendees.
2. The Officer violates the University Code of Student Conduct.
3. The Officer fails to complete his or her assigned duties as stated under Article III, Section B, and is issued two warnings prior to the removal offense.
4. The Officer misses more than two scheduled meetings or events without prior approval from the committee.
5. At least 50% of members, including members of the Executive Committee, vote for their removal.

Should an Officer be removed from office, they may retain membership unless the provisions listed in the previous paragraph are violated.

If PISG or any of its officers go into an out-of-governance status (which includes becoming inactive, absences as described in PISG constitution, unavailable -due to graduation, transfer, illness or any other reason), then the MPI Director, who serves as the lead faculty advisor to PISG and the Assistant Director of Student Services will convene initiatives to appoint one or more new student officers by selection of one or more appropriate candidates to serve as PISG officers and leadership.

## Members

### **Board Members:**

President: [Raj Parikh](#), MPI

Vice President: [Simran Singh](#), MPI

Treasurer: [Jonathan Delura](#), MCRP/MPI

Secretary: [Shiya John](#), MCRP

Membership & Outreach Coordinator: [Nihar Mhatre](#), MCRP

### **Faculty Advisors:**

[Clint Andrews](#), Ph.D. – Professor, Associate Dean – Research

[Michael Lahr](#), Ph.D. – Distinguished Research Professor

[Jim Samuel](#), Ph.D. - Associate Professor of Practice, Executive Director – Informatics

[Wenwen Zhang](#), Ph.D., Assistant Professor

[Soumitra Bhuyan](#), Ph.D., Assistant Professor

[Gavin Rozzi](#), MS, Coadjutant faculty

### **Alumni advisors:**

[Haoyun Wang](#), MCRP/MPI'20

[Qingyang Xie](#)

[Naomi Lee](#)

First Passed and Resolved in Spring, 2019.

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**First Amendment:**

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Passed and Resolved on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022.