

# BYLAWS OF THE UNIVERSITY LOWBROW ASTRONOMERS

## Article I: Name

The name of this organization is “*University Lowbrow Astronomers*” hereinafter referred to as *the Lowbrows* or *the Club*.

## Article II: Object

The objects of the Lowbrows are to

- Maintain and operate the University of Michigan’s 24” McMath telescope and other telescopes and equipment owned by the Lowbrows,
- Care for the Peach Mountain optical observatory facility for the use of the members and the public,
- Learn about astronomy from each other and guest speakers,
- Share our knowledge of astronomy with the public through open houses and other programs,
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of astronomy by club members and the public, and
- Have fun while accomplishing all of the above.

## Article III: Members

- A. All those who have paid their dues within the preceding 12 months will be considered members. Members are encouraged to attend meetings and other events, and to actively participate in all activities of the Club.
- B. Membership dues shall be at one price for individual or family membership and at a lower price for students and seniors (age 55+).
- C. Members are entitled to receive the monthly *Reflections* newsletter and to be placed on the mailing lists (newsletter, e-mail, etc).
- D. Members may use the 24” McMath telescope after receiving training and being certified by the Observatory Director. Untrained members may use their own telescopes on Peach Mountain once they understand the rules for entering and using Peach Mountain.

- E. Honorary membership may be extended to deserving individuals by consensus of the officers; honorary members may not vote or hold office, except if they pay dues and become regular members.
  - F. The term of membership expires one year from the first of the following month after dues are paid.
  - G. As long as the Club continues to exist, dues will not be refunded.
  - H. Only dues-paying members will be eligible to vote or run for office.
  - I. Family membership includes only those in the immediate family. Only family members age 14 and over are eligible to vote.
  - J. Members may be expelled from the Club for reasons such as:
    - Willful misuse and/or damage to Club and/or University property
    - Illegal activities on University property or at Club activities
    - Other conduct deemed inappropriate behavior by the officers
1. A motion to remove the member must be brought before the membership, if a majority of the officers approve the motion.
  2. Removal will be effective upon approval by two-thirds of the members voting.

#### **Article IV: Officers**

A. The elected offices shall be:

- President
  - Vice President(s)
  - Treasurer
  - Newsletter Editor
  - Observatory Director
  - Webmaster
  - Online Coordinator
1. Eligibility for office
    - a. The President must have previously held another Lowbrow office.
    - b. There shall be at least one and no more than four Vice Presidents to share the duties.
    - c. The Observatory Director must have served on the Observatory Committee for at least one year.

- d. The Webmaster must have the appropriate ability. If no member has appropriate abilities, this office may be left vacant and the Treasurer must appoint someone to maintain the Club e-mail list.
- e. The Online Coordinator must have the appropriate ability, with access to the tools needed to hold virtual meetings.
- f. A member may hold up to two offices simultaneously, except that the President may not also be Treasurer or Vice President.

## B. Duties of Officers

1. The President is responsible for:
  - a. Establishing Club direction with the advice and consent of the elected officers and general membership.
  - b. Presiding over Club and officers' meetings.
  - c. Coordinating and overseeing the activities of the Club in accordance with its objectives.
  - d. Acting as a Club representative to The University of Michigan, other organizations and public events.
  - e. Approving official Lowbrow correspondence.
  - f. Ensuring the Annual Report is prepared during the first quarter of each year.
  - g. Being the alternate signer on the bank account or appointing a vice president as alternate signer.
2. Vice President(s) is (are) responsible for:
  - a. Organizing monthly programs and keeping other officers informed of monthly programs and changes.
  - b. Assisting the President with governance of the Organization and presiding over meetings in the President's absence.
  - c. Keeping a record of the meetings, to be published in the following month's newsletter. This need not be word-for-word but rather an outline of what the program was, proposals, motions, voting results, announcements, etc.
  - d. Working with the Online Coordinator and Communications Committee on virtual meeting set up for guest speakers and permission to record presentation.
  - e. Notifying the membership, through e-mail or other means, of upcoming meetings and events.

3. The Treasurer is responsible for:
  - a. Keeping a record (including receipts) of all income and expenditures of the Club.
  - b. Monitoring the use of Club funds and reporting any misuse.
  - c. Preparing a financial report to the Lowbrows once a year to be presented with the Annual Report in spring.
  - d. Keeping a record of who has paid dues.
  - e. Keeping the membership address list up-to-date. All changes of address and phone number should be reported to the Treasurer.
  - f. Paying for expenditures
    - 1) Expenditures shall be considered as one of two types:
      - a) General Operating Expenditures
      - b) Special expenditures
    - 2) General expenditures are the ongoing expenses incurred by the officers in the fulfillment of their duties and the basic objectives of the Club. Receipts must be submitted within 90 days of the expense for reimbursement. These do not require a vote by the membership to pay. Examples:
      - a) Minor repair and upkeep expenses of the telescope and observatory.
      - b) Cost of printing the newsletter, producing and mailing meeting and event announcements, and printing and disseminating posters and flyers.
      - c) Long-distance telephone charges by members on Lowbrow business and accounting to a maximum of \$20 in one month.
    - 3) Special expenditures are one-time expenses for a special purpose or of a large sum (over \$250). These do require a vote by the membership to pay. Examples:
      - a) Major expenses towards the repair and upkeep of the McMath telescope and observatory.
      - b) Purchases of equipment for the telescope or observatory,
      - c) Expenses of special events and activities planned by the Club.
      - d) Special expenditures under \$250 must be approved by a majority of the club officers, including either the President and/or Treasurer.

- e) Since the Treasurer and the President have check signing authority, checks written to either party must be written and signed by the other.
4. The Newsletter Editor is responsible for:
- a. The appearance and technical details of the newsletter with input on contents from the officers and members.
    - 1) The contents of the newsletter should be:
      - a) Visually appealing
      - b) Grammatically correct
      - c) Scientifically and factually accurate
      - d) Interesting
    - 2) The contents of the newsletter should not be
      - a) Defamatory
      - b) Plagiaristic
      - c) Offensive to members of any race, creed or gender
      - d) Obscene
      - e) Inane
  - b. Printing the newsletter in an economical way consistent with the above specifications.
  - c. Publishing the Annual Report in the Newsletter in the first quarter of each year.
5. The Observatory Director is responsible for:
- a. Chairing the Observatory Committee.
  - b. Reporting all progress and necessary expenditures on the telescope to the membership.
  - c. Keeping track of the Lowbrow's gate and observatory building keys to Peach Mountain.
  - d. Reporting, as needed, to the University regarding any repair or maintenance issues with the observatory building.
  - e. Keeping the public and membership informed on the status of the open houses via voice mail and the internet web pages.
  - f. Supervising the responsible use of Peach Mountain for observing by the membership.
6. The Webmaster is responsible for:
- a. Maintaining the contents of the Lowbrow website with input from the officers and members.
    - 1) The appearance of the website should be:

- a) Visually appealing
  - b) Grammatically correct
  - c) Scientifically and factually accurate
  - d) Interesting
  - e) Up to date
- 2) The contents of the website should not be
- a) Defamatory
  - b) Plagiaristic
  - c) Offensive to members of any race, creed or gender
  - d) Obscene
  - e) Inane
- b. Maintaining the club e-mail list or designating a subcommittee to do so.
- c. The website shall include an e-mail address or some other mechanism for website visitors to contact the Club. The webmaster is responsible for answering this e-mail or designating a subcommittee to do so.
7. The Online Coordinator is responsible for:
- a. Chairing the Communications Committee
  - b. Ensuring that meetings (monthly meetings and special events) are available to the members and public through virtual means, as needed.
    - 1) Members will determine which meetings or event should be available virtually, to members-only or to the public.
  - c. Assisting with virtual officers' meetings as needed.

#### C. General Duties of Officers

1. Officers shall prepare an Annual Report to be published in the Newsletter in the first quarter of each year (before the April elections).
2. If an officer is unable to perform a specific duty at a specific time, that officer may call upon another officer or member to perform that duty.
  - a. The substitute officer must follow the responsibilities for the original officer as outlined above.
  - b. The other officers must be informed of the change in responsibilities.

#### D. Interim Officers

1. All officers who will not be able to perform their duties for more than three consecutive months must inform the Club so that an interim officer may be elected.
2. An interim officer's term will end when the regular officer resumes his/her duties or on the date of the next regular elections, whichever comes first.

E. Resignations and other Vacancies

1. If an officer is no longer able to perform his/her duties, the office will be considered vacant.
2. The positions of officers who quit the Club, or resign the office are considered vacant. Resignation must be in writing or by email and submitted to the President or Treasurer and will be assumed to be effective immediately upon receipt.
3. All vacancies will be filled as soon as possible by a special election which will proceed as a regular election would.

F. Removal of Officers

1. Officers may be removed from office for any of the following reasons:
  - a. Misuse of Club funds
  - b. Willful misuse and/or damage to Club and/or university property
  - c. Assault of a member or nonmember during a Club meeting or outing.
  - d. Failure to perform the duties of the office in an appropriate and/or intelligent manner.
  - e. Failure to pay dues.
2. A motion to remove the officer must be brought before the membership, if a majority of the remaining officers approve the motion.
3. Removal will be effective upon approval by two-thirds of the members voting and the position will be considered vacant.

## **Article V: Elections & Voting**

### **A. Elections**

1. Officers will be elected at the April meeting. Terms are to begin immediately after the meeting and end after the next annual elections.
2. Nominations will be taken by the President starting at the March meeting. Names of nominees will be published in the April Newsletter prior to the April meeting. Nominations may continue at the April meeting.
3. Voting will proceed by paper ballot and/or electronic polling if more than the necessary number of candidates run for any office or by a show of hands if there are no uncontested offices at the April meeting. Only members present at the meeting (including those participating on-line) may vote.
4. The count will be tallied by two members not running for office.
5. The nominee for an office obtaining a plurality of the vote will win that office.

### **B. Voting**

1. Voting for officers will be by paper ballot and/or electronic polling or a show of hands if there are no uncontested offices, of those members present at the meeting.
2. Voting for the removal of an officer will be by paper ballot or email. Ballots will be mailed or emailed to current members with known addresses and members will have at least 15 days to return the ballot (by mail or email) to a designated officer.
3. Voting for the removal of a member will be by paper ballot or electronic polling of those members present at the meeting.
4. Voting for amendments to the Bylaws will be by show of hands and/or electronic polling plus any absentee ballots received by the date of the vote.



5. Voting for all other motions will be by a show of hands and/or electronic polling. A simple majority of those voting is required for a motion to pass.

## **Article VI: Meetings**

### **A. Club Meetings**

1. Regular meetings shall be held monthly at a day, time and place as convenient as possible to the membership, and shall be announced in the newsletter or by email to all members.
2. The Lowbrows may plan other events and activities from time to time, to be held at the day, time and place decided upon by the membership.

### **B. Officers' meetings**

1. Officers shall meet for live discussion, on at least a semi-annual basis to
  - a. Plan Club functions and participation in other events.
  - b. Prioritize and set goals for each year.
  - c. Determine when major projects are needed on the McMath telescope or the Peach Mountain observatory and grounds.
  - d. Organize support as needed to assist the officers in completing their duties and to carry out the Club activities and projects.
  - e. Advise and consent on interaction with the public and university.
  - f. Annually internally audit the treasurer's books.
  - g. Annually publish the standing rules of the Club.
2. Officers may also make decisions by e-mail provided all officers respond.

## **Article VII: Committees**

A. Committees consist of chairs as designated by these Bylaws and volunteer members. If more members than required volunteer to serve, the officers will decide who will serve from those volunteering.

### **B. Standing committees are**

1. Observatory Committee, chaired by the Observatory Director, consisting of at least 3 members, inclusive of the chair. Responsibilities are:
  - a. Supervising the renovation, repair and upkeep of the 24-inch telescope and observatory.

- b. Scheduling of observation time with the 24-inch telescope should an increase in demand cause conflicts to arise.
  - c. Publicity and organization of public open houses and events held at Peach Mountain.
  - d. Interfacing with the University on issues relating to the observatory and grounds, the McMath telescope, open houses and special events held at Peach Mountain.
  - e. Training of members on the operation and care of the 24" McMath telescope.
  - f. Keeping an inventory of all equipment and property belonging to the Lowbrows.
2. Communications Committee, chaired by the Online Coordinator, consisting of at least 3 members, inclusive of the chair. Responsibilities are:
- a. Assisting the Online Coordinator with virtual meetings, via hosting, etc.
  - b. Welcoming guests at star parties and providing Lowbrow information (e.g., club membership information, star party etiquette, etc.).
  - c. Organizing annual elections, especially electronic polling.
  - d. Coordinating with the Webmaster on Public Relations outreach, including producing flyers and contacting media outlets.
- C. Ad hoc committees may be formed and disbanded as needed. Any member of the Club may chair them.

### **Article VIII: Parliamentary Authority**

Meetings shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* as interpreted by the presiding officer, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Bylaws or special rules of the Club.

### **Article IX: Amendment of Bylaws**

These bylaws may be amended after the following conditions have been met:

1. All members have been notified, in writing through the Newsletter and by e-mail, at least one month before voting is to take place, of the exact wording of the proposed amendment.

2. All members unable to attend the meeting when the vote is scheduled to take place may send an absentee ballot to the Treasurer. The ballot must be received by the Treasurer before the date of the vote.
3. All members present at the meeting may vote.
4. A simple majority of those voting, including absentee ballots, is sufficient to approve the amendment.

### **Article X: Dissolution of the Club**

- A. Dissolution of the Club can only occur upon vote of the membership using the conditions for amending the bylaws, except that approval by two-thirds of those voting is needed to pass.
- B. Once the motion for dissolution is approved, the Club will work with the University to remove the Club's property from Peach Mountain, ensure the McMath telescope is in working order, and return the keys to the University.
- C. Non-monetary assets and equipment of the Club will be disposed of using these methods in the following order:
  1. Auction to members, with minimum bids set by the officers.
  2. Offer of sale of remaining assets to the public with prices set by the officers or by auction.
  3. Donation of assets to schools, other astronomy clubs, or other non-profit organizations.
- D. All monetary assets, including proceeds from the disposition of the Club's assets and equipment as mentioned above, shall be distributed in equal shares to those members who are on the rolls on the date of the dissolution vote.

Revision 2 of the Bylaws was approved by the membership on April 18, 2003

Bylaws amended April 16, 2010 by vote of 30(yes) to 2(no).

Bylaws amended September 18, 2020 by a vote of 20 (yes) to 0 (no).