Brandeis Science Policy Initiative (SPI) Constitution

I. Purpose
   A. Mission Statement: Brandeis SPI seeks to provide on campus opportunities for graduate student education in science policy through seminars, peer-to-peer activities, and lectures given by both Brandeis faculty, and outside experts in the relevant fields.
   B. Main Goal: To have every participating graduate student:
      1. Learn about the larger concepts at the intersection of science and policy, such as, how federal funds for research and development are allocated, the pressures and priorities of policymakers.
      2. Use contemporary topics such as climate change, health care policy, and bioethics as case studies for effective and ineffective policy, and the challenges and viewpoints inherent on different sides.
      3. Develop a collaborative network between graduate students in Heller School and GSAS, with lecturers, and with the broader community of Boston area science policy activists and organizations.
      4. Effectively communicate their work and it’s importance to policymakers and the general public.
   C. General Description: The ability of scientists to continue their investigations hinges on their ability to secure funding and support, largely from public sources. In the current political climate, it has never been more important that scientists have an ability to speak to the public and to policymakers in such a manner that the importance of their work can be conveyed. Pursuant to this, new scientists should recognize the challenges and pressures that policymakers face, as well as the process by which decisions regarding the allocation of federal funds for scientific research occurs. However, as graduate students, we receive little to no formal education in matters of science policy, to our great detriment. The proposed organization will have, as its mission, the goal of enabling students to “sell” their work to a broad audience, as well as establish a fluency among students in matters related to federal science policy, and allocation of federal funds for research and development. We aim to create a new generation of scientists who are able to step outside of the ivory tower and act as their own advocates at local, state and national levels.
   D. As far as we are aware, this is the first club or organization at Brandeis to pursue these goals.

II. Membership
   A. Brandeis SPI will be open to any and all graduate students for whom federal funding provides the bulk of their resources. Membership will be contingent upon acceptance and retention of good standing within their respective graduate programs.

III. Officers
   A. SPI will have a core group of officers that includes a president to lead discussions and stear meetings, a secretary to keep track of meeting minutes
and decisions made, and several strategic advisors whose role will be to lead efforts to reach out and contact faculty and speakers. Additional roles will be created as a need arises.

IV. Meetings
   A. Meetings will be held at least biannually, with the goal of Fall/Spring semester meetings being to welcome new graduate student members and discuss upcoming goals and resources for the semester. The intent of the group is to bring in faculty and outside speakers who can lend their expertise in various matters related to science policy - thus acting as mentors for SPI members. Additional meetings of the group will hinge upon the group's ability to recruit such speakers to give lectures or seminars.

V. Election of Officers
   A. Officers will be elected by a majority vote when a vacancy is available. Candidates will submit their name and credentials to the group and votes will be counted at that same group. If more than 2 candidates run for a position, the individual with the most total votes will be elected.

VI. Constitution Amendments
   A. Amendments will be made to the constitution as needed and as supported by a majority of members. The president will act as a tiebreaker in the event of an even split on a question of amendments.

VII. Statement of Non-Exclusivity: Brandeis SPI is open to all members of the Brandeis Community. Brandeis SPI does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, gender identity and expression, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, disability, political affiliation, ideology, veteran status, or any other category protected by the law.