



SANFORD UNDERGROUND RESEARCH FACILITY

SOUTH DAKOTA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY

User Association Charter

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Revision History

Rev	Date	Section	Paragraph	Summary of Change	Authorized by
05	2/24/2025	2, 4	NA	Update the term of office to 3 years. Updated term for Executive Committee (EC) member replacement. Updated mechanism for staggering EC terms.	CCR 1068
06	11/19/2025	7	NA	Updated document due to change to the document numbering of controlled documents due to the change from DocuShare system to SharePoint system & corrected document approval process	CCR 1190

1.0 Purpose

The Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) User Association serves four main purposes:

- The Association provides an organized framework for interaction between the SURF researcher community and South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (SDSTA) management regarding strategies and programs to improve support to science experiments at SURF. The Association promotes open discussion on relevant topics for researchers performing science at SURF, including communications, coordination, policies, procedures, forms, operations/logistics and aspects of strategic planning pertinent to science.
- The Association provides a means for SDSTA management to inform users on issues including current and future plans for the facility. Thorough discussion with users of ongoing projects, as well as plans for future uses, will place SURF management in a stronger position to evaluate the needs of users and will enable users to plan more efficiently regarding utilization of the facility.
- The Association promotes a sense of community amongst SURF experiments and researchers, including identifying and advocating for sharing of information regarding experiences of living and working in the area around SURF.
- The Association articulates and promotes the scientific case for underground science and its significance to society, and it provides a channel for advocacy with representatives in various organizations such as government and funding agencies, as appropriate.

The Association may be requested to provide input or otherwise inform separate SURF reviews or committees such as the Science Program Advisory Committee (SPAC), which is responsible for reviewing the SURF science program and support capacity as well as science facilities.

2.0 Membership

Membership shall be open to individuals with a professional interest in the scientific program at SURF, including SDSTA staff. Formal membership shall be compiled via registration and can be reviewed by members of the Executive Committee. Members do not need to be affiliated with SURF experiments. The Executive Committee Secretary maintains the Association membership list and interacts with SURF to create an email distribution list and review it on a regular basis. The Executive Committee has the authority to remove members by unanimous vote.

- Executive Committee
 - The Executive Committee will conduct most of the day-to-day business of the Association, including regular communication with the SURF Laboratory and Science Directors. The Executive Committee shall be elected by the membership and consist of nine (9) individuals, including the Chair, the Secretary, and seven additional members. The Executive Committee shall comprise:
 - ◆ At least one (1) early-career researcher (less than 5 years post-Ph.D.).
 - ◆ At least three (3) representatives of the physics community.
 - ◆ At least three (3) representatives of the biology-geoscience-engineering community.
 - The Executive Committee shall have no more than two (2) representatives from any single experiment collaboration and no more than one (1) member from a particular

institution in the same experiment research discipline. The Executive Committee shall strive to maintain representation that reflects inclusion, diversity, and equity; see <https://sanfordlab.org/about-us/who-we-are>.

- The term of office for Executive Committee members is three (3) years, with staggered terms of office.
 - Executive Committee membership shall be advertised to the Association and SDSTA management on a website devoted to the Association.
 - The Executive Committee shall select a Chair from among its members for a term of one (1) year (renewable upon re-election; see Section 4 below). The Chair of the Executive Committee will be asked to continue to serve as a committee member for one year after the term as Chair expires, if necessary as a 10th (non-voting) member. The Chair will preside at all meetings and be the spokesperson for the Association.
 - A Secretary shall be appointed by the Chair for a term of one (1) year and shall be renewable. The Secretary shall prepare a summary of all meetings, and the summary of the General meetings shall be emailed to all members.
 - In the event that a position on the Executive Committee should be vacated before expiration of its term, the Executive Committee shall appoint a member of the Association to fill the position for a minimum of one year, with eligibility to continue serving until the election following their appointment. In the event that the Chair or Secretary position becomes vacant, the members of the Executive Committee first select a new member and then proceed with an election to the vacated position. The newly selected Executive Committee member is not a candidate for the Chair or Secretary positions.
- Nominating Committee
 - The Executive Committee shall appoint at least five (5) members to form a Nominating Committee, which shall prepare a list of candidates for election to the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee is responsible for preparing a slate of candidates for election to the Executive Committee, including any candidate who receives at least five (5) nominations from the membership. The list of candidates for a given election shall be more than the number of positions to be filled on the Executive Committee; the specific number of candidates for a given election shall be at the discretion of the Chair.
 - In preparing the list, the Nominating Committee shall formally solicit widespread input from the Association membership. In compiling the list of Executive Committee candidates, the Nominating Committee shall reflect a balance of interests among research fields pursued at SURF and among institutional affiliations of the users and shall strive to maintain representation that reflects inclusion, diversity, and equity. Individuals serving on the Nominating Committee can be nominated for office.

- Subcommittees
 - It is expected that the Executive Committee will poll the Association constituency as appropriate and create Subcommittees to study technical and administrative matters of concern to the Association.
 - A Subcommittee can be created with the approval by two-thirds of the Executive Committee through the process of an anonymous vote. An Executive Committee member must present the goals and function of the Subcommittee formally in an Executive Committee meeting. The vote will occur at a time designated by the Executive Committee Chair in consultation with the presenting member, with the stipulation that there will be at least one (1) month between the initial Executive Committee presentation and the Executive Committee vote.
 - Subcommittee Chairs are voted into office with a simple majority of the Executive Committee membership and are the spokespeople of the Subcommittee. They call the meetings of the Subcommittee, set the agenda, and report to the Executive Committee on behalf of the Subcommittee. Deputy Subcommittee Chairs are appointed by the relevant Subcommittee Chair and assist the Subcommittee Chairs, including performing the duties of the Subcommittee Chair when the Chair is unavailable. The Executive Committee Chair shall not serve as a Subcommittee Chair or Deputy Chair.
 - The Executive Committee Chair should perform an annual review of the Subcommittees to ensure that they are active in addressing needs of the user community and aligned with current goals and priorities of the Executive Committee. It is expected that the Chair report the results of the review to the full Executive Committee.
 - Subcommittees can be retired with the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Committee through the process of an anonymous vote. An Executive Committee member must present the motivation for retiring a Subcommittee formally in an Executive Committee meeting with the voting occurring no earlier than the following Executive Committee meeting.

3.0 Meetings

All meetings (except Subcommittee meetings) shall be called by the Executive Committee Chair, who will provide an agenda and circulate it in advance of each meeting. Subcommittee meetings shall be called by the Subcommittee Chair.

- General Meeting
 - Typically, one meeting of the general membership shall be held each year. In-person General meetings will nominally be held at SURF, but other sites may be selected by the Executive Committee. Except under unusual circumstances, notice of meetings shall be given to the membership at least three (3) months in advance. General meetings may present a practical opportunity for conducting Executive Committee elections, but alignment is not required.

- Executive Committee Meetings
 - The Executive Committee shall meet at least quarterly, with a quorum consisting of a majority of Committee members (i.e., five (5) individuals).
 - The Executive Committee will meet regularly with SDSTA management, including during quarterly Executive Committee meetings as appropriate. SURF Laboratory and Science Directors will regularly participate in meetings with the Executive Committee, with participation by other appropriate SDSTA representatives based on agenda requests, coordinated by the SDSTA Science Director.
- Subcommittee Meetings
 - Subcommittee meetings will be held regularly, and they can include participation by SDSTA personnel based on agenda requests. Participation by appropriate SDSTA representatives will be coordinated by the SDSTA Science Director.
- Other Meetings
 - The Executive Committee and other members of the Association are encouraged to participate in other meetings at SURF such as the weekly Science Integration meeting conducted by the SDSTA Science department that also includes representatives from various SDSTA departments. The main purpose of this meeting is to cover logistics and coordination topics relevant for both facility and experiment groups.

4.0 Decision Making

- General
 - General business of the Executive Committee, including voting, can be conducted via email at the discretion of the Chair.
- Elections
 - Executive Committee
 - ◆ The Executive Committee shall be elected by the membership from a slate of candidates identified by the Nominating Committee. Special procedures are required for the first election of the Executive Committee:
 - ◆ Nominating Committee: Candidates for the inaugural Nominating Committee shall be selected by polling Principal Investigators and Spokespersons from current SURF experiments. The initial Nominating Committee of 5 individuals shall be appointed by the SDSTA Executive Director and shall comprise at least two (2) representatives of the physics community and at least two (2) representatives of the biology-geoscience-engineering community. In subsequent years, the Executive Committee appoints the Nominating Committee.
 - ◆ Executive Committee (Staggering Positions): To ensure continuity of knowledge within the Executive Committee, a mechanism for adjusting nominal term lengths with staggered expirations will be implemented. In the first election, the five (5) nominees having the largest number of votes serve for two (2) years, the remaining

four (4) nominees will serve for one (1) year. In subsequent years, additional staggering of terms can be implemented with support from the majority of the entire Executive Committee. Otherwise, all terms of office will be of nominal duration as specified in Section 2.0.

- Executive Committee Chair
 - The process will be overseen by the previous term's Executive Committee Chair. If the Chair is running, the process will be overseen by the previous term's Secretary. If the Secretary is running, an alternate is selected by all non-running members of the Executive Committee.
 - All continuing and elected Executive Committee members are eligible to run for Executive Committee Chair.
 - Two (2) weeks before the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee, Executive Committee members solicit Chair nominations, including self-nominations, to be sent to the member overseeing the election.
 - One (1) week before the first meeting, vision statements from candidates running for Executive Committee Chair are sent to full Executive Committee membership.
 - At the voting meeting, which is the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee, candidates leave the forum so that remaining Executive Committee members can discuss.
 - Voting begins with a motion and a second.
 - Voting is anonymous and done by all members. Slips of paper can be used, and those attending remotely can send email in real-time to a non-Executive Committee member providing administrative support. Those unable to attend in person or remotely may designate a proxy prior to the meeting.
 - Counting is done by a non-Executive Committee administrative support person immediately following the vote, assisted/verified by the Executive Committee member overseeing the election.
 - In the case of a tie, the outgoing Chair casts the tie-breaking vote. If the outgoing Chair is part of the tie, the tie is broken by whoever is overseeing the process.

5.0 Reporting

Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded by the Secretary, and after approval by the Chair, minutes of all meetings shall be provided to all Association members.

6.0 Communication

The Executive Committee may, on its own initiative, and shall, upon instruction of a majority of the members attending a General meeting, submit questions or statements for consideration to the full

membership. Results of the deliberations of the Association shall be communicated to the SURF Laboratory Director.

7.0 Amendments

The initial charter will be established following SDSTA approval. This charter may be amended by a vote of the Executive Committee. Proposed changes may be submitted by petition to the Executive Committee, the vote on which shall be taken no sooner than one week after such introduction. A two-thirds majority of the Committee members voting is required for passage. The charter approved by the User Association Executive Committee will be formally approved by SDSTA's document change control process.