

## **Charter of the Shoals Marine Laboratory Alumni and Friends Association** ***Revised and Approved, January 2026***

The ***Vision*** of the Shoals Marine Laboratory Alumni and Friends Association (“AFA”) is to be a powerful force in successfully supporting the growth, development, and outreach goals of the Shoals Marine Laboratory.

The ***Mission*** of the AFA is to engage and enhance the involvement of the Shoals Marine Laboratory community in a manner that expresses the pride, tradition, excitement and life-long learning that stretches across time and space.

The ***Mission*** will be achieved through the work of several Committees, which will strive to:

1. Support the work of SML leadership and staff
2. Inform and connect different components of the SML community through effective communication
3. Provide networking and mentoring opportunities that enhance career and social needs within the SML community
4. Support and increase SML community participation in fundraising activities
5. Plan and engage the SML community in activities on Appledore Island and on the mainland

### ***AFA Structure and Leadership***

The Shoals Marine Laboratory Alumni and Friends Association (“AFA”) is comprised of all members of the SML community (all “Shoalers”): SML course and program alumni, friends of SML, SML leadership, Faculty and Staff.

Three Officers will provide leadership for the AFA: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

1. The Chair oversees all AFA Council meetings, and will advise AFA Committee Chairs on key priorities, develop Council meeting agendas, schedule meetings with input from the Committee Chairs and Secretary, and meet periodically with the SML Executive Director and other SML leadership.
2. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair in leading the Council and will lead Council meetings, and assume other responsibilities, if the Chair is unavailable.

3. The Secretary will assist the Chair and Vice Chair in leading the Council by supporting internal Council communications related to plans and workflow. The Secretary will generate and shares minutes of the Council meetings and keep track of Council membership and the AFA membership database (names and contact info) in collaboration with SML staff.

The SML Alumni and Friends Association Council (the “Council”)<sup>1</sup> will represent the SML Alumni and Friends Association (AFA). The Council consists of three AFA officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary), Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, Decadal Representatives (1966-1979; 1980’s; 1990’s; 2000’s; 2010’s, 2020’s, etc.), and representatives of the faculty, staff and friends (at least one person from each of these constituencies).

AFA Officers and SML leadership will seek volunteers to serve as Council members. They should be passionate about SML, eager to re-connect with and re-engage alums and friends, enthusiastic about what SML has done for their careers and lives, and supportive of the need to raise funds for the long-term sustainability of SML. Each Council member will serve on at least one AFA Committee.

The Council will meet at SML each summer, ideally at the annual SML Alumni and Friends Reunion Weekend in August (or if it is not held, then at a mutually agreeable time, via teleconference). The Council will report its activities to the Executive Director of SML on a semi-annual basis (in August and February). Meeting minutes will be distributed for comment and then sent to the Executive Director. Additional meetings of the Council may be called during the off-season at the discretion of the AFA Chair and with the support of the SML Executive Director.

### **Election of Officers, Appointments to the Council, and Amendments/Alterations to the Charter**

Nominations for Officer positions, nominations for membership on the Council, and any proposed changes to the AFA Charter will be addressed at the Annual Meeting of the AFA Council held during the summer, ideally at the SML Alumni and Friends Reunion Weekend (or if it is not held, then at a mutually agreeable time, via teleconference).

Elections and votes on amendments or alterations to the Charter will take place electronically, in October of each year. Election of Officers and changes to the Charter will require an affirmative vote of at least 50% of AFA Council members. For any election or vote in which a majority vote is not achieved, the SML Executive Director will cast the deciding vote. Officer terms will begin January 1 following the election. Any approved changes to the Charter will also take effect on January 1 following the vote.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected for two-year terms. The Secretary will also be appointed for a two-year term, such that the terms of the Chair and Secretary do not turn over at the same time. Officers will be limited to two sequential two-year terms in the same position. Officers can be eligible again for that position after at least a one-year hiatus.

During the last year of a Chair's final term, the Council will inquire whether the Vice Chair is willing to take on the position of Chair, and if so, it will vote on that appointment. If the Vice Chair does not wish to succeed the Chair, nominations will be sought and an election will be held for a Chair and Vice Chair. If vacancies occur among the officers, new officers may be elected at any time via electronic vote, as needed.

For proposed amendments or alterations to the Charter, proper written notice must be given in advance (by August 1, which is prior to the Annual Meeting of the AFA) to all Council members, including a written copy and written explanation of proposed changes. Any member of the AFA Council may bring a request for a closed written vote to the Chair either privately or publicly and it will be honored in all cases.

***AFA Committees:***

Several Committees will carry out the work of the AFA. Each committee will be comprised of a Chair (and co-Chair, if needed) who are members of the AFA Council and at least 3-6 other members (from the Council or general AFA membership). Committee Chairs will be selected by consensus of the AFA Officers and the SML Executive Director.

Each committee will meet (by teleconference, or in person, as appropriate) on a regular basis (as necessary) to carry out their work. Committee chairs will schedule meetings and keep committee work moving forward, with the support of the AFA Secretary.

Three committees are currently active, but committees can be “retired” and other committees can be constituted as needs arise:

**1. Recruitment Committee** - This committee assists SML in developing and helping to execute an effective plan for recruitment of students for SML courses, participants for the public programs, and scientists for research opportunities at SML. This committee will work primarily with SML’s Associate Director.

**2. Networking, Mentoring & Activities Committee** - This committee will develop an AFA network for the benefit of all members of the SML community. It will plan sustainable AFA activities on the Island and on the mainland, with a special focus on the SML Alumni and Friends Reunion Weekend in August each summer (including the Annual Meeting of the AFA and AFA Council). It will use the SML alumni database to locate and effectively engage alumni and promote career development through mentoring. This committee will work with several SML staff, as needed.

**3. Philanthropy Committee** - This committee will guide SML by encouraging communication within the AFA, in an effort to grow the participation and involvement of all members of the SML community in fundraising and help identify new SML donors. The committee will support SML through periodic fundraising activities (e.g., Cornell Giving Day, 603 Challenge) to support SML’s mission. This committee will work primarily with SML’s Director of Community Relations.

<sup>1</sup> The AFA Council is comprised of volunteers who provide leadership for the AFA. It is not a legal Board and does not represent the Shoals Marine Laboratory, Cornell University or University of New Hampshire.

*Approved by the AFA Council in January 2026*