

Zone Councilor Onboarding Book



2017-2018 National Council

Congratulations and Welcome to the National Council!

The National Office is excited for you to join us as part of the SPS National Council family. This guide is intended to provide you with some advice on how to make the best of the next few months as we plan for the National Council meeting. As a Zone Councilor, you are a leader within our community and we at the National Office are here to support you throughout your term.

What is a Zone Councilor?

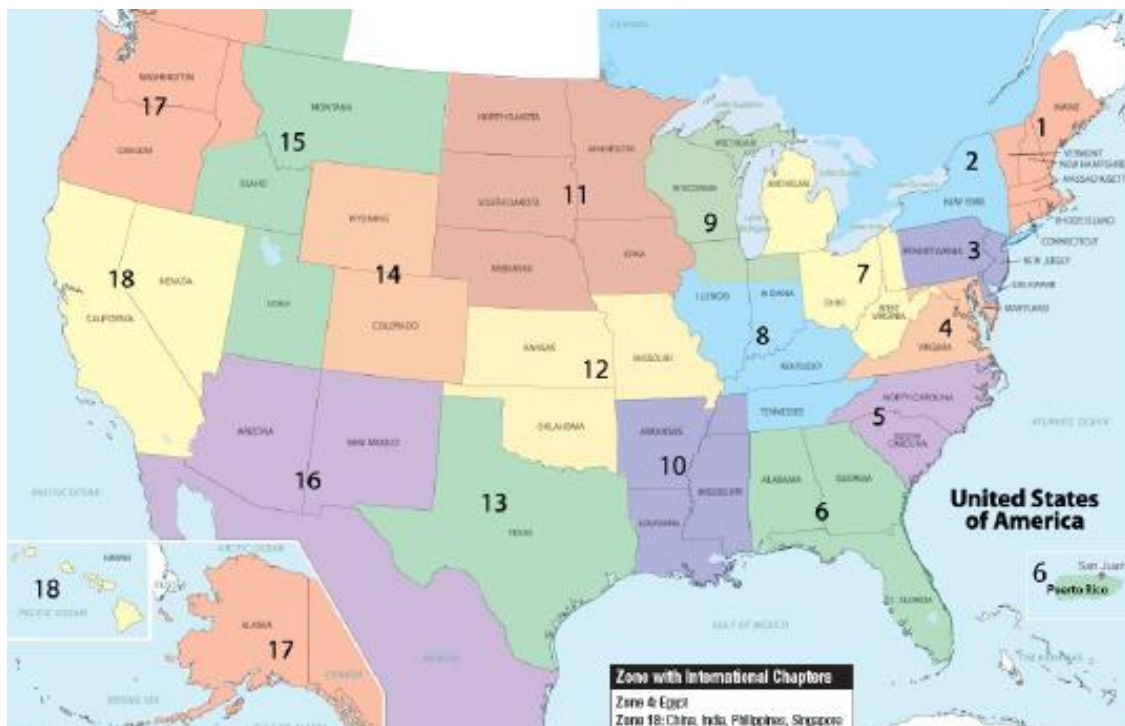
The official responsibilities of the ZC are described in the [SPS Constitution](#):

“the duties of the Councilor shall include representing the Chapters in the Zone at Council meetings, assisting Chapters of the Zone, arranging combined activities among the Chapters in the Zone, and providing liaison between the Chapters in the Zone and National Office.” (Article III, Section 1, Clause 4)

Fundamentally, SPS is about students! Work closely with your student AZC to provide support and continuity from year-to-year (AZCs are elected annually). Below is information that, while not comprehensive, describes in more detail the roles of the ZCs and AZCs and how they can work together to advance the mission of SPS in the zone.

ZC Responsibilities:

- Represent faculty and department perspectives on the national council
- Communicate with SPS faculty advisors regarding opportunities and deadlines
- Communicate regularly with chapters within their zone about SPS and ΣΠΣ
- Encourage local and national initiatives
- Remind chapter leadership of deadlines
- Meet with individual chapters as time and resources permit
- Encourage and support local chapter advisors
- Represent all chapters within their zone on the National Council
- Support and encourage the events within a zone
- Ensure that zone meetings are organized and held within their zone
 - *The ZC does NOT have to organize a zone meeting!*
 - *Instead, work with chapters to ensure a great meeting takes place!*



Zone Map

AZC Responsibilities:

- Represent student perspective on the national council
- Communicate with SPS presidents about national opportunities and due dates
- Communicate with chapters
- Encourage and urge chapters to host zone meetings
- Attend zone meetings hosted by others
- Serve as a primary point of contact for chapters
- Work with local chapter officers to maintain and increase chapter activity levels
- Be a student member of SPS during their term of service

Together the ZC and AZC Should Work Jointly To:

- Ensure a zone meeting occurs, preferably hosted by a chapter different from those of the ZC/AZC.
 - *It is helpful to attend a previous zone meeting before helping to host a meeting!*
- Evaluate chapter reports for your zone and another zone assigned by national
- Attend national meetings, Fall (in person), Winter (virtual), and Spring
- Participate in a National Council committee
 - Some committees hold monthly sub-committee meetings.
 - You and your AZC may be on a separate committees. It can be helpful to keep in communication with your AZC about their committee work.

More About Zone Meetings

You and your AZC should help organize at least one zone meeting each year. Ideally, a zone meeting will be held each semester and hosted by a chapter within the zone (rather than the ZC or AZC). The timing of zone meetings can vary from zone to zone based on tradition, availability of venue, and interest, but they often occur in the spring, as the fall can be busy time for chapters getting going locally.

The [SPS National Website](#) has a lot of helpful information to guide you and the host chapter through planning a zone meeting. Keep in mind that [funding is available](#) both in support of the meeting itself and also for helping students travel to attend the meeting.

Getting Started: Between Now and September

Below are some tips to help you kick-start your term as Zone Councilor before the National Council meeting. These items are not all-inclusive or mandatory.

1. Meet with your Associate Zone Councilor.

Your AZC is the person with whom you should be in the most contact. Each Zone elects one AZC (an undergraduate) and one ZC (you, a professional physicist). You can find contact information on your AZC [here](#). Schedule a meeting with your AZC (in-person or virtual). Establishing a good rapport early on will make you a more effective team.

2. Introduce yourself to your fellow Zone Councilors.

You and your fellow ZCs represent the professional leaders of SPS and ΣΠΣ. As members of the National Council, you will come together with the AZCs, Executive Committee, and National Office to provide the strategic guidance and executive leadership our international organization needs to prosper. Developing a close relationship with the other ZCs is benefits both our organization as a whole and you personally. You are all fellow physics-lovers working to support the next generation of physicists. Getting to know each other know quickly will make your time together at the National Council meeting more fulfilling. Cohorts in years past have used social media and group chats to introduce themselves.

3. Get a continuity briefing from the outgoing ZC and AZC.

The National Office will schedule a meeting with the incoming and outgoing zone representatives to discuss the state of your Zone, what they focused on during their term, and what their recommendations are for the future of the Zone. Outgoing ZCs and AZCs are a wealth of information and can be a guiding light for you as you begin your tenure. You may want to consider other specific topics for discussion including

- Historical zone meeting information
- Discussion of active chapters
- Climate of zone
- Methods of zone communication
- Unique attributes of the zone
- Transfer of social media, files, and zone-specific content

4. Become familiar with the National Organization.

Our website (www.spsnational.org) is a great resource to learn about the national organization. Peruse the site and take note of all we do. It's important you have a deep understanding of the resources provided by the National Office because you will be the person your Zone's chapter officers turn to. Familiarize yourself with what we offer: scholarships, awards, career toolbox, publications, and so much more.

5. Ensure you are an official SPS member.

Our bylaws state 'all elective officers must be current members of the Society of Physics Students'. If you are not currently an official SPS dues-paying member, begin the membership process on our website.

Moving Forward

The activities of the ZC can and will change throughout the academic year. To be successful, you should be aware of the typical calendar of the SPS National Council and Office and be able to take actions accordingly. A typical timeline of activities is shown below.

SPS Typical Annual Events

- ❖ **March 15:** Nomination due
- ❖ **April:** Elections
- ❖ **May:** Confirmation of election and formal notification of results
- ❖ **June/July:** Transition calls between outgoing & incoming councilors
- ❖ **June:** Chapter Report deadline
- ❖ **August:** Committees form
- ❖ **August/September:** Review chapter reports (your zone and another)
- ❖ **September:** three day Fall National Council meeting (in person)
- ❖ **October/November:** *Physics Congresses (every few years)*
- ❖ **November 15:** Fall Awards due (Awards and Grants)
- ❖ **January:** Winter webinar
- ❖ **January 15:** Internship applications due
- ❖ **March 15:** Scholarship applications due
- ❖ **April:** Spring Webinar
- ❖ **June:** Chapter Report deadline

In addition, you should try to help organize at least one zone meeting per year (and possibly more if there is sufficient interest!).

The Bottom Line

While these lists may seem like being a ZC is a lot of work, keep in mind that these items are only suggestions and, as a ZC, you have the flexibility to define how much or little you take on. You should also seek out support from the SPS National Office if you need help, particularly in regards to zone meetings and providing support to chapters in the zone. Just focus on being flexible and responsive to the needs of your AZC and the students in the zone and the rest will work itself out!