

**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION**

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Revised by Carla Glosson, Ekeama Goddard and Eric Scovel, July 2008**

**Article I. Name**

The name of this organization shall be Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO). It shall be located in West Lafayette, Indiana.

**Article II. Affiliation**

The GEO shall be affiliated with the United Steelworkers (USW) through their Associate Member Program.

**Article III. Purpose**

The purpose of the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) at Purdue University is to organize graduate student employees to advocate for themselves and to take action toward improving the quality of graduate life and employment.

In doing so, we pursue the following:

1. Act in accordance with Purdue University policies and regulations.
2. Organizing: To empower graduate employees by working diligently to improve graduate student life as it relates to our employment and related labor and/or social matters at Purdue University.
3. Collective Representation and Action: Foster partnerships with graduate student organizations, Purdue administration and other relevant body in regards to terms and conditions of graduate employment.
4. Education: To promote quality instruction and research at Purdue.
5. Community: Offer a collegial space for underrepresented populations such as international students; LGBT students; students with federally designated minority status; students who are disabled; and whoever wishes to voice their concerns.
6. Solidarity: Reach out to similar organizations residing in the Greater Lafayette area and neighboring universities to encourage dialogue beyond the boundaries of Purdue.

7. Social Justice: To acknowledge that economic justice cannot be separated from the fight for social justice, civil rights, and human rights within and beyond the borders of our campus, to recognize that events beyond our campus often directly affect our working and living conditions, and to work toward the spread of unionism, solidarity, and social justice.

#### **Article IV. Organizational Structure**

- Section 1. The GEO is a representative body, and its structure shall reflect the egalitarian-democratic values on which it is based. Members shall suffer no impairment of freedom of speech concerning the operations of the GEO. Active discussion of GEO affairs shall be encouraged and protected within the GEO.
- Section 2. The Executive Board (EB) is the executive body of the GEO. Between meetings of the EB, officers shall exercise such powers as are granted to them by the constitution or by the Executive Board.
- Section 3. The Steering Committee shall exercise oversight of the Executive Board, shall advise the EB, and may refer any action (or lack of action) or decision by the EB or an officer to a membership meeting.
- Section 4. Subject to this constitution, the by-laws of the GEO and other decisions approved by ballot as laid out in Article VI, membership meetings shall be the supreme decision making body of the organization.
- Section 5. Members shall have the right to full participation in the decision making process, through discussion and voting, and shall receive due notice of membership meetings and have access to any information necessary for the exercise of this right.
- Section 6. The enumeration in this constitution of certain roles or powers for a body or officer shall not prevent that body or officer from holding other roles or powers not so enumerated.

#### **Article V. Membership**

- Section 1. Membership and participation are free from discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran, or political belief/affiliation.

- Section 2. Full Membership: Every graduate student employed by Purdue University as a research assistant, teacher's assistant, lecturer and administrative assistant is eligible for membership within the organization.
- Section 3. Associate Membership: Purdue University undergraduates, staff, faculty, post-doctorates and graduate students not employed by the University as research assistants, teacher's assistants, lecturers or administrative assistants are eligible for associate membership of the GEO. They may not vote or hold office within the GEO.
- Section 4. Full members are eligible to serve as representatives of the Steering Committee and to run for the Executive Board.
- Section 5. All officers of the Executive Board, duly elected, shall be eligible for membership, for the academic year in which they hold office, by virtue of their election.
- Section 6. Members shall have the right to fair and democratic elections at all levels of the organization. This includes due notice of nominations and elections, equal opportunity for competing candidates, and proper electoral procedures which shall be specified in the Constitution.
- Section 6. Good Standing: Members shall remain in good standing by paying regular dues to the GEO and by complying with directives of the GEO. The By-laws will specify dues. Officers must remain members in good standing of the GEO in order to retain their position.
- Section 7. No eligible person shall be denied membership. All members in good standing will have equal rights and privileges under this constitution.

**Article VI. Executive Board and Election Committee**

- Section 1. The elected officers of the organization shall be:
- a) President
  - b) Vice President
  - c) Secretary
  - d) Treasurer
- Section 2. The Elected Officers shall also serve as the Executive Board.
- Section 3. During the semester immediately preceding the end of the term of office for elected officers, an Election Committee shall be formed by volunteers who are

members in good standing. The Election Committee shall conduct the election of the Executive Board.

- Section 4. All members in good standing shall be eligible to run for the Executive Board.
- Section 5. By the midpoint of the semester immediately preceding the end of the term of office of the elected officers, the Election Committee shall send an electronic notice to all members in good standing declaring nominations for the Executive Board open. Nomination shall remain open at least two weeks. Nominations may be made by any member in good standing and shall be presented in writing to the Election Committee. Nominees wishing to decline may do so by notifying the Election Committee.
- Section 6. Nominees may not serve on the Election Committee. They may choose either to decline the nomination and remain on the committee, or to resign from the committee.
- Section 7. The Election Committee or Executive Board shall call a membership meeting for the purposes of electing the new Executive Board. This meeting shall be held within two weeks of the closing of nominations. Electronic notice of this membership meeting and its purpose shall be sent to all members in good standing at least one week before the meeting. The first order of business of all such meetings shall be the presentation of speeches by all nominees desiring to do so. Any nominee making a speech shall be subject to questioning by the membership at the meeting.
- Section 8. These elected officers of the Executive Board shall be voted in on a simple majority vote of members in good standing attending such a meeting. The top vote getter for each position will be elected to that position. The Election Committee shall tally the ballots and present the outcome at the meeting.
- Section 4. Each office has a term of one consecutive year. If for any reason the elected officer resigns, a temporary member will be appointed by the President until the new officer is elected into office by a simple majority vote of general members.
- Section 5. The advisor for GEO will be voted in by a simple majority serving for the standard one year term open for renewal each year.

## **Article VII. Officer Duties**

- Section 1. President – The President will organize and direct all general meetings. It shall be the duties of the President to:
- a) Call and preside over special emergency meetings when deemed necessary by the executive board.
  - b) Appoint temporary vacancies in offices with the approval of the general board.

- c) Cast a vote in the case of a tie.
- d) Serve as liaison and front figure of the GEO to all public, private and interested entities including Purdue University.
- e) To delegate proper tasks, responsibilities, projects to general members.
- f) Ensure the longevity and empowerment of the organization in accords to the mission statement
- g) Maintain communication with USW liaison.

Vice President – The Vice President shall have responsibility for the organizing activities of GEO. It shall be the duties of the Vice President to:

- a) Preside in the absence, or inability of the President
- b) Assist the President in any necessary duties
- c) Insure the proper performance of all administrative duties, the proper operation of all committees, and the timely submission of all reports to the Executive Board.
- d) Serve as one of two Chairs for the Steering Committee

Treasurer – The Treasurer shall serve as the director of finance and accounting for the organization. It shall be the duties of the Treasurer to:

- a) Keeps accounts, deposits the organization’s funds, and makes expenditures in a manner approved by the Business Office for Student Organizations.
- b) Establishes annual budgets.
- c) Establishes fines and penalties for organizational infractions.
- d) Makes regular reports to the Membership. The membership shall have access to the financial records of the GEO in a manner specified by the by-laws.

Secretary – The Secretary will serve as the administrative assistant to the executive board. It shall be the duties of the Secretary to:

- a) Takes minutes at general meetings and report them to the general members.
- b) Manage communications between the executive board and general members.
- c) Work with Space Management and various Purdue offices for scheduling and reserving of venues for business and GEO events.
- d) Update annual GEO organizers Manual.
- e) Serve as Proxy for the Treasurer when necessitated.

## **Article VIII. Steering Committee**

Section 1. The Steering Committee will consist of representatives appointed by departments. Representatives will coordinate organizing within departments, participate in organizing and education, and handle grievances of members within departments.

Section 2. The Steering Committee shall elect two of its members to serve as Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs will be responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the Steering Committee.

Section 3. The Steering Committee may write its own by-laws to govern its internal operations.

#### **Article IX. Meetings**

Section 1. Regular Meetings: Regular membership meetings shall be scheduled and called by the Executive Board at least twice during each of the fall and spring academic semesters. No fewer than ten days notice shall be given for the calling of regular meetings.

Section 2. Executive Board Meetings: The executive board shall meet as needed.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings: The President has the right to call emergency meetings giving at least 48 hours notice to general members.

Section 4. Steering Committee Meetings: The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice during each of the fall and spring academic semesters.

Section 5. Each member of the GEO has one (1) vote, with the President of the GEO refraining from voting. In the event of a tie, the President will cast the deciding vote.

#### **Article X. Amendments**

Section 1. All amendments to the constitution and bylaws are subject to the approval of the Office of the Dean of Students. They may not take affect until they have been approved.

Section 2. The proposed amendment shall be presented in writing at the General Meeting and the voted upon at the following General Meeting by members present.

Section 3. Proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be considered to be adopted by the voting members of the GEO with a three-fourth (3/4) vote.