

**GEO Bylaws**  
**Last revised: February 2019**

**Article 1 NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Graduate Employee Organization of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst or GEO, a unit within Local 2322 of the United Auto Workers (UAW).

**Article 2 PURPOSE**

A. GEO is a democratic union that aims to organize and represent all graduate employees at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst over issues related to their employment and the improvement of their working conditions. GEO supports the struggle of all workers, and stands in solidarity with other unions and progressive organizations in their fights for social and economic justice.

B. GEO is authorized to negotiate on the employment practices and policies of the University as they relate to graduate employees including, but not limited to, affirmative action; appointment and reappointment process; childcare; contract length; disciplinary policy and codes of conduct; dues check-off and agency fee; evaluations; fee waivers; grievance and arbitration; health and safety, including health benefits and sick leave; hours of work and workload; job descriptions, retrenchment, salary, seniority, sexual harassment, and training. GEO is not authorized to negotiate on academic practices and policies as they relate to graduate employees in their simultaneous capacity as students, such as salary maximums or limitations on employee's rights to choose the time and manner of their work.

C. GEO follows an equal opportunity policy and employs personnel and serves its members without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, HIV status, political affiliation or belief, citizenship, veteran status, military obligations, and marital or relationship status. GEO Strives to be an inclusive union and build a broad based unity among its members. It will actively seek to promote the participation and engagement of oppressed groups and underrepresented work sites at all levels of the union.

This policy also applies to internal promotions, training, opportunities for advancement, terminations, members, and where possible, outside vendors, service clients, use of contractors and consultants, and dealings with the University of Massachusetts and general public.

D. Social Justice and/or Ally Trainings on the topics of racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, classism, and ableism will be mandatory for all GEO Staff, Elected Officers, and Steering Committee members. GEO staff and elected officers will coordinate five trainings (one on each of the above noted topics) over the course of two semesters, with no less than two trainings a semester. Where appropriate, these trainings will be coordinated in partnership with campus and community resources (i.e. The Stonewall Center, Center for Women and Community, Disability Services, Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success, etc.).

E. GEO understands marginalized, traditionally underrepresented, and oppressed groups to include but not be limited by the following: racial and ethnic minority groups; women;

religious minority groups; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, gender queer, gender non-conforming, gender variant, intersex; people with disabilities, youths and seniors; people with low-incomes, the working poor, people experiencing poverty, and people experiencing homelessness; immigrants; people for whom English is not a primary language; single parents; veterans; and people with limited education or literacy.

### **Article 3 MEMBERSHIP**

A. The Membership consists of all full members in good standing of the bargaining unit.

B. A graduate employee of the University of Massachusetts who is included in the bargaining unit is eligible for full membership during the term of employment.

C. A full member in good standing who ceases to be included in the bargaining unit may remain a full member through the next semester plus one day, provided they retain their graduate student status. Summer session is not defined as a semester.

E. A member is considered to be in good standing if they are current in their payment of dues. A member is considered to be a full member if they have paid their initiation fee.

G. The initiation fee is set in accordance with the UAW constitution and Local 2322 bylaws.

H. A full member in good standing is entitled to full voice and a single vote on all questions and to hold any elected or appointed position.

### **Article 4 OFFICERS (GEO STAFF)**

A. Election of officers shall be held during the spring semester. Members are asked to consider the requirements of Article 2(C) when voting.

B. All officers are elected for one-year terms. They will take office on June 1 of the year in which they were elected.

C. Officers may only be removed by following procedures outlined in Articles 30 and 31 in the UAW International Constitution.

D. For the academic year in which they serve, the five officers will each receive one full time equivalent (FTE) stipend so long as such stipends are provided by the University.

E. Officers shall be paid at the average hourly stipend rate of FTEs.

F. GEO shall determine GEO related duties of all local personnel assigned to work at GEO.

G. There are four elected officers and one hired officer: The hired position shall be the Grievance Officer.

## **1. Two (2) GEO Co-Chairs**

Responsibilities will include but are not limited to: chairing Steering Committee meetings and General Membership meetings and ensuring agendas are set for both; and acting as primary GEO representatives to the Joint Council of Local 2322 and therefore attending Joint Council meetings. Except where otherwise noted, the co-chairs shall be considered the official representatives of GEO to the Administration and in all external relations; sign agreements between GEO and the University (with approval of the General Membership and/or Assembly of Stewards); serve as liaisons for the Steering Committee to the Staff; ensure GEO representation at Central Labor Council meetings; speak on behalf of GEO to media, the University, etc., and manage the production of media and publicity; act as primary liaisons between GEO and other Unions; oversee publication of GEO newsletter and web page; organizing Standing Committees; and assist the union in achieving its overall mission in the workplace.

## **2. Mobilization Coordinator**

Responsibilities include but are not limited to: supervising membership drives; assisting in boosting attendance; attending General Membership, Steering and Assembly of Stewards meetings; assisting the GEO Co-Chairs in preserving order when called upon to do so; ensuring that minutes are taken at all GEO meetings; maintaining records of organization; submitting requisitions to the Local and International as needed; planning and administering GEO operating budget and chairing the GEO Finance Committee; facilitating GEO sponsorship of events and organizations; taking charge of all property of GEO not otherwise provided for; monitoring and giving guidance on procedural questions and rules; assist in ensuring that those attending GEO meetings are either members or invited visitors; assuming duties of the Co-Chairs if they are unavailable; and assisting the union in achieving its overall mission in the workplace.

## **3. Membership Organizer**

Responsibilities include but are not limited to: assisting with membership drives and engaging in consistent field work; coordinating events and workshops that develop membership participation; recruiting, organizing and overseeing the election of Stewards in departments and/or work sites; fostering stewardship through one-on-one meetings; attending General Membership and Assembly of Stewards meetings; ensuring that those attending GEO Membership Meetings and Steward's Assembly are members; organizing orientation schedule; maintaining accurate membership lists; coordinate department orientations; assuming duties of the Mobilization Coordinator if they are unavailable; and assisting the union in achieving its overall mission in the workplace.

## **4. Grievance Coordinator**

The core responsibilities for this position are investigating potential contract violations, working with to GEO members who feel their rights have been violated, filing grievances, attending grievance hearings, and monitoring the resolution of grievances. The Grievance Coordinator works closely with UAW 2322 Servicing Representatives in the performance of these duties. The Grievance Coordinator is directly supervised by the UAW 2322 President and the GEO Steering Committee. Additional duties include, but are not limited to: educating members about the grievance procedure and providing training and support to stewards so they can handle the

first step of grievances; organizing around grievances by working with stewards as well as Servicing Reps and GEO-UAW elected leadership; assisting with the process of publicizing successful grievances; contributing content to the GEO website and other media as appropriate.

H. Although each officer has their specific job responsibilities, all five officers are jointly responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning of GEO and are collectively responsible for all the duties mentioned above. All officers are expected to devote a portion of their paid working hours to office management tasks (i.e. holding office hours, answering phones, taking messages, in-taking grievances, greeting members who come into the office, etc.) and to attend meetings as required, including regular weekly staff meetings.

## **Article 6 STEERING COMMITTEE**

A. The Steering Committee will consist of the three officers; two Stewards, elected by the Assembly of Stewards; and two members at-large elected by the Membership. Each member of the Steering Committee will be entitled to one vote on any issue raised at any Steering Committee meeting. In addition, all staff members of GEO are ex-officio, non-voting members of the steering committee.

B. The Steering Committee shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the unit including, but not limited to: the direction of the day-to-day operations of the organization; the oversight of the staff; preparation and submission of all proposals, budgets, budget requisitions and budget modifications to the Assembly of Stewards for approval; coordination and oversight of standing committees; the appropriate maintenance of the health of the organization; management and execution of the budget; all correspondence and relations between the leadership, the Assembly of Stewards and the membership; and all external relations excepting those duties specifically proscribed for other committees (such as the Bargaining Committee).

C. The Steering Committee shall meet at least two times a month during the academic year. The committee shall meet once a month at other times. Additional meetings can be called as needed by the officers.

D. A quorum of one half (rounded upward) of the voting members of the Steering Committee is necessary to conduct business.

E. The Steering Committee shall be empowered to make decisions on behalf on the membership, except as limited by these bylaws. The Steering Committee shall not make any decisions which contradict those made by the Assembly of Stewards or the membership or contradict the will or intent of the Assembly of Stewards or the membership.

F. All Stewards are welcome to attend Steering Committee meetings and shall be considered ex-officio non-voting members of the Steering Committee.

## **Article 7 STEWARDS**

A. A group of graduate employees who share a common employing department or unit are considered a work group. The Steering Committee is authorized to determine the work group divisions in the event there is a dispute.

B. The membership of each work group shall elect one Steward for each 25 employees or

fraction thereof. Stewards shall be elected at the start of each Fall semester and shall serve until the next elections. If no members in the work group are able to serve as Stewards, the graduate students from the same department who are employed in a different work group may be elected instead. The stewards shall be democratically elected by all GEO members in the work group. When an election occurs by secret ballot, outside of a meeting, a reasonable period shall be provided for return of ballots. The election shall be conducted by any two members who are not candidates in the election. Stewards may be recalled at any time by a vote of all members working under the Steward's jurisdiction. This vote must be initiated by a petition and set forth the reasons why the recall is sought. The petition must be signed by at least 25 percent of the current members working under the jurisdiction of the Steward.

C. Two or more work groups, each with fewer than 25 members, may choose to combine for purposes of Steward election, by majority vote of each such group. Such combined work groups shall then be treated as a single work group.

D. The Stewards shall be responsible for: organizing and mobilizing departments, assisting members with grievances, calling meetings of the group, distributing literature to the members, recruiting new members, serving on committees, and attending the Assembly of Stewards.

#### **Article 8 ASSEMBLY OF STEWARDS**

A. The Assembly of Stewards shall be composed of elected stewards from GEO work sites, as well as various ex-officio members as specified by these bylaws. The assembly shall meet at least twice during the semester. Additional meetings can be called by the Steward Assembly Chair(s) or 20% of the Stewards by means of a signed petition to the Steering Committee.

**B. A quorum of either 25% of stewards, or 17 of the total voting members of the Assembly of Stewards, is necessary to conduct business. In accordance with Robert's Rules, quorum must be called at the meeting in order to be activated.**

C. The Assembly will have the ability to make decisions on behalf of the General Membership, which includes the ability to override decisions made by the Steering Committee. However, the Assembly of Stewards cannot override a decision made by the General Membership at a membership meeting. Except as limited by these bylaws, the Assembly can draft its own rules, including those for the election of Assembly meeting chairs.

D. The Assembly of Stewards aims: to create and develop shop floor activism and to organize and mobilize rank-and-file participation and coordinate their struggle, to develop a team of activists and union leaders, to increase the communication between the leadership and the membership, to get the stewards involved in decision-making regarding union policy, contract administration, contract negotiations, and other work-related issues, to bring the stewards together, to share information, to learn from one another, and to support each other.

E. Non-steward members of the Steering Committee (i.e. the four officers and the three elected at-large members) and committee chairs as designated in Article 9(C), are ex-officio, full-voting members of the Assembly.

F. Each semester the Assembly shall appoint two Stewards to serve as voting members of the Steering Committee.

G. The Chair of the Assembly shall be elected by all members of the Assembly at the first

Assembly meeting of each semester. Ex officio members of the Assembly are not eligible to serve as Chair. In the absence of an elected Chair, the GEO Co-Chairs may appoint an interim Chair.

## **Article 9 STANDING COMMITTEES**

A. Committees carry out and facilitate the various functions of the union in a way that promotes greater consistency and continuity among all union members. In addition, they are instrumental in engaging rank and file members and increasing their participation in union activity and decision making. These committees are not meant to replace the standing committees outlined in the bylaws to the UAW Local 2322, but to supplement them where appropriate. All members are eligible to serve on all committees except where noted in these bylaws. Every effort shall be made to ensure the membership of all committees and caucuses is representative of the diversity of GEO.

B. All committees and positions responsible for the hiring of staff and elected union leadership positions (e.g. officers, stewards, steering committee members) must meet with union members of marginalized groups (e.g. LGBTQ, ALANAA, women students in GEO) to inform them of open positions on committees and solicit applications and nominations. Members will be elected to committees by the general membership, but between membership meetings may be elected at Steering Committee or Stewards' Assembly meetings, subject to ratification at the next membership meeting.

C. Committees will collaborate with the UAW's standing committees, as well as other committees and caucuses in GEO, GSS, and other graduate student organizations on campus comprised of and representing the interests of underrepresented and marginalized groups.

D. Except where specifically noted in Article 9(E), the steering committee will appoint acting chairs to the standing committees until such time as the committee meets to elect a formal chair.

E. Chairs of Committees are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Steering Committee and are ex-officio, full voting members of the Assembly of Stewards, except where noted in Article 9(D).

F. The standing Committees include, but are not limited to:

### **1. Organizing Committee**

which shall be chaired by the GEO staff person responsible for internal organizing. This committee will also consist of all lead organizers as well as at least one elected officer. The committee will be responsible for signing up new members, working with stewards and developing leadership in departments and clusters. The goal of the committee will be to build a strong internal organizing structure able to lead and support a contract campaign, respond to and prevent grievances, create a stronger union presence and awareness in individual departments campus-wide.

### **2. Bargaining Committee**

which will consist of nine members and an unspecified number of alternate members elected by the membership. The chief and the co-chief negotiators will be elected by the bargaining committee members. All bargaining committee members shall serve throughout the duration of

a contract negotiation and shall not be required to seek re-election if contract negotiations go beyond a year. If bargaining committee members resign or are recalled, new members of the committee will be elected by the membership as needed. A quorum of five is needed to make decisions. All decisions shall be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the decision in question shall be brought to the membership for final determination. Membership has oversight over the bargaining committee. The bargaining committee shall be responsible for assessing membership needs and concerns prior to contract negotiations, and issuing regular written bargaining updates to the membership during negotiations. These updates shall also be posted regularly on the GEO web site.

### **3. Grievance Committee**

which will consist of not less than five members. Committee members must be trained in labor grievance procedure. Any graduate employee coming forward with a grievance shall be interviewed by the Chair of this committee and one member of the committee, apprising them of their rights according to the contract and advising them on how to proceed; the committee shall meet to decide which grievances will be filed. All grievance requests must be kept on file and the Chair will ensure that these records are in order. The Chair of this committee shall be the staff person hired by GEO.

### **4. Communications Committee**

which shall be chaired by the Co-Chairs of GEO, shall be responsible for generating the newsletter; drafting and distributing press releases; maintaining the GEO web page; and the creation and distribution of posters, flyers and billets.

### **5. Finance Committee**

which will be composed of the Mobilization Coordinator (as Chair) and two members in good standing. The Finance Committee is responsible for communicating with the Local 2322 Finance Committee, [attending Joint Council meetings,] drafting the annual budget for the unit, and preparing requisitions for the Joint Council. The annual budget for the unit will be presented at the first membership meeting of the spring semester and passed by a simple majority. All members have responsibilities that include serving on Local 2322 Finance Committee, attending all Joint Council meetings, drafting the annual budget for the unit, and preparing requisitions for the Joint Council. The annual budget for the unit will be presented at the first membership meeting of the spring semester and passed by a simple majority.

### **6. Elections Committee**

The membership will annually elect an Elections Committee to oversee the election of officers and at-large members of the Steering Committee. This committee must be composed of at least five members, none of whom are seeking office or are currently elected officers or at-large members of the Steering Committee. The chair of this committee is not an ex-officio member of the stewards' assembly or the steering committee. In the event that two or fewer candidates run for the co-chair positions, then there will be a vetting process rather than a de facto election of the unopposed candidates. The Stewards' Assembly will convene and ask the candidates questions, and then excuse the candidates while stewards vote on whether or not to approve the candidates for co-chairs. If either one or both of the candidates is a steward, then they will recuse themselves from the vote. A simple majority wins. In the event that stewards vote "No,"

on one or both of the candidates, the nominations process will be extended, and stewards will aggressively recruit nominees for the elected positions. The elections process will then repeat.

### **7. Social Justice Committee**

which will oversee all issues concerning discrimination and defamation against GEO members. The committee will assist any GEO member submitting a grievance involving a violation of the campus Harassment Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and/or the Affirmative Action Office. It will actively investigate accusations of harassment, sexual harassment, and discriminatory or defamatory action on the part of GEO members against other GEO members, i.e. racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. If any incident of such behavior is verified by this committee, that incident will be reported to the Steering Committee along with recommendations for appropriate action, including sanctions. Sanctions may include expulsion from the unit. All parties involved in any aspect of this process will act at all times to preserve the confidentiality of these proceedings. Information will be shared with those individuals who have a legitimate and operational need to be informed, and to the extent that it is necessary to maintain the effectiveness of this process. Members submitting complaints concerning discrimination, defamation, harassment, sexual harassment, may at any time withdraw their complaint, and may request closed meetings. Committee members may also request closed meetings to discuss individual cases.

### **8. Coalition and Political Action Committee**

which shall be responsible for organizing GEO participation in local, state, national, and international concerns, as well as building coalitions with campus and local unions, student organizations, community organizations, and caucuses including but not limited to those in our union representing marginalized and oppressed groups. GEO resolves to actively support legislation which seeks to improve the higher education system, including the principle of educational access and promotes free collective bargaining. This committee shall recommend proposed actions or endorsements to the Assembly of Stewards. Political endorsements and expenditures shall require a two-thirds vote of approval by the Assembly of Stewards or the membership.

### **9. Family Issues Committee**

which is responsible for providing the membership with information concerning child care, housing, and other family concerns, as well as discussing with individual members how GEO can improve the living conditions of members who have families. This committee shall have at least three members (from either the Assembly of Stewards or the Membership). The committee shall be chaired by the family issues advocate.

### **10. Personnel Committee**

which will be composed of five representatives elected by the Membership and two members of the Steering Committee selected by the Steering Committee. This committee may include elected officers and current staff members who are not seeking re-appointment. Quorum is five members. The primary responsibility of this committee is to hold interviews for applicants interested in staff positions. The Personnel Committee will select three committee members to conduct interviews for all open positions. Upon completion of the interview process, the committee will submit a list of recommended candidates to the Assembly. The final hiring decision is made by the Assembly of Stewards. Interim and temporary appointments for periods



no longer than six weeks, may be made directly by the Steering Committee. An Evaluation Subcommittee will be appointed to evaluate the performance of the staff at least once per semester. These evaluations will be used in future hiring decisions. The subcommittee will be composed of at least three members of the personnel committee.

## **11. By-Laws Committee**

All GEO members are invited to meetings of the By-Laws Committee. The responsibility of the by-laws committee is to try to achieve broad consensus about procedures in GEO, to educate people holding positions in GEO about their rights and duties according to the bylaws and established practices and to resolve, on the basis of consensus, conflicts related to the bylaws. The bylaws committee has the right and the duty to give recommendations on:

- (a) Changes of the by-laws, from general concepts to final drafts
- (b) Disputes over interpretations or implementations of the by-laws
- (c) Conflicts between actual procedures and procedures as outlined in the by-laws

G. The Assembly of Stewards shall decide if any additional committee chairs shall have a vote in the stewards assembly.

H. The committees may decide upon their own operational procedures, except when specified by these bylaws.

I. The following procedure shall be followed when electing members to the bargaining and personnel committees.

1. Appropriate notification will be given two weeks prior to when such elections are due to take place.
2. Nominations are due at the membership meeting at which the elections are scheduled to take place. If the nominee is present in person, they are required to make a short statement to the meeting prior to the elections. If the nominee is not present in person, they are required to submit a written statement to the co-chairs, who shall ensure that the statement is read out to the meeting, prior to the elections.

J. In order to recall any member from a committee a petition which sets forth the reason why recall is sought must be signed by twenty members and submitted to the co-chairs no less than ten days before a membership meeting in order to be put on the agenda of that meeting. The co-chairs will see to it that this agenda item is announced ten days prior to the meeting. A two-thirds vote of the membership is required to recall a committee member.

## **Article 10 CAUCUSES**

A. Caucuses are formed around issues of social oppression. They exist to provide safe spaces for marginalized groups of people to share experiences and problems they have experienced as graduate student workers; to brainstorm potential solutions to those problems; and to advise Standing Committees, the Steering Committee, and Stewards of their ideas as needed so that appropriate actions can be taken. Standing Committees exist to plan policies and campaigns that Steering, Stewards, and General Membership can put into action effectively and democratically. Caucuses should be in touch with the Organizing Committee, Political Action and Coalition Committee, and the Social Justice Committee as is appropriate, in particular whenever a topic comes up requiring policy-making or collective action.

B. Chairs of caucuses are ex-officio non-voting members of the Steering Committee and full voting members of the Stewards Assembly.

C. The Steering Committee will appoint acting chairs to the caucuses until the caucus meets to elect a formal chair.

D. The Caucuses include, but are not limited to:

**1. ALANA and International Students Caucus**

which will consist of ALANA graduate employees and International graduate employees of color.

**2. Women's Caucus**

all are welcome to attend the Women's Caucus, although it will center around women (trans inclusive), non-binary, femme presenting, and genderqueer folks. It will serve as an anti-racist, feminist space to voice, advocate, and discuss our concerns--many of which regard inclusion/exclusion, discrimination, and accessibility.

**3. Queer & Trans Caucus**

which will consist of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and gender non-conforming graduate employees.

E. Caucus members may choose to expand the scope of their membership.

F. The Assembly of Stewards shall decide if any additional caucus chairs shall have a vote on the Stewards Assembly and ex-officio non-voting status on the Steering Committee.

**Article 11 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

A. A general meeting of the membership shall be held at least twice each semester.

B. Additional meetings can be called as needed by the Steering Committee, the Assembly of Stewards, or by petition of one-tenth of the membership.

C. Decisions of the Membership override decisions made by any other GEO body.

D. The quorum for Membership meeting will be 10% of the Membership or 30 members, whichever is less.

**Article 12 PROCESS AND PROCEDURES AT MEETINGS**

A. Whenever a decision is to be made in a meeting of the Assembly of Stewards, the Steering Committee, or the Membership, the following process and procedures will apply.

B. The Chair (The title Chair refers to the individual conducting the meeting) will ensure broad participation and open discussion at these meetings. Members wishing to speak at such meetings, who have not spoken already will be given priority over members wishing to speak, but have already spoken. The Chair may set a time limit, applied to all speakers uniformly, on

the duration of speeches.

C. The Chair will recognize motions, and amendments thereof, made by anyone in the group.

D. Motions or amendments are proper only after they have been offered to and accepted by the Chair, and seconded.

E. Debate over motions is closed by a call from the group, which must be supported by a second. When the Chair puts this to a vote of the body, a two-thirds majority of the voting members present is required to end debate. If enough votes are cast to end debate, the chair must call for an immediate vote on the motion and the amendments.

F. Motions to table debate are made from the group, and if seconded, must be put to an immediate vote.

G. Any member may at any time call upon the Chair for a Point of Information to clarify business being discussed.

H. If any member disagrees with a ruling of the Chair, they may raise a Point of Order and state their objection to the Chair. The Chair must then rule on this Point of Order.

I. If any member disagrees with a ruling of the Chair on a Point of Order, then they may, if supported by a second, appeal from the decision of the Chair. The member appealing the Chair's decision will be recognized by the Chair, and given an opportunity to state their reasons for believing the Chair should be overruled, after which the Chair will also have an opportunity to give their reasons for ruling against the appealing member. No one else may participate in this discussion. The Chair will then place the appeal before the group for a vote. A simple majority vote is necessary to sustain the appeal. A tie vote sustains the Chair.

### **Article 13 AFFILIATION**

A. Affiliation with another organization, for purposes of better realizing the goals and objective of GEO, or conversely, disaffiliation with another organization, may be initiated by Referendum (as provided in Article 17).

B. The affiliation or disaffiliation shall be approved if more than one-half of the votes cast are in favor of affiliation or disaffiliation.

### **Article 14 DUES**

A. GEO dues will be set in accordance with the UAW and Local 2322 constitution and bylaws.

### **Article 15 MEMBER RIGHTS**

A. GEO derives all of its power from the members. The membership reserves the right to override any decision of the Steering Committee, the Assembly of Stewards or any other Committee at any time.

B. All GEO meetings are open to all members and all GEO members have the right to

participate in the discussion of all decisions, with the exception of confidential personnel matters. This right includes notification of meetings, when feasible.

C. While the Steering Committee and the Assembly of Stewards are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the membership, they shall not make any decisions which contradict decisions made by the membership or contradict the will or intent of the membership.

D. The Steering Committee is authorized to disperse funds in an amount that cannot exceed \$500. The Assembly of Stewards is authorized to disperse funds in an amount not to exceed \$1000. Any dispersal of funds exceeding \$1000 must be approved by the General Membership. Expenditures for political activity may be made only by the Assembly of Stewards or the General Membership and shall not exceed \$500 per semester.

E. GEO does not prevent people from holding elected positions including becoming officers based upon their political affiliations.

F. GEO is a union made up of graduate employees from many different countries. We do not condone or operate under the patriotic notions of any one of these represented countries, but are instead steered by the common interests of our members as academic workers.

## **Article 16 BYLAWS**

In order to change a bylaw, the Bylaws Committee must first post the proposed change(s) online for at least a ten-day (including weekends and holidays) comment period. GEO leadership and staff must notify membership by email that the change(s) are available online. Membership will have the opportunity to submit comments and concerns by email to the Bylaws Committee. Second, the Bylaws Committee must have a public meeting after the comment period has ended. This will allow members with strong feelings or those who do not like email to discuss the proposed change(s) with the Bylaws Committee. The Bylaws Committee will consider the comments from membership and present the final version of the proposed bylaw change(s) online at least ten days before a membership meeting. Once the final version of the bylaw change(s) has been posted, the following holds true:

1. The language of the proposed bylaw cannot be changed. The change must be voted up or down by the membership.
2. The Elections Committee, the GEO leadership and staff, and the Bylaws Committee will make voting available for members outside of the membership meeting for at least six hours over at least three days.
3. The Elections Committee is responsible for counting the final votes. Voting will also occur during the membership meeting.
4. Even if the membership meeting does not have quorum, an amendment can still be adopted. In order for an amendment to be adopted, the total number of votes cast during the voting period must exceed quorum for the year; and two-thirds of the members who voted must vote in favor of the amendment.
5. If the bylaw change is voted down, the Bylaws Committee may continue trying to pass the proposed change. However, in order to do so, the Bylaws Committee must start the process over. That is, the proposed bylaw change must undergo a comment period, a public meeting to

discuss appropriate changes, and the new language must be posted at least ten days before the next meeting.

6. If the votes do not meet or exceed the number needed for quorum, the Bylaws Committee may continue trying to pass the proposed changed. In this case, the proposed language does not need to undergo an additional comment period, but the vote must be re-done in its entirety.

The Bylaws Committee may propose language for a bylaw change to a comment period in the last few weeks of the spring semester of a given academic year. However, the proposed bylaw change must be voted on in either the first or second membership meeting of the fall semester. Furthermore, the final draft of the proposed bylaw change cannot be posted before the first day of the semester. That is, the final draft of the bylaw change must be posted for at least ten days during the semester before it can be voted in a membership meeting. In the event of confusion about the rules regarding changing the bylaws, the Steering Committee is empowered to interpret the bylaws governing changing the bylaws (Article 16), subject only to the authority of the Stewards Assembly and membership as outlined in the bylaws.

### **Article 17 ELECTION AND REFERENDA**

A. Elections of officers and referenda votes shall be held by secret ballot at membership meetings. Before this meeting, provisions shall be made for absentee, mail-in or open balloting.

B. If more than two candidates run for one office, and if none of the candidates receives more than 50% of the votes cast, then a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates who receive the most votes.

C. Regular elections for officers and at-large members of the Steering Committee shall be held during the spring semester.

D. Elections to fill vacancies shall be held at the first general meeting following the date the office became vacant. The Assembly of Stewards can appoint a Steward or member of the Assembly of Stewards to fill a position on an interim basis.

E. Full members in good standing (as defined by Article 3(H)) may nominate themselves or any other full member in good standing for any office. Nominations shall be presented in writing to the Steering Committee. The deadline for nominations shall be 15 calendar days before the date of the election. Elections must occur no later than the first full week of May.

F. Referendum questions must be presented in writing at a Steering Committee Meeting with either the signatures of at least one-tenth of the membership, the signatures of one-half of the Stewards, or the signatures of two-thirds of the members of the Steering Committee, no later than ten calendar days before the next Membership meeting. The Steering Committee shall place the referendum on the agenda for the next membership meeting and distribute written copies of the referendum within three working days after the referendum is presented to the Steering Committee. Referenda may specify that they may not be amended. If this specification is made, they must be voted on in the form they are written and originally presented.

### **Article 18 JURISDICTION**

A. As a unit within the UAW, GEO is subject to the rules and regulations governing the UAW

and Local Union 2322 Bylaws. However, in all unit matters we have strict autonomy in accordance with Article 35 Section 3 of the UAW Constitution.

B. GEO has proportional representation on Local 2322 Joint Council based on the dues dollar amount GEO pays to the Local Union in accordance with Article 35 Section 3 of the UAW Constitution.

C. GEO representatives to the Joint Council shall serve the greater of one year or until such time as new elections for representatives to Joint Council takes place. If a GEO representative to the Joint Council resigns or is recalled, the Steering Committee must appoint a new representative to serve until the next membership meeting. At that membership meeting a new representative will be elected, in accordance with the bylaws of Local 2322.

### **Article 19 ENACTMENT**

These bylaws shall be voted on by secret ballot and enacted thereupon