

# Revisions Formatting

- 1
- 2 Blue: moved language
- 3 Red: new changes
- 4 All new language underlined.
- 5 ~~Removed or moved language denoted with strikethrough.~~
- 6 *Comments italicized.*

# Article 1

## Name

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

# Article 2

## Purpose

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

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

18 **Section C.** GEO follows an equal opportunity policy and employs personnel and serves its  
19 members without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, caste, national origin, religion, sex,  
20 sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, physical or mental  
21 ability, HIV status, political affiliation or belief, academic department and/or field,  
22 citizenship, veteran status, military obligations, and marital or relationship status. GEO  
23 strives to be an inclusive union and build a broad based unity among its members. It will  
24 actively seek to promote the participation and engagement of oppressed groups and  
25 underrepresented work sites at all levels of the union. This policy also applies to internal  
26 promotions, training, opportunities for advancement, terminations, members, and where  
27 possible, outside vendors, service clients, use of contractors and consultants, and dealings  
28 with the University of Massachusetts and general public.

29 **Section D.** GEO commits to work with the UAW Local 2322 and UAW Region 9A to facilitate  
30 Social Justice and/or Ally Trainings on the intersectional topics of racism, sexism,  
31 heterosexism, cissexism, classism, and ableism. These training sessions are required to be  
32 held by professionals and/or experts. At least one training session every year will be  
33 mandatory for GEO Staff (Article 4), and Steering Committee members (Article 6) and at  
34 least one more training will be held that will be accessible to all organizers, stewards and  
35 every other GEO member in good standing. Where appropriate, these trainings will be  
36 coordinated in partnership with campus and community resources (i.e. The Stonewall Center,  
37 Center for Women and Community, Disability Services, Center for Multicultural  
38 Advancement and Student Success, etc.).

39 **Section E.** GEO understands marginalized, traditionally underrepresented, and oppressed  
40 groups to include but not be limited by the following: racial and ethnic minority groups;  
41 women; 2 religious minority groups; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer,  
42 transgender, gender queer, gender non-conforming, gender variant, intersex; members of  
43 oppressed caste groups; people with disabilities, youths and seniors; people with low-incomes,  
44 the working poor, people experiencing poverty, and people experiencing homelessness;

- 1 immigrants; people for whom English is a not a primary language; single parents; veterans;
- 2 and people with limited education or literacy.

# Article 3

## Membership (*Dues Article (14) added here*)

3 **Section A.** The **Membership** consists of all members ~~of the bargaining unit~~ of GEO who are  
4 members in good standing ~~according to as defined by~~ these bylaws.

5 **Section B.** A member in good standing is a member of GEO who has a signed and active  
6 dues authorization, has paid their initiation fee, and is current in payment of their dues.

7 **Section C.** A graduate student employee of the University of Massachusetts who is included in  
8 the bargaining unit is eligible ~~for membership to become a member of GEO by signing a~~  
9 dues authorization form during the term of their employment.

10 **Section D.** GEO dues and initiation fee will be set in accordance with the UAW constitution  
11 and Local 2322 bylaws. (*Language from old Article 14*)

12 **Section E.** A member in good standing who ceases to be included in the bargaining unit may  
13 remain a member of GEO through the next semester plus one day, provided they retain their  
14 graduate student status. Summer session is not defined as a semester.

15 ~~**Section F.** A member is considered to be in good standing if they are current in their payment~~  
16 ~~of dues. (*Moved/edited/clarified above in Sections B and C*)~~

17 ~~**Section G.** A member of the bargaining unit is considered to be a member of GEO if they have~~  
18 ~~paid their initiation fee. (*Moved/edited/clarified above in Sections B and C*)~~

19 **Section H.** A member in good standing is entitled to full voice and a single vote on all  
20 questions, and ~~to~~ may hold any elected or appointed position.

# Article 4

## Member Rights *(Moved from Article 15)*

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2  
3 **Section A.** GEO derives all of its power from the members. The Membership reserves the right  
4 to override any decision of the Steering Committee, the Assembly of Stewards or any other  
5 Committee at any time.

6 **Section B.** All GEO meetings are open to all members and all General Membership Meetings  
7 will be held in hybrid (in-person and remote) format. All GEO members have the right to  
8 participate in the discussion of all decisions, with the exception of confidential personnel  
9 matters. ~~This right includes notification of meetings, when feasible.~~ *(Moved and clarified to*  
10 *Section D below)*

11 **Section C.** The provisions of this Article will not prevent the holding of a virtual General  
12 Membership Meeting should the need arise.

13 **Section D.** Hybrid meetings will be conducted according to the best practices to ensure that  
14 both virtual/remote participants and in person participants are able to participate in the  
15 meeting with equal access and decision making ability. Best efforts will be made to book/hold  
16 all meetings in spaces that are accessible to members attending in-person and the meeting  
17 space, audio visual components, and best efforts will be made to ensure that seating  
18 prioritizes accessibility as a right to participate in the discussion of all decisions.

19 **Section E.** This right to participate includes receiving adequate advance notifications of  
20 meetings, advance access to a meeting agenda and meeting notes made available upon  
21 request within a week of the meeting to ensure a quorum representative of membership can  
22 be assembled. If an emergency meeting is called and an agenda and adequate notice cannot  
23 be provided, an agenda must be provided prior to the start of the meeting and notes must be  
24 made available to any member who requests them within a week of the request. Refer to  
25 Article 16 about which committees or officers can change which decisions made in previous  
26 GEO meetings.

27  
28 ~~**Section F.** While the Steering Committee and the Assembly of Stewards are empowered to~~  
29 ~~make decisions on behalf of the General Membership, they shall not make any decisions~~  
30 ~~which contradict decisions made by the General Membership or contradict the will or intent~~  
31 ~~of the General Membership.~~ *(Moved to Article 16 Powers of Administration)*

32 ~~**Section G.** The Steering Committee is authorized to disperse funds in an amount that cannot~~  
33 ~~exceed \$500. The Assembly of Stewards is authorized to disperse funds in an amount not to~~  
34 ~~exceed \$1000. Any dispersal of funds exceeding \$1000 must be approved by the General~~  
35 ~~Membership. Expenditures for political activity may be made only by the Assembly of~~  
36 ~~Stewards or the General Membership and shall not exceed \$500 per semester.~~ *(Moved to*  
37 *Article 16 Powers of Administration)*

38 **Section H.** GEO does not prevent **people members** from holding elected positions including  
39 becoming officers based upon their political affiliations.

40 **Section I.** GEO is a union made up of graduate **student** employees from many different  
41 countries. We do not condone or operate under the patriotic notions of any one of these

- 1 represented countries, but are instead steered by the common interests of our members as
- 2 academic workers.

# Article 5

## Stewards (*Moved from Article 7*)

1  
2  
3 **Section A.** A group of graduate student employees who share a common employing department  
4 or unit are considered a **work group**. The Steering Committee is authorized to determine the  
5 work group divisions in the event that there is a dispute.

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

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

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



# Article 6

## Assembly of Stewards (*Moved from Article 8*)

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

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

11 ~~Section C. The Assembly will have the ability to make decisions on behalf of the General~~  
12 ~~Membership, which includes the ability to override decisions made by the Steering~~  
13 ~~Committee. However, the Assembly of Stewards cannot override a decision made by the~~  
14 ~~General Membership at a membership meeting. (*Moved to Article 16 Powers of*~~  
15 ~~*Administration*)~~ Except as limited by these bylaws, the Assembly can draft its own rules,  
16 including those for the election of Assembly meeting chairs.

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

24 **Section E.** Non-steward members of the Steering Committee (i.e. all officers and ~~the three~~  
25 elected at-large members, committee chairs as designated in Article 11(E), and caucus chairs  
26 as denoted in Article 12(B)) are ex-officio, full-voting members of the Assembly.

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

29 **Section G.** The **Chair(s)** of the **Assembly** shall be elected by all members of the Assembly at  
30 the first Assembly meeting of each semester. Ex-officio members of the Assembly are not  
31 eligible to serve as Chair. In the absence of an elected Chair, the GEO Co-Chairs may appoint  
32 an interim Chair.

# Article 7

## Steering Committee (*Moved from Article 6*)

3 **Section A.** The Steering Committee will consist of the GEO co-chairs; the Mobilization  
4 Coordinator; two Stewards, elected by the Assembly of Stewards; and two members at-large  
5 elected by the Membership. Each member of the Steering Committee will be entitled to one  
6 vote on any issue raised at any Steering Committee meeting. In addition, all other staff  
7 members of GEO are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Steering Committee.

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

17 **Section C.** The Steering Committee shall meet at least two times a month during the academic  
18 year. The committee shall meet once a month at other times. Additional meetings can be  
19 called as needed by the officers staff members of GEO who serve on the Steering Committee.

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

22 ~~**Section E.** The Steering Committee shall be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the~~  
23 ~~General Membership, except as limited by these bylaws. The Steering Committee shall not~~  
24 ~~make any decisions which contradict those made by the Assembly of Stewards or the General~~  
25 ~~Membership or contradict the will or intent of the Assembly of Stewards or the General~~  
26 ~~Membership; (*Moved to Article 16 Powers of Administration*)~~

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

# Article 8

## Officers and Staff (Moved from Article 4)

1  
2  
3 **Section A.** Election of officers shall be held during the spring semester. Members are asked to  
4 consider the requirements and values of Article 2(C) when voting.

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

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

9 **Section D.** For the academic year in which they serve, the GEO staff will each receive one full  
10 time equivalent (FTE) stipend so long as such stipends are provided by the University.

11 **Section E.** Officers shall be paid at the average hourly stipend rate of Teaching Assistant  
12 FTEs.

13 **Section F.** GEO shall determine GEO related duties of all Local 2322 personnel assigned to  
14 work at GEO.

15 **Section G.** The GEO staff consists of five elected officers and one hired officer: The hired  
16 position shall be the Grievance Officer Coordinator.

17 1. Two (2) GEO Co-Chairs – Responsibilities will include but are not limited to: chairing  
18 Steering Committee meetings and General Membership meetings and ensuring  
19 agendas are set for both; and acting as primary GEO representatives to the Joint  
20 Council of Local 2322 and therefore attending Joint Council meetings. Except where  
21 otherwise noted, the co-chairs shall be considered the official representatives of GEO to  
22 the Administration and in all external relations; sign agreements between GEO and  
23 the University (with approval of the General Membership and/or Assembly of  
24 Stewards); serve as liaisons for the Steering Committee to the Staff; ensure GEO  
25 representation at Central Labor Council meetings; speak on behalf of GEO to media,  
26 the University, etc., and manage the production of media and publicity; act as primary  
27 liaisons between GEO and other Unions; oversee publication of GEO newsletter and  
28 web page; organizing Standing Committees; and assist the union in achieving its  
29 overall mission in the workplace.

30 2. Mobilization Coordinator – Responsibilities include but are not limited to:  
31 supervising membership drives; assisting in boosting attendance; attending General  
32 Membership, Steering and Assembly of Stewards meetings; assisting the GEO  
33 Co-Chairs in preserving order when called upon to do so; ensuring that minutes are  
34 taken at all GEO meetings; maintaining records of organization; distributing  
35 membership lists to stewards to aid in organizing; submitting requisitions to the Local  
36 and International as needed; planning and administering GEO operating budget and  
37 chairing the GEO Finance Committee; facilitating GEO sponsorship of events and  
38 organizations; taking charge of all property of GEO not otherwise provided for;  
39 monitoring and giving guidance on procedural questions and rules; assist in ensuring  
40 that those attending GEO meetings are either members or invited visitors; assuming

1 duties of the Co-Chairs if they are unavailable; and assisting the union in achieving its  
2 overall mission in the workplace.

- 3 **3. Two (2) Membership Organizers** – Responsibilities include but are not limited to:  
4 assisting with membership drives and engaging in consistent field work; coordinating  
5 events and workshops that develop membership participation; recruiting, organizing  
6 and overseeing the election of Stewards in departments and/or work sites; fostering  
7 stewardship through one-on-one meetings; attending General Membership and  
8 Assembly of Stewards meetings; develop awareness of the various issues affecting  
9 graduate workers – especially those affecting students of color, international students,  
10 and student with families – and build organizing infrastructure for these issues;  
11 fostering and engaging in organizing projects around permissive subjects of bargaining,  
12 e.g. housing, immigration, accessibility, anti-sexism and anti-racism, and liaise with  
13 already-existing organizations involved in these spheres; expanding our capacity to  
14 meet the needs and interests of underrepresented groups are being met by the union,  
15 e.g. making accessible GEO events, spaces and information; ensuring that those  
16 attending GEO Membership Meetings and Steward’s Assembly are members;  
17 organizing orientation schedule; maintaining accurate membership lists; coordinate  
18 department orientations; assuming duties of the Mobilization Coordinator if they are  
19 unavailable; and assisting the union in achieving its overall mission in the workplace.
- 20 **4. Grievance Coordinator** - The core responsibilities for this position are investigating  
21 potential contract violations, working with GEO members who feel their rights have  
22 been violated, filing grievances, attending grievance hearings, and monitoring the  
23 resolution of grievances. The Grievance Coordinator works closely with UAW 2322  
24 Servicing Representatives in the performance of these duties. The Grievance  
25 Coordinator is directly supervised by the UAW 2322 President and the GEO Steering  
26 Committee. Additional duties include, but are not limited to: educating members about  
27 the grievance procedure and providing training and support to stewards so they can  
28 handle the first step of grievances; organizing around grievances by working with  
29 stewards as well as Servicing Reps and GEO-UAW elected leadership; assisting with  
30 the process of publicizing successful grievances; contributing content to the GEO  
31 website and other media as appropriate.

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

# Article 9

## Membership Meetings (*Moved from Article 11*)

1  
2  
3 **Section A.** A general meeting of the membership, or General Membership Meeting, shall be  
4 held at least twice each semester.

5 **Section B.** Additional ~~meetings~~ General Membership Meetings can be called as needed by the  
6 Steering Committee, the Assembly of Stewards, or by petition of one-tenth of the  
7 Membership.

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

9 **Section D.** The quorum for a General Membership Meeting will be 10% of the Membership or  
10 30 members, whichever is less.

# Article 10

## Process and Procedures at Meetings (*Moved from Article 12*)

1  
2  
3 **Section A.** Whenever a decision is to be made in a meeting of the Assembly of Stewards, the  
4 Steering Committee, or the Membership, the following process and procedures will apply.

5 **Section B.** The **Chair** (the title Chair refers to the individual conducting the meeting) will  
6 equally ensure broad participation and open discussion at these meetings for all members  
7 regardless of attendance method (in-person or virtual). The Chair may set additional  
8 expectations for a given meeting, such as ground rules or time limits for speakers, given that  
9 they are applied uniformly and communicated to the meeting participants. Members wishing  
10 to speak at such meetings, who have not spoken already will be given priority over members  
11 wishing to speak, but have already spoken. ~~The Chair may set a time limit, applied to all~~  
12 ~~speakers uniformly, on the duration of speeches.~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Article 11

## Standing Committees (*Moved from Article 9*)

**Section 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 of 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.

**Section 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~~ as outlined in Article 2(E)) 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.

**Section C.** Committees will collaborate with the ~~UAW's~~ standing committees of the UAW and UAW Local 2322, as well as other committees and caucuses in GEO, ~~GSS~~ GSG, and other graduate student organizations on campus consisting of and representing the interests of underrepresented and marginalized groups.

**Section D.** The Steering Committee ~~will~~ may appoint acting chairs to the standing committees until such time as the committee meets to elect a formal chair.

**Section 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 6(E).

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

- 1. Organizing Committee** This Committee shall be chaired by any GEO staff person responsible for internal organizing. This committee will also consist of all lead organizers as well as at least one elected ~~officer~~ GEO staff member. 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** This committee shall consist of nine members elected by the membership and an unspecified number of alternate members. 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

1 of the committee will be elected by the membership as needed. A quorum of five is  
2 needed to make decisions. All decisions shall be made by consensus. If consensus  
3 cannot be reached, the decision in question shall be brought to the membership for  
4 final determination. Membership has oversight over the bargaining committee. The  
5 bargaining committee shall be responsible for assessing membership needs and  
6 concerns prior to contract negotiations, and issuing regular written bargaining updates  
7 to the membership during negotiations. These updates shall also be posted regularly on  
8 the GEO web site.

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

17 **4. Communications Committee** This committee shall be chaired by the Co-Chairs of  
18 GEO, and shall be responsible for generating the newsletter; drafting and distributing  
19 press releases; maintaining the GEO web page; and the creation and distribution of  
20 posters, flyers and billets.

21 **5. Finance Committee** This committee shall be composed of the Mobilization  
22 Coordinator (as Chair) and two members in good standing. All members have  
23 responsibilities that include serving on Local 2322 Finance Committee, attending all  
24 Joint Council meetings, drafting the annual budget for the unit, and preparing  
25 requisitions for the Joint Council. The annual budget for the unit will be presented at  
26 the first membership meeting of the spring semester and passed by a simple majority.

27 **6. Elections Committee** The membership will annually elect an Elections Committee to  
28 oversee the election of officers and at-large members of the Steering Committee. This  
29 committee must be composed of at least five members, none of whom are seeking office  
30 or are currently elected officers or at-large members of the Steering Committee. The  
31 chair of this committee is not an ex-officio member of the stewards' assembly or the  
32 steering committee. ~~In the event that two or fewer candidates run for the co-chair  
33 positions, then there will be a vetting process rather than a de facto election of the  
34 unopposed candidates. The Stewards' Assembly will convene and ask the candidates  
35 questions, and then excuse the candidates while stewards vote on whether or not to  
36 approve the candidates for co-chairs. If either one or both of the candidates is a  
37 steward, then they will recuse themselves from the vote. A simple majority wins. In the  
38 event that stewards vote "No," on one or both of the candidates, the nominations  
39 process will be extended, and stewards will aggressively recruit nominees for the  
40 elected positions. The elections process will then repeat. (Moved to Article 13)~~

41 **7. Social Transformative Justice Committee** This committee shall oversee all issues  
42 concerning discrimination and defamation against GEO members. The committee will  
43 assist any GEO member submitting a grievance involving a violation of the campus  
44 Harassment Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and/or the Affirmative Action Office. It  
45 will actively investigate accusations of harassment, sexual harassment, and



1 discriminatory or defamatory action on the part of GEO members against other GEO  
2 members, i.e. racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. If any incident of such behavior is  
3 verified by this committee, that incident will be reported to the Steering Committee  
4 along with recommendations for appropriate action, including sanctions. Sanctions  
5 may include expulsion from the unit. All parties involved in any aspect of this process  
6 will act at all times to preserve the confidentiality of these proceedings. Information  
7 will be shared with those individuals who have a legitimate and operational need to be  
8 informed, and to the extent that it is necessary to maintain the effectiveness of this  
9 process. Members submitting complaints concerning discrimination, defamation,  
10 harassment, sexual harassment, may at any time withdraw their complaint, and **must**  
11 **be informed that they** may request closed meetings. Committee members may also  
12 request closed meetings to discuss individual cases.

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

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

29 **10. Personnel Committee** This committee shall be composed of five representatives  
30 elected by the Membership and two members of the Steering Committee selected by  
31 the Steering Committee. This committee may include elected officers and current staff  
32 members who are not seeking re-appointment. Quorum **of this committee** is five  
33 members. The primary responsibility of this committee is to hold interviews for  
34 applicants interested in staff positions. The Personnel Committee will select three  
35 committee members to conduct interviews for all open positions. Upon completion of  
36 the interview process, the committee will submit a list of recommended candidates to  
37 the Assembly. The final hiring decision is made by the Assembly of Stewards. Interim  
38 and temporary appointments for periods no longer than six weeks, may be made  
39 directly by the Steering Committee. An Evaluation Subcommittee will be appointed to  
40 evaluate the performance of the staff at least once per semester. These evaluations will  
41 be used in future hiring decisions. The subcommittee will be composed of at least three  
42 members of the personnel committee.

43 **11. Bylaws Committee** All GEO members are invited to meetings of the By-Laws  
44 Committee. The responsibility of the by-laws committee is to try to achieve broad  
45 consensus about procedures in GEO, to educate people holding positions in GEO about  
46 their rights and duties according to the bylaws and established practices and to

1 resolve, on the basis of consensus, conflicts related to the bylaws. The bylaws  
2 committee has the right and the duty to give recommendations on:

3 i. Changes of the by-laws, from general concepts to final drafts

4 ii. Disputes over interpretations or implementations of the by-laws

5 iii. Conflicts between actual procedures and procedures as outlined in the by-laws

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

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

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

12 1. Appropriate notification will be given two weeks prior to when such elections are due to  
13 take place.

14 2. Nominations are due at the membership meeting at which the elections are scheduled  
15 to take place. If the nominee is present in person, they are required to make a short  
16 statement to the meeting prior to the elections. If the nominee is not present in person,  
17 they are required to submit a written statement to the co-chairs, who shall ensure that  
18 the statement is read out to the meeting, prior to the elections.

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

# Article 12

## Caucuses (*Moved from Article 10*)

**Section A.** Caucuses are formed around issues of marginalization, underrepresentation, and social oppression. They exist to provide safe spaces for marginalized groups of members 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.

**Section B.** Chairs of caucuses explicitly listed in Article 12(D) are ex-officio non-voting members of the Steering Committee and full voting members of the Stewards Assembly. Caucuses may choose a representative to the Steering Committee in the event that their structure does not define a Chair.

**Section C.** ~~The Steering Committee will appoint acting chairs to the caucuses until the caucus meets to elect a formal chair.~~ In the event that a listed caucus is inactive and members wish to revive it, then the Steering Committee will approve a volunteer Chair until the caucus can meet to elect a Chair. If a new caucus is formed, Steering shall leave it to that caucus to determine the Chair.

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

- 1. ALANA and International Students Caucus** This caucus shall be a space that consist of centers around ALANA graduate student employees and International graduate student employees of color.
- 2. Women's Caucus** ~~All are welcome to attend the Women's Caucus, although it~~ This caucus will be a space that centers 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** This caucus shall be a space that consist of centers around lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and gender non-conforming graduate student employees.
- 4. Disability & Accessibility Caucus** The Disability & Accessibility Caucus is a space for disabled graduate students and their allies within GEO. We gather to provide community and advocate for ourselves and others with any kind of disability (mental, physical, short-term, chronic, etc). The volunteer work carried out by this caucus will focus on drafting better protections in our contract and supporting accessibility efforts around the campus.

1 **5. Abolition Caucus** Abolition is a multi-faceted political endeavor rooted in Black  
2 liberation and Indigenous sovereignty. The Abolition Caucus stands in solidarity with  
3 calls for abolition from the UMass Amherst undergraduate student body, Western  
4 Mass, community organizations, and students and workers at colleges and universities  
5 across the higher education landscape. The Abolition Caucus will offer leadership in  
6 this work, beginning with an educational campaign about abolition intended for  
7 membership, in order to continue GEO's long history of activism and organizing.  
8

9 **Section E.** Caucus members may choose to expand the scope of their membership and/or  
10 mission.

11 **Section F.** The Assembly of Stewards shall decide if any additional caucus chairs not explicitly  
12 listed in Article 12(D) shall have a vote on the Stewards Assembly and ex-officio non-voting  
13 status on the Steering Committee.

## Article 13

### Election, Referenda, and Affiliation *(Combined from Articles 17 and 13)*

**Section 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.

**Section 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.

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

**Section 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.

**Section E.** Members in good standing (as defined by Article 3(D)) may nominate themselves or any other full member in good standing for any office. Nominations shall be presented in writing or by email 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.~~ Elections must occur within three weeks of the end of the spring semester.

**Section F.** In the event that two or fewer candidates run for the co-chair positions, then there will be an approval process rather than a de facto election of the unopposed candidates. The Stewards' Assembly will convene a special meeting to discuss their goals and collective vision for the upcoming year with the candidates. Candidates will have the opportunity to describe their own vision for the upcoming year. The candidates will then be excused while stewards discuss and 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. (Moved from Article 9(F):6)

**Section G.** 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.

**Section H.** 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.

1 **Section I.** The affiliation or disaffiliation shall be approved if more than one-half of the votes  
2 cast are in favor of affiliation or disaffiliation.

# Article 14

## Bylaws *(Combined from Articles 16 and 19)*

**Section A.** 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 a 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 changes. 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.

**Section B.** 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 on 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

1 (Article 16), subject only to the authority of the Stewards Assembly and membership as  
2 outlined in the bylaws.

3 **Section C.** These bylaws shall be voted on by secret ballot and enacted thereupon. (*Language*  
4 *combined from Article 19*)



# Article 15

## Jurisdiction (*Moved from Article 18*)

3 **Section A.** As a unit within the UAW, GEO is subject to the rules and regulations governing  
4 the UAW and Local Union 2322 Bylaws. However, in all unit matters we have strict  
5 autonomy in accordance with Article 35 Section 3 of the UAW Constitution.

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

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

# Article 16

## Powers of Administration (*New Article*)

**Section A.** GEO derives its power from an active and engaged membership and seeks to make decisions through democratic processes at General Membership Meetings. In order to keep GEO running smoothly in the interim between membership meetings, the power to act in the best interests and in accordance with the will and intent of the General Membership shall be delegated as follows.

1. The Assembly of Stewards 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.
2. The Steering Committee shall be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the General 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 General Membership or contradict the will or intent of the Assembly of Stewards or the General Membership.

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

**Section C.** Consistent with Article 4(A), the General Membership further has the right to override any decision made on behalf of the General Membership by the Assembly of Stewards or the Steering Committee.

**Section D.** Section A of this Article shall not apply to the authority to disburse funds. Instead, the following shall apply.

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