

# Fall 2025 GEO Bylaws Draft

GEO Bylaws Committee

Fall 2025

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## Article 1 Name

**Section 1A:** The name of this organization shall be the **Graduate Employee Organization of the University of Massachusetts Amherst** or **GEO**, a unit within Local 2322 (the **Local**) of the United Auto Workers (the **International** or **UAW**).

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## Article 2 Purpose

**Section 2A:** GEO is a democratic union that aims to organize and represent all graduate student employees at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (the **University**) 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.

**Section 2B:** GEO is authorized to negotiate on the employment practices and policies of the University as they relate to graduate student employees including, but not limited to, affirmative action; appointment and reappointment process; childcare; contract length; disciplinary policy and codes of conduct; dues check-off; 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.

**Section 2C:** GEO follows an equal opportunity policy and employs personnel and serves its members without regard to race; creed; color; ethnicity; caste; national origin; religion; sex; sexuality; sexual orientation; gender identity and/or expression; age; physical or mental ability; HIV status; political affiliation or belief; academic department and/or field; 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.

**Section 2D:** GEO commits to work with the UAW Local 2322 and UAW Region 9A to facilitate Social Justice and/or Ally Trainings on, but not limited to, the intersectional topics of racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, classism, and ableism. These training sessions are required to be held by professionals and/or experts. At least one training session every year will be mandatory for GEO Staff (Article 9), and Steering Committee members (Article 8) and at least one more training will be held that will be accessible to all organizers, stewards and every other GEO member in good standing. 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.).

**Section 2E:** GEO understands marginalized, traditionally underrepresented, and oppressed groups to include but not be limited by the following: racial and ethnic minority and/or minoritized groups; women; religious minority and/or minoritized groups; people who identify as are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, gender queer, gender non-conforming, gender variant, and/or intersex; members of oppressed caste groups; 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 a not a primary language; single parents; veterans; and people with limited education or literacy.

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## Article 3 Constitution and Bylaws

**Section 3A:** The **Constitution** of this Union shall be the Constitution of the International.

**Section 3B:** These Unit Bylaws are, in effect, a supplement to the Bylaws of the Local; wherein these Bylaws do not provide for Constitutional provisions, the Bylaws of the Local will be used.

**Section 3C:** The Unit Bylaws shall be in all respects subordinate to the International Constitution and all applications and interpretations thereof.

**Section 3D:** These Unit Bylaws shall be voted on by secret ballot and enacted thereupon.

**Section 3E:** Amendments to these Unit Bylaws may only be made through the processes and procedures outlined in Article 15.

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## Article 4 Membership

**Section 4A:** The **Membership** consists of all members of GEO who are members in good standing as defined by these bylaws.

**Section 4B:** A **member in good standing** is a member of GEO who has a signed and active dues authorization, has paid their initiation fee, and is current in the payment of their dues.

**Section 4C:** A graduate student employee of the University of Massachusetts who is included in the bargaining unit is eligible to become a **member of GEO** by signing a dues authorization form during the term of their employment.

**Section 4D:** GEO dues and initiation fee will be set in accordance with the UAW Constitution and Local 2322 Bylaws.

**Section 4E:** A member in good standing who ceases to be included in the bargaining unit may remain a member of GEO through the next semester plus one day, provided they retain their graduate student status. Summer session is not defined as a semester.

**Section 4F:** Graduate student workers in the bargaining unit designated as Prestigious Graduate Fellows (per Article 2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement) are considered to be in good standing and current in their payment of dues for one year from the first day of the month in which their payment of dues for the upcoming year is made.

**Section 4G:** A member in good standing is entitled to full voice and a single vote on all questions, and is eligible to run for any elected or appointed position.

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## Article 5

### Member Rights

**Section 5A:** 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.

**Section 5B:** All GEO meeting, such as General Membership Meetings, committee meetings, and caucus meetings, are open to all members and all General Membership Meetings will be held in hybrid (in-person and remote) format. All GEO members have the right to participate in the discussion of all decisions, with the exception of confidential personnel matters.

**Section 5C:** The provisions of this Article will not prevent the holding of a virtual General Membership Meeting should the need arise.

**Section 5D:** Hybrid meetings will be conducted according to the best practices to ensure that both virtual/remote participants and in person participants are able to participate in the meeting with equal access and decision making ability. Best efforts will be made to book/hold all meetings in spaces that are accessible to members attending in-person and the meeting space, audio visual components, and best efforts will be made to ensure that seating prioritizes accessibility as a right to participate in the discussion of all decisions.

**Section 5E:** This right to participate includes receiving adequate advance notifications of meetings, advance access to a meeting agenda, and meeting notes made available upon request within a week of the meeting to ensure a quorum representative of membership can be assembled. If an emergency meeting is called and an agenda and adequate notice cannot be provided, an agenda must be provided prior to the start of the meeting and notes must be made available to any member who requests them within a week of the request. Refer to Article 17 about which committees or officers can change which decisions made in previous GEO meetings.

**Section 5F:** GEO does not prevent members from holding elected positions including becoming officers based upon their political affiliations.

**Section 5G:** GEO is a union made up of graduate student 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.

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## Article 6

### Stewards

**Section 6A:** A group of graduate student 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 of a dispute.

**Section 6B:** The membership of each work group shall elect one **Steward** for each 25 employees or fraction thereof. Stewards shall be elected on a yearly basis in line with established practices of the work group they would represent. Should a work group decide to change its established practices, GEO must be notified and provided documentation of said changes from members in the work group prior to the next election. 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, and the election shall be conducted by a member or 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.

**Section 6C:** 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.

**Section 6D:** 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.

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## Article 7 Assembly of Stewards

**Section 7A:** The GEO Unit Workplace Council shall be known as the **Assembly of Stewards** or **Stewards Assembly**.

**Section 7B:** The Assembly of Stewards shall be composed of elected stewards from GEO work groups, 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

**Section 7C:** A quorum of either 25% of stewards, or 17 of the total voting members of the Assembly of Stewards and the attendance of at least one Chair of the Assembly, to chair the meeting, is necessary to conduct business. In the absence of a Chair of the Assembly, a GEO Officer may fill the role of chairing an Assembly meeting. In accordance with Robert's Rules, quorum must be called at the meeting in order to be activated.

**Section 7D:** Except as limited by these bylaws, the Assembly can draft its own rules, including those for the election and recall of Assembly Chairs.

**Section 7E:** The Assembly of Stewards aims: to create and develop shop floor activism and to organize and mobilize rank-and-file member 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.

**Section 7F:** Non-steward members of the Steering Committee (i.e. all officers and elected at-large members, committee chairs as designated in Section 12E, and caucus chairs as denoted in Section 13B) are ex-officio, full-voting members of the Assembly.

**Section 7G:** At the end of each Spring semester the Assembly shall elect two Stewards to serve as voting members of the Steering Committee.

**Section 7H:** The **Chair(s) of the Assembly** shall be elected by all members of the Assembly at the end of the Spring semester. If the elected Chair(s) of the Assembly are unable to continue serving in their role, including not being reelected to serve as stewards for the Fall or Spring semester, the Assembly may hold an election to fill the vacant spot(s) until the end of the Spring 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.

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## Article 8 Steering Committee

**Section 8A:** The GEO Executive Board shall be known as the **Steering Committee**.

**Section 8B:** The Steering Committee will consist of the GEO Co-Chairs; the Mobilization Coordinator; the two Membership Organizers; two Stewards Representatives, elected by the Assembly of Stewards; and four At-Large Members, elected by the Membership. The Steering At-Large Members of the Steering Committee will serve on the Joint Council as GEO representatives alongside the GEO Co-Chairs and additional elected GEO Joint Council Representatives, as outlined in Section 16C. Each member of the Steering Committee will be entitled to one vote on any issue raised at any Steering Committee meeting. In addition, all other staff members of GEO are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Steering Committee.

**Section 8C:** 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 prescribed for other committees (such as the Bargaining Committee).

**Section 8D:** 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 GEO Officers who serve on the Steering Committee.

**Section 8E:** A quorum of one half (rounded upward) of the voting members of the Steering Committee is necessary to conduct business.

**Section 8F:** All Stewards are welcome to attend Steering Committee meetings and shall be considered ex-officio non-voting members of the Steering Committee.

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## Article 9 Officers and Staff

**Section 9A:** The GEO Unit Committee shall consist of the GEO Officers. The GEO Officers shall be known as the **GEO Staff**.

**Section 9B:** Election of GEO Officers shall be held during the spring semester. Members are asked to consider the requirements and values of Section 2C when voting.

**Section 9C:** All GEO Officers are elected for one-year terms. They will take office on June 1 of the year in which they were elected.

**Section 9D:** GEO Officers may only be removed by following the processes and procedures outlined in the UAW International Constitution.

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

**Section 9F:** GEO Officers shall be paid at the average hourly stipend rate of Teaching Assistant FTEs.

**Section 9G:** GEO shall determine GEO related duties of all Local 2322 personnel assigned to work at GEO.

**Section 9H:** The **GEO Staff** consists of five elected officers and one hired officer: The hired position shall be the Grievance Coordinator. The Grievance Coordinator shall be hired by a committee consisting of the other five elected GEO Staff members. This committee may meet and begin interviews before the start of their term, however, the Grievance Coordinator may not be officially hired until their term begins.

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 University 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. **Two (2) Membership Organizers** – 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; developing awareness of the various issues affecting graduate workers – especially those affecting students of color, international students, students with disabilities, students with families, and students who are part of marginalized groups – and building organizing infrastructure for these issues; fostering and engaging in organizing projects around permissive subjects of bargaining, e.g. housing, immigration, accessibility, anti-sexism and anti-racism, and liaise with already-existing organizations involved in these spheres; expanding our capacity to meet the needs and interests of underrepresented groups are being met by the union, e.g. making accessible GEO events, spaces and information; ensuring that those attending GEO Membership Meetings and Steward’s Assembly are members; organizing the orientation schedule; maintaining accurate membership lists; coordinating 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 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.

**Section 9I:** Although each officer has their specific job responsibilities, all GEO 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 10

### Membership Meetings

**Section 10A:** A general meeting of the membership, or **General Membership Meeting**, shall be held at least twice each semester.

**Section 10B:** Additional General Membership Meetings can be called as needed by the Steering Committee, the Assembly of Stewards, or by petition of one-tenth of the Membership.

**Section 10C:** Decisions of the Membership override decisions made by any other GEO body.

**Section 10D:** The quorum for a General Membership Meeting will be: one of the GEO Co-Chairs, to chair the meeting; an additional member of the GEO Staff, to assist in running the meeting; and 10% of the Membership or 30 members, whichever is less.

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## Article 11

### Process and Procedures at Meetings

**Section 11A:** The **Meeting Chair(s)** (the title Meeting Chair shall refer to the individual or individuals conducting the meeting) will ensure equal and broad participation and open discussion at these meetings for all members regardless of attendance method (in-person or virtual). The Meeting Chair may set additional expectations for a given meeting, such as ground rules or time limits for speakers, given that they are applied uniformly and communicated to the meeting participants. 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.

**Section 11B:** The Meeting Chair will recognize motions, and amendments thereof, made by anyone in the group.

**Section 11C:** Motions or amendments are proper only after they have been offered to and accepted by the Meeting Chair, and seconded.

**Section 11D:** Debate over motions is closed by a call from the group, which must be supported by a second. When the Meeting 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 Meeting Chair must call for an immediate vote on the motion and the amendments.

**Section 11E:** Motions to table debate are made from the group, and if seconded, must be put to an immediate vote.

**Section 11F:** Any member may at any time call upon the Meeting Chair for a **Point of Information** to clarify business being discussed.

**Section 11G:** If any member disagrees with a ruling of the Meeting Chair, they may raise a **Point of Order** and state their objection to the Meeting Chair. The Meeting Chair must then rule on this Point of Order.

**Section 11H:** If any member disagrees with a ruling of the Meeting Chair on a Point of Order, then they may, if supported by a second, appeal from the decision of the Meeting Chair. The member appealing the Meeting Chair's decision will be recognized by the Meeting Chair, and given an opportunity to state their reasons for believing the Meeting Chair should be overruled, after which the Meeting 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 Meeting 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 Meeting Chair.

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## Article 12

### Standing Committees

**Section 12A:** 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 12B:** 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 (as outlined in Section 2E) 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 12C:** Committees will collaborate with the standing committees of the UAW and UAW Local 2322, as well as other committees and caucuses in GEO, GSG, and other graduate student organizations on campus consisting of and representing the interests of underrepresented and marginalized groups.

**Section 12D:** The Steering Committee may appoint acting chairs to the standing committees until such time as the committee meets to elect a formal chair.

**Section 12E:** Chairs of Standing 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 Section 7F.

**Section 12F:** 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 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 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. All members of the Bargaining Committee share responsibility for Bargaining Committee tasks which include: assessing membership needs and concerns prior to contract negotiations; researching, drafting, discussing, and writing out contract proposals for negotiations; help arguing for our proposals at the bargaining table with the University Administration; involving more members in the bargaining process and recruiting members to speak at the bargaining table; organizing actions around 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. Paid Bargaining Committee members are expected to attend all bargaining-related trainings and meetings.
3. **Grievance Committee** This committee shall serve to assist the Grievance Coordinator in discharging their duty to handle and organize around grievances brought forward by graduate student workers. Committee members must be trained in labor grievance procedure. 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 Grievance Coordinator hired by GEO.

4. **Communications Committee** This committee shall be chaired by the Co-Chairs of GEO, and shall be responsible for generating the newsletter; drafting and distributing press releases; maintaining the GEO web page and social media; and the creation and distribution of posters, flyers and billets.
5. **Finance Committee** This committee shall be composed of the Mobilization Coordinator (as Chair) and two members in good standing. All members have responsibilities that include serving on the 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 General 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.
7. **Transformative Justice Committee** This committee shall 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, or sexual harassment may at any time withdraw their complaint, and must be informed that they may request closed meetings. Committee members may also request closed meetings to discuss individual cases.
8. **Coalition and Political Action Committee** This committee 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 Matters Committee** This committee 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 chair of this committee shall take on the responsibility of advocating for family issues and matters within GEO.
10. **Personnel Committee** This committee shall 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 of this committee 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. **Bylaws Committee** All GEO members are invited to meetings of the Bylaws Committee. The responsibility of the Bylaws 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 Unit Bylaws and established practices

and to resolve, on the basis of consensus, conflicts related to the Unit Bylaws. The Bylaws Committee has the right and the duty to give recommendations on:

- i. Changes of the Unit Bylaws, from general concepts to final drafts;
- ii. Disputes over interpretations or implementations of the Unit Bylaws;
- iii. Conflicts between actual procedures and procedures as outlined in the Unit Bylaws.

**Section 12G:** The Assembly of Stewards shall decide if any additional committee chairs shall have a vote in the Assembly.

**Section 12H:** The committees may decide upon their own operational procedures, except when specified by these Unit Bylaws.

**Section 12I:** 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.

**Section 12J:** 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 General 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.

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## Article 13 Caucuses

**Section 13A:** Caucuses are formed around issues of marginalization, under-representation, 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 13B:** Chairs of Standing Caucuses explicitly listed in Section 13D are ex-officio non-voting members of the Steering Committee and full voting members of the Stewards Assembly. Caucuses may choose a Caucus Representative to the Steering Committee and Stewards Assembly in the event that their structure does not define a Caucus Chair.

**Section 13C:** In the event that a Standing Caucus is inactive and members wish to revive it, then the Steering Committee will approve a volunteer Chair who will be tasked with reviving the caucus until the caucus can meet to elect a Chair or Representative. If a new caucus is formed, Steering shall leave it to that caucus to determine the Chair or Representative.

**Section 13D:** The Standing Caucuses include, but are not limited to:

1. ALANA and International Student Caucus This caucus shall be a space that centers around ALANA graduate student employees and international graduate student employees of color.

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

**Section 13E:** Caucuses and their members may choose to expand the scope of their membership and/or mission.

**Section 13F:** The Assembly of Stewards shall decide if any additional Caucus Chairs not explicitly listed in Section 13D shall have a vote on the Stewards Assembly and ex-officio non-voting status on the Steering Committee.

## Article 14

### Elections, Referenda, and Affiliation

**Section 14A:** Elections of GEO Officers, Steering At-Large Members, Delegates, and Referenda votes shall be held by secret ballot at General Membership Meetings. Before this meeting, provisions shall be made for absentee, mail-in or open balloting.

**Section 14B:** 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 14C:** Regular elections for GEO Officers and At-Large Members of the Steering Committee shall be held during the Spring semester.

**Section 14D:** Elections to fill vacancies shall be held at the first General Membership 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 14E:** Members in good standing (as defined by Section 4B) may nominate themselves or any other member in good standing for any office. Nominations shall be presented in writing or by email to the Steering Committee and Elections Committee. The deadline for nominations shall be 15 calendar days before the date of the election. Elections must occur no later than three weeks prior to the end of the Spring semester.

**Section 14F:** 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 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” onto not approve 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.

**Section 14G:** 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 General Membership Meeting. The Steering Committee shall place the Referendum on the agenda for the next General 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 14H:** Affiliation with another organization, for purposes of better realizing the goals and objective of GEO, or conversely, disaffiliation with another organization, may be initiated with a Referendum.

**Section 14I:** The affiliation or disaffiliation shall be approved if more than one-half of the votes cast are in favor of the affiliation or disaffiliation.

**Section 14J:** GEO Delegates to UAW Councils will be elected through the same process as elections for GEO Officers and Steering At-Large Members. Delegates will be elected every Spring semester alongside GEO Officers and Steering At-Large Members and will serve a term of office concurrent with the term of the GEO Officers and Steering At-Large Members. Any GEO member in good standing who has been a member for a period of thirty days prior to the date of the election may run to be a GEO Delegate, including current GEO Officers, current Steering At-Large Members, and members running for those positions. Elections for interim GEO Delegates or for GEO Delegates to newly formed UAW Councils will be held when needed but follow the same procedures as typical elections.

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## Article 15 Amendments to Unit Bylaws

**Section 15A:** In order to amend these Unit Bylaws, a **Bylaws Committee** must first be convened by either the Steering Committee, Stewards Assembly, or by vote at a General Membership Meeting. Such a vote will consist of the convening of the Bylaws Committee, as well as an overview of the scope of the work they are tasked with. The scope of the work may include an amendment to a specific Article or Section, a new proposed Article or Section, a general change that the Membership wishes to see, a broad revisiting of the Unit Bylaws as a whole, or other similar tasks. Once a Bylaws Committee has been convened, a broad call for participation will be sent out to the Membership. The Bylaws Committee must meet to work on the proposed changes before they are presented at a General Membership Meeting for at least fourteen weeks, or the length of the Summer term, whichever is longer.

**Section 15B:** Once the Bylaws Committee has met and worked on the proposed changes for at least the requisite time, the following steps shall be followed.

1. The initial draft of the proposed changes will be sent to the Membership and posted online for members to read and provide comments. The Bylaws Committee will also at this time announce the General Membership Meeting at which the proposed changes will be given a first reading, which must be at least ten days after the date the changes are publicly posted.
2. The **first reading** of the proposed changes will include an overview of the proposed changes, the rationale behind the proposed changes, and a review of comments received prior to the meeting. At this General Membership Meeting there will be no votes taken on the proposed changes, although additional comments from members will be accepted.
3. After the first reading General Membership Meeting there will be an additional comment period of at least ten days. During this additional comment period the Bylaws Committee will hold a public comment meeting. This will allow members with strong feelings or those who do not like email to discuss the proposed changes with the Bylaws Committee.
4. After the additional comment period concludes the Bylaws Committee will meet to consider the received comments from the Membership and modify the proposed changes as needed. The Bylaws Committee will also announce the General Membership Meeting at which the second reading and vote on the proposed changes will take place. The announced meeting should be the next General Membership Meeting after the first reading

General Membership Meeting, but need not be if the Bylaws Committee believes that the comments require more time to be fully taken into account while preparing the final draft.

5. Once the Bylaws Committee has a final draft it will be posted online and sent to all members to read at least ten days prior to the General Membership Meeting at which the second reading and vote will take place. The final draft of the bylaw change may be posted before the first day of the semester during which the second reading and vote will take place, but must be posted for at least ten days during the semester before it can be voted in a General Membership Meeting. At this point the language of the proposed changes cannot be changed, and the proposed changes must be voted up or down by the Membership.
6. The **second reading** will consist of an overview of the proposed changes, as well as any additional changes made by the Bylaws Committee in response to comments from the Membership. The proposed changes will then be voted on by following the procedures outlined below in Section 15C.

**Section 15C:** Once the final draft of the proposed changes has been posted by the Bylaws Committee, the following holds true:

1. The language of the proposed changes cannot be changed, and the proposed changes must be voted up or down as a package by the Membership.
2. The Elections Committee, GEO Staff, and the Bylaws Committee will make voting available outside of the second reading General Membership Meeting for at least six hours over at least three days.
3. The Elections Committee is responsible for running the vote and counting the final votes. Voting will also occur during the second reading General Membership Meeting.
4. In order for the proposed changes to be adopted the total number of votes cast during the voting period and at the second reading General Membership Meeting must exceed the General Membership Meeting quorum for the year, and two-thirds of the Members who voted must vote in favor of adopting the proposed changes.
5. If the proposed changes are voted down there shall be a vote to decide whether to return the proposed changes to the Bylaws Committee for further work. In the case that the proposed changes are returned to the Bylaws Committee for further work, the Bylaws Committee must repeat the process outlined in Section 15B above.
6. If the votes do not meet or exceed the number needed for quorum, the Bylaws Committee may ask the Elections Committee to extend the voting period in order to achieve a quorum. In this case, the proposed changes do not need to undergo the process again, but the vote must be re-done in its entirety.

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## Article 16 Jurisdiction

**Section 16A:** 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.

**Section 16B:** 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.

**Section 16C:** The ex-officio GEO representatives to the Joint Council shall be the two Co-Chairs and four Steering At-Large Members. In the event that the six ex-officio GEO representatives to Joint Council do not exhaust the seats on the Local 2322 Joint Council apportioned to GEO by the Local, additional representatives to the Joint Council shall be elected and serve the greater of one year or until such time as new elections for additional representatives to the Joint Council takes place. If the number of GEO representatives to the Joint Council is below the number apportioned to GEO by the Local, or if a GEO representative to the Joint Council resigns or is recalled, the Steering Committee may appoint an interim representative to serve until the next General Membership Meeting. At that General Membership Meeting a new representative will be elected, in accordance with the Bylaws of Local 2322. If a replacement for the vacated position is not elected at that General Membership Meeting, the interim representative may be extended for an additional General Membership Meeting by the Steering Committee.

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## Article 17

### Powers of Administration

**Section 17A:** 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 17B:** 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 17C:** Consistent with Section 5A, 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 17D:** Section 17A of this Article shall not apply to the authority to disburse funds. Instead, the following shall apply.

1. The Steering Committee is authorized to approve the disbursement of funds in an amount that cannot exceed \$500.
2. The Assembly of Stewards is authorized to approve the disbursement of funds in an amount not to exceed \$1000.
3. Any 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.