



## Constitution of the UIC-Graduate Employees Organization

### ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the University of Illinois - Chicago Graduate Employees Organization (UIC-GEO), Local 6297, American Federation of Teachers (AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT)).

### ARTICLE II - Objectives

The primary objectives of the UIC-GEO shall be to serve as the bargaining agent for all graduate employees at the University of Illinois - Chicago and to create a culture of labor organizing among those graduate employees. The UIC-GEO believes in and will bargain for the idea that all graduate employees should be paid a fair living wage, should receive comprehensive health care and retirement benefits, and should be free from unfair, unreasonable, or dangerous work conditions. The UIC-GEO is also committed to promoting quality teaching and research at UIC, and, therefore, to fostering a sense of community among UIC graduate students. In addition, the UIC-GEO is committed to the principles of labor solidarity, social justice, and participatory democracy, and will give support to and work in coalition with labor or social justice groups on campus, throughout the Chicago area or internationally.

### ARTICLE III - Membership

#### A. Eligible Members

##### a. Voting Members

Voting Members shall be defined as Graduate Assistants (GAs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs) currently employed at UIC. These Members shall have the right to vote and shall pay dues.

##### b. Non-voting Members

Research Assistants (RAs), graduate students employed as lecturers, and graduate students on fellowship or otherwise without appointment, shall be eligible to become non-voting Members. These Members shall not have the right to vote, nor shall they pay dues.

#### B. Good Standing

A member in good standing shall be defined as a Voting Member who is current in payment of dues.

#### C. Ineligible as Members

Faculty, support staff, university administration, and those holding supervisory or managerial positions are not eligible to become Members of the UIC-GEO.

#### D. Non-discrimination

The UIC-GEO shall not discriminate in any way on the basis of race, ethnicity, religious belief, national origin, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, social, political or economic status, or physical disability.

### ARTICLE IV - Officers

The UIC-GEO shall have five officers: two Co-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Grievance Chair, and two Officers-At-Large. The Steering Committee may open nominations for one or more Officers-At-Large to coordinate specific Local functions such as Bargaining, Organizing, Communications, and Outreach.

#### A. Officer Requirements

a. All officers must be Members of the UIC-GEO.

b. All officers must be elected by a majority vote of the Membership attending a designate election meeting, as per ARTICLE V.

#### B. Officer Elections

Officer elections shall be held no earlier than one month before the last day of instruction of the Spring semester.

#### C. Term of Office.

Office shall commence upon the last day of instruction of the Spring semester and shall last no longer than one (1) year.

#### D. Officer Duties

a. The Co-Presidents:

- i. shall share full responsibility for execution of the Membership's goals and desires;
  - ii. may divide these duties between them however they determine;
  - iii. shall be members of the Steering Committee and attend all Steering Committee Meetings;
  - iv. shall preside over all Steering Committee Meetings, either together or in alternation;
  - v. shall be *ex officio* members of all standing committees;
  - vi. shall serve as liaisons to the Bargaining Committee and the Stewards Council;
  - vii. shall attend and preside over all Membership Meetings and Special Membership Meetings, either together or in alternation;
  - viii. shall make reports to the Membership on the status of the Union;
  - ix. shall meet regularly with UIC-GEO and Illinois Federation of Teachers (ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT)) staff members;
  - x. shall serve as the primary contacts for organizations in the labor community and groups in higher education;
  - xi. shall recruit activists and work with undergraduate activists;
  - xii. shall generate organizing assignments for activists and ensure that accountability structures are in place;
  - xiii. shall foster and promote accountability among stewards, Steering Committee members, and staff;
  - xiv. shall work with others to secure Grievance Committee members and to ensure that Grievances are handled appropriately;
  - xv. and shall serve as spokespeople in the press and other venues.
- b. The Treasurer:
- i. shall keep all financial records of the UIC-GEO;
  - ii. shall be responsible for the receipt and disbursement of all Union funds in accordance with the adopted Budget;
  - iii. shall ensure that the ledger on the computer desktop is updated regularly and contains the most current information;
  - iv. shall add new Members and remove old Members from the primary account;
  - v. shall pay all bills;
  - vi. shall maintain and keep available the checkbook;
  - vii. shall advise the Office Manager with sufficient advance notice when it is necessary to order new checks;
  - viii. shall change, update, or otherwise alter accounts if necessary and if directed by the Steering Committee;
  - ix. shall be a member of the Steering Committee and attend all Steering Committee Meetings;
  - x. shall attend all Membership Meetings;
  - xi. shall be responsible for keeping the UIC-GEO in good standing with the American Federation of Teachers (AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT)) by forwarding all per capita dues to the National Office of the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) by the appropriate dates;
  - xii. shall be responsible for submitting a financial statement of assets and liabilities and a statement of income and expenses to the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) Secretary-Treasurer as per Article IX, Section (9) of the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) Constitution;
  - xiii. shall serve as chair of the Budget Committee;
  - xiv. shall serve as the liaison to the Communications Committee;
  - xv. and shall participate in and cooperate with any necessary financial audits.
- c. The Secretary:
- i. shall keep records (minutes) of all Meetings, including Steering Committee Meetings and Membership Meetings;
  - ii. shall prepare agendas for Meetings;
  - iii. shall create and maintain files of agendas and minutes, and shall distribute these agendas and minutes as necessary;
  - iv. shall be a member of the Steering Committee attend all Meetings of the Steering Committee
  - v. shall attend all Meetings of the standing committees;
  - vi. shall find a replacement to take minutes in the event that he/she cannot attend a particular Meeting;
  - vii. shall issue all notices and handle correspondence at the direction of the Co-Presidents;
  - viii. shall keep records of the Membership;
  - ix. shall be responsible for keeping the UIC-GEO in good standing with the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) by forwarding current Membership lists to the National Office of the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) by the appropriate dates;
  - x. shall serve as liaison to the Outreach Committee;
  - xi. and shall keep all non-financial records of the UIC-GEO.
- d. The Grievance Chair:
- i. Shall meet regularly with the Steering Committee to inform them of potential grievances.
  - ii. shall meet regularly with the Stewards Council to evaluate potential grievances;
  - iii. shall work with the Stewards Council to meet with all potential grievants;
  - iv. shall interview and investigate the cases of all grievants;
  - v. shall bring the findings of interviews and investigations to the Steering Committee for approval by majority vote of a quorum of Steering Committee members;
  - vi. shall coordinate the filing of grievances per the contract;
  - vii. and shall take the direction of the steering committee in pursuing grievances at each step (per the contract), including arbitration.
- E. Officers-at-Large shall be Bargaining Chair, Communications Chair, Outreach Chair, and Organizing Chair. These Officers shall oversee the functions of their respective standing committee (Bargaining, Communications, Outreach, Stewards) as listed in Article VI below.

- F. All officers elected by the general membership of the organization shall serve as members of the Steering Committee.

#### ARTICLE V - Elections

- A. Eligibility to vote  
All members in good standing per ARTICLE III B shall be eligible to vote in any UIC-GEO election.
- B. Offices subject to Election:
- a. Co-President,
  - b. Treasurer,
  - c. Secretary,
  - d. ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) Convention Delegate,
  - e. AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) Convention Delegate.
- C. Election Dates
- a. The Steering Committee shall schedule election dates for officers per ARTICLE IV B.
  - b. The Steering Committee shall schedule election dates for Convention delegates no less than thirty (30) days prior to Convention.
- D. Election Procedures  
All elections shall be carried out in a manner consistent with Title IV of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (Landrum-Griffin).
- E. Election Committee
- a. An Election Committee of the membership shall be convened no later than sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled election date;
  - b. The Election Committee shall be convened per ARTICLE VI;
  - c. The Election Committee shall designate a Chair;
  - d. The Election Committee shall notify the membership of open offices, deadlines for nominations, and election dates;
  - e. The Election Committee shall develop ballots, supervise voting, tally votes, and announce election results to the membership;
  - f. The Election Committee shall keep all Election records, including ballots.
- F. Nominations
- a. All members shall be notified of the procedures and deadlines for nominations no later than fifteen (15) days before nominations open.
  - b. Nominations shall be closed no more than two (2) days in advance of the scheduled election. Nominations may be held open through the date of the scheduled election at the discretion of the Steering Committee.
- G. Notice of Election Dates  
All members shall be notified of scheduled election dates no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the election.
- H. Election Venue  
All elections shall take place at a membership meeting or meetings called for that purpose. Voting shall be opened according to the agenda of the meeting or meetings and shall be closed at the conclusion of the meeting or meetings.
- I. Balloting  
All contested elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.
- J. Tallying and Announcement of Results  
Election results shall be tallied and announced to the membership no later than two (2) days after the election.
- K. Records  
All records, including ballots, shall be kept on file in the UIC-GEO office for one (1) year.

#### ARTICLE VI - Committees

- A. Standing Committees:  
The UIC-GEO shall have the following standing committees: the Steering Committee, the Bargaining Committee, the Communications Committee, the Outreach Committee, and the Stewards Council.
- B. The Steering Committee:
- a. shall guide the UIC-GEO by serving as an executive decision-making body;
  - b. shall be composed of the two Co-Presidents, the Treasurer, and the Secretary;
  - c. shall administer the policies of the UIC-GEO;
  - d. shall be empowered to make all decisions regarding organizing, the planning and execution of actions, the endorsement of other organizations, coalition work, literature production and distribution, publicity, social functions, hiring recommendations to the ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT), and day-to-day operations of the organization;
  - e. shall be empowered to create ad hoc committees;
  - f. shall be empowered to name Alternates to elected standing or ad-hoc committees;
  - g. shall be empowered to make contracts and incur liabilities appropriate to the accomplishment of its purpose;

- h. shall be empowered to take emergency actions when policy cannot be set by the Membership;
  - i. shall regularly report its progress and activities to the Membership;
  - j. shall be empowered to call Membership Meetings and Special Membership Meetings;
  - k. shall determine the agenda for all Membership Meetings;
  - l. shall employ all professional, technical, clerical and support staff of the organization;
  - m. shall establish the salary, benefits and expense guidelines of any general officer who is employed by the organization.;
  - n. shall be empowered to make contracts and incur liabilities including the purchase of services, equipment and real property, to borrow money, to secure such obligations by mortgage or other instrument, and to otherwise engage in financial transactions to the extent permitted by applicable law or statute. The Executive Board shall have the power to sue, complain and defend on behalf of the membership;
  - o. shall approve the chairperson and membership of all standing and special committees of the organization, except the Elections Committee, and receive regular reports from such committees;
  - p. shall be responsible for adherence to and enforcement of the Constitution and By-Laws of the organization;
  - q. shall issue regular reports, including an annual report, to the membership;
  - r. and shall meet weekly.
- C. The Bargaining Committee:
- a. shall serve as the main bargainer in contract negotiations with the University Administration;
  - b. shall be composed of a Chief Negotiator, a number of Tactical Negotiators, a number of Note-Takers, and a number of Alternates;
  - c. shall be elected by a majority vote of the Membership;
  - d. and shall meet regularly.
- D. The Communications Committee:
- a. shall serve to facilitate communication of the activities and issues of the UIC-GEO with the Membership and with the larger community;
  - b. shall be composed of Members who volunteer to participate;
  - c. shall concern itself with print and electronic communication, campaign communication, and media relations;
  - d. and shall meet regularly.
- E. The Outreach Committee:
- a. shall serve to increase goodwill towards the UIC-GEO, ally with other organizations, and improve the image of the UIC-GEO;
  - b. shall be composed of Members who volunteer to participate;
  - c. shall concern itself with planning and staging UIC-GEO events, organizing caucuses, building coalitions of campus organizations, and maintaining relationships with labor and community organizations;
  - d. and shall meet regularly.
- F. The Stewards Council:
- a. shall serve as a forum for Departmental Stewards for the purposes of strategy, solidarity, and accountability;
  - b. shall be composed of Departmental Stewards of all departments;
  - c. Departmental Stewards shall be defined as Members elected/selected by their departments to represent the department to the UIC-GEO.
  - d. The goals and responsibilities of Departmental Stewards shall be to build Membership, to promote participation in UIC-GEO events and actions, to facilitate two-way communication between the Members and the Steering Committee, to take grievance information, and to represent their departments to the UIC-GEO Membership.
  - e. and shall meet regularly.
- G. Ad Hoc Committees
- The Steering Committee shall be empowered to create ad hoc committees. These committees may include, but are not limited to, the following: the Budget Committee, the Constitution Committee, the Election Committee, and the Audit Committee.
- a. The Budget Committee:
    - i. shall prepare a Budget for the UIC-GEO;
    - ii. shall present this Budget to the Membership for approval by a majority vote;
    - iii. shall maintain or revise this Budget as deemed necessary;
    - iv. shall be chaired by the Treasurer;
    - v. shall be composed of the Treasurer and Members who volunteer to participate;
    - vi. and shall meet as needed.
  - b. The Constitution Committee:
    - i. shall concern itself with the writing and maintenance of the UIC-GEO Constitution;
    - ii. shall be composed of Members who volunteer to participate;
    - iii. and shall meet as needed.
  - c. The Election Committee:
    - i. shall oversee elections as per ARTICLE V;
    - ii. shall be composed of Members who volunteer to participate;
    - iii. shall not include any Member of the Steering Committee;
    - iv. and shall meet as needed.

- d. The Audit Committee:
  - i. shall work to ensure that any necessary financial audit goes smoothly;
  - ii. shall be composed of Members who volunteer to participate;
  - iii. shall not include any member of the Steering Committee;
  - iv. and shall meet as needed.

#### ARTICLE VII - Affiliations

- A. Affiliations
  - a. The UIC-GEO shall be affiliated, and remain in good standing, with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).
  - b. The UIC-GEO shall be affiliated, and remain in good standing, with the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT).
  - c. The UIC-GEO shall be affiliated, and remain in good standing, with the American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), as well as relevant state and local organs thereof.
- B. Delegates
  - a. The UIC-GEO shall send delegates to the above named organizations in accordance with their respective constitutions.
  - b. The UIC-GEO shall elect said delegates according to ARTICLE V.

#### ARTICLE VIII - Meetings

- A. Membership Meetings
  - a. The Membership of the UIC-GEO shall meet at least twice per academic semester.
  - b. The Steering Committee shall have the power to call Membership Meetings.
  - c. All Members may attend and speak at Membership Meetings.
  - d. All Members in good standing may vote and propose business at Membership Meetings.
  - e. Membership Meetings shall be governed by Roberts' Rules of Order (Revised) in cases not covered by this Constitution or the By-Laws.
  - f. Membership Meetings shall be called with at least ten (10) days' notice.
  - g. Membership Meetings shall have a posted agenda.
  - h. Members wishing to add items to the agenda may do so by contacting the Secretary.
  - i. The Co-Presidents shall preside at Membership Meetings as per ARTICLE IV.
  - j. Membership Meetings shall be scheduled with the maximum possible reasonable accommodation to the varied schedules of the Membership.
  - k. In the event that a Membership Meeting is called on two consecutive days, it shall count as one Meeting for purposes of voting.
- B. Committee Meetings
  - a. Steering Committee Meetings
    - i. The Steering Committee shall meet weekly, as per ARTICLE VI.
    - ii. The Co-Presidents shall preside at Steering Committee Meetings, as per ARTICLE IV.
  - b. Other Committee Meetings
    - Other Committees shall meet as defined in ARTICLE VI.
- C. Special Meetings
  - a. A Special Membership Meeting shall be called at the discretion of the Steering Committee or by petition of 5% of the Membership.
  - b. No less than three (3) days' notice shall be given for Special Membership Meetings.
  - c. The agenda for Special Membership Meetings shall be included in the notice given.
  - d. Only items included on the published agenda for a Special Membership Meeting shall be considered at that Meeting.
  - e. Special Membership Meetings shall be governed by Roberts' Rules of Order (Revised) in cases not covered by this Constitution or the By-Laws.
  - f. The Co-Presidents shall preside at Special Membership Meetings as per ARTICLE IV.

#### ARTICLE IX - Finances

- A. Dues
  - a. Local Dues
    - i. Local dues shall be defined as dues collected in excess of ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) per capita dues for the purpose of carrying out the day-to-day functions of the Local, including but not limited to administering and enforcing the collective bargaining agreement, hiring Local staff, funding member education initiatives and programming, and catering Local functions.
    - ii. Local dues shall be determined by a majority vote on a ballot of members present at a meeting or meetings called for that purpose.
  - b. Per Capita Dues
    - i. Per Capita Dues shall be defined as dues collected for the purpose of affiliation with the ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT).
    - ii. The UIC-GEO shall be considered to have elected to pay Per Capita Dues by retaining its affiliation with the ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT).

- B. ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) Per Capita Payments
  - a. The UIC-GEO shall pay per capita to the ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for the preceding month.
  - b. The UIC-GEO shall ensure that per capita is paid through the two (2) months immediately preceding the convention dates of the ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT).
- C. Dues Pass-Through
  - a. The UIC-GEO shall increase Local and Per Capita dues by action of the Steering Committee when ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) and/or AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) increase per capita dues.
- D. Financial Review
  - a. The UIC-GEO shall submit to the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) annually, and within six months of the close of its fiscal year, a financial review of the affiliate's financial statements conducted by an internal audit committee.
  - b. The internal audit committee shall follow AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) guidelines for audit committees.
  - c. The UIC-GEO shall append to the financial review must a signed certification by the Co-Presidents that the financial review has been presented at a specified regular or special meeting of the affiliate's governing body and published and made available to the members.
- E. Fair Share Notice
  - a. The UIC-GEO shall adopt procedures for Fair Share payers to receive annual notice of the fees charged, the basis for the calculation of the fees and the opportunity to contest the fee levels.
  - b. These procedures should comply with the requirements of federal and state law.
  - c. These procedures shall be adopted into the By-Laws.

#### ARTICLE X - Amendment

- A. This Constitution shall be amendable by a vote of the Membership at a Membership Meeting or Special Membership Meeting.
- B. A proposed Amendment shall be presented to the Steering Committee no less than twelve (12) days before the Meeting at which it is to be considered; the Steering Committee shall distribute the Amendment to the Membership no less than ten (10) days before said Meeting.
- C. A proposed Amendment shall be accepted and shall become part of this Constitution if 2/3 of the Membership present vote in favor of it.

#### ARTICLE XI - Availability of Constitution

- A. This Constitution shall be kept on file and available in both electronic and paper form in the UIC-GEO Office.
- B. This Constitution shall be available to all Members of the UIC-GEO upon request.
- C. A Member may request a copy of the Constitution from any Steering Committee member, who shall provide it promptly.
- D. A Member may request a copy of the Constitution from the ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT) representative, at the following address:
  - 310 S. Peoria St., Ste. 305
  - Chicago, IL 60607
  - (312) 491-1808
- E. This Constitution shall be distributed electronically to the Membership by the Secretary after any revision, change, or Amendment.
- F. Three copies of this Constitution and By-Laws shall be submitted to the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) National Office, and shall be available to all other affiliated organizations.

#### ARTICLE XII - Ratification

This Constitution shall be Ratified by a majority vote of the Membership at a Membership Meeting called for the purpose of Ratification.

#### ARTICLE XIII - By-Laws

- A. The UIC-GEO may create By-Laws to this Constitution.
- B. By-Laws or Amendments to the By-Laws shall be proposed either by the Steering Committee or the Membership.
- C. Proposed By-Laws or Amendments shall be placed on the agenda for a Membership Meeting.
- D. A majority vote of the Membership at a Membership Meeting shall approve a proposed By-Law or Amendment to the By-Laws.

#### ARTICLE XV - Miscellaneous

- A. Legitimate forms of mailing, notifying, publishing, giving notice, and distributing shall include paper mail and electronic mail.