

Constitution of the Graduate Employees Together at the University of Pennsylvania (GET- UP)

Preamble:

We, the graduate academic workers of the University of Pennsylvania, recognize ourselves as a community of scholars, teachers, and researchers. Despite our differences across disciplines, programs, and departments, we all ultimately labor under common working conditions, face similar challenges, and share related grievances. We therefore aim to develop our collective power to improve these working conditions, enrich our academic experience, and transform the university into a more democratic workplace for the benefit of the wider community, including undergraduates, standing and non-standing faculty, staff, and the City of Philadelphia. We also aim to improve the hiring, acceptance, and retention of academic workers from historically underrepresented groups, cognizant that these selection procedures and associated working conditions determine the diversity of the labor force at the University of Pennsylvania. Recognizing that such change can never occur nor be maintained without solidarity, sustained organization, and collective action, we, the graduate academic workers of the University of Pennsylvania, organize ourselves into a Union under the name of Graduate Employees Together at the University of Pennsylvania (GET-UP) and give ourselves the following Constitution:

Article I: Membership

Section A: Eligibility

1. Membership is open to all University of Pennsylvania graduate and professional academic workers on all campuses, regardless of funding source, fellowship status, or citizenship, and to all University of Pennsylvania graduate degree recipients who:
 - a. Remain at the University of Pennsylvania or under its auspices as short-term lecturers, adjuncts, researchers or otherwise as non-tenure track academic workers.
2. To retain membership, members must remain in good standing.

Section B: Membership Procedure

1. Membership will incur upon the filing of a valid Union membership card.
 - a. Each card must be printed on paper, filled out, and physically signed in ink. All digital signatures received thus far are valid. Digital signatures received in the future will be accepted.
2. The signed card must be returned to the Coordinating Committee, which will be filed in the Union archive.

Section C: Privileges of Membership

1. All GET-UP members may participate in General Body meetings, run for elected office, vote in all elections and referenda, and join committees and working groups according to official procedures.

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2. All GET-UP members may file grievances with the Grievance Committee or file charges for disciplinary action against other members.

Section D: Dues

1. Any and all dues may be set by the procedural decision-making process.

Section E: Loss of Membership and Voluntary Withdrawal

Subsection E1: Loss of membership

1. Loss of membership occurs automatically upon:
 - a. Non-payment of dues after notification.
 - b. Graduating from or leaving the University of Pennsylvania permanently.
2. Permanent loss of membership may be a component or result of disciplinary action, arising from violation of this Union's Constitution or federal law.

Subsection E2: Voluntary Withdrawal Procedure

1. Members may ask to leave the Union at any time by written request to the Coordinating Committee.
2. The Coordinating Committee will mark the card as inactive and log the date of the withdrawal.
3. Should the member, otherwise eligible, decide to rejoin the Union, membership procedures for new members will apply.

Article II: Union Governance

Section A: Overview

1. GET-UP will be governed by a combination of standing committees and working groups.
 - a. Standing committees: GET-UP will maintain standing committees as outlined in Section B of this Article. Any member is eligible for any standing committee and committees may be added, eliminated, or merged via amendment procedure.
 - b. Working groups: Working groups may be ad-hoc committees or long-term committees (e.g. data or communications) developed for the purpose of solving/researching a particular issue relevant to GET-UP. They can be initiated by any member via the procedural decision-making process in a General Body meeting or by the Coordinating Committee. They are not elections-based and provide the general membership of GET-UP with a voice outside of the Coordinating Committee. Working group findings will be presented at GET-UP General Body meetings and/or at Coordinating Committee meetings.

Section B: The Standing Committees

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1. The standing committees consist of the following:
 - a. The Coordinating Committee.
 - i. This committee is responsible for organizing the Union's General Body meetings. It oversees the selection of meeting facilitators, note takers, and other relevant roles as needed. It works to expand Union membership and, in tandem with other standing committees and working groups, to promote an inclusive and representative membership.
 - b. The Grievance Committee.
 - i. The Grievance Committee functions as a forum for members to report problems and issues the Union can work on, initiate an inquiry, or advocate.
 - c. Affinity Group and Allies Committee.
 - i. This committee is responsible for outreach and coordination with both university and non-affiliated affinity groups and allies (e.g. student groups, labor unions, community organizations).
 - d. Elections Committee.
2. Elections will be held each April to elect members to standing committees of the following academic year. The first set of elections will be held when GET-UP wins a recognition election, but may be postponed until after ratification of the first contract. Until such initial elections are held, the day to day operational responsibilities of GET-UP will be the responsibility of a voluntary Coordinating Committee with roles assigned on an ad hoc basis. Upon the removal or replacement of an officer or the creation of a new position, an interim election shall be held to appoint an individual with a term running until the next April election.

Section C: The Coordinating Committee and its Responsibilities

1. The Coordinating Committee of GET-UP shall:
 - a. Faithfully carry out the decisions of the membership and act on its behalf.
 - b. Coordinate the work of the union.
 - c. Facilitate member discussion, debate, and participation in decision-making.
 - d. Meet at least twice a month.
 - e. Coordinate the activities of all committees, maintain documentation including membership cards and rosters, and ensure that the actions of each committee adhere to GET-UP Constitution and are authorized by the General Body.
 - f. Ensure the smooth transition of leadership roles by arranging an orientation for new officers before the end of each academic year, or within thirty (30) days of any filled vacancy.

Article III: Union Meetings and Decision Making

Section A: Meetings

Subsection A1: General Body Meetings

1. General Body meetings are to take place one (3) time a semester. Time and location of these meetings will be announced a minimum of seven (7) days in advance.

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2. Only members of GET-UP will be allowed to attend General Body meetings, with exceptions to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Coordinating Committee.
3. General Body meetings may only take place during the academic year.
4. General Body meeting procedure:
 - a. In advance of each meeting, the Coordinating Committee will appoint two facilitators to moderate discussion and to implement decision-making process and one note taker to take minutes.
5. Minutes from General Body meetings will be made available to the general membership.

Subsection A2: Special Meetings and Actions

1. Special meetings and actions will occur in case of emergency, or if a General Body meeting is necessary in addition to, or in between, scheduled General Body meetings.
2. To the extent possible, special meetings and actions will follow same prior notice and guidelines as General Body meetings. If notice is not possible on this timeline, it shall take place as soon as possible.
3. To the extent possible, special meetings and actions should occur during the academic year.

Subsection A3: Standing Committee Meetings

1. Standing committees shall meet as follows:
 - a. The Coordinating Committee shall meet at least two (2) times per month and at a time mutually agreed upon at the beginning of the semester by members of the committee.
 - b. All other committees shall meet as their members deem necessary or as deemed necessary by the Coordinating Committee.
2. Notice of each standing committee meeting shall be made available to the general membership in advance.
3. Standing committee members shall choose the norms of communication for these meetings.
4. All members in good standing are allowed to attend standing committee meetings as observers, though participation is limited to standing committee members.
5. Minutes from standing meetings will be available to all members.

Subsection A4: Working Group Meetings

1. Working group meetings will be called as necessary by members of working group.
2. Working group members can decide on norms of communication prior to or during meetings.

Section B: Decision Making

Subsection B1: Types of Decisions

1. Substantive decisions will be determined through general referenda. These decisions affect the long-term collective bargaining aspects of GET-UP. Routine duties of standing committees are not subject to referenda.
 - a. Substantive decisions include strike votes, the initiation of negotiations, the

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- acceptance or rejection of any agreement with the University of Pennsylvania, and the decision to affiliate/disaffiliate with a national union.
2. Procedural decisions will be determined by vote at GET-UP membership meetings and standing committee meetings. These decisions involve the maintenance and everyday functions of GET-UP, as well as the routine duties of standing committees.
 - a. Procedural decisions include creating sub-committees, setting agendas, developing strategies, ordering supplies, and all decisions that are not defined as substantive decisions.

Subsection B2: Referenda Procedure

1. A referendum can be called in the following ways:
 - a. 10% of the GET-UP membership may petition the Coordinating Committee requesting a referendum.
 - b. Members at a General Body meeting can call for a referendum by a procedural vote.
 - c. The Coordinating Committee can call for a referendum.
2. After a referendum is called, the Coordinating Committee will work with the member(s) calling the referendum to decide upon its final wording.
3. The referendum will occur in such a way that all members are able to vote.
 - a. Generally, the referendum will take place online.
 - b. The length of time allowed for voting must be a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours.
4. For a decision to be reached by referendum, a simple majority is needed for approval except in the case of a strike vote.
 - a. The decision to strike will require a 66% supermajority of the total membership.
 - i. Graduate student workers will be permitted to cross a picket in order to prevent the loss of academic work (e.g. to preserve a time-sensitive scientific experiment).

Subsection B3: Procedural Decisions

1. When important procedural decisions must be made in General Body meetings, the meeting facilitators will guide the General Body through the following ordered, time-bound steps:
 - a. Proposal:
 - i. Presentation of the proposal by its proponents, standing committee or working group, will have five (5) minutes to present their proposal.
 - ii. Additional five (5) minute increments may be added by a simple majority vote.
 - b. Discussion and debate prior to voting:
 - i. Agenda drafters establish a set amount of time for consensus building to be displayed on the agenda. Suggested time for discussion is ten (10) minutes.
 - ii. Facilitators guide discussion. An ordered “stack” of members to speak will be kept by facilitators during this time.
 - iii. A straw poll can be taken at any time and proposed by a facilitator.

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- iv. When time is up, the General Body may, by simple majority, vote to extend debate in five (5) minute increments to allow remaining “on stack” members to speak.
- c. Voting Procedure:
 - i. The facilitator should ask if there is a motion to table the proposal.
 - 1. If there is a motion to table, the General Body votes, by simple majority, on whether to table the proposal.
 - 2. If the proposal is tabled, it may be introduced again at the next General Body meeting.
 - ii. If there is no motion to table, or if the motion to table fails, the General Body votes, by simple majority, on the proposal.

Article IV: Constitutional Amendment Process

Section A: Amendment Procedure

1. The articles of this Constitution can be amended at any point using the referendum procedure.

Section B: Post-Ratification Procedure

1. Previous versions of the constitution shall be preserved in the union archive.
2. The amended Constitution must be available to all members within fifteen (15) days after ratification and will note the most recent date of amendment.
3. Parts of the Constitution that conflict with ratified amendments are considered null and void.

Article V: Discipline and Dispute Resolution

Section A: Disciplinary Procedure

1. Any member or group of members may file a charge against another member, including officers, for a violation of the Constitution, dereliction of duty, or for actions that are believed to be against the good and welfare of GET-UP.
2. The Disciplinary Procedure is established and amended through the procedural decision-making process.

Article VI: Elections

Section A: Coordinating Committee Elections

Subsection A1: Officer Election Committee

1. Annually, by January 31, the Coordinating Committee shall put out a call to the all members in good standing calling for nominations by February 15 for the three (3) person Election Committee.
 - a. Any member who serves on the Election Committee is prohibited from running

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- for any Coordinating Committee position.
 - b. If more than three (3) members are nominated (and accept their nominations) or self-nominate, the Coordinating Committee shall conduct an election for the Election Committee.
 - c. The election for the Election Committee shall be conducted at the next General Body meeting or electronically, if the next General Body meeting will not take place within two (2) weeks. Any tie results shall be resolved by a coin toss.
2. Duties of the Election Committee:
- a. The Election Committee shall receive a list of positions to be filled from the Coordinating Committee.
 - i. Prior to the first election, the Coordinating Committee shall determine the number and kind of positions.
 - ii. In subsequent elections, the Coordinating Committee may propose to the General Body that positions be added or removed.
 - b. The Election Committee shall announce to all members a procedure for receiving nominations for any elected position.
 - i. Any member in good standing may nominate another member (or self-nominate) for any elected position. A member may only run for one (1) position per committee for a given term. If nominated for more than one position, may choose which one (1) to run for.
 - ii. Members must have at least two (2) weeks from the Election Committee's initial notification of the opening of nominations to make nominations.
 - iii. After nominations have closed, the Election Committee will determine, in accordance with the Constitution, the eligibility of the nominees.
 - iv. If no eligible nominee is found for a particular position, the Election Committee shall reopen nominations for a period of one (1) week. If no eligible nominations are received, the newly elected Coordinating Committee may appoint a member to the vacant position for the next term.
 - c. The Election Committee decide and publicize the date for the election and announce it to the general membership at least seven (7) days prior to the election along with a list of candidates. Upon request of members without access to the internet, the Election Committee will deliver such notice to such members' homes if provided with such address.
 - d. The Election Committee shall forward any candidate communications to the membership list on a schedule to be determined by the Election Committee. The Election Committee may prepare a voter guide and may ask candidates to provide statements or information to the voter guide.

Article VII: No Harm Clause

No graduate student worker shall have their stipend and benefits reduced as a consequence of that individual's assignment to a position covered by any agreement ratified by the membership of GET-UP.