
GA United

**Local
Bylaws**



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Graduate Assistants United Local Bylaws

Article 1 – Name and Objective

Section 1 – Name

The name of this organization shall be the SIUC Graduate Assistants United (GAU), an affiliate of the Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association (IEA/NEA).

Section 2 – Objective

The objectives of the organization shall be:

- Organizing:** To empower graduate employees on the job and within the wider University community.
- Collective Representation and Bargaining:** To act as the representative for graduate employees in negotiations with the University administration and any other relevant body over terms and conditions of employment.
- Education:** To promote quality instruction and research at the University.
- Community:** To foster a sense of community among graduate employees from all departments and backgrounds.
- Cooperation and Social Justice:** To cooperate with other working people on campus and beyond in order to promote social justice.

Section 3 – Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles of Graduate Assistants United (GAU) shall be:

- Justice:** graduate employees work hard and deserve fair treatment, just wages, and affordable benefits.
- Professionalism:** graduate employees are professionals performing invaluable teaching research and administrative functions for SIUC.
- Equality:** graduate employees are equal in the union with no division or separation based on age, race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or academic discipline.
- Democracy:** graduate employees have the right to be heard in all deliberations and that any major decision must be transparent and focus on the common good of all graduate employees.
- Collective Action:** real success is achieved when graduate employees are united not just by union affiliation but also by unity of purpose and action.
- Solidarity:** the interests of graduate employees are achieved when we act in solidarity and purpose with other unions and organizations that share our goals and values.
- Public Conscience:** the availability and affordability of a public university education is a right, and not a privilege, for all who wish to learn.

Article 2 – Membership, Affiliation and Non-Discrimination

Section 1 – Membership

Membership shall be open to all dues paying graduate employees with Southern Illinois University Carbondale appointments for the preceding, current, or forthcoming Fall or Spring semester.

Section 2 – Affiliation

This organization shall be affiliated with, and comply with the By-Laws of the IEA and Constitution and By-Laws of the NEA. If there are any conflicts or inconsistencies between these By-Laws and the By-Laws or Constitution of the state or national organization, the state or national documents shall govern.

Section 3 – Non-Discrimination

This organization shall not deny membership based upon race, color, national origin or citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, economic status, or political affiliation.

Section 4 – Release Time

In the event GAU requests organizing funds (or has some to spend) to pay a Graduate Assistant release time the Executive Committee will, along with any IEA Uniserv Director or IEA staff person who may be the release timer's supervisor, make a call for candidates amongst all GAU activists (including, but not limited to officers, committee members, and stewards). The Executive Committee will designate a person or persons to review all the applications and submit best applications to the Executive Committee. The President, the designated person or persons, along with any IEA Uniserv Director or IEA staff person who may be the release timer's supervisor, will meet with the candidates and select the person to receive the position. If any Executive Committee member is applying for the release time position or has a close personal relationship with a candidate, then they will recuse themselves from the decision making process. In the event the President is applying for release time, another officer will fill the President's role in the decision making process (ranked as VP of Membership, Secretary/Treasurer, VP of Communications, Grievance chair).

Article 3 – Governance

Section 1 – Executive Officers

The Executive Officers of the organization shall be the President, Vice-President for Membership, Vice-President for Communications, Secretary/Treasurer, Steward Council Chair, Grievance Committee Chair, and the Chairperson of each Standing Committee.

Section 2 – Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Executive Officers plus Regional Council Representative.

Section 3 – Steward Council

The Steward Council shall consist of the Executive Committee and GAU Stewards elected at large by building core groups. Each core group shall have stewards at the ratio of approximately 1:40 bargaining unit members. The Executive Committee shall apportion the building core groups at least every two years to fairly reflect the proximity, access and distribution of bargaining unit members.

Section 4 – Recall

Any Executive Committee member, excluding Regional Council Representative(s), may be removed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of those members voting at a Steward Council meeting when a majority of the council is present. Such a recall election shall be conducted by the Election Committee upon receipt of a petition stating the specific grounds of the recall and containing the signatures of thirty (30) percent of the membership.

Article 4 – Executive Officers

Section 1 – Duties

A. President. The President shall be the Chief Officer, with the power and the obligation to enforce and interpret the By-Laws, carry out organizational policies between Executive Committee and/or Steward Council-meetings, sign contracts and agreements, represent the organization before the public either personally or through designees, appoint and remove members of all committees with the consent of the Executive Committee and/or Steward Council, serve as ex-officio member on all committees, cause a budget to be constructed and an annual audit to occur, and preside over meetings of the Executive Committee and/or Steward Council, and the membership. The President shall also serve as ex-officio member of the Graduate and Professional Student Council's (GPSC) executive board. Further, the President shall have the power and duty to perform all acts generally associated with the nature of the office and such other duties applicable to the office as prescribed by the parliamentary authority adopted herein that are not inconsistent with the By-Laws. The President shall be involved in any and all recruitment efforts, including but not limited to spring membership drive office visits.

B. Vice-President for Membership. Under the direction of the Vice President for Membership, the Membership committee shall organize and conduct the annual membership drive. It shall inform the potential membership of the policies, programs, and accomplishments of the local, state, and national organizations. The Vice-President shall have the powers and duties of the President in the President's absence or inability to serve, shall succeed to the Presidency

pursuant to the By-Laws, and shall otherwise have such powers and duties as may be assigned by the President.

The Vice-President for Membership shall be involved in any and all recruitment efforts, including but not limited to spring membership drive office visits.

C. Vice-President for Communication. Under the direction of the Vice-President for Communication, the Communications Committee shall be responsible for planning and implementing activities of the local organization – both internal communications to and from the organization’s bargaining unit, and external communication to the media and the public. The Vice-President shall have the powers and duties of the President in the President’s absence or inability to serve, shall succeed to the Presidency pursuant to the By-Laws, and shall otherwise have such powers and duties as may be assigned by the President. The Vice-President for Communication shall be involved in any and all recruitment efforts, including but not limited to spring membership drive office visits.

D. Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer shall maintain the official files and shall assist the President with organizational correspondence. The Secretary/Treasurer shall insure that accurate minutes are taken of each meeting of the Executive Committee, Steward Council and each meeting of the membership. S/he shall be responsible for notifying members of regular and special meetings. The Secretary/Treasurer shall maintain the records of membership, keep accurate records of expenses and income, and report such records at the Executive Committee and Steward Council meeting and meetings of the membership. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be responsible for the payment of bills, for updating and returning of membership rosters to IEA, and for transmitting dues to the IEA as per IEA policies. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be involved in any and all recruitment efforts, including but not limited to spring membership drive office visits.

E. Steward Council Chair. The Steward Council Chair shall be an Executive Officer of GAU, and shall serve on the Executive Committee. The Steward Council Chair shall be the main contact for all Stewards, will initiate Stewardship and Grievance training, and will work to organize and recruit Stewards. The Steward Council Chair shall be involved in any and all recruitment efforts, including but not limited to spring membership drive office visits.

F. Grievance Committee Chair. The Grievance Committee Chair shall be an Executive Officer of GAU and shall serve on the Executive Committee. The Chair shall be the point person for GAU on all Assistant grievances, and shall chair the Grievance Committee. The Chair shall, as appropriate, delegate responsibilities to maintain the committee, and monitor and enforce the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Grievance Committee Chair, with the Grievance Committee, shall assist members in the application of the grievance process. The Grievance Committee Chair shall be involved in any and all recruitment efforts, including but not limited to spring membership drive office visits.

Section 2 – Term

A. Term. The term of office for Executive Officers shall be one (1) year commencing the day following the certification of results from election conducted in May of each year. The Steward Council Chair will be elected, by majority vote, by Stewards in October of each year for a term of one year to commence the day after certification of the election results.

B. Transfer of Records. Each officer shall transfer records to the organization within ten (10) days of leaving office.

Section 3 – Vacancies

Vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation, incapacity or other disqualification shall be filled as follows:

A. President. A vacancy in the office of the President shall be filled by the more senior (in service to GAU) of the two Vice-Presidents for the remainder of the unexpired term. In the event of a tie, selection will be made by lot.

B. Other Officers. If the vacancy occurs in any other office, the President shall appoint a successor for the remainder of the unexpired term, with the consent of a three-fifths (3/5) vote of the Executive Committee.

C. President and Vice-Presidents. If a vacancy occurs in both the office of President and of both Vice-Presidents, the Secretary/Treasurer shall assume the President's duties until an election is conducted by the Election Committee within sixty (60) days to complete the unexpired terms.

Article 5 – Regional Council Representatives and Alternates

Section 1 – Duties

IEA Regional Council Representatives shall attend the regional council meeting, represent the organization, and report Council activities to the Executive Committee and/or Steward Council and membership as necessary. An alternate shall perform the duties of the Regional Council Representative in his/her absence.

Section 2 – Election and Terms

The election of a Regional Council Representative and alternate shall be as prescribed by the IEA By-Laws.

Section 3 – Vacancies

Vacancies for Regional Council Representatives and alternates must be filled in the manner of the original election as prescribed by the IEA By-Laws.

Article 6 – Executive Committee

Section 1 – Duties

The Executive Committee shall conduct and supervise the business of the organization as directed by the Steward Council, annually recommend a budget for adoption by the membership, undertake such expenditures as are necessary and reasonable for the operation of the organization, consent of the appointment of committees, plan and recommend programs to the membership, develop By-Laws, approve expenditures, and consent to the filling of vacancies.

Section 2 – Terms

The term of office for all Executive Committee members shall be one (1) year and the Regional Council Representatives shall be two (2) years. All shall commence on the same day as the elected officers.

Section 3 – Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs within the Executive Committee, excluding Executive Officers and Regional Council Representative(s), the President shall appoint a replacement for the unexpired term with the consent by majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 4 – Meetings

A. Quorum. A majority of the elected members of the Executive Committee must be present to conduct business, and a majority vote of those present shall rule.

B. Regular Meeting. The Executive Committee shall meet once per month during the school term, and may meet as many additional times as necessary or reasonable to transact its business.

C. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the President, or upon the written request of any member of the Executive Committee. Except in cases of emergency, at least 24 hours' notice shall be given to all Executive Committee members and business shall be limited to that contained in the notice.

D. Open Meetings. Executive Committee meetings will be open to all members and the public, although the Executive Committee may go into “executive session” where only the members of the Executive Committee and those they chose to invite may remain.

Article 7 – Stewards and the Steward Council

Section 1 – Duties

A. GA United Stewards shall be members of the organization and elected to provide two-way communication between the organization and the members, distribute materials to members personally, and conduct information meetings. They shall recruit volunteers for organization jobs and activities, and generate support for organizational positions and programs. The organization shall provide training and support for Stewards, keep them informed of organizational activities and positions, and incentives for recruitment and retention.

Stewards are the key to strengthening graduate employee rights and articulating graduate employee views. They are the union's day-to-day connection with their members. Their job is to make the union's presence felt at the department level, to build membership and involvement, and to give voice to members' concerns. *Building a corps of active Stewards is the best way to*

strengthen the graduate employee voice and negotiating power. An active Steward structure brings democracy to our workplace. A Steward may hold any other office in the union.

B. The Steward Council shall along with the Executive Committee be the policy making body of the organization, shall annually approve [or recommend to the membership] a budget, establish [or recommend to the membership] the dues, approve expenditures, and may adopt programs on behalf of, or for recommendation to, the membership. The Steward Council will be chaired by the Steward Council Chair; or, in the absence of a Steward Council Chair, the Steward Council will be chaired by the President.

Section 2 – Terms

The term of office for Steward Council members shall be elected in October of each year at large by building core group, per Article III, Section 3, for a term of one year to commence the day after certification of the election results.

Section 3 – Vacancies

If a vacancy/open seat exists on the Steward Council, the President shall appoint an interim Steward with the consent of a majority of the Steward Council members voting.

Section 4 – Meetings

A. Quorum. A majority of the members of the Steward Council must be present to conduct official business, and a majority vote of those present shall rule.

B. Regular Meeting. The Steward Council shall establish its annual calendar of meetings and events and may meet as many additional times as necessary or reasonable to transact its business.

C. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the President, or shall be called upon the written request of 25% of the Steward Council. Except in cases of emergency, at least 24 hours' notice shall be given to all Steward Council members and business shall be limited to that contained in the notice.

Article 8 – Elections

Section 1 – Elections Committee

A. Composition. The President shall appoint an Elections Committee with the approval of the Executive Committee with one person serving as the Chairperson appointed by President.

B. Duties. Establish procedures subject to the approval of the Executive Committee for nomination of candidates, dissemination of notices concerning the election and conduct of the election, tabulation of the ballots, and hear initial election challenges. These procedures shall be consistent with procedures established by the IEA Elections Committee.

C. Vacancies. Should a temporary or permanent vacancy occur on the Committee, whether because a member becomes a candidate for office or for any other reason, the vacancy shall be filled in the manner of the original appointment.

Section 2 – Election Procedures

A. Composition. The President shall appoint an Elections Committee with the approval of the Executive Committee with one person serving as the Chairperson appointed by President.

B. Conduct. All elections shall be conducted by open nomination and secret ballot. The committee may establish reasonable rules pertaining to voting by proxy and/or absentee ballot.

C. Nominations. Reasonable notice shall be given for nomination to all offices to be filled. Notice shall include time, place, and method for submitting nominations.

D. Write-In Provisions. A write-in provision is required if the number of declared candidates is less than the number of positions available. In cases of elections where the local officer will also serve as a delegate to the IEA and/or NEA Representative Assembly, a write-in provision is required.

E. Eligibility. All dues paying members must be afforded the opportunity to run for and/or vote in any election representing members.

F. Timeline. Elections should take place late spring semester every school year, no later than the end of April.

G. Training. All outgoing executive members should schedule time to train incoming executive members on their positions.

H. Notice. A fifteen (15) day notice of local elections may be given by posting or by other means.

I. Consistency. All election procedures shall be consistent with IEA and NEA regulations as Federal and Illinois state legal requirements.

J. Use of Dues. No dues may be used in support of a candidate for any Local, Regional, State or National office.

K. Offices Governed by this Article. All Local Officers, Stewards, Regional Council Representatives, Delegates to IEA Representative Assembly, Delegates to NEA Representative Assembly.

L. Multiple Candidates. In the event that there are more than two candidates for any elective office, a plurality of certified votes cast shall determine the winner provided the plurality must equal or exceed 40% ; otherwise a runoff election, run in the same manner as the original election, will be conducted between the two individuals receiving the greatest number of votes so

that the winner receive a majority of votes cast.

M. Results of the Election. The results of the election must be published in a timely manner which allows members to obtain the information without unusual effort.

Section 3 – Election Challenges

Any member(s) desiring to challenge the conduct of any election shall file a written challenge according to the procedures as follows:

A. Local Level - Initial challenges to all local elections governed by this Article shall be with the Local Elections Committee. Such challenges must be made no later than 14 calendar days of issuance of the election results.

B. Region, State, and National Level. Consult the region, state, and national governing documents for additional challenge procedures and timelines, especially for offices which serve as delegates to the IEA and NEA Representative Assemblies.

Article 9 – Arbitration and Grievance Appeal

The Executive Committee shall decide whether or not a grievance shall be processed to final and binding arbitration. Recommendations should be provided to the Executive Committee from the Grievance Committee. A bargaining unit member denied arbitration has the right to appeal that matter to the Steward Council and its decision shall be final.

Article 10 – Committees

Section 1 – Appointment

Committees may be established on a standing and/or ad hoc basis by the Executive Committee (or Steward Council). The President shall appoint members to any committees and name the chairperson with the consent of the Executive Committee, or the Representative council as appropriate.

Section 2 – Standing Committees

There shall be the following standing committees, and they will be active as determined by the Executive Committee (or Steward Council): Negotiations, Grievance, and Legislative/Political Action. The Communication Committee and Membership Committee shall each be chaired by the organizations respective Vice-President for Communication and Vice-President for Membership.

Section 3 – Negotiations Committee

The Negotiations Committee, also known as the "Bargaining Team," shall explore and prepare programs as necessary in all areas of employee welfare, contractual and otherwise. In conjunction with the Executive Committee and Steward Council, the committee shall solicit input from the membership as a whole. The Bargaining Team shall be appointed by the President with advice of the Executive Committee and consent of the Steward Council.

Section 4 – Grievance Committee

The Grievance Committee shall be responsible for monitoring and enforcing the Collective Bargaining Agreement. It shall assist members in the application of the grievance process. It will make recommendations whether to arbitrate grievances to the Executive Committee.

Section 5 – Legislative/Political Action Committee

The Legislative and Political Action Committee shall work with IEA Government Relations, and additional stakeholders, to promote activities that encourage fair labor practices, civic engagement, and social justice. The activities include, but are not limited to, rallies for legislative change, community service projects, and coalition building with groups that are sympathetic to organized labor.

Section 6 – Communications Committee

Under the direction of the Vice-President for Communication, the Communications Committee shall be responsible for planning and implementing activities of the local organization - both internal communications to and from the organization's bargaining unit, and external communication to the media and the public.

Section 7 – Membership Committee

Under the direction of the Vice-President for Membership, the Membership Committee shall organize and conduct membership recruitment activities. It shall inform potential members of the policies, programs, and accomplishments of the local, state, and national organizations.

Article 11 – Meeting of the Membership

A. Regular meetings of the membership shall be held to ratify a collective bargaining agreement or at special meetings as called below.

B. Special meetings of the membership may be called by the President, a majority of the Executive Committee, or a petition signed by fifteen (15) percent of the dues paying membership. Except in case of emergency, at least 3 to 5 days' notice shall be given. The Secretary shall notify the membership as soon as possible.

Article 12 – Voting

Unless otherwise provided herein, the adoption of all business by the Executive Committee (or Steward Council) and the membership shall be by a majority of those voting. Only dues paying members as verified by the Vice-President for Membership are eligible to vote.

Article 13 – Parliamentary Authority

All meetings of this organization shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, except as specified within the context of this document.

Article 14 – Dues

Local dues shall be established by the Steward Council per Article VII, Section 1.B. The IEA-NEA dues shall be transmitted to the IEA-NEA as per IEA-NEA policies. The books and records of the organization shall be open to inspection by any member upon reasonable request.

Article 15 – Savings Clause

In the event a portion or portions of these By-Laws are found to be inconsistent with state or federal law, such portions to the extent that they violate the law shall be deemed deleted and of no force and effect.

Article 16 – Procedures for Amending

Proposed amendments of these By-Laws shall be submitted by the Executive Committee to the Steward Council at its regular or special meeting per Article VII, Section 4, provided that all dues paying members of the organization have been sent notice of the date and place of the meeting and the proposed revision(s) at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

Adopted: April 26, 2007

Amended: April 9, 2014

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