

Graduate Employees and Students Organization (GESO) Bylaws

Ratified by the GESO Membership in 2001

Article 1 • Name and Purpose

1. This organization shall be known as GESO, the Graduate Employees and Students Organization, of New Haven, Connecticut.
2. The purpose of this organization shall be:
 - a. To represent, protect, promote, and advance the interests of graduate students at Yale University, and to uphold the dignity of our work and scholarship.
 - b. To ensure that the university provides the resources and services necessary to our work. To ensure the continued excellence of teaching and research at Yale.
 - c. To ensure that graduate students have an active role in the University's decision-making processes that affect graduate student life.
 - d. To maintain the vision, leadership, and organization necessary to be an effective, democratic and united organization.
 - e. To form a cohesive union in affiliation with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union and its Locals 34 and 35, Federation of University Employees, at Yale.
 - f. To join with other students, faculty and workers at Yale, and with the greater New Haven community, to promote justice at Yale and to encourage the university to be a good citizen of the community.
 - g. To fight against racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination at Yale University.

To work with Locals 34 and 35, Federation of University Employees, and other Yale employees to strengthen Unionism on the Yale campus, and to ensure that all employees of Yale University are respected for their contribution to the University's success.

Article 2 • Membership

Membership in GESO is open to graduate students of Yale University. All such individuals who apply for membership, and who become and remain members in good standing by abiding by the bylaws of this organization and paying dues shall have the rights and privileges of membership. Any question regarding whether a member or potential member is a "graduate student of Yale University" shall be decided by the Chair, subject to appeal to the Coordinating Committee.

Article 3 • Membership Meetings (MM)

1. The regular membership meetings of the Union shall be held at least once in the spring semester and once in the fall semester in New Haven, Connecticut, at a time and place reasonably convenient for the membership and each meeting shall be announced reasonably in advance. The membership shall be appropriately notified of the meeting schedule.
2. Special membership meetings may be called by the Chair, by majority vote of the Coordinating Committee, or upon the written request of fifty members of the Union. All members shall be appropriately notified of any such special meetings. A special MM called by written request of members shall be held within thirty days.
3. One hundred members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a MM.
4. Regular or special membership meetings shall follow the agenda established by the Coordinating Committee, in conjunction with standing committees, and approved by a majority vote of those members present at a membership meeting.

5. The Chair may limit debate on any pending question to one minute per speech and two speeches per member. Responses to parliamentary inquiries, points of information, and speeches in sponsorship of a motion or in coordinated rebuttal to a motion (as defined by the Coordinating Committee) are not subject to these limits.
6. The Coordinating Committee, by majority vote, may establish rules for conducting membership meetings, provided that such rules are promulgated at least 14 days in advance of any MM for which they will be in force, that members shall be appropriately notified of any such rules, that the rules not be inconsistent with these bylaws, and that the rules be approved by a majority of those members present at the beginning of a MM.
7. If disputes arise regarding the conduct of any regular or special MM not regulated by these bylaws or rules established by the Coordinating Committee, Roberts' Rules of Order shall govern. The Chair or his/her designee will be responsible for ruling on any disputes over parliamentary procedure.
8. All union-wide actions shall be approved in advance by a majority vote of those members present at a MM. When this is not possible, the Coordinating Committee will take a departmental role-call vote.
9. Any proposed strike or other major job action shall be decided by secret ballot majority vote of those members then-employed in the bargaining unit involved present and voting at a special or regular MM. Members then-employed in the bargaining unit involved shall be appropriately notified that such proposals may be the subject of voting. The proposed acceptance or rejection of any collective bargaining agreement shall be decided by a majority vote of those members of GESO present and voting at a special or regular MM. Members shall be appropriately notified that such proposals may be the subject of voting.
10. The results of any votes taken at the MM shall be distributed within 48 hours of the meeting.

Article 4 • The Coordinating Committee (CC)

1. The officers and Coordinating Committee (CC) shall have as their principal responsibilities the governance and organization of GESO. Any member who serves as an officer or member of the CC should be willing and able to undertake such leadership and organizing responsibilities.
2. The CC is the governing body of GESO between MMs. It is the obligation of CC members, and of members in departmental organizing committees, to represent the views of members in their departments in addition to organizing those members.
3. The CC shall meet regularly, either campus-wide or in other groupings, on a schedule to be established by the Chair. A majority of the CC shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business, except during June, July and August, when ten members of the CC shall constitute a quorum.
4. The entire CC should be as involved as possible in setting its own agenda. Accordingly, the Chair should ensure:
 - a. that there is time at the end of each CC meeting to suggest items for the following meeting;
 - b. that, in order to propose a specific agenda, a time should be set aside during the week prior to each CC meeting, and all coordinators should be welcome to attend and participate in setting a provisional agenda; and
 - c. that there is time at the beginning of each CC meeting, before the vote on the agenda, to add or remove items from it.
5. Members must be notified of the CC meeting agenda at least 48 hours in advance of those meetings. Likewise, the minutes of CC meetings shall be made available within one week of the meeting.
6. The CC shall have general charge of all bargaining with Yale for wages and working conditions. Subject to the approval of a majority of members present and voting at a regular or special MM, the CC may delegate its negotiating authority to a representative, who shall act under its direction and supervision.

7. The CC can vote to recommend donations by GESO to organizations and individuals and proposed expenditures other than routine operating expenses; which recommendation shall be subject to membership approval by majority vote of the membership present and voting at a regular or special MM.
8. The CC must vote on all salaries, wages, compensation or expense allowances for officers, organizers, employees, delegates, or members of the Union, subject to approval by majority vote of the membership present and voting at a regular or special MM.
9. The CC has the authority, by majority vote of at least a majority of the CC, to discipline or remove an officer or any of its own members for cause. (See Article 9, Trials and Appeals, below.)
10. Each Coordinator gets one vote. Any coordinator can call for a roll-call vote by department. Motions subject to a roll-call vote must pass by a majority of departments.

Article 5 • Standing Committees

1. GESO shall have the following Standing Committees: Accessibility, Communications, Health Care, International Students, Outreach, Personnel and Teaching Program.
2. The chair of each Standing committee will be nominated by the GESO chair and confirmed by a majority vote of those present at the next CC meeting and at the next membership meeting. A committee chair may serve for only a single twelve-month term. A committee chair may be removed by majority vote of either the CC or the membership meeting. The chair of each standing committee shall be a voting member of the CC.
3. Membership on a standing committee is open to all members in good standing. Each standing committee shall be responsible for deciding how many members may serve on it. Lists of all members currently serving on standing committees must be made available to all members at least one week prior to all membership meetings.
4. One Steering Committee person will serve on each standing committee and be responsible for carrying out the administrative and any other such responsibilities as the committee shall determine. A Steering Committee person may not serve as the chair of any standing committee.
5. All recommendations by standing committees are subject to a majority vote of the CC or a majority vote of those present at a membership meeting before becoming policy.
6. The responsibilities of the standing committees shall include but not necessarily be limited to the following:

7. Accessibility Committee

It shall be the responsibility of the Accessibility Committee regularly to consult with the membership to identify issues of concern to graduate students who do not fit the traditional demographic profile of graduate students, to research and debate these matters, and to make recommendations to the CC and membership in order to ensure that the University does not discriminate against such students.

8. Communications

The goal of this committee is to foster communication by disseminating information among members and making itself available to members to vocalize issues, concerns and complaints, including concerns about organizing. It may also make recommendations to the CC and the membership in its ongoing effort to improve communication. This committee would also be charged with planning the membership meeting in conjunction with the CC. The Communications committee shall:

- a. Provide the CC with a report summarizing membership concerns at least once a semester.
- b. Develop and regularly update a Membership Handbook to be a guide to the aims, structures and procedures of GESO.
- c. Make the agendas and minutes for CC meetings available.
- d. Nominate three people, to be confirmed by the CC who will serve as ombudspople to help members and organizers resolve any concerns or com-

plaints regarding internal union processes or organizing. The ombudspersons should represent a diversity of departments and genders. Their names should be advertised on the website, the GESO e-mail list, and in the GESO Voice.

9. Health Care

The purpose of the Health Care committee is to work on issues related to Yale University Graduate School's policies on health care, in order to among other things increase the effectiveness and lower the cost of such care. The Health Care committee shall make policy recommendations to the CC when it sees fit and should work to integrate health care issues into GESO's continuing platform.

10. International Students

It shall be the responsibility of the International Students' Committee regularly to consult with the membership, especially international students, to identify issues of concern to graduate students who are not U.S. citizens, to research and debate these issues, and to make recommendations to the CC and membership in order to ensure that the University does not discriminate against such students.

11. Outreach

The Outreach committee shall be responsible for research, press and media relations, faculty, undergraduate, community and labor movement outreach.

12. Personnel

The purpose of the personnel committee is to oversee the hiring and performance of part-time and full-time staff members. It will be responsible for writing job descriptions, coordinating searches for staff members, interviewing candidates, and making hiring recommendations to the CC. In addition, it will monitor the performance of the staff, ensuring that they undertake their jobs in an acceptable and efficient manner.

- a. The personnel committee shall make progress reports to the CC at least once every month, reporting on the state of any ongoing hiring searches and the performance of the current staff.
- b. When hiring new staff members, the personnel committee will notify the CC of all candidates selected for interviews and the date and time of said interviews. All candidate visits should be well-publicized, and all candidates should be made available to all members.
- c. All hiring recommendations should be brought to the CC for approval by the Personnel committee chair at least two weeks before the term of employment begins. The chair of the Personnel committee shall present the CC with justification for hiring and the description of the job that the individual is being hired to perform.
- d. An individual is considered hired after the CC approves the hiring and job description by majority vote, subject to ratification by a majority of those members present at a MM.

13. Teaching Program

The purpose of the Teaching Program committee is to work towards fairness and equity in Yale University's teaching program. The teaching program committee shall make policy recommendations to the CC when it sees fit and should work to integrate teaching issues into GESO's continuing platform.

14. Ad-Hoc Committees

The CC, or a majority of those present at a membership meeting, may create temporary ad-hoc committees to address issues that fall outside the responsibility of a standing committee. The by-laws for standing committees shall apply to all ad-hoc committees. Should a standing or ad-hoc committee fail to meet during the course of one academic year, the CC shall have the option to dissolve said committee (pending a majority vote of the members present at the next membership meeting).

Article 6 • Officers & Steering Committee

1. The officers of GESO shall be the Chair, the Co-Chair, and the Secretary-Treasurer.

2. Chair. The Chair shall:

- a. Preside at all regular and special MMs and at all meetings of the CC; have the authority to call special meetings of the membership; and have the authority to take such reasonable action as s/he deems necessary to preserve order at meetings.
- b. Co-sign all checks for payment of money from GESO funds.
- c. Sign all documents required by GESO's bylaws or by law.
- d. By virtue of office, be a member of the CC, and a delegate to all graduate student or labor bodies with which GESO affiliates.
- e. Nominate persons to head all Standing Committees.

3. Co-Chair. The Co-Chair shall:

- a. Preside over all meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- b. Fulfill the other responsibilities of the Co-Chair during the temporary absence or incapacity of the Chair.
- c. By virtue of office, be a member of the CC, and a delegate to all graduate student or labor bodies with which GESO affiliates.

4. Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer shall:

- a. Keep or cause to be kept reasonable records of membership and committee meetings.
- b. Keep or cause to be kept a complete and accurate set of books to show all of GESO's business transactions, including its income and expenditures and its assets and liabilities.
- c. Co-sign all checks for payment of money from GESO funds.
- d. Make a financial report to the membership at least annually, giving an official accounting of all moneys collected and expended by GESO.
- e. Have charge of and attend to official correspondence of GESO, and keep on file a copy of all such correspondence; and sign all documents required by GESO's bylaws or by law.
- f. Preside over all meetings in the absence of the Chair and Co-Chair.
- g. By virtue of office, be a member of the CC, and a delegate to all graduate student or labor bodies with which GESO affiliates.
- h. Serve on the communications committee.

5. Trustees. Two trustees shall review GESO's financial records for accuracy and completeness at least annually.

6. Steering Committee. Steering Committee members shall:

- a. Perform their duties as described by the Personnel Committee
- b. Work with coordinators, standing committees, and organizers to implement programs and strategies.
- c. By virtue of position, be members of the CC and at least one standing committee.

7. Lead Organizer. The Lead Organizer shall:

- a. Oversee and direct the organizing in every department in the union.
- b. Oversee the hiring and training of Steering Committee.
- c. Work with Steering Committee and Coordinators to implement programs and strategies.
- d. By virtue of position, be a member of the Coordinating Committee.

Article 7 • Elections

1. The election of Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, as well the ratification of Standing Committee Chairs (as nominated by the GESO chair and approved by the CC) and the GESO Steering Committee (as hired by the personnel committee and approved by the CC), shall be held by secret ballot at a regular or special MM in the Fall of every year.

2. The CC shall be elected by the members of the departments they represent in elections occurring the same month as the officer-elections. Preferably the elections will take place at a meeting of all members in those departments at which candidates for the CC can make a statement of their aims and answer questions before the voting occurs. Additional members can join the CC with the approval of their departmental membership at

other times.

3. Only members in good standing may be nominated for any elective office in GESO. In order for any member to be nominated for office, he or she must be present at the meeting or must have submitted a written statement to the Secretary-Treasurer prior to the opening of nominations, indicating his or her willingness to accept the nomination if proposed. No member may be nominated for more than one of the three offices of Chair, Co-Chair, or Secretary-Treasurer. No Trustee may serve as an Officer.
4. An Election Committee comprised of at least two members shall be appointed by the CC to ensure fair and efficient voting procedures. The Committee will meet as needed prior to a MM to plan the balloting. No incumbent officer, Trustee, or nominee for any of those positions may serve on the committee.
5. Any candidate shall have the right to have an observer at the counting of the ballots. All observers must be members of GESO.
6. The votes cast shall be counted under the supervision of the Election Committee and results for each office shall be announced and published. The Secretary-Treasurer shall preserve for one year the ballots and all other records pertaining to the election.
7. The installation of all newly elected Officers and Trustees shall take place within one month following the election.
8. Officers and Trustees may resign in writing at any time. Any officer who resigns shall immediately surrender to the Chair or Secretary-Treasurer books, records or other property belonging to GESO.

Article 8 • Dues

1. Dues. Dues are \$45 per year, payable by September.
2. Dues shall be waived throughout the card drive that begins in April 1998, and they shall not be re-instated until at least 30 days after a union election. During this time, paying dues shall not be a condition of being a "member in good standing" pursuant to Article 2 of these by-laws.

Article 9 • Trials & Appeals

1. Any member of GESO who has been disciplined by the Coordinating Committee may request a trial pursuant to this article by written request to the Chair.
2. After such a request is received, the disciplined member shall be:
 - a. Provided with written specific charges;
 - b. Given a reasonable time to prepare a defense; and
 - c. Afforded a good faith hearing as set forth in this Article.
3. A member of GESO, including an officer, shall be subject to charges and stand trial when charged with violating these bylaws. The procedures and requirements of said charges, trials and appeals shall be those set forth in the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union Constitution.
4. The Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer shall each appoint two members to a Trial Board from the membership to hear the charges and to render a written decision. (However, if the Chair, Co-Chair or Secretary-Treasurer has been disciplined, she shall not have the right to appoint members to the Trial Board. In the event that all three officers have been disciplined, the Coordinating Committee shall appoint members to the Trial Board.) These Trial Board members shall appoint one additional member to the Board. If the accused member is found guilty, the penalty may be a fine, suspension, expulsion from GESO, limitation to hold office, any combination of the foregoing or such other penalty as the trial board may

deem appropriate.

5. The Secretary-Treasurer shall notify the accused member of the charges by sending a copy of the charges to the member by certified mail or by personally delivering a copy of the charges to the accused. The accused shall be notified of the time, date and place of the trial and shall be allowed not less than 30 days from the time of such notice for the preparation of a defense. Each side shall procure the attendance of its witnesses.

6. The decision and penalty of the trial board shall be approved or modified at the next regular membership meeting of GESO before becoming finally effective.

Article 10 • Amendments

1. Amendments to these bylaws must be submitted in writing and may be proposed by either the Chair or the CC or through the signatures of forty members in good standing. Such proposed amendments shall be published, and posted in the Union Office at least fourteen days prior to a regular or special MM. A reasonable effort shall be made to notify the membership of the proposed amendment prior to the membership meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at the meeting shall be required to adopt an amendment.

2. This procedure shall be fully applicable to an amendment providing for an increase in dues or for initiation fees or any financial assessment of the membership, except it shall require a majority vote by secret ballot at a membership meeting after reasonable written notice of intent to vote on the increase or assessment is given to the membership. Such an amendment may be amended, but not if such change results in a dues increase or assessment greater than that for which the notice was given.

Article 11 • Dissolution

Should the membership of GESO vote to dissolve the organization, or if GESO has been inactive for three years or longer, its remaining assets shall be transferred to a labor union or graduate student organization. In the event that a quorum cannot be achieved at a membership meeting to designate a particular labor union or graduate student organization, the remaining assets shall be transferred in equal parts to Locals 34 and 35, Federation of University Employees. In no case shall there be any transfer of assets to individual members.