

Coalition of Graduate Employees
The Pennsylvania State University
Constitution
Ratified: [put to a vote in August]

Article I - Name

Section A) The name of the organization is the Coalition of Graduate Employees or CGE.

Article II - Purpose

Section A) *Mission Statement:* The Coalition of Graduate Employees (CGE) at the Pennsylvania State University is a group of graduate workers (GAs, RAs, and TAs) who teach classes, conduct research, and produce scholarship. Our integral role in the institution gives us the right to democratic representation in the decision-making processes that affect our labor and quality of life. Each graduate employee brings to the workplace a unique set of skills and needs specific to their backgrounds and experiences of various forms of inequality. Because of this, CGE is committed to serving as a platform for intersectional advocacy and ensuring that no employees experience discrimination based on race, class, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, nationality, religion, or citizenship status. To that end, we are working to form a legally recognized union that will provide current and future graduate employees with an organized platform to address our concerns and advance our interests. As we strive towards better working conditions, financial security, stable healthcare, and the security of a union contract to combat workplace inequalities, CGE aims to make graduate work at Penn State more accessible and equitable to all potential future graduate employees.

Article III - Membership

Section A) *Membership:* All graduate employees of The Pennsylvania State University may participate in CGE, including, but not limited to, students employed as teaching assistants, research assistants, graduate assistants, graduate lecturers, and graduate fellows.

Section B) *Voting Rights:* All CGE participants have the right to vote in all elections.

Article IV - Decision-making

Section A) *Business:* All major organizational decisions will be put to vote. These decisions include but are not limited to those concerning the election of officers,

proposals that would require more than \$250 in union funds, and decisions regarding the union's formal affiliations and co-sponsorships with other groups.

Section B) Voting: All major votes will be initiated by proposition to the Record Keeper or to another designated officer. Once a proposition is posed, the officers will distribute it to the members via email. The officers and those involved in the formation of the proposition will set a timetable for consideration of the proposition, including a reasonable interval for members to discuss and debate. The length of the discussion period shall be indicated in the email containing the summary of the proposition. Once the allotted time has elapsed, the vote will begin and it will remain open for 48 hours. The vote shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast.

Subsection i) Responsible Officer: Votes will be run by the Record Keeper unless the proposed vote would directly impact or improperly involve the Record Keeper. If this is the case, one of the Co-presidents will administer the vote.

Subsection ii) Timeline: The amount of time open for discussion will be decided on a case-by-case basis. For example, those proposing business may decide they want to hold a longer discussion than usual in decisions regarding matters that are complex or that have long-term consequences for the organization. On the other hand, officers may decide they want to shorten the period of discussion for votes that need to be decided on a more timely basis or for those that have already been discussed to a point of consensus in general meetings and other union spaces.

Section C) Calling a Vote: Individual members may call for a vote through petition to the Record Keeper. If the petition receives 10 total signatures from members of at least 5 different departments, then the issue will be brought to a vote using the same methods outlined above.

Article V - Officers

Section A) Requirements: Any voting member will be eligible to run for any single office. No individual will occupy more than a single office.

Section B) Elections and Terms

Subsection i) Elections: Each Co-president will manage the one officer election per year in which they are not running. They will:

- Call for nominations at least two weeks prior to the election
- Notify nominees
- Submit nominees a week prior to the election

- Assemble and distribute an electronic poll by email
- Allow at least 48 hours for the voting period
- Announce winners within 48 hours of the election closing

Subsection ii) Terms: Terms will last for a year with staggered elections in December (one Co-president, Record Keeper) and June (one Co-president, Treasurer, Chief Organizer).

Subsection iii) Term Limits: No officer will hold the same title for more than two (2) consecutive years.

Subsection iv) Termination of Officers: At any point between elections, an officer may be removed for reasons including, but not limited to, abuse of power, misuse of union resources, a vote of no confidence, and unresolvable disputes. If a member petitions to remove an officer, this petition will follow the process outlined in Article IV, Section C. If the petition involves the Record Keeper, it will be directed to a Co-president instead. If an officer petitions to remove another officer, an internal 48 hour vote will be held amongst the officers (excepting the one who has been petitioned). Four out of five voting officers must vote for removal for the petition to succeed.

Subsection v) Emergency Elections: If an officer has been terminated, must resign, or is for any other reason unable to fulfill their full term, an emergency election will begin no more than one week after their departure. A call for nominations will open and the election will follow the procedures and timeline outlined in Subsection i.

Subsection vi) Special Election: A special election will be held in August of 2017 after the ratification of this constitution. The special election will be held by Kevin Reuning and will elect all officer positions. The treasurer position will be newly instated and the officers at time of the adoption of this constitution will run for re-election. If a member wishes to challenge one of these positions, they will email Kevin Reuning by August 15th 2017 and be put on the ballot. One Co-president and the Record Keeper will hold their positions until December of 2017. The other Co-president, Treasurer and Chief Organizer will hold their positions until June 2018.

Section C) Positions

Subsection i) Two Co-presidents will be elected by the general body. They will serve staggered year-long terms; one will be elected in December and the other will be elected in June. Co-presidents will:

- Shape agendas for officer and general meetings

- Facilitate meetings
- Maintain presence at events (at least one will be present at every coffee hour and happy hour)
- Monitor committee actions
- Book spaces for events (including the municipal building for general meetings)
- Serve as the public faces of CGE
- Provide oversight for strategic planning (goals, timelines, etc.)
- Develop plans of action based on these goals and delegate to the proper committee
 - **Subsection a)** In times when immediate decisions must be made where there is not adequate time to have full vote the Co-presidents must come to agreement on the decision. After the decision has been made then a vote can still be called approving that decision, following the process outlined above. In the case that the vote fails the Co-presidents will immediately resign.

Subsection ii) The *Record Keeper* will be elected by the general body. They will serve a year-long term beginning in December. The Record Keeper will:

- Take minutes at the officers and general meetings
- Distribute minutes within one week of each meeting
- Take attendance at meetings and events
- Input new email addresses from attendance into the Google Groups
- Distribute and manage votes
- Manage the listserv
- Maintain the CGE calendar
- Maintain the organizational memory (spreadsheets, google drive)

Subsection iii) The *Chief Organizer* will be elected by the general body. They will serve a year-long term beginning in June. The Chief Organizer will:

- Write agenda for organizing committee (bi-weekly and long-term)
- Identify leaders amongst membership
- Engage committed and interested members
- Coordinating canvassing efforts and membership drives
- Oversee the future steward program
- Delegate tasks of co-presidents' action plan
- Identify new grad students and orientations
- Coordinate orientation efforts
- Identify issues to rally around

Subsection iv) The *Treasurer* will be elected by the general body. They will serve a year-long term beginning in June. The Treasurer will:

- Develop a yearly budget plan

- Look for outside funding opportunities (grants, fundraising, raffles)
- Manage the checking account
- Produce a semesterly expense report to present to the officers and membership
- Oversee funding requests for activities
- Recommend and collect locals dues (if relevant)
- Arrange for the annual audit
- Pay organizational bills
- Work under the direction of the Co-presidents in the performance of all other responsibilities that may be given by the Co-president or the Executive Council

Subsection v) The *Chief Media Officer* will be appointed by officers in June. There is no limit to this term, but officers will evaluate the organization's needs and potentially re-appoint this chair every June. The Chief Media Officer will:

- Attend officers' meetings
- Answer media inquiries by email
- Coordinate interaction with the press at events
- Assemble and distribute press releases
- Maintain continuity in messaging and publicity
- Administer CGE website and organizational presence on social media

Article VI - Committees

Section A) When necessary, ad hoc committees may be formed to deal with specific events or goals.

Section B) If a committee is expected to last no longer than 1 year then it can be formed at the discretion of the Co-presidents.

Section C) The rules and direction of all other committees will be outlined in the by-laws.

Article VII - Meetings

Section A) At the beginning of each semester, the Record Keeper will conduct a poll determine the best days and times for holding general meetings.

Section B) *General Meetings* will typically be held on a regular schedule that reflects the best days and times determined by the poll mentioned in Section A. Meetings will be announced at least 48 hours in advance. An agenda drafted by officers—with

consultation from the membership at large when needed—will be distributed 12 hours in advance of each meeting.

Section C) *Consultation* is voluntary and may take the form of written or spoken correspondence with the Record Keeper or any other designated officer. The officer would then compile a list of member responses and distribute them to the other officers drafting the agenda.

Section D) *Emergency Meetings* can be called either at the decision of the two Co-presidents or by agreement of three executive officers. Emergency meetings will still need at least a 12 hour notification prior to the meeting time.

Section E) *Minutes* of every meeting will be kept and distributed by the Record Keeper within a week of each held meeting.

Article VIII - Constitutional Amendments

Section A) If the constitution needs to be amended the same decision making process will be followed as before except there will be at least three days between announcing the vote and the vote happening and the amendment will require a supermajority of 65% to pass.

Section B) In cases of larger revisions to the constitution, leadership will assemble a Constitution Committee. This committee will draft a constitution, present it to membership for feedback, then follow the procedure in Article VIII, Section A to ratify the constitution.

Article IX - Ratification of this Constitution

Section A) This Constitution will be ratified by a vote of CGE's member. This vote will last for 72 hours. The Constitution will be ratified if it receives a supermajority of 65% approval from those who vote. The ratification process will be run by the current Record Keeper (Liana Glew). Once ratified this Constitution will immediately go into effect.