

# **Constitution and Bylaws for the University of Florida Chapter of Graduate Assistants United**

*Ratified April 18, 2017*

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## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Preamble**

In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Faculty of Florida, we, the members of Graduate Assistants United (GAU) at the University of Florida, have established this Chapter in order to achieve the objectives which are of importance to the graduate assistants at the University of Florida.

### **Article I. Name**

This organization shall be known as the University of Florida Chapter of the Graduate Assistants United (UF-GAU).

### **Article II. Objectives**

**Section 1.** To bring graduate assistants of the University of Florida into a cooperative relationship to protect the rights and privileges to which they are entitled under the constitutions of the United States and the State of Florida, and the Graduate Assistants United/University of Florida Board of Trustees (GAU/UFBOT) Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**Section 2.** To promote the democratization of the University to serve better the people of the State of Florida.

**Section 3.** To insure responsible management of the University and accountability for policies developed and actions taken by University administrators on behalf of the University, faculty, and professional employees.

**Section 4.** To achieve and safeguard due process and academic freedom.

**Section 5.** To combat all forms of discrimination based on race, sex, age, religion, national origin, political belief, or sexual orientation at the University of Florida and in the State University System.

**Section 6.** To promote academic excellence in research, teaching, and service at the University.

**Section 7.** To help graduate assistants realize their professional and human potential.

**Section 8.** To promote economic security and humane working conditions within the University.

### **Article III. Membership**

Graduate assistants at the University of Florida who are within the bargaining unit shall be eligible for membership in the UF-GAU Chapter, according to the Bylaws, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution of the United Faculty of Florida (Article III).

### **Article IV. Officers and Senators**

**Section 1.** The elected officers shall consist of two Co-Presidents, one Treasurer, one Coordinator, one Grievance Officer, and one Membership Officer. These officers shall conduct the business of and act as spokespersons for the Chapter. No individual may hold more than one office at the same time.

**Section 2.** The membership shall elect the appropriate number of senators and delegates, as determined by UFF and FEA Bylaws.

### **Article V. Executive Committee**

The elected officers, Chairs of the Standing Committees, and the Chief Steward shall constitute an Executive Committee to advise the Co-Presidents in the operation of the Chapter. The Executive Committee shall confirm the appointment of the Chairs of the Standing Committees and the Chief Steward.

### **Article VI. Standing Committees**

There shall be seven standing committees: Bargaining Committee, Grievance Committee, Organizing Committee, Communications Committee, Healthcare Committee, Membership Committee, and International Student Issues Committee.

### **Article VII. Rules of Order, Voting, Constitutional Ratification, and Constitutional Amendments**

**Section 1.** All Chapter business shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 2.** All decisions of the Chapter shall require a majority of the votes of the members present and voting.

**Section 3.** Ratification of this Constitution shall be by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a membership meeting or by a mail ballot. The Constitution shall be made available to the members two weeks prior to the vote.

**Section 4.** This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a membership meeting or by a mail ballot. The amendment(s) shall be made available to the members two weeks prior to the vote.

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## **BYLAWS**

### **Article I. Membership Meetings**

Membership meetings will be held at least once during the Fall and once during the Spring semesters or whenever summoned by 10% of the Membership by petition. Members will be given no less than two weeks' notice of regular meetings and as much notice as possible of any emergency meeting.

### **Article II. Election and Recall of Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, and Senators**

**Section 1.** In even-numbered years, the membership of UF-GAU shall elect by open nomination and secret ballot the following officers: one Co-President, the Treasurer, the Coordinator, the Grievance Officer, and the Membership Officer. In odd-numbered years, the membership of UF-GAU shall elect by

open nomination and secret ballot one Co-President (so that there are 2 co-presidents). The term of office for each elected position shall be two years. Any UF-GAU member in good standing shall be eligible for nomination for any position.

**Section 2.** All officers and senators shall begin their terms of office on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the year in which the election occurs. Chapter officers for the coming year will be elected at the Spring membership meeting, which will be held in time for new officers to assume their duties by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Section 3.** The Chairs of the Standing Committees and the Chief Steward shall be appointed by the executive board. The Chairs of the Standing Committees and the Chief Steward shall assume their duties by May 15<sup>th</sup> and shall serve terms of two years.

**Section 4.** In the event of a vacancy in any elected chapter office, the executive board shall fill the vacancy by appointment of a UF-GAU member in good standing. The term of office for the appointee shall extend to no later than the next regularly-scheduled election.

**Section 5.** No later than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled date of each election meeting, the executive board shall appoint an elections committee to consist of no fewer than two (2) and no more than three (3) elections coordinators, which shall be responsible for securing and announcing nominations, preparing ballots, and counting ballots at the election. UF-GAU members in good standing and/or UF graduate fellows not eligible for membership may serve on the elections committee, except that neither any employee of UF-GAU nor any candidate for any office on the ballot may serve on the elections committee.

**Section 6.** The elections committee will count ballots by hand and announce results by the end of the same meeting at which the election occurs. Only dues-paying members in good standing may vote for chapter officers. If no positions on the ballot are contested, the election shall proceed by voice affirmation of UF-GAU members in good standing.

**Section 7.** Failure to carry out prescribed duties and actions or to adhere to Chapter policies shall constitute grounds for recall. Recall of a Chapter Officer, Standing Committee Chair, Chief Steward, or UF-GAU Senator may be initiated by a petition signed by 20% of the Chapter membership. An emergency Membership meeting shall be called to discuss the motion before further action. A recall election by the membership shall be held within 30 days of the emergency membership meeting by mail ballot.

### **Article III. Duties of Officers and Standing Committee Chairs**

**Section 1.** Duties of Co-Presidents. The Co-Presidents shall call and preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and Membership. They shall appoint the Standing Committee Chairs and the Chief Steward, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. They shall be ex-officio members of all committees, sign all necessary documents and papers, and represent the Chapter internally and externally. They are members of the UFF President's Council. The Co-Presidents shall report to the membership annually on the activities of the Chapter. The Co-Presidents supervise the work of any employees of the Chapter. Significant correspondence and documents shall be deposited in the Chapter records at the end of the Co-Presidents' term of office.

**Section 2.** Duties of Coordinator. The Coordinator shall maintain the records of the Chapter, and shall record the minutes of all Membership meetings, Executive Committee Meetings or consultations with the University President or Provost. Copies of these minutes shall be distributed to all Executive Committee members.

**Section 3.** Duties of Treasurer. As chief financial officer of UF-GAU, the Treasurer shall exercise supervision over the receipt and disbursement of all moneys, properties, securities, and other evidences of financial worth of the organization. They shall prepare an annual financial statement and shall prepare a proposed budget for approval at UF-GAU's first membership meeting of each Fall semester. They also shall submit the approved version of the budget to the UFF office in Tallahassee. The Treasurer shall report regularly to the Executive Committee and the membership on the financial status of the Chapter.

**Section 4.** Duties of the Grievance Officer. The Grievance Officer shall chair the Grievance Committee, shall direct the administration of grievances at UF, coordinate the activities of the Grievance Committee as described in the UFF Constitution and report regularly to the Chapter. They shall serve as the Chapter representative to the State UFF Contract Enforcement Committee unless otherwise determined by the Chapter.

**Section 5.** Duties of the Chair of the Bargaining Committee. The Chair of the Bargaining Committee shall represent the Chapter to the statewide Graduate Assistants United Bargaining Council unless otherwise determined by the membership. The Bargaining Chair shall coordinate the activities of the Bargaining Committee as described in the UFF Constitution and report regularly to the membership on the progress of bargaining.

**Section 6.** Duties of the Chair(s) of the Organizing Committee. The Chair(s) of the Organizing Committee shall coordinate the activities of the Organizing Committee as described in the UFF Constitution and report regularly to the membership. The Chair(s) shall serve as chapter representative(s) to the State UFF Membership Committee unless otherwise determined by the Chapter membership.

**Section 7.** Duties of the Chair of the Communications Committee. The Chair of the Communications Committee shall direct the activities of the Communications Committee, and shall work in conjunction with the Coordinator to supervise activities of release-time employees who work on communications-related activities.

**Section 8.** Duties of the Chief Steward. The Chief Steward shall coordinate the activities of department stewards and shall report regularly to the Executive Committee and to the Membership on recruitment activities and membership concerns at the department level. In conjunction with the Organizing and Communications committees, the Chief Steward shall contact new bargaining unit employees and prepare materials that can be used in recruiting.

**Section 9.** Duties of the Chair(s) of the International Issues Committee. The Chair(s) of the International Issues Committee shall serve as a liaison between GAU and the various international student groups and representatives on campus. The Chair(s) shall coordinate the activities of the International Issues Committee as described in the UFF Constitution and report regularly on international issues and related projects to the Executive Committee and the Membership.

**Section 10.** Duties of the Chair of the Healthcare Committee. The Chair or the Healthcare committee shall work with membership to help insure they receive the care they are entitled to including by working with the university, report on the satisfaction of the membership with the current health insurance plan, and shall suggest any necessary improvements to the health insurance plan.

**Section 11.** Duties of the Membership Officer. The Membership Officer shall chair the Membership Committee and shall be responsible for the coordination and implementation of GAU social activities aimed to drive membership; coordinate and manage new member recruitment during new graduate assistant orientations; and, in conjunction with the Treasurer, oversee the procurement of line item 8050 funds from UFF.

#### **Article IV. Executive Committee**

**Section 1.** The Executive Committee shall meet upon the request of the Co-President(s) or other member(s) of the Executive Committee.

**Section 2.** The Executive Committee shall monitor the operations of the Chapter and shall make recommendations to the membership.

#### **Article V. Standing Committees**

**Section 1.** Committee members shall be appointed by the Chair of the Committee in consultation with the Co-President(s) except as provided otherwise in the Chapter Constitution or Bylaws.

**Section 2.** All committees shall report regularly to the Executive Committee and membership on their activities.

**Section 3.** Committees shall submit reports on current activities at membership meetings. By a date set by the UF-GAU Treasurer, a proposed budget for the coming year shall be submitted to the Treasurer.

**Section 4.** The Bargaining Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the GAU Bargaining Council. They will plan and analyze bargaining surveys and develop position papers as needed. The Committee shall meet at least once per semester during the academic year to discuss issues of concern to Collective Bargaining at UF.

**Section 5.** The Grievance Committee consists of the Chapter's certified grievance representatives. The Grievance Committee shall keep records of and supervise all grievances and make sure that members are fully represented in informal resolutions and in formal grievance procedures. They shall also insure that the Executive Committee is fully informed on progress in enforcing and expanding the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Committee shall meet at least once per semester during the academic year to discuss issues of concern to contract enforcement at UF. Grievance training sessions shall be scheduled once per year. The Grievance Committee shall only represent Chapter members.

**Section 6.** The Organizing Committee shall carry out organizing drives among graduate assistants. In conjunction with the Chief Steward and Communications Committee, it shall contact new bargaining unit employees and prepare materials that can be used in recruiting. The Committee shall meet at least once per semester during the academic year to discuss the progress of recruiting efforts at UF.

**Section 7.** The communications committee shall be responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy for the unit's internal and external communications. This

includes overseeing UF-GAU's social media accounts and website; crafting press releases and public statements and cultivating relationships with news media; generating emails to the unit mailing lists; and producing a chapter newsletter each semester. In addition, the communications committee shall work in conjunction with the Organizing and Membership committees to produce flyers and other promotional materials for public events and membership activities.

**Section 8.** The International Issues Committee shall address issues and initiate projects that are of specific importance to international graduate assistants. The Committee shall communicate and work in conjunction with the various international student groups and representatives on campus. The committee shall meet at least once per semester per academic year to discuss international issues and plan related projects.

**Section 9.** The Healthcare Committee shall work with membership to help insure they receive the care they are entitled to including by working with the university, report on the satisfaction of the membership with the current health insurance plan, and shall suggest any necessary improvements to the health insurance plan.

**Section 10.** The Membership Committee shall be responsible for supporting the Chair of the Membership Committee in all tasks pursuant to the duties, responsibilities, procedures, and aims pertaining to the management of membership of UF-GAU. Committee members shall aid in the oversight of membership density reports, member benefits, new member literature, and the management of new membership forms.

## **Article VI. Stewards**

Each department in the University of Florida that employs graduate assistants is entitled to at least one UF-GAU department steward. Department stewards must be enrolled in the department they represent. It shall be the goal of UF-GAU to recruit at least one steward for every department in the University employing graduate assistants. Stewards shall work to recruit members for UF-GAU at the department level, shall represent the concerns of graduate assistants in their department to the Chief Steward, and shall keep current records of UF-GAU membership within their respective departments.

## **Article VII. Amendments**

**Section 1.** Proposed amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted to the membership two weeks prior to the date scheduled for a vote on the amendments.

**Section 2.** Adoption of an amendment requires a vote of a simple majority of the membership present and voting on the amendment.