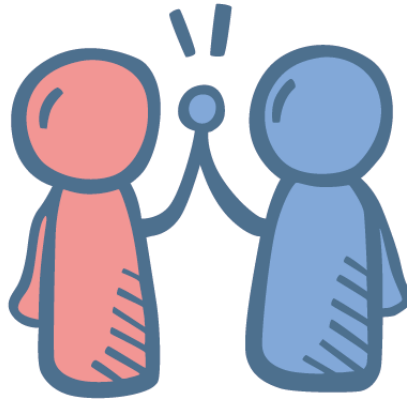




Rights, Responsibilities and Roles of GGSU Officers



Thank you for assisting GSU members

A union's strength comes from the strength and unity of the members in the workplace.

Thank you for volunteering your time to become a union officer and assist your fellow union members. Your work on behalf of GSU is appreciated.

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Congratulations on

Local and Sub-Local union officers play a key role in supporting members in their workplace and in supporting GSU at large. This booklet is designed to assist GSU officers in carrying out their duties and to help develop an organized, active, and informed Local.

It is important to remember that union officers are not expected to be labour relations experts or have previous experience. What they need is a willingness to learn, to know when to ask for help, and how to access the help that is available to them. Your staff rep and other union staff will always be available to help you with whatever is required.

GSU's geographically diverse Locals such as Local 1 (Viterra Operations and Maintenance), Local 14 (Richardson Pioneer) and Local 15 (Nutrien Ag Solutions), are comprised of Sub-Locals based on work locations. These Sub-Locals elect and are each represented by a delegate. Sub-Local delegates are GSU's representatives in their particular workplace and also participate in meetings of delegates from all of the work locations where they elect a Local executive committee, agree upon collective bargaining proposals etc.



becoming a GSU officer

All certified unions have a legal responsibility and duty to fairly represent their members. GSU includes the responsibility to educate, engage and motivate its union members. We are always considering members' interests and the services we provide to improve the lives of our members at work and in their communities. In doing so, we consider the following questions:

- How do we continue to be an organization that effectively represents members?
- What should GSU do when government proposes or introduces legislation that we will be detrimental to our members' interests?
- Should GSU members' dues be spent challenging or advocating government legislation?
- Should GSU members' dues be spent to advocate for public policies intended to address poverty, social injustice, inequality, and unionization?
- Should GSU members' dues be spent to advocate for the election or defeat of a particular political party in any election?
- How should decisions be made with regard to which member grievances are arbitrated?
- When there is a workplace conflict between two or more members, that also involves the employer and potential disciplinary action, how should it be handled by GSU?

The ways we fulfill this purpose include assertive collective bargaining, resolving workplace conflicts, strengthening workplace safety, working with other unions and organizations to advocate for the rights of all workers, giving advice to members, member education and acknowledging members' contributions to their communities.

When facing a problem in the workplace, the desired outcome of members will vary greatly. Members may want a simple clarification, assistance filing a grievance, collective agreement interpretation, or some help crafting a response or reply. You may be asked to attend a discipline meeting, send an email, make a phone call, and sometimes members just want you to listen to them and absorb what they are saying while they vent.

Each situation is different and there is no cookie cutter approach to assisting members.

Understanding member rights



Members of GSU are not alone in facing workplace challenges.

If they experience problems at work members can call a GSU officer, steward or staff representative for advice and assistance to find solutions to the problem.

It is your right to belong to a union and participate in union activities. As a member of GSU you are protected by the rights afforded to you by the collective agreement between the union and your employer as well as federal or provincial labour laws, as the case may be.

Under your collective agreement you have the right to have a GSU staff representative act as your advocate in disputes, issues, contract interpretation, and other problems with your employer.

You have the right to fair representation from your union.

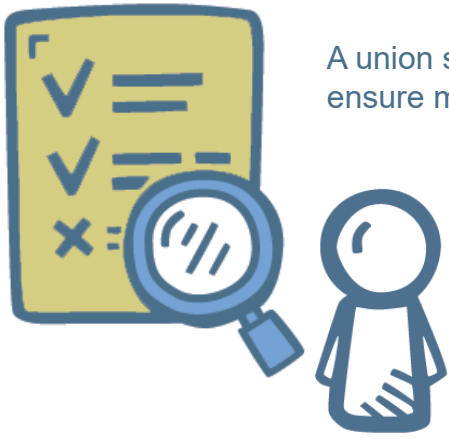
You also have the right to determine how to proceed in matters that affect you.

Contacting the union does not mean you are obligated to file a grievance or proceed in the way recommended by GSU staff.

Helpful hint:

GSU encourages doing the following at work:

- Ask questions of your employer if you are unsure or think something is being done incorrectly.
- Refuse unsafe work if the situation feels unsafe or the proper safety precautions are not being taken.
- Stand up for yourself and co-workers.
- Seek assistance. If you have a question, need advice, or need help solving a problem, GSU is here to help.
- Document your experiences by keeping a notebook where you can record your hours, or note conversations and issues when they happen.



A union steward is a union member who is elected or selected to ensure members' rights and the collective agreement are upheld.

Your rights as a union steward

As a Steward, you are there to identify issues and protect the rights of members.

Most of us know our tools: the contract, the grievance procedure, and, most important, shop floor unity and organization.

Less well-known are the protections we have under the law.

The right to disagree

You can openly disagree and argue vigorously with management during grievance meetings, question management's authority, and demand certain actions of management – all without risking disciplinary action.

Always be firm but respectful in your conversations with management.

Equality

Labour law and your collective agreement make you a legal equal to the employer's representatives when you are acting as a representative of the union.

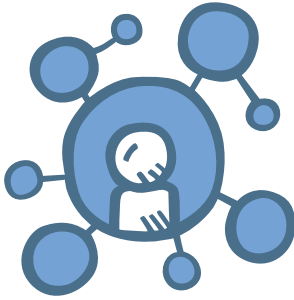
The equal status is in effect only when you are doing your job as a steward, not when you're acting as an individual employee.

No Reprisals

The employer is not allowed to use discipline, either real or threatened, or any other form of intimidation to discourage you from doing your job as a union steward.

For example, you can't be denied overtime opportunities, promotions, job transfers, bumping rights, or any other entitlement as punishment for doing your job as steward. Nor can management assign you to the most undesirable jobs or more closely supervise you than other workers.

Your role as a steward



In GSU we use the terms delegate, officer and steward interchangeably. The individual(s) union member elected or selected to fulfill the role of delegate/officer/steward is the GSU representative in the workplace.

In the remainder of this document we use the term steward.

While not always an easy job, the role of a steward is something to be proud of. You are the voice of your co-workers and a source of support for them. Stewards are important in the workplace because as peers who work in the workplace they have an intimate knowledge of problems that may arise.

You are not on your own



Depending on the size of your workplace there might be other stewards or Local officers of the union present. We encourage you to engage the other stewards, Local officers and GSU staff representatives with your questions, concerns, observations and ideas as well as those of the union members you represent have. We are always more powerful together.

GSU stewards aren't expected to be walking encyclopedias, but a good working knowledge of the collective agreement and the ability to be a good listener, take good notes, and be a calm voice of reason are helpful.

Where do I get my authority as a GSU Steward?



The authority of a steward flows directly from GSU's status as the legal collective bargaining agent of the employees in your workplace.

Laws and regulations dealing with occupational health and safety, human rights and employment standards can also serve as a basis for the authority of a union steward.

As mentioned above, your local's collective agreement might stipulate the authority of a union steward in the workplace. For example, you may have the right to:

- Set deadlines for responses from management under the grievance procedure.
- Do union work on the employer's time.
- Meet with union members in the workplace.
- Attend meetings to investigate a problem or attend meetings where a union member is being disciplined.

What does a Steward actually do?



Depending on your local union, you might:

- Investigate, write, or file grievances on behalf of members.
- Help to solve problems outside the grievance procedure.
- Ensure good communication between the members and the executive.
- Educate members about the collective agreement, about the union's role in the workplace – and about important social issues.
- Stand up as a strong ally of members from equity-seeking groups.
- Mobilize members to support the union's role in bargaining, etc.
- Act as a mediator when members are in conflict with one another.
- As a steward, your role is to watch and listen to what's happening in your workplace. As part of this role, you will want to inform the Local executive committee and GSU Staff Representative of issues and events affecting the members.

Communicate and Educate

The most effective form of communication is one-on-one workplace conversations. Flyers, newsletters, emails, and meetings are all important, but the best way to inform members, get feedback, and encourage participation is through personal contact.

- Listen and learn about your co-workers' problems and concerns.
- Teach your co-workers about our union, their rights under our contract, bargaining goals, important issues affecting working people and political efforts.
- Always challenge members to help win improvements to benefits, working conditions, workplace rights and wages.

Problem Solve

Stewards should be prepared to approach workplace problems with a solution based orientation. Some problems only affect one person, others affect a group. Different issues may require one or more of the following:

- Mobilizing workers to solve problems as a group. When issues affect large numbers of workers and provoke strong worker reactions, they may be best handled through a group action such as an SOS meeting with a manager, group requests, a members' information meeting, or a formal letter or email.
- Holding informal discussions with management, the steward, and affected workers.
- Using the grievance procedure to address violations of the contract, company rules/policies or established practices.

Lead

Actions speak louder than words—a steward can serve as a unifying advocate for workers' rights.

- Build unity: find common ground on problems.
- Be an active participant in union decisions and actions: collective bargaining campaigns, conventions, political action, and organizing efforts.
- Maintain a good work record. Don't give management an excuse to discipline you. Be a role model for other workers.
- Involve members when advocating on their behalf.
- Avoid going into a situation or meeting alone – always bring a co-worker with you.

How to connect as a GSU Steward



The members you represent need to know who you are. They need to know how to reach you, and how a steward can help them solve their problems in the workplace. Often, the best way to let people know you are a steward is for a member of the Local executive committee to make an announcement and introduce you as a steward. Sometimes it might be necessary to do it yourself.

Even if you already know everyone, take time to visit the members and let them know you are now a steward.

- Introduce yourself to everyone you represent.
- Give people written information about your role as a steward.
- Introduce yourself to the supervisors and managers you will be dealing with.
- Find out when a new employee is hired and introduce yourself right away.

The three Rs for GSU Stewards



Be respectful, responsible, and reasonable in your role as steward.

This will strengthen your position and help earn respect.

Respectful

Respect is earned, and you must earn your respect as a shop steward. Treat others in the way you wish to be treated.

Ways to be respectful:

- You may think you understand the problem, issue or concern, but you must allow members the time and space to tell their story.
- Practice active listening without speaking over the member, and not rushing to fix the problem. Listen closely to the member and

after they have explained their situation, you can ask them what they would like to happen and offer recommendations and how you are able to help.

- Build trust by being sincere, kind, helpful, and supportive. Work with the member in a way that makes them comfortable.
- Respect the privacy of GSU members. If they ask that information remain confidential, ensure it stays between you and the member.
- Contacting GSU does not mean members are obligated to file a grievance. You must assist in any way you can, but don't contact employers, file grievances, or act on behalf of a member without consultation, direction and approval from that member. If they ask you not to talk to their employer or co-workers, you need to make sure you don't.
- When you are representing a member, you must act in a respectful way toward the employer or management. Take the high road and agree to disagree without snappy replies, abrupt responses, or inappropriate language. Doing otherwise reflects poorly on you, the member, and the union. Participating in a confrontational relationship with company management will not make those with the power to affect change more inclined to consider your side of an issue or work to assist you.

Responsible

As a Steward you must represent your members to the best of your ability within the scope of the collective agreement to GSU's Constitution and Bylaws. This doesn't mean you need to go to the ends of the earth for a cause or issue, but you must take your responsibility to your members seriously.

Ways to be responsible:

- Follow up with members in a timely fashion and when you said you would.
- Don't promise results or outcomes to a member.
- When speaking to the employer, remember you are relaying the views of all members and speaking on behalf of everyone in your local/sub-local - even if the message you are conveying doesn't mirror your personal thoughts or beliefs.
- Don't carry the burden of being a Steward alone. You aren't expected to know everything immediately. If you don't know the answer, admit it and undertake to find the answer and come back with more information.
- Don't be too hard on yourself or overburden yourself. Take care of yourself and you will be a better Steward for everyone. Burning yourself out helps no one.

Reasonable

Being reasonable is a process of exercising thoughtfulness in actions, taking the time to use sound judgment, trying to be fair, and making

decisions that are beneficial for the members. You must moderate your personal feelings and try to include the perspective of others in your approach. What is reasonable in one situation may not be reasonable in a different situation.

Ways to be reasonable:

- Gather all facts and information.
- Make an appropriate decision based on what is in front of you.
- Respect different opinions, understand what can change and what cannot.
- Sometimes when you take a stand, speak-up, and fight for what you feel is right, people may see you as unreasonable. Don't take it personally. They may not be aware of everything that requires consideration, be letting their own interpretations influence their position, or they may be stuck in the status quo. If you are successful in advancing your position – and the other side accepts or admits your position has merit – it was reasonable.

Documentation



If it's not in writing, it didn't happen. It's that simple. Be certain to document events, incidents and meetings. Keep organized and thorough notes.

What to Record

It is important to document complaints, potential problems, unclear instructions, wrong or unsafe instructions, as well as the facts that you encounter. Keep a file or note book.

Documentation should include:

- factual written summaries of incidents noting date, time, location, and people involved
- copies of memos and letters
- relevant work documents
- meeting notes
- phone conversation notes
- performance evaluations
- any other relevant paperwork such as investigation interviews, witness statements, etc.

Keep good notes and records

Keeping a paper trail is essential for providing needed evidence should grievance action be needed down the road. It's impossible to have too much information regarding an incident and it's better to have a written record than relying solely on memory.

Roles

of a Local president, sub-local delegate, vice president and secretary treasurer



Local president or sub-local delegate

The Local president or Sub-Local Delegate is GSU's representative in your work location and with your employer. They are the link between the union administration and members at your workplace.

Members look to you for advice about workplace issues and problems, to represent their best interests when meeting with the employer, and to supply information and answer questions about GSU.

The president/delegate is responsible for the activities undertaken on behalf of members and the union at your location, but this doesn't mean the president/delegate must do all of the work. Effective leaders also delegate work as required. Local bylaws provide that anything that needs to be done in the Local is to be carried out by the Local Executive.

Duties of the Local president or Sub-Local delegate include:

- chairing meetings of the members
- working with GSU staff representative to schedule meetings
- reminding members of meetings and encouraging participation
- receiving monthly and reviewing a list of new employees
- identifying or organizing social events for Local members (t-shirts, hockey games, bowling nights, etc.)
- ensuring there is a full slate of elected officers so the members of the Local are properly represented
- signing authority for the Local.



Role of Vice President

A vice president assists the Local president in his or her duties and is encouraged to come up with ideas to benefit the members and the Local.

Duties for the vice president may include:

- coordinating the Local Community Connections program
- working with staff rep on new-member orientations and union card signing
- keeping up-to-date on issues in the Local
- receiving monthly a list of new employees in the Local
- signing authority for the Local.



Role of Secretary Treasurer

The secretary treasurer handles administrative duties of the local.

Duties for the secretary treasurer duties may include:

- taking minutes at meetings
- maintaining Local bank account (if the Local has one)
- paying Local bills or expenses
- receiving monthly a list of new employees in the Local
- signing authority for the Local.

Roles

Local Executive Committee members



Role of Local Executive Committee

Together, the president, vice president, secretary treasurer and members at large form the Local Executive Committee.

Like any new experience, you will learn a lot about your role through your day-to-day activities and from those people who are ready and able to assist you.

GSU's education programs will also help broaden your knowledge, develop helpful skills, and introduce you to a peer group of other union officers to compare notes with.

Primary responsibilities of the Local Executive Committee are:

Communicate

- Keep informed about what is happening at the Local.
- Distribute information from the GSU office and your Local executive to members.
- Maintain your contact with union members and share union information with union members and union staff.
- Welcome new members, tell them about the union and let them know how they can participate.
- Make sure that members know how to contact the Local Executive.
- Make sure the union office is aware of new members, changes in Local officers, and issues affecting Local members.

Organize

- Ensure the Local holds regular business meetings and fun events, too.
- Ask members to help out with tasks, such as surveys, votes, BBQs, etc.
- Seek out inactive members, talk to them about what the Local and the union are doing and ask if they have any concerns. Make sure everyone feels included.

Educate and Inform

- Explain what the union is doing and why.
- Attend union education opportunities and encourage the general membership to do the same.
- Encourage members to stay up-to-date through the union's *Tuesday Members' Memo* (TMM) weekly e-newsletter and by checking out the GSU web site.

Lead

- An active Local Executive creates local support and active members. Lead by example.
- Build the Local by talking with your members and asking their advice on issues.
- Work with all your members, speak up for them, act promptly and decisively, keep your word.
- Listen, provide advice and support, and act on members' concerns and issues.

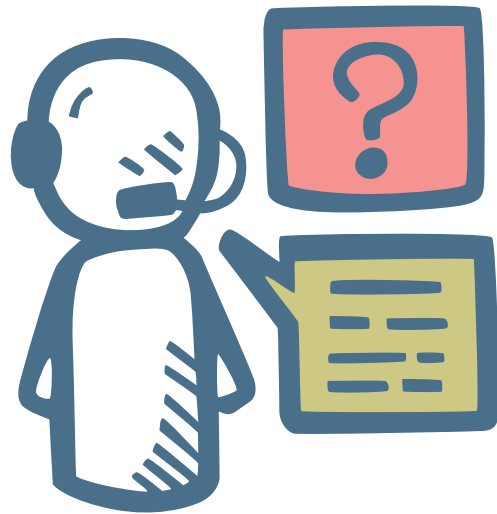
- Represent all members fairly and equitably when resolving workplace issues and representing members' views at Local and other union meetings.
- Notify your GSU staff representative when there is a change in your Local leadership.

Contract Compliance

There may be articles in the collective agreement that your employer doesn't like or tries to evade. Nonetheless, all parties are bound by the words contained in the contract.

Union members are responsible for ensuring the employer complies with the collective agreement. In GSU the members and union officers are the eyes and ears of the union in the workplaces. When you see or become aware of situations where the collective agreement is not being enforced, let your staff representative know. By dealing with little problems we can often fix them before they become big problems.

Encourage your co-workers to use the benefits of their collective agreement. When members don't make use of the benefits and terms of the agreement – for example not claiming overtime or premiums, or using vacation entitlements – it tends to weaken the agreement for everybody.



Help, please Assistance and advice is nearby

While the responsibilities of being an officer may appear daunting, GSU staff provide Local officers with the support, information, and materials needed to undertake their responsibilities. In addition to a staff rep who is dedicated to assisting your local, GSU's office staff are also available to help you.

Talk to your staff rep if you or your Local Executive would like:

- business cards
- local newsletters
- posters
- a union bulletin board
- workshops
- education
- help with a fund-raiser or a social event,
- or more.

Your staff rep will be able assist you.

Running a meeting

A simple outline and steps to follow



This job isn't as difficult as it sounds. GSU meetings have a history of being friendly and informal. And the chair is not responsible for doing all of the talking; quite the opposite.

The chair makes sure the meeting runs smoothly and efficiently, by explaining the meeting's purpose, keeping things on track, and making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance to do so.

Purpose of the meeting

Determine the purpose of the meeting.

Are you:

- electing officers?
- gathering bargaining resolutions?
- providing information to members and/or reporting on collective bargaining?
- conducting a vote on union business?
- what specifically do you hope to accomplish?

Agenda

Develop an agenda and a meeting notice. Your staff representative can help you with this.

The meeting notice should clearly start the date, time and location of the meeting. The Local Bylaws state that you must have the notice of meeting at least seven days prior to the meeting

or such shorter period of time as determined by the Executive Committee of the Local when circumstances require shorter notice.

Include the agenda and the purpose of the meeting in the notice. You may also want to include an anticipated time of adjournment and make copies of the previous meeting's minutes available to members in advance of the meeting.

Getting organized

Arrive early and get yourself organized. This may include picking up a key, setting up chairs, reviewing meeting materials, and arranging with your officers who will deliver reports or sit at the registration table or hand out ballots.

If you know a member is planning to submit a lengthy motion, suggest they write it down so you and the secretary don't have to

phrase things to capture another's ideas.

Call to order

Start the meeting on time, by saying, "I call this meeting to order."

You can take this opportunity to welcome people to the meeting.

Adopting the agenda

This is a chance for others to add topics to the agenda. Read the agenda aloud or draw people's attention to it and ask them to review it. Call for a mover and seconder to adopt the agenda and conduct a vote of those present by a show of hands in favour and opposed to the motion. Announce whether the motion is carried or defeated.

Reading and adoption of the minutes of the last meeting

The next item of business is for the chairperson to call for a

motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting as:

- read aloud by the Local secretary treasurer, or
- as circulated, or
- as amended.

Ask whether there are any errors or omissions and once again you will need a mover and a seconder to adopt the minutes.

Once a mover and seconder have been identified, ask for all in favour of the motion and all opposed to the motion. Announce whether the motion is carried or defeated.

Treasurer's report and committee reports

It is not necessary to have a report from your local committees at every meeting but when you do the treasurer's report usually follows the reading of the minutes. The committee reports should follow next.

After each report is given, ask if there is any discussion. After the discussion, ask for a motion to accept the report as presented or as amended, depending on your meeting.

When a mover and seconder have been identified, ask for all in favour of the motion and all opposed to the motion. Announce whether the motion is carried or defeated.

Business arising from the minutes or old business

This is a continuation of business from previous meetings and minutes. Discussions or reports relating to the outcome or progress on past meeting motions and projects are given. Motions or recommendations providing direction are made and recorded in minutes.

New business

This is where new issues

may be raised. Motions and recommendations for actions are made where necessary to ensure these issues are dealt with, brought forward and reported on at the next meeting.

Next meeting

Some locals like to set the next meeting date, time and location before the current meeting adjourns.

Adjournment

It is a good practice to set an agreed-upon time to end the meeting. Adjourn when you reach the set time or finish the business of the meeting before the set time.

Members will be more inclined to attend future meetings when they know they are well organized and efficiently chaired.

A motion is required to adjourn a meeting. No seconder is required for motions to adjourn.

Are elections being held at your meeting? If so, follow these steps

1. Ask for nominations for the position in question.
2. When there are no further nominations, ask someone to move a motion that nominations cease. This motion needs a seconder and must be voted on.
3. Ask each of the members who have been nominated if they are willing to run for that position.
4. If there is only one name on the list, declare that member elected by acclamation.
5. If there are two or more names on the list, the members can request that the candidates give brief speeches.
6. Conduct a secret-ballot vote. Appoint one or two people to count the ballots.
7. Once the winner has been announced, ask for a motion to destroy the ballots. Make sure that this is done.

Rules of Order

Key points to help your meeting run smoothly



GSU local meetings aren't usually as formal as Joint Executive Council meetings or a GSU convention.

Here are some key points that apply to everyone.

Everyone gets to speak

One purpose of membership meetings is to hear what the members think. Give everyone ample opportunity to speak, no matter how unpopular their opinions may be.

A discussion doesn't necessarily require a motion

When an item is raised and discussion takes place, a motion may be made.

If a discussion does not require a motion, simply summarize what the members have agreed to regarding that particular issue. This provides a sense of completion for members and direction for the secretary treasurer who is recording the meeting minutes.

Making a motion

Motions require a mover and seconder. Once a mover and seconder for the motion have been identified, the chair asks if there is any discussion on the motion. Once discussion ceases, the chairperson conducts a vote by asking for a show hands of those in favour of and opposed to the motion. Once the vote has been taken announce whether the motion has been carried or defeated.

- **Tie vote**

The chairperson shall have the same rights as other members to vote on any question. In case of a tie vote, he/she shall also cast the deciding vote.

The chairperson may either:

- vote on the original question and, if it is tied, vote again, or
- refrain from voting on original question and only vote in the event of a tie.

- **Reconsidering a motion**

At the request of any meeting participant, a motion may be reconsidered at an upcoming meeting if:

- notice of motion is given for reconsideration at the next meeting, and
- said notice of motion is supported by two-thirds of the members at the meeting.

In this case, the chairperson calls the vote asking if the meeting wishes to reconsider the motion at an upcoming meeting. If two-thirds of the members at the meeting vote yes, the motion will be reconsidered at the next meeting.

- **Motions to amend GSU's constitution, bylaws**

Motions to amend GSU's constitution, bylaws or the dues to be paid by employees represented by GSU are required to be voted on at meetings of each Local or Sub-Local, as the case maybe.

The results of the vote at each meeting should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and communicated to GSU's general secretary who is responsible for compiling a tally of all of the votes cast and announcing same when the voting has been completed. A majority of two-thirds of the overall votes cast is required for motions of this type to be carried.

The one exception to the two-thirds rule is the annual vote on the motion to continue the additional dues being paid into the GSU Defense Fund when a majority of fifty percent plus one is required for the motion to be carried or defeated.

Everyone gets to speak ... if they want to

If one person is dominating the debate, the chair can request that everyone who has spoken on the issue wait until everyone else has had a chance to speak if they choose to do so.

If it's a hot topic with several people trying to speak at once, start a speakers list. Ask members to raise their hands if they want to speak. Write their names down as you see a hand raised and call out names one by one until everyone has spoken. You can ask the secretary treasurer or another officer to help you record the speakers' list.

The majority rules

Votes are held by a show of hands unless members ask for a secret-ballot vote as is the case when elections are being held.

The chairperson shall have the same rights as other members to vote on any question and, if they so choose, they are allowed to vote from the head table when others vote. In the case of a tie vote, the chairperson shall cast the deciding vote.

Election of officers

Elections for officers of the Local should be announced on the proposed meeting agenda. When the meeting convenes and the time to conduct elections arrives, the chairperson of the meeting should conduct the election for each position by calling for nominations or volunteers and conducting the election for each position before moving on to the next position.

Elections in which there is more than one candidate for the position should be conducted by a secret ballot in which each voting member writes the name of the nominee they are voting for on a piece of paper (the ballot). Once the ballots are marked they should be collected, counted by appointed scrutineers and the results should be reported before moving on to the election for the next position.

When the elections have been completed the chairperson for the meeting should call for a motion that the ballots be destroyed.

Use common sense

If the meeting hits a snag, ask the group how it wants to proceed.

Helpful hint:

Keep a written record of the decisions and motions made, the actions called for, and who took responsibility for what. A written record reminds members to get on with their tasks.

Creating an agenda

It's quite simple once you know how

You've seen one, you've pretty much seen them all

Each organization or committee has its unique structure and style of conducting membership and board meetings, but the elements are always similar: call to order, reports, business discussions and decision-making, and adjournment.

Tips on creating an agenda

You can contact participants before the meeting to find out if there is anything they want included on the agenda under new or old business. If participants are scheduled to give reports or speak, ask them beforehand how much time they need.

Sometimes it is difficult to judge the timing on an agenda. Either be patient with experimenting on the timing, or be firm with the times in an effort to move the meeting along. One of the main purposes of creating a meeting agenda is to provide structure and help make the meeting more productive.

Reasons to use an agenda

A printed agenda is a useful tool to help the secretary take minutes of the meeting, even if items in the meeting are discussed out of order. The agenda ensures that all business is covered, and leaves room for some flexibility.

The necessity of forming committees is sometimes brought about when meetings stray from the agenda. Committees can work on issues inbetween membership meetings.



Membership Meeting (or Annual Meeting, etc.) of GSU Local ____

PROPOSED AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Welcome, Introductions.
2. Adoption of the Agenda.
3. Minutes from Previous Meeting / Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting (if no additions or corrections).
4. Business Arising from Minutes.
5. Officers' Reports.
6. New Business.
7. Elections (when required to fill vacancies or elections for all positions at annual meetings).
8. Other Business and Announcements.
9. Adjournment.

Sample Outline of Common Motions

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that the agenda be adopted as presented (or as amended).
Carried/Defeated

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that the minutes of the meeting be adopted as read (or as amended).
Carried/Defeated

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that the President's (or Treasurer's, etc.) report be adopted as
presented (or as amended).
Carried/Defeated



Meeting minutes

Important ... and simple to do!

The minutes are a record of what was decided and proposed at your meeting.

If you are the Secretary of the Local or the person responsible for recording the minutes, don't worry. It's not as daunting a task as it may seem.

Prepare before the meeting begins

Ask the chairperson whether he/she can state a conclusion at the end of each agenda item during the meeting. This makes all easier and clearer for you, as well as the rest of the participants.

Ask the chairperson to identify who is making or seconding a motion to assist you.

Sometimes you won't understand what is said in the meeting. Allow yourself to ask if you haven't heard a name, or something else. This is better than inventing the story.

It is a good idea to sit as close as possible to the chair of the meeting as this will allow you to hear everything and to ask for clarification without having to raise your voice.

Recording the minutes

Bring a notebook or laptop with you. Make sure that it is something you are comfortable working with. Also, it is advisable that you have a good pen or pencil on hand.

You can be more efficient by using a template for meeting minutes, especially when you prepare these before the meeting with the agenda items of the particular meeting.

Call to Order

Note the time the meeting was called to order and who called the meeting to order.

The Agenda

As the Local's secretary, you may have prepared a draft agenda or the union office may have provided copies for you.

The president may read the agenda or refer to it for meeting participants to review. There may be additions, deletions, or other amendments to the agenda. The president will ask for a mover and a seconder for the agenda.

Note the name of the mover/seconder, and whether the agenda was adopted as read or as amended.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The president may read the minutes from your last meeting or ask you to read them. It is essential that you have them with you. They can be distributed beforehand or you can read them right there and then.

The president will ask if there are any errors or omissions. Again, the president calls for a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting as read, circulated or as amended. You need a mover and a seconder to adopt the minutes.

Note the name of the mover/seconder, and whether the minutes were adopted as read or as amended.

Reports

Listen to the other reports. Note who read them.

The chairperson will ask for a motion to accept the report. Note the name of the mover and seconder, and whether the report was adopted as read or as amended.

Make sure at the end of the meeting, you ask for a copy of the report.

Business Arising from the minutes or old business

This is anything that needed a follow up from the last meeting.

Did someone need to write a letter? Was it sent? Note anything that was done or not done and by whom.

New Business

Record the New Business. When someone has an issue to address they will make a motion. For example "I move we send a GSU camper to the SFL Kids' Camp." It is important that you write down the exact words.

Note who made motions, seconded motions and whether or not they were carried or defeated. Also, write down who has to do what as follow up.

Adjournment

Note what time the meeting adjourned.



After the meeting ...

Make sure you have everything you need after the meeting adjourns

Check to ensure you have wording for all resolutions, copies of all written reports, and the proper spelling of the names you will be including in the minutes.

Type up or make a good written copy of the minutes

The recipients will appreciate short minutes. Find a balance in short minutes, in which not all the words said are important, but the essence of each item is recorded. Record the conclusion, and sometimes the most important arguments leading to the conclusion.

You should also put yourself in the shoes of someone absent, and see whether that person would understand your description.

You don't need to include the debate into the minutes, such as "Member A said he did not agree." Record only the motion, who made the motion, its seconder, and whether it passed or failed.

Leave out unimportant detail. If an amendment is made, you do not have to write that someone proposed making an amendment. Just make sure, if it is passed, that the amendment is in the main motion when you write it down.

Distribute your draft.

Once you have prepared or typed the minutes, send them to your fellow Local Executive Committee members and the GSU staff rep responsible for your Local. Until they are approved they are draft minutes and subject to change.



At the next meeting ...

At the next meeting of your Local/Sub-Local, bring a copy of the draft minutes for review. When the minutes are approved, note or make the necessary corrections or amendments and have the elected officers sign the minutes.



Type up your minutes as soon as possible after the meeting. It's best to do this while the events are still fresh in your mind.

If there are reports or written items discussed at the meeting you can include a copy with your original set of minutes in a Minute Binder.

It's also helpful for meeting participants to get a copy of the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.

Keep the minutes filed in a safe place and pass them on to your successor when you leave office.

Sample Template of Meeting Minutes and Common Motions



MINUTES OF THE GSU LOCAL X MEETING held in the ABC Hotel in City/Town, Saskatchewan, (date)

President _____ called the meeting to order at (time).

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that the proposed agenda be adopted (or amended).
Carried/Defeated

(This person) read the minutes of the (date) meeting of the Local.

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that the minutes be adopted as read (or as amended).
Carried/Defeated

(This person and/or title) presented (this report).

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that the report of (this person and/or title) be adopted (or adopted as amended).
Carried/Defeated

MOVED by _____ seconded by _____
that (this item) be referred to (the next meeting, the GSU's Joint Executive Council, etc.)
Carried/Defeated.

MOVED by _____ that the meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at (this time).

President

Union Officer

If you are thinking about it, others are thinking about it, too. Let us know what we can add to make this booklet even more helpful to GSU stewards.



We're here to help you.

Call GSU

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