Charter of the
John R. Commons Club

Department of Economics, University of Wisconsin–Madison

1 Mission

The John R. Commons Club exists to represent the interests of the Economics Department Graduate Student Body. Its elected and appointed officials will work to provide public goods, correct information asymmetries, and maximize the total welfare of the graduate students whom they serve.

2 Elected Positions

2.1 President

The general management of Club affairs falls to the President. The President will appoint the positions listed in Section (3) and encourage the execution of their duties. Official meetings of the Club will be scheduled and organized by the President. The President is responsible for communications between the Graduate Student Body and the Teaching Assistants Association.

The President may, but is not required to hold up to one other position in the Club. There will be no limit on the number of terms, consecutive or otherwise, an individual may serve as President.

Should any vacancies occur among the Cohort Representatives, the President will appoint a replacement to serve until the following election. The President may be removed from office by a supermajority (2/3) vote of all Cohort Representatives.

2.2 Cohort Representatives

Each Cohort shall have one representative. Cohorts are defined as follows: Ph.D. First Year, Ph.D. Second Year, Ph.D. Third Year, Ph.D. Fourth Year, Ph.D. Fifth Year and Greater, and Master’s Program. An individual must be a member of the cohort she represents. A student may choose the Cohort to which she belongs but should do so consistent with her progression through the program.

Cohort Representatives serve to link each Cohort with the Club in order to ensure the Club serves the needs of the entire Graduate Student Body. Cohort Representatives should communicate with those in their Cohort to this end. The President will inform the Cohort Representatives of any relevant decisions. Official Club meetings should be attended by all Cohort Representatives.
A Cohort Representative may, but is not required to hold up to one other position in the Club. There will be no limit on the number of terms, consecutive or otherwise, an individual may serve as a Cohort Representative.

2.3 Elections

Elections for all elected positions are to be held annually, no earlier than the first day of classes of the Fall semester and no later than two weeks following that date.

All students enrolled in a professional or advanced degree program in the Economics Department are eligible to vote. A candidate must receive greater than 50 percent of votes cast for the seat in order to be elected. If no candidate meets this requirement for a particular seat, a second round of elections will be held for that seat in which only the two candidates with the greatest votes will participate. A student may only vote for a Cohort Representative from her own cohort.

The current Technology Officer is responsible for collecting nominations, soliciting and recording votes in a democratic manner, and reporting the results to the Graduate Student Body. Election results go into effect when they are reported to the students.

Should the position of President become vacant, an election to fill the seat shall occur no later than two weeks following the development of the vacancy.

3 Appointed Positions

The following positions are appointed by the President and serve at her leisure. A student may hold up to two of these positions if not serving as a Cohort Representative or the President. There will be no limit on the number of terms, consecutive or otherwise, an individual may hold an elected position.

3.1 Daisy Director

The Daisy Director is charged with operating the student lounge and associated services. Specific duties that fall to this post include:

- Stocking goods for sale in the Daisy
- Making available the means to purchase items in the Daisy and encouraging the use of the honor system
- Handling the finances associated with sales made by the Daisy
- Maintaining a clean and functional space with working appliances in coordination with building management

3.2 Faculty Liaison

The Faculty Liaison will regularly communicate news of Faculty decisions to the Graduate Student Body and solicit and relay the needs of the Graduate Student Body to the Faculty. Specific duties
that fall to this post include:

- Surveying the needs of the Graduate Student Body related to Faculty decisions, both proactively and as a resource available when complaints arise
- Advocating on behalf of the Graduate Student Body with the relevant faculty members
- Developing relationships and regularly communicating with pertinent faculty members in order to maintain a flow of information
- Notifying students of new hires, promotions, changes to program requirements, changes to the structure of exams, changes to funding, additions or reductions in program size, staffing changes, and any other information pertinent to graduate student life

3.3 Research Officer

The Research Officer shall hold a regular research seminar for students, facilitate links between current students and alumni, and relay relevant information regarding students’ research progress. Specific duties that fall to this post include:

- Operating a regularly scheduled research seminar open to students only
- Arranging a formal mechanism that links alumni with current students
- Maintaining an accessible catalog of voluntarily submitted past field papers and three signature proposals for each field
- Informing the Graduate Student Body of placement results

3.4 Social Officer

The Social Officer will lead the planning of annual Department social events and generally work to improve the social life of the Graduate Student Body. Specific duties that fall to this post include:

- Organizing Spring and Fall Picnics and a Holiday Party in coordination with the Graduate Adviser

3.5 Technology Officer

The Technology Officer is charged with handling the Club’s technology needs, assuming technical responsibilities that may fall on the Graduate Student Body, and advocating for the technical needs of the graduate students. Specific duties that fall to this post include:

- Conducting elections as described in Section 2.3
- Administering and updating the Club website
- Managing graduate student printing as directed by the Department
- Interacting with the Social Science Computing Cooperative as needed
4 Meetings

The Club will hold at least one official meeting each semester at a time convenient to all Cohort Representatives. Official meetings will be open to all graduate students. The President and each appointed official will report briefly on their duties and hear feedback from attendees.

5 Amendments

This Charter can be amended by a simple majority vote of all Cohort Representatives and the President.

APPROVED: September 4, 2013