

# 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 (4/5) 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. An individual must be a member of the cohort she represents. A student may choose the Cohort to which she belongs but said choice should be 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 the Ph.D. 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. In case any Cohort Representative or the President holds the position of Technology Officer, such duty will be performed by a third party appointed by a simple majority of the Cohort Representatives

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, with the exception of the Master's Student Representative, 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 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

### **3.2 Alumni Liaison**

The Alumni Liaison will regularly communicate to alumni about developments in the economics department of general interest. It should serve as a facilitator for the Graduate Student Body to connect with alumni. Specific duties that fall to this position include:

- Coordinate with the Graduate Adviser the posting of content to the professional website, if active, to inform alumni of major changes in the graduate programs of the Economics Department, its facilities, the compositions of the Graduate Student Body or of the Faculty as the Alumni Liaison considers pertinent. The JRC shall suggest contents to be posted in its official meetings
- Inform current students and alumni of graduating students' market placement
- Manage and annually update a professional alumni directory

As a new position, the Alumni Liaison shall be temporarily be hold by an interim, and officially appointed for the 2016-2017 academic year.

### **3.3 Research Officer**

The Research Officer shall hold a regular research seminar for students. The purpose of the seminar is to provide the Graduate Student Body with a place to expose their research at any stage of development, and to promote cooperation among the Graduate Student Body. Specific duties that fall to this post include:

- Operating a regularly-scheduled Student Research Group: a research and career seminar open to students only
- Scheduling at least one Career Development Event each semester, involving a faculty member or individual outside the Graduate Student Body with experience and knowledge of Economics Ph.D. careers. The events should be aimed to improve research quality, exposition skills, and student placement in the job market, in general
- In consultation with the Alumni Liaison, to facilitate the transmission of information on the job market process and placement from outgoing Graduate Students to the Graduate Student Body through an open meeting at the end of the academic year, as well as by any additional mechanisms the Research Officer feels are helpful

### **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, or any event replacing the above mentioned.

- Communicate and advertise properly the schedule, or organizational details of the social events to both Faculty and the Graduate Student Body including the students registered to both the Ph.D. and the Master's economics programs.

### **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

### **3.6 Master's Student Representative**

In consultation with a Master's Student Organization, or should such a Student Organization not be active, with several interested Master's Students, the President will appoint a Master's Student to represent those in her program with regards to social events conducted by the JRC, from which the master students are beneficiaries.

The Master's Students Organization, if active, enjoys autonomy from the JRC in its governance and administration. The Master's Student Representative cannot be removed from office by the President.

## **4 Meetings**

The Club will hold at least one official meeting each semester at a time convenient to all JRC staff: Cohort representatives, appointed officials and the president. 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 Staff Transition**

To ensure the continuity of the JRC club, and ease its administration, the president and all appointed positions are responsible of preparing a transition file that includes any information necessary for the management of their positions to future JRC representatives, as well as an archive containing information collected from the Graduate Student Body, along with a privacy disclaimer if necessary. Examples of this information include access codes, survey results, administrative protocols and e-mail formats.

## **6 Amendments**

This Charter can be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of all Cohort Representatives and the President. Amendments go into effect when the charter is published in the Club's website.

AMENDED: October, 2015

RATIFIED: November, 2015