

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION (PSA) / RHODE ISLAND
NATIONAL EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION (NEARI)
LOCAL #888 BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the Association shall be the University of Rhode Island Professional Staff Association (NEARI/NEA). The Association shall have the exclusive right to identify itself officially by logo, letterhead, and any other Association recognition material approved by the Executive Committee. Use of the name of the Association or subordinate body in an unauthorized manner or for an unauthorized purpose is a violation of the Bylaws.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. The purpose of this organization shall be to provide for the general welfare and equitable representation of its members in all matters, primarily through collective bargaining, as well as bolstering and facilitating dialogue between staff, employees, and administration.

Section 2. To promote within the group the highest level of professional practices, to encourage the active participation of all in the resolution of mutual problems, to urge every member of the Association to be a continuing student of professionalism, and to arouse allegiance to a genuine spirit of professionalism and professional ethics.

Section 3. To enable and provide a forum for members to speak equitably and with common voice on matters pertaining to their profession and the University, and to present their individual and common interests and views before their respective legal authorities.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

As a unified affiliate of the National Education Association of Rhode Island/National Education Association, any Professional Staff member may join by completing the required membership form to become a member of the local, state and national organizations. The University of Rhode Island Professional Staff Association shall have Active and Unaffiliated categories of membership.

1. **Active Member:** A person is an active member of the Association if they hold a position within the prescribed limits of the Association at the University of Rhode Island, is a signatory card holder with the URIPSA/NEARI/NEA as noted by the U.S. Supreme Court Janus Decision, and is a member in good standing with the local Association. A member in good standing is defined as a dues paying member and an active employee of URI.
2. **Unaffiliated Member:** A person that holds a position within the prescribed limits of the Association at the University of Rhode Island but is NOT a signatory member with URIPSA/NEARI/NEA.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Officers of the Association shall be active members in good standing with the local association. The Officers of the Association shall be: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and an Officer-At-Large (nominated by the President and approved by the Committee). Unaffiliated members are not eligible to hold positions within the organization.

The term of office shall be for two years. The term shall begin on July 1 following the election. The election shall take place in April/May of even numbered years.

Section 1. The **President** shall have the following duties:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Association.
- b. Call all special meetings of the Association.
- c. Sit as a member ex-officio of all committees except the Nomination Committee, or except where specifically noted.
- d. Appoint the chairpersons of all committees/ delegations with the consent of the Executive Committee.
- e. If an officer of the Association is unable to serve as chairperson of a standing committee, nominate a chairperson to replace the designated officer.
- f. Represent the Association at those functions where Association representation is required, or appoint a suitable representative.
- g. Execute the mandates of the Executive Committee and / or the general membership.
- h. Serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee and of its Steering Committee.
- i. Serve as primary liaison to URI Administration and NEARI and is authorized to sign special waivers, Memorandum On Agreement (MOAs), etc. on behalf of the organization. The President shall seek Executive Committee input when needed.
- j. Organize a contract negotiation committee when needed.

Section 2. The **Vice President** shall have the following duties:

- a. Preside at Association meetings in the absence of the President.
- b. Assist in the execution of the obligations of the office of the President.
- c. With approval of the Executive Committee, serve as acting President with all prerequisites if the President resigns or is otherwise incapacitated.
- d. Serve as the Executive Committee point of contact for the Grievance Committee.
- e. Support all committees and immediately fills an officer vacancy until the Executive Committee meets to appoint someone, or until the next election.

Section 3. The **Treasurer** shall have the following duties:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Association in the absence of the President and Vice President.
- b. Receive from any source and take custody of the Association's dues and monies, make prescribed distributions to NEARI/NEA.
- c. Supervise the expenditures of all Association monies. All payments shall bear two (2) authorized signatures or written approvals for amounts over \$1000.00. Persons authorized to sign payment orders are the Treasurer, President, or another Executive Committee member. Such authorized people must be listed on the bank account.
- d. Keep an adequate and accurate record of all Association monies, and report quarterly. The quarterly reports shall include Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Functional Expenses, and Aging Reports for invoices. The assistance of tools like Quickbooks or professional services is acceptable.
- e. Publish a financial report and prepare a proposed budget for approval by the general membership. The Association's fiscal year will be July 1 – June 30. The Annual Financial Report shall include a year-to-date analysis of the current year's budget, a proposal for the upcoming fiscal year, and a historical analysis of revenues and expenses to ensure our rates and revenues are adequate for our proposed expenditures.
- f. Initiate all payment orders for clearance with the Executive Committee as outlined in the budget. When necessary, expenditures not specified in the budget under one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) may be processed directly.
- g. Collaborate with the Secretary on procedures for processing both financial and membership records.

- h. Submit payments to NEARI/NEA that match and can be shared with NEARI/NEA. This is because our membership changes often unlike other NEARI/NEA organizations. This should occur at least monthly.
- i. Develop a Finance Committee, as needed, to assist with these duties.
- j. In collaboration with the President, complete and file all documents and forms required by the State of Rhode Island, NEARI/NEA, and The United States Government.

Section 4. The **Secretary** shall have the following duties:

- a. Keep an accurate record of the proceedings and attendance of all Association meetings, including Executive Committee meetings.
- b. Verify the necessary requirements for quorum, voting, candidacy and election.
- c. Serve concurrently as unit historian, including scanning/archiving agendas, minutes, voting records, special rules etc. in an easily accessible format (shared network drives, cloud storage, and hard copy if necessary).
- d. Prepare correspondence for the Association after consultation with the President and committee chairpersons, when appropriate.
- e. Coordinate the issuance notices (with agenda, when appropriate) of all general and special meetings of the Association, giving one-week advance notice, when possible.
- f. Be responsible for regular communication via the official PSA Listserv or other appropriate electronic communication to the PSA membership on a quarterly basis.
- g. Review, forward, respond to, and file all emails.
- h. Serve as Chairperson of the Bylaws Committee
- i. Co-chair the Communication Committee with the Officer-at-Large

Section 5. **Officer-at-Large:** The Officer-At-Large is an Area Representative that is nominated by the President each July and approved by the Executive Committee. The Officer-At-Large position focuses on individual member and Area Representatives issues. The Officer-at-Large shall have the following duties:

- a. Co-chairs the Grievance Committee
- b. Co-chair the Sick Bank Committee and nominates committee members to be approved by the Executive Committee.
- c. Attends all Executive Committee meetings.
- d., Attend other meetings, trainings, and events as needed.
- e. Co-chairs the Communications Committee with the Secretary (including website content, and maintenance)
- f. Assists all other officers as needed.
- g. Coordinate the distribution of membership cards to new and old members as appropriate, and submit membership reports as required to NEARI/NEA. This includes being the liaison to URI Human Resources for lists, new member notices, retirements, etc... Collaboration with the Treasurer is required.
- h. Maintain quarterly updates to PSA membership lists for the Area Representatives, which are shared with the Executive Committee.
- j. Retains the role and its respective duties as the elected Area Representative for their section in addition to the tasks associated with the Officer-At-Large

Section 6. Area Representatives and Area Representatives-at-Large : The Area Representatives are elected by the general membership based on area designations determined by geographical area and interest considerations. The designations are to be reviewed and determined by the Executive Committee prior to Area

Representative elections of odd - numbered years. An area may have more than one representative. Area representatives shall have the following duties:

- a. Represent members from their respective areas through the Executive Committee, vote on the strategic direction of the organization, including changes to bylaws and the annual budget process.
- b. Responsible for outreach to individual members, solicitation and organizing of information that is relevant to the orderly functioning of URIPSA.
- c. Attend all Executive Committee meetings.
- d. Attend other meetings, training, and events as needed.
- e. Serve on committees (Grievance, Scholarship, Sick Bank, Communication, Finance, etc.)
- f. Organize events, communicate to new PSA eligible members, and other requests of the Officers.
- g. Shall be immediately considered to fill an officer position should one become vacant mid-term.

Section 7: Should any of the above positions become vacant during a term, the Executive Committee is responsible for filling the position as soon as possible via appointment or the next election, whichever comes first.

ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS

Section 1. Election of officers shall be held in April/May of even numbered years. The term shall begin on July 1 following the election. Special elections may be called as needed to fill vacant positions when deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. Unaffiliated members may NOT serve as officers, area representatives, or participate in any committee, subcommittee, ad hoc committees, or vote on URI PSA/NEARI/NEA matters. The elections shall follow these procedures:

- a. The Nominating Committee shall announce an upcoming election to all Active members listing the open positions and calling for nominations four weeks prior to the election. An announcement shall be made via email, a Listserv and/or other appropriate means of communication. The Nominating Committee must accept and announce all nominations or declarations for office.
- b. Nominations from any Active member for any office will be accepted up to two weeks prior to the election.
- c. A person may not be elected to more than one office in the PSA.
- d. When nominations are completed, Active members shall vote for each office by secret ballot.
- e. A person shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the votes received.
- f. In the event of a tie, a second ballot shall be distributed to Active members for a vote.
- g. Election results shall be reported to the membership by the Nominating Committee via email group, the listserv or other appropriate communication means.
- h. Elections will take place using a secure electronic ballot system.

Section 2. Election of area representatives shall be held in April/May of odd numbered years. It shall follow the procedure put forth in Article V Section 1 above. The term shall begin on July 1, following the election. Special elections may be called when necessary to fill vacant positions. The elections shall follow these procedures:

- a. Area Representatives shall be nominated and elected by Active members of their respective areas only.
- b. Two Area Representatives-At-large representatives shall be nominated and elected by the entire membership.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

There shall be eight-standing committees of the Association: **Executive Committee** (Officers), **Steering Committee of the Executive Committee** (Officers and Area Representatives), **Negotiating Committee**,

Bylaws Committee, Grievance Committee, Scholarship Committee, Sick Bank Committee, and the Communications Committee. A quorum for each committee shall consist of a majority of its members.

ARTICLE VII: COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Committees may consist of the officers of the Association, the designated number of area representatives, and 2 representatives at-large elected by the general membership. The Executive Committee shall provide leadership for the Association regarding decisions about:

- a. Association policy and matters that pertain to the general welfare and common good of the membership.
- b. Whenever two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of the Executive Committee shall vote that an officer or an area representative has been negligent or unable to perform their duties, or that they are incapacitated, the office shall be declared vacant.
- c. An interim appointment may be made to any vacant position by the Executive Committee except to the office of president, which shall be assumed by the vice-president.
- d. The Executive Committee shall supervise all business of the Association on behalf of the membership, in accordance with the Bylaws.
- e. The Executive Committee will vote on all nominations of Chairpersons of standing committees/delegations submitted by the Association President.
- f. The Executive Committee must vote to approve or disapprove of standing committee / delegation members.
- g. The President may appoint special committees from time to time as the need arises with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- h. Committee Quorums shall be at least 2/3rds members. Virtual meetings may occur as advertised and a quorum shall be satisfied by electronic attendance.

Section 2. The Steering Committee of the Executive Committee: Is composed of the Officers of the Association and Area Representatives.

- a. The Steering Committee shall implement policies established by the Executive Committee, handle the day-to-day matters of the Association in accordance with established policy, as well as reporting to and advising the Executive Committee on issues of concern to the Association.
- b. The Steering Committee shall set the agenda for meetings of the Executive Committee, review the progress of pending items, recommend official actions and conduct assignments specifically authorized by the Executive Committee.
- c. An auxiliary duty of the Steering Committee is to function as a Grievance Committee should the need arise. Furthermore, any member of the Steering Committee may be tasked to act as a Grievance Representative.

Section 3. The Negotiating Committee: draws its authority from the Executive Committee and is empowered to negotiate contracts.

- a. The Negotiating Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Steering Committee members.
- b. Two alternates shall be selected from the Executive Committee.
- c. The Negotiating Committee shall solicit recommendations for contract negotiations from the general membership.
- d. No individual member of the Negotiating Committee may commit the Association to any tentative agreement until said agreement has been reviewed and agreed to by a quorum of the members of the Negotiating Committee.

Section 4. The Bylaws Committee: The duties of this committee shall be to interpret the Bylaws for the orderly functioning of Association business. The Bylaws Committee shall be composed of a chairperson and a minimum of two (2) members.

- a. Upon receipt of a proposed amendment from any membership source, this committee shall consider the amendment and shall make recommendations to the Executive Committee in advance of membership ratification (Article XIV).
- b. The committee members shall be nominated by the Committee chairperson who is the Association Secretary.
- c. Bylaws Committee shall meet and review Bylaws annually

Section 5. The Grievances Committee. The Grievance Committee shall be required to address, investigate, and provide guidance for all member-reported grievances, ethically and individually, utilizing best-practices guidelines from NEARI.

- a. The Grievance Committee shall be co-chaired by the Vice-President, and Officer-At-Large
- b. Members of the Grievance Committee shall include the co-chairs, the grievant, and an Area Representative/At-Large Representative, chosen by the grievant.
- c. The Grievance Committee will disclose reported grievances to members of the Executive Officers.
- d. The Grievance Committee will follow consistent and ethical practices in evaluating and responding to grievances, which vary in nature.
- e. Grievances must be confidential, and records kept on a password protected document.

Section 6. The Scholarship Committee: (NEW) URI PSA provides annual scholarships funds for active members seeking professional development and/or dependents of active members enrolled as full-time student(s) in a degree program of higher education institutions in the United States.

- a. Chaired by the Treasurer, who will determine the frequency of committee meetings.
- b. Committee members may include, but are not limited to both Executive Officers, and Area Representatives.
- c. The Scholarship Committee shall be tasked with the responsibility of coordinating with the Communications Committee to notify membership of PSA scholarship opportunities. The Scholarship Committee will accept and review scholarship applications on a rolling basis, determine eligibility, and award scholarships accordingly.
- d. Funds allotted for scholarships may vary and are determined by the budgetary vote of the general membership.

Section 7. The Sick Bank Committee: The Sick Bank committee shall be responsible for reviewing requests made for Active member-donated PSA Sick Bank time, equitably determining eligibility, and distributing donated sick bank time accordingly.

- a. Co-chairs and members will be composed of volunteers from the Steering Committee.
- b. The Sick Bank Committee will coordinate with the Communications Committee and Secretary to notify membership of Sick Bank donation and application processes.

Section 8. The Communications Committee: The Communications Committee shall be responsible for creating, editing, and maintaining up-to-date content on the URI PSA website.

- a. Co-chaired by the Secretary and Officer-At-Large.

- b. Additional Communications Committee members will be composed of volunteers from the Steering Committee.
- c. The President with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee may appoint a webmaster.
- d. Co-chairs will communicate content to the designated PSA website webmaster.
- e. Tasked with communicating union-specific opportunities, processes, policies, and benefits, including, but not limited to Sick Bank donations/applications, grievance procedures, and URI PSA scholarships..
- f. Educating the community on news and events connected with the PSA union
- g. Create and maintain a schedule of communications to members.

ARTICLE VIII: QUORUM

Section 1. At any general membership meeting, a quorum shall consist of fifteen (15) percent of the active membership. A quorum shall be established by the Secretary after taking the roll. Once a quorum is established, the vote necessary to call the meeting to order shall be conducted from those members present. Virtual meetings may occur as advertised and a quorum can be determined through electronic attendance if the meeting was advertised as such.

Section 2. Votes by proxy are not allowed, but mail ballots are permitted upon Association or Executive Committee authorization. Electronic voting is allowed.

ARTICLE IX: RULES OF ORDER AND PARLIAMENTARIAN

Section 1. “Robert’s Rules of Order” shall be the fundamental parliamentary law of the Association meetings. “Special Rules of Order” shall govern the Association whenever possible.

Section 2. The President with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee may appoint a parliamentarian.

Section 3. The President, with the consent of the committee they are presiding over, may suspend elements of “Robert’s Rule of Order,” if it is deemed in the best interests of the union. A two-thirds majority is needed for any waiver of a particular rule or motion during a meeting.

ARTICLE X: TERM LIMITS

The Executive Officers shall adhere to a term limit of 3 consecutive terms in office with one position for a maximum two terms, and one additional term in another office. There are no term limits for elected Area Representatives.

ARTICLE XI: STIPENDS

Section 1. Elected Officers, Area Representatives, and Committee chairpersons of this Association may receive annual stipends for services rendered to the Association.

Section 2. The amount of each stipend shall be determined by the Executive Committee, and line-itemed in the budget. Stipends will be approved as part of the annual budget process by the membership with the Executive Committee’s recommendations.

ARTICLE XII: MEETINGS

Section 1. There may be an annual meeting of the General Membership by vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President or upon presentation to the President of a petition for a special meeting signed by ten percent (10%) or more Active members.

Section 3. Notice of special meetings shall be distributed at least one week in advance, when possible, official PSA listserv or other appropriate means of communication.

Section 4. Electronic/Virtual Meetings. For reasons of accessibility, Active members may attend Regular and Special Meetings through an electronic/virtual method. Communication and meeting practices for an electronic/virtual format will be determined and communicated to Active members.

Section 5. The Executive Committee meetings shall be open to the general membership. If closed Executive Committee sessions are necessary, it will be noted in the meeting agenda. The Executive Committee will report relevant actions taken during closed sessions.

- a. Meetings shall be held monthly with an annual schedule provided to the general membership at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE XIII: SPECIAL RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION

Section 1. The Executive Committee and / or Steering Committee may establish special rules that are deemed necessary for the orderly and equitable conduct of PSA business. Special rules should not conflict with the Bylaws.

ARTICLE XIV: DUES

The membership dues schedule shall reflect both the dues for the state and national affiliations adopted by the NEARI Delegate Assembly each year and the dues for the local Association. The dues for the local Association are proposed by the Executive Committee in the annual budget, and approved by vote by Active members. If necessary, a special audit of membership dues may be approved following a majority vote of those present at a general membership meeting or those responding to a special ballot presented to the general membership.

ARTICLE XV: LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORITY

No individual officer or member of the Executive Committee, Steering Committee, or Negotiating Committee may commit the Association to any agreement, either orally or in writing, with NEARI, other URI unions, members of the University of Rhode Island Administration or any other entity without the expressed consent of the Executive Committee.

In a bona fide emergency, a quorum of Steering Committee members may vote and sign an authorization. They shall convene a special meeting of the Executive Committee within two days to report on their activities and justify their actions.

ARTICLE XVI: METHOD OF AMENDMENT

The Bylaws shall be amended in accordance with the guidelines in the following sections:

Section 1. At any time, a proposed amendment may be submitted to the President in writing. The President shall then transmit the proposal to the chairperson of the Bylaws Committee for review and study.

Section 2. The Chairperson of the Bylaws Committee shall furnish a copy of the proposal with Committee comments to the Executive Committee publication for a vote to approve, prior to membership ratification.

Section 3. The proposed amendments shall be published and distributed via the Listserv and/or other appropriate means of communication. A two-week comment period will precede a vote of the membership.

ARTICLE XVII: AREA REPRESENTATIVES

The composition of Areas shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee prior to each Area Representative Election, held in odd-numbered years. The Executive and Nominating Committee shall review (new buildings etc.) and balance areas so that each Area Representative has approximately the same number of members.

AREAS as of the 2022 Area Representative Election

A	Buildings: Mallon Outreach, Potter Bldg, Quinn, Shepard Bldg, Skogley Turf Research Building, Transition Ct
B (2)	Bay Campus
C	CBLS, Chafee, Davis, Fine Arts Ctr, Library, Morrill, Gender & Sexuality Ctr, Multicultural Ctr, Women's Ctr
D	Avedisian, Bliss, Beaupre, Carlotti, East, Fascitelli CAE (Engineering), Fascitelli (Fitness & Wellness), Fogarty, Kirk, Pastore, Research Office, Tyler, White
E	Alumni Ctr, Ballentine, Int'l Engineering, Int'l Student, Lippitt Hall, Surge Bldg, Swan, Taft
F	Coastal Institute, East Farm, Greenhouses, Lands and Grounds, Liberty Lane, Ranger, Peckham, URI Gardner Agronomy Farm, Woodward
G (2)	Carother's Library, Edwards, Green, Higgins, Hillel, Hillside (HRL), Human Resources, Lippitt, Newman, Rodman, Roosevelt
H	Adams, Child Dev.Ctr, Dining Services, Memorial Union, Carlotti, Adams, W.Alton Jones
I	Athletics, Boss, Garage Rd, Independence Sq, Keaney, Mackal Field House, Sherman Bldg, Public Safety Bldg, Wakefield House
At- Large Representative (2)	Assist all members, representatives, and officers

Corrected and edited 10/20/92 / Corrected and edited 12/31/94 / Corrected and edited 12/8/97 / Corrected and edited 10/31/00 / Corrected and edited 10/6/02 / Corrected and edited 12/04 / Corrected and edited 7/17 / Corrected and edited 7/31/2023/ Corrected and edited by committee (IP: John Rooney, Lisa Macarusio, Deb Cohen, Erran Sousa, Nina Tobin, additional draft contributions by Schane Tallardy and Pat Kelly) 8/2 - 8/3/2023