

Fordham Graduate Student Workers
Communication Workers of America Local 1104
Bylaws

1. Name

- a. This union shall be known as Fordham Graduate Student Workers – Communications Workers of America, Local 1104 (FGSW–CWA).

2. Mission

- a. Fordham Graduate Student Workers unites and represents graduate students employed by Fordham University in a variety of positions. Through our union, we will ensure fair, safe, and humane working conditions so that we can effectively educate students and do our part to realize Fordham's Jesuit mission.

3. Structure

- a. This union is organized under the following structure of parties:
 - i. The Members
 - ii. The Coordinating Committee
 - iii. Elected officials: The FGSW-CWA Business Agent and Stewards

4. Definition of membership and dues

- a. A member in good standing is defined as a card-carrying member who is currently in payment of dues to the organization.
 - i. Withdrawal of Membership - All graduate student workers who do not wish to be members of FGSW must formally withdraw their membership by submitting a letter of withdrawal to the CWA Local 1104. ~~These graduate student workers will not pay dues (2%) but will have agency fees (1.8%) withdrawn from their Fordham—paychecks.~~ (This last clause is superseded by Local bylaws and the CWA International Constitution)
 - ii. Graduate student workers eligible for membership in the Union hold appointments as Graduate Student Assistants (including hourly positions), Teaching Fellows, or Teaching Associates, subject to the collective bargaining agreement between the Union and Fordham University.

b. Rights and Responsibilities of Membership

- i. Workplace Protections: all members are entitled to the rights and protections outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. This includes Weingarten Rights, which is the right to representation at all meetings with supervisors.
- ii. Decision Making: all members in good standing have the right to participate in the following decision involving the union by a measure of one member, one vote. The Coordinating Committee shall seek as much member input as possible and may conduct these decisions via a General Membership Meeting or Referendum.

1. Strike authorization

2. Endorsement of candidates for political office or signing onto political statements

3. Election of the Union Officers

4. Approval of any modifications to the Bylaws.

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- 5. Approval of subsequent Collective Bargaining Agreements and any modifications of said Agreement.
- iii. Participation in Leadership: All members in good standing have the right to participate in leadership of the union by serving as department representatives, on working groups, or running for elected office. The CC aims to have department representatives equal to 10% of the bargaining unit, proportionally distributed across departments.
- iv. Participation in coordinating meetings: all members in good standing are entitled to attend meetings of the coordinating committee, submit issues for discussion on the meeting agenda, and speak as representatives of a topic discussed. However, only members who are currently serving in an elected office, on a working group, or as a department representative have voting rights for coordinating committee votes.
- v. Member Responsibilities: all members have the responsibility to read their contract and know their protections guaranteed therein. All members should report any suspected violations of the bargaining agreement or any other labor issues that may arise to their department representatives.

5. Elected Officers: nomination, election, and responsibilities

- a. Elected officers include a business agent, and at least two Chief Stewards. These Chief Stewards will be divided by workplace with one responsible for the graduate students working at the Lincoln Center campus and one responsible for the graduate students working at the Rose Hill campus. The process for nominations, elections, and details on the responsibilities of these roles are defined by the CWA local 1104 bylaws, and can be found [here](#).

6. Coordinating Committee (CC)

- a. The affairs of the union shall be governed by its membership in accordance with the Constitution and policies of CWA in the following manner:
 - i. Through action taken in membership meetings or by referendum of the membership.
 - ii. Through actions and decisions of the Coordinating Committee between membership meetings.
 - iii. Through actions of the Elected Officers between meetings of the Coordinating Committee.
- b. **Section 1. Definition.**
 - i. The Coordinating Committee shall be a body of members that coordinates work in the union, ensures that all decisions of the membership are carried out in a timely and effective manner, and otherwise carries out the administration of the union between membership meetings
 - ii. The Coordinating Committee shall act as the decision-making body of the union between membership meetings as long as its decisions follow the policies set by the membership and do not contradict these Bylaws. Its decisions will be subject to democratic mechanisms, such as, any decision can be transformed into a referendum or any decision can be rescinded by a majority vote of union members.

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c. Section 2. Composition.

- i. The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of the Local Officers (business agent and stewards); all hourly CWA staff members; at least one representative from each working group, whether standing or temporary; and departmental representatives from as many departments as possible.
- ii. The standing working groups of FGSW are the Community Engagement, Maintenance, Media, and Union Culture Working Groups. The Coordinating Committee has the ability to establish temporary working groups at its discretion.
 1. The Community Engagement Working Group aims to establish and maintain mutual support and communication with full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and undergraduate students at Fordham; with other unions, particularly within the CWA family and within higher education; and with the local population surrounding Fordham's Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses.
 2. The Maintenance Working Group organizes and, as appropriate, makes accessible the records of FGSW. Records include members' contact information, meeting agendas, and meeting notes. The Maintenance Working Group works with the Business Agent and local unit to maintain the privacy and security of FGSW members' information, particularly members' signed membership cards and Social Security data. Members of the Maintenance Working Group also send out emails notifying members of upcoming CC and membership meetings, membership votes, and other pertinent information.
 3. The Media Working Group presents FGSW to various audiences and communicates its actions, values, and goals to these audiences. As such, its work informs and is informed by the work of the Community Engagement Working Group. The Media Working Group coordinates FGSW's social media presence and activity, press releases, and interviews with media outlets.
 4. The Union Culture Working Group builds up the sense of community in FGSW. It fosters unity, inclusion, respect, transparency, and mutual support in the union through programming like socials, maintaining clear communication within FGSW and between FGSW and the local unit, and initiatives on diversity and equity.

d. Section 3. Responsibilities

- i. A representative from a working group can attend as a departmental representative and vice versa.
- ii. Working groups must designate one person to regularly attend CC meetings. The meeting representatives can designate another member of their groups to attend a CC meeting in the event they cannot make that meeting. However, these meeting representatives should attend CC meetings regularly to function as reliable liaisons between the CC and their working group.
 1. This bylaw applies to departmental representatives when they belong to the department they are representing. Unit members working with departments to which they do not belong are not obligated but rather encouraged to attend CC meetings.

7. Timing and conduct of meetings

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- a. The time and location of Coordinating Committee meetings shall be set by the Coordinating Committee-
 - i. The Coordinating Committee should meet monthly but may decide to meet more frequently, as needed.
 - ii. Coordinating Committee meetings should be held on a consistent day and time whenever possible.
- b. The conduct of Coordinating Committee meetings should include rotating shared responsibilities for Coordinating Committee members, including:
 - i. Chairing meetings, taking notes, marking meeting attendance, which should be rotated each meeting.
 - ii. Making the meeting agenda, which should be open to rotation on a semesterly basis (ie: each Fall, Spring, and Summer)
 - iii. Emailing the agenda to the CC prior to meeting, and hosting the zoom link, which should be rotated between members of the Maintenance working group at time intervals to be decided at their discretion.
- c. The conduct of Coordinating Meetings should follow the agenda sent out before each meeting, and should be guided and facilitated by the meeting chair. If Coordinating Committee members have particular issues that they would like addressed in a meeting, they should notify the agenda makers in the appropriate slack channel.
- d. If an issue to be added to the agenda includes an item to be voted on, agenda makers should be notified at least one week ahead of the meeting, so that a detailed email on the vote and relevant issues can be sent to coordinating committee members at least five days before. This background should be read by Coordinating Committee members ahead of the meeting, to facilitate an efficient voting process. Votes during Coordinating Committee meetings shall be immediately in effect provided that sufficient notice and information (see above) was distributed amongst the Coordinating Committee ahead of the vote. Voting shall follow Robert's rules, and be decided by a simple majority of a given quorum of members present.
- e. The quorum level shall be no less than two thirds of active Coordinating Committee members.
- f. If a CC member cannot make a meeting where an item is being voted on, they may designate someone to attend and vote in their stead.

8. Membership meetings

- a. Time and location of membership meetings:
 - i. There shall be at least three membership meetings per semester (Fall and Spring) during the academic year, with the option to schedule more if necessary. These shall occur in a hybrid format to facilitate as much attendance as possible.
- b. Conduct and function of membership meetings:
 - i. The membership meetings function to update membership at large of ongoing organizing work, any emergent issues, and during contract campaigns, to vote on contracts.
- c. Membership socials will take place throughout the academic year through the coordination of the Coordinating Committee and the Union Culture Working Group

9. Bylaws amendment

- a. After adoption, these Bylaws may be amended by either referendum of the membership or by two-thirds vote of the members present in a membership meeting, provided the proposed

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amendment has been introduced at a previous membership meeting or has been advertised by use of an official union email at least five (5) days in advance of the date voting takes place. The Coordinating Committee must convene a meeting to reconsider these Bylaws at the close of each new contract but may convene additional meetings at its discretion or at the request of two-thirds of union members.

10. Local and International Preemption

If any portion of these bylaws are in conflict with the bylaws of CWA International Union or local union CWA 1104, the International or local bylaw holds precedent on the matter and shall preempt the FGSW chapter bylaw on said question.