

**Vermont State Colleges United Professionals  
American Federation of Teachers  
AFT VT, Local 6217**

# **Constitution**

(Revised May 18, 2023)

## **1. NAME**

The name of this organization is “Vermont State Colleges United Professionals”, also called VSCUP

## **2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1. To secure full trade union rights, including those of exclusive recognition and collective bargaining, for all employees who are eligible for membership.
- 2.2. To bring VSCUP members together for mutual assistance and cooperation.
- 2.3. To advance the welfare of all employees who are eligible for membership.
- 2.4. To promote the effectiveness and quality of the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS).
- 2.5. To foster cooperation among labor organizations within the VSCS and our communities.
- 2.6. To expect that officers carry out their duties ethically and maintain confidentiality.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1. Membership shall be open to all employees in the job titles covered by the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) unit determination (Supervisory/SUP and Professional, Administrative and Technical/PAT units), the collective bargaining agreement (also called the ‘contract’), and/or other agreements between VSCUP and the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS).
- 3.2. Full Member
  - 3.2.1. A full member is an employee who is eligible for membership and agrees to pay the full membership fee.
  - 3.2.2. A full member can attend all bargaining unit meetings, bargaining updates, and are eligible to vote for representatives and contract ratification.
- 3.3. Bargaining Unit Member
  - 3.3.1. A bargaining unit member is an employee who is eligible for membership and declines to pay the membership fee.
  - 3.3.2. Members who choose not to be dues payers may be asked to compensate the union for travel, copies, and technical assistance under certain circumstances.
- 3.4. Membership shall be acquired by signing a form authorizing payroll deduction of VSCUP dues. A member can resign by following the procedure outlined by their membership card.
- 3.5. Where separate contracts or contract provisions may occur between the VSCS and the Professional, Administrative, and Technical (PAT) unit or the Supervisors (SUP) unit, only members in the appropriate unit shall vote on those contracts or contract provisions.

## **4. REPRESENTATION STRUCTURE**

- 4.1. The organization shall have four chapters, one each at Castleton, Randolph, Lyndon and Johnson. Each chapter shall consist of the VSCUP members from that campus and any members working at the Chancellor’s Office and/or Vermont State University satellite and other locations, who have chosen that campus as their chapter.

- 4.2. Each chapter shall elect five officers:
  - 4.2.1.1. Chapter Chair
  - 4.2.1.2. Membership Chair
  - 4.2.1.3. Grievance Chair
  - 4.2.1.4. PAT Delegate (When possible, can be filled by a member of the other unit when position is vacant after elections and there are no willing candidates)
  - 4.2.1.5. SUP Delegate (When possible, can be filled by a member of the other unit when position is vacant after elections and there are no willing candidates)
- 4.2.2. All of these positions will be held for two-year terms and be voted on by unit members in good standing at the Annual Meeting.
- 4.3. The Executive Board shall be elected to two-year terms by the general membership and will consist of the following officers:
  - 4.3.1. Co-Presidents (2)
  - 4.3.2. Secretary
  - 4.3.3. Treasurer
  - 4.3.4. SUP Executive Vice President (elected by the members of the SUP unit)
  - 4.3.5. PAT Executive Vice President (elected by the members of the PAT unit)
- 4.4. The organization shall have a Delegate Assembly consisting of the officers from each chapter and the Executive Board and the Finance Chair.

## 5. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- 5.1. **The Co-Presidents** (or their designee) shall:
  - 5.1.1. Serve a two-year term as President;
  - 5.1.2. Be the principal executive officers of the organization;
  - 5.1.3. Attend and preside at all meetings of the membership, the Executive Board, and the Delegate Assembly;
  - 5.1.4. Direct the internal organizing, member education, delegate representation and confidentiality training, and leadership development of the organization, and oversee any standing committees;
  - 5.1.5. Attend chapter meetings when possible
  - 5.1.6. Represent the organization before bodies of the employer, executive, and legislative officials, or appoint a designee;
  - 5.1.7. Represent the organization before the public, community organizations, and the news media, or appoint a designee;
  - 5.1.8. Be an ex-officio member of all standing committees except the Elections Committee;
  - 5.1.9. Receive, report, and respond to correspondence for the organization, or direct such correspondence to the appropriate officer;
  - 5.1.10. Be one of the responsible financial officers of the organization and be authorized to co-sign financial instruments and make regular and usual disbursement of funds;
  - 5.1.11. Be a delegate to the Vermont chapter of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT-VT) and the state AFL-CIO body (when applicable);
  - 5.1.12. Be a delegate to the convention of the AFT and meetings of its affiliated bodies;
  - 5.1.13. Make an annual report to the members at the Annual Meeting, and
  - 5.1.14. Be empowered to delegate the responsibilities of the office except where otherwise specified by this Constitution.
  - 5.1.15. Be the custodian of the seal and charter of the organization;
- 5.2. **The PAT/SUP Executive Vice-Presidents** shall:
  - 5.2.1. Attend meetings of the Executive Board and Delegate Assembly;

- 5.2.2. Oversee the grievance process, maintain a record of all grievances, educate the members of their respective bargaining units concerning grievances, and jointly oversee any grievance committee that may be formed;
  - 5.2.3. Serve as alternate grievance officers;
  - 5.2.4. Work with the PAT and SUP Delegates in the processing of grievances and disputes beyond the immediate work location;
  - 5.2.5. Serve on the Membership Committee, when it is needed;
  - 5.2.6. Serve ex officio as members of their respective bargaining teams when necessary;
  - 5.2.7. Work with Chapter Chairs on outreach to new employees represented by the organization, and
  - 5.2.8. Perform other duties as delegated by the Presidents or assigned by the Executive Board.
- 5.3. The **Secretary** shall:
- 5.3.1. Maintain the files and records of the organization;
  - 5.3.2. Respond to correspondence;
  - 5.3.3. Prepare the agendas for, and record and keep accurate minutes of, meetings of the membership, the Delegate Assembly, and the Executive Board;
  - 5.3.4. Be one of the responsible financial officers of the organization and be authorized to co-sign financial instruments;
  - 5.3.5. Oversee the work of, and receive and certify the reports of the Election and other Standing Committees and ad hoc committees as established by the Delegate Assembly.
- 5.4. The **Treasurer** shall:
- 5.4.1. Attend meetings and present Treasurer's Report at Executive Board and Delegate Assembly meetings;
  - 5.4.2. Deposit and process dues deduction income in the name of the organization on a bi-weekly basis;
  - 5.4.3. Scan bank statements to Finance Chair;
  - 5.4.4. Write per capita dues checks;
  - 5.4.5. Perform AFT Annual audit with Finance Chair, when necessary;
  - 5.4.6. Review Treasurer's reports before they are submitted to the Delegate Assembly;
  - 5.4.7. IRS Form 990-EZ (prepared by AFT);
  - 5.4.8. Work with Finance Chair and President to develop an annual operating budget to discuss with the Executive Board;
  - 5.4.9. Agency fee audit biannually (by independent accountant), with Finance Chair;
  - 5.4.10. Miscellaneous deposits (Quarterly AFT Plus web reimbursements, etc.);
  - 5.4.11. Manage investments (savings account, certificates of deposit, money market);
  - 5.4.12. Receive, record, and deposit all income in the name of the organization;
  - 5.4.13. Be one of the responsible financial officers of the organization and be authorized to co-sign financial instruments and make regular and usual disbursement of funds;
  - 5.4.14. Arrange for an annual independent review of the finances of the organization and make same available to the membership and the Executive Board;
  - 5.4.15. Perform the duties of the office as required by the *Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act* and as advised by the AFT's guidelines. The Treasurer shall be bonded by the organization.
  - 5.4.16. Provide the Executive Vice Presidents and Chapter Chairs with the information necessary to maintain accurate membership lists.
  - 5.4.17. Maintain accurate membership records and regularly report these to the Delegate Assembly;

- 5.5. The **Finance Chair shall work with the Treasurer to:** Reconcile monthly bank statements with QuickBooks online;
  - 5.5.1. The Finance Chair is nominated by the Treasurer and approved by the Executive Board
  - 5.5.2. Put together Treasurer's Reports for each Executive Board meeting;
  - 5.5.3. Attend Delegate Assembly meetings as an ex officio member;
  - 5.5.4. Assist with yearly AFT audit and bi-annual Agency Fee Audit;
  - 5.5.5. Work with the President to develop an annual operating budget;
  - 5.5.6. Review, update, and communicate financial accounting policy and procedure with the Executive Board as needed;
  - 5.5.7. Serve as a consultant concerning fiscal matters;
  - 5.5.8. Assist Treasurer with preparing for the biannual agency fee audit.
- 5.6. The **Delegates** shall:
  - 5.6.1. Attend Delegate Assembly meetings and raise concerns and ideas from their chapter colleagues
  - 5.6.2. Share and collect information with chapter members
- 5.7. The **Chapter Chairs** shall:
  - 5.7.1. Three Chairs will divide responsibilities, Administrative, Membership, and Grievance
    - 5.7.1.1. Administrative Chair
      - 5.7.1.1.1. Schedule and preside over all chapter meetings
      - 5.7.1.1.2. Keep notes
      - 5.7.1.1.3. Communicate with campus administration
      - 5.7.1.1.4. Communicate with Union leadership
      - 5.7.1.1.5. Coordinate and oversee committees
      - 5.7.1.1.6. Work with the Delegates of their chapters to identify issues to be brought forward in the Delegate Assembly and in contract negotiations;
    - 5.7.1.2. Membership Chair
      - 5.7.1.2.1. Provide orientation to new members within their first 30 days of employment
      - 5.7.1.2.2. Educate and foster the involvement of those represented at their campuses
      - 5.7.1.2.3. Identify and recruit members of standing committees and chapter leadership
      - 5.7.1.2.4. Serve on the Membership standing committee and work to recruit members on their campuses.
      - 5.7.1.2.5. Keep accurate membership lists
      - 5.7.1.2.6. Annual outreach to non-dues payers in their chapters, in collaboration with the Treasurer
      - 5.7.1.2.7. Communicate with members
    - 5.7.1.3. Grievance Chair
      - 5.7.1.3.1. All contract concerns
      - 5.7.1.3.2. Work with members to document possible grievances
      - 5.7.1.3.3. Work with Co-Presidents and Executive Vice-Presidents to facilitate the grievance process
  - 5.7.2. All Chairs shall Attend Delegate Assembly meetings, and between them they will cast one vote for decision making;
- 5.8. The **Delegate Assembly** shall:
  - 5.8.1. Formulate and set the policy of this organization;

- 5.8.2. Set the annual dues of the organization with the Finance Committee, to be ratified by the membership;
- 5.8.3. Have the power to make contracts and incur liabilities which may be appropriate to enable it to accomplish its purposes; to borrow money for its purposes at such rates of interest and terms and conditions as it may determine; to issue notes, bonds, and other obligations; and to secure any of its obligations by mortgage, pledge, or deed of trust of all or any of its property and income;
- 5.8.4. Meetings of the Delegate Assembly shall be open to all members in good standing. A quorum for Delegate Assembly meetings shall consist of not less than 50% of the Assembly plus one member.

## **6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- 6.1 Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of even years for two-year terms, except for one of the Co-Presidents, who will be elected in odd years for two-year terms.
- 6.2 To be eligible for office a person must be a member in good standing for a period of six months before the election date.
- 6.3 One month before the election date, the Elections Committee shall notify all members of the date of the election and of the opening of nominations for offices to be filled. Notice shall be by e-mail.
- 6.4 In order for a nominee to be included on the ballot, nominees must present the Elections Committee with a nominating petition containing the names of not less than five members in good standing in support of their candidacy.
- 6.5 The Elections Committee shall conduct the election for officers at the annual meeting. The vote shall be by secret ballot or online voting. A majority of the votes cast shall determine the result. In the event of a lack of any candidate achieving a majority of votes cast, a runoff election will be held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. The runoff election will follow the rules for elections specified in this article.
- 6.6 Written requests for absentee ballots must be received by the Campus Chapter Chairs no less than ten days prior to the election. Absentee ballots must be sent to the Election Committee and must be received by election day or by the end of the election period.
- 6.7 Objections to the election must be submitted in writing, with a statement of supporting facts, to the Elections Committee within five days of the count. The Committee shall issue a written opinion regarding the objection(s) no later than 10 days after it receives such objections.
- 6.8 The Elections Committee will notify the members of the final election results by e-mail and by posting notices at the campuses, within twenty (20) days of the count.
- 6.9 The successful candidates shall assume office thirty (30) days after the vote.
- 6.10 If an at-large position on the Executive Board other than President falls vacant, it shall be filled by appointment by a majority of the Executive Board. In case of a vacancy of the Presidency or of a recall, the position shall be filled by an off-cycle election by the members. Vacancies in chapter-based offices shall be filled by election by the chapter members. Terms awarded off-cycle shall end when on-cycle terms end. Officers appointed to complete a term vacated mid-term by an elected official will serve until the completion of said term.
- 6.11 A petition signed by thirty percent (30%) of the membership, and stating specific grounds, shall be sufficient to require the Elections Committee to conduct a recall election of any officer specified in the petition under the elections procedures specified in this article. If an officer is recalled, the Elections Committee shall then hold a special election under the elections procedures specified in this article, to fill the position.

## **7. COMMITTEES**

- 7.1. The following standing committees shall be active in the union when needed and prepare a report for each annual meeting:
- 7.2. Finance Committee
  - 7.2.1. Finance Chair, Treasurer and Co-Presidents or their designee
- 7.3. Grievance Committee
  - 7.3.1. Consists of the Grievance Chairs from the 4 campuses, the Executive VPs of SUP and of PAT
  - 7.3.2. Meet to discuss current challenges and training needs
- 7.4. Membership Committee, consisting of the Executive Vice-Presidents, the four Membership chairs and up to one member-at-large from each campus
  - 7.4.1. The purpose of the membership committee is to develop organizing trainings and materials, as well as to recruit new members into the organization.
  - 7.4.2. The membership committee will make recommendations to the DA regarding organizing plans and projects.
- 7.5. Elections Committee, to conduct all general and special elections and referenda
  - 7.5.1. The Elections Committee shall consist of four members in good standing, one from each chapter. The Committee shall elect its own chair.
  - 7.5.2. Any member of the Elections Committee nominated for or seeking office must vacate their position and be appointed by the Co-Presidents.
- 7.6. Professional Development committee – see Article 29 of the VSCUP PAT or SUP Agreement.
- 7.7. Equity committee – See Article 24 of the VSCUP PAT or SUP Agreement.
- 7.8. Special committees shall be appointed as needed by the Executive Board.
- 7.9. Members of each committee, except the Grievance Committee, shall be appointed by the Chair of each committee with the consent of the Co-Presidents.
- 7.10. Each committee shall have a Chair, appointed by the President with the consent of the majority of the Executive Board
- 7.11. Within one month of formation, each committee shall present its program of action to the Executive Board. This shall also be presented at the next Annual Meeting.

## **8. MEETINGS**

- 1.1 The Delegate Assembly shall meet no fewer than four times a year and announce dates at the beginning of each semester.
- 1.2 Meetings of the Delegate Assembly shall be open to all members in good standing. Notice of the Delegate Assembly meeting schedule shall be given to the members. A quorum for the Delegate Assembly meetings shall consist of not less than 50% plus one.
- 1.3 The Executive Board may also meet separately from the Delegate Assembly and announce dates at the beginning of each semester; a quorum for Executive Board meetings shall consist of a majority.
- 1.4 The Chapters shall meet at least twice a semester, preferably once a month. The Chapters shall set the time and place of meetings each year and announce dates at the beginning of each semester. Chapter meetings shall be open to chapter members in good standing. Chairs may choose to open some meetings to the full BU membership. When a quorum is required, a quorum shall consist of fifteen percent (15%) of campus membership in good standing.
- 1.5 The organization shall hold an Annual Meeting at which the dues shall be ratified and other business may be put before the general membership. This meeting may be conducted in person or via a telecommunications network. A quorum shall consist of twenty-five percent (25%) of

membership. The Delegates shall set the time and place of meetings each year. The membership will be given at least one month warning of the time and place(s) of the Annual Meeting.

## **9 CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

- 9.1 The Delegates and the Executive Vice President from the relevant bargaining unit shall appoint the bargaining team members. Each team shall have no fewer than four members, who must be drawn from each of the four chapters.
- 9.2 The members of the team shall select one of their own numbers to serve as chief negotiator.
- 9.3 Ratification: majority of those voting; absentee ballot process. The Contract shall be ratified at elections by secret ballot and electronic voting held on each campus. The election shall be warned at least two weeks in advance. A quorum for voting shall consist of 25% of the total membership in good standing. The contract will be approved by a simple majority of those voting. Provisions will be set up to allow for electronic voting at each campus. The Executive Board will work with Chapter Chairs to coordinate contract ratification voting.
- 9.4 Written requests for absentee ballots must be received by the College Chapter Chairs no less than ten days prior to the election. Absentee ballots must be sent to the Election Committee or completed online, and must be received by election day or by the end of the election period.

## **10 REVENUES**

- 10.1 The dues of this organization shall be equal to the total of required affiliation fees for the AFT, AFT-Vermont, and the AFL-CIO state affiliate, plus the amount set by the local.
- 10.2 Annual dues shall be established by the Delegate Assembly and ratified by a majority of those voting at the annual Membership Meeting.
- 10.3 The Delegate Assembly may levy special assessments for specific purposes provided that the actions required to hold a referendum have not been initiated within one month of the decision of the Delegate Assembly.
- 10.4 The local union shall adopt procedures consistent with local, state, and federal law and Article VIII, Sections 1 (a) – (d), of the AFT By-laws.

## **11 AFFILIATION** - This organization shall maintain affiliation with the following organizations:

- 11.1 The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO. Whenever possible, VSC-UP will send delegates to the AFT's national convention.
- 11.2 The Vermont state federation of the AFT. Whenever possible, VSCUP will send delegates to AFT's state convention. The delegates will be elected by the Delegate Assembly at least 30 days prior to a convention and solicit the names of members interested in attending at least 60 days prior to the convention.

## **12 RULES OF ORDER**

*Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall govern this organization and all of its subordinate bodies in all matters not expressly covered by this Constitution of this organization.

## **13 AMENDMENT**

- 13.1 Thirty percent of the membership in good standing may present, by petition, a proposed amendment to this constitution to the Secretary, who shall notify the membership of the proposed amendment no later than one month prior to the next annual meeting or special meeting. Discussion of the proposed amendment will be scheduled for said membership meeting.

13.2 The Elections Committee will hold a vote on the amendment at the next Membership Meeting and will tally the results. Two-thirds (2/3) of those members voting shall be required to pass the amendment.

**14 AVAILABILITY OF CONSTITUTION**

14.1 The Secretary shall provide an electronic copy to all union officers and any member of the organization on request.