

# **UFAS Committee on Political Education (COPE) Bylaws**

## **May 2018**

### **ARTICLE I—Name**

This organization shall be known as the UFAS Committee on Political Education (COPE)

### **ARTICLE II—Statement of Principles**

The Principles of UFAS COPE are:

#### **Section 1. Excellence**

To support and strengthen the commitment of members, citizens, and government to excellence in education and public service

#### **Section 2. Understanding**

To encourage our members to comprehend the functions of government and political processes and understand political issues, especially as these affect our members

#### **Section 3. Activism**

To promote and strive for improvement of education and public service by encouraging and stimulating our members to take a more active part in elections (such as voting, running for office, or volunteering for candidates' campaigns) and governmental affairs affecting education and public service

#### **Section 4. Organization**

To assist our members in organizing themselves for more effective political action

#### **Section 5. Labor**

To assist members to understand and support the broad range of Labor issues

#### **Section 6. Action**

To engage in any suitable activities to achieve the principles stated above

### **ARTICLE III—Responsibilities**

Membership of UFAS authorizes COPE to undertake the following activities:

#### **Section 1. Conduct Candidate Interviews**

Interview candidates or their surrogates for local, state, and federal office when deemed appropriate and pursuant to Article VII of these Bylaws

#### **Section 2. Recommend Candidates**

Make recommendations to the UFAS Membership regarding candidates pursuant to Article VIII of these Bylaws. Process to approve: Membership requires a majority to approve COPE recommendations. Membership requires 2/3 to endorse without COPE recommendation

**Section 3. Plan**

Develop and recommend to the UFAS Steering Committee a budget and plan for the UFAS COPE

**Section 4 Report to Members**

Report to members on an annual basis the activities of the UFAS COPE Board as outlined in Article XI, Section 1 of these Bylaws

**Section 5. Serve as Liaisons to AFT-Wisconsin**

UFAS COPE shall regularly communicate activities, principles, and responsibilities with AFT-Wisconsin

**Section 6. Perform Other Duties**

Any additional responsibilities delegated by the UFAS Steering Committee

**ARTICLE IV—COPE Board**

**Section 1. Authority**

- (a) COPE is a standing committee of UFAS
- (b) The COPE Board is regulated by these Bylaws as adopted and modified by the UFAS General Membership
- (c) The COPE Board is charged with:
  - 1. implementation of the principles, responsibilities, and duties set forth in these Bylaws
  - 2. implementation of the political plan and budget as developed by COPE and approved by UFAS Steering Committee
  - 3. the implementation of such other duties as are given to it by the UFAS Steering Committee

**Section 2. Membership**

- (a) The COPE Board shall consist of at least three (3) members
- (b) Chair (Co-chairs) of the UFAS COPE is (are) elected by the UFAS General Membership for a one-year term, and all other members are appointed by the COPE Chair (Co-chairs) and approved by the UFAS Steering Committee
- (c) Voting membership of the COPE Board shall be limited to UFAS members in good standing
- (d) If the number of COPE Board members in good standing drops below three (3), the UFAS President shall appoint UFAS members in good standing to fill COPE Board position(s) as outlined in (a) and (b) above

**Section 3. Length of Appointments**

- (a) The officers and members of the COPE Board shall serve for a term that corresponds with that of the elected COPE Chair (Co-chairs)

- (b) COPE Board members are terminated if they have missed three consecutive meetings and have not communicated to the COPE Chair, a Co-chair, or Secretary that they will be absent
- (c) If terminated, reappointment of the member to the COPE Board shall not be considered until the following term

**Section 4. Frequency of Meetings**

The UFAS COPE Board shall meet at least semi-annually or as deemed necessary by the COPE Board Chair or a Co-chair

**ARTICLE V—Officers of the COPE Board**

**Section 1. Chair (Co-chairs)**

- (a) The Chair (Co-chairs) shall be a member of the COPE Board in good standing
- (b) The Chair (Co-chairs) is (are) elected by the UFAS General Membership during annual spring elections
- (c) Duties of the Chair (Co-chairs)
  - 1. serve as presiding officer and chair for COPE Board meetings as a voting member
  - 2. jointly approve the agenda prior to the meetings
  - 3. send agenda and COPE membership list to the COPE Board
  - 4. perform other duties designated by the UFAS President
  - 5. initiate activities consistent with the principles, responsibilities, and duties in accordance with these Bylaws

**Section 2. Secretary**

- (a) The Secretary shall be a member of the COPE Board in good standing
- (b) The Secretary shall be elected by the COPE Board at the first COPE Board meeting after the UFAS annual regular election
- (c) Duties of the Secretary
  - 1. Record attendance of those present at the COPE Board meetings, including the presiding officer
  - 2. Determine quorum at the COPE Board meetings
  - 3. Take minutes of the COPE Board meetings and record when the presiding officer changes
  - 4. Record motions taken at COPE Board meetings
  - 5. Preside over the COPE Board meetings when no Chair is present
  - 6. Report out at each COPE Board meeting any members who have missed 3 (three) consecutive meetings without notification and who are being removed from the COPE membership list
  - 7. Report out at each COPE Board meeting any members who have missed 2 (two) consecutive meetings without notification
  - 8. Pursuant to Article VI, Section 3, electronically distribute to the COPE Board and UFAS Steering Committee the minutes of the COPE Board meetings

**Section 3. Vacancies of Officers**

If an officer of the COPE Board resigns or otherwise becomes unable to perform the duties of their office, the UFAS Steering Committee shall appoint a COPE Board member to fill that vacancy until the next election

**ARTICLE VI—COPE Board Meetings**

**Section 1. Notice of Meetings**

(a) Meetings of the COPE Board shall be called by the Chair or a Co-chair with at least 72 hours written notice to the COPE Board

(b) Meeting notices shall be distributed to the COPE Board, the UFAS Steering Committee, and all UFAS members

**Section 2. Quorum**

(a) A quorum shall consist of a majority of COPE members

(b) UFAS President, as an ex officio member, shall qualify for the purposes of quorum, if present

**Section 3. Minutes**

(a) Minutes shall be distributed to the COPE Board and the UFAS Steering Committee. Minutes will also be available upon request to any interested UFAS member, pending verification of status as a member in good standing

(b) Minutes shall be considered for approval at a subsequent COPE Board meeting

(c) The COPE Board has the right to revise, extend, edit, and amend minutes by a two thirds (2/3) of votes cast

**Article VII—Candidate Interviews**

**Section 1. Authority**

Pursuant to Article III, Section 1 of these Bylaws and by sanction of the UFAS Steering Committee, the UFAS COPE Board is charged with interviewing candidates or their designated surrogates for local, state, and federal office

**Section 2. Interviews Open to Members**

Candidate interviews are open to all UFAS members in good standing

**Section 3. Notice to Attend**

Whenever possible UFAS members who plan to attend candidate interviews shall provide prior notification to the COPE Board; this is in order to accommodate needs for physical space and food

**Section 4. Prior Notice of Interviews**

(a) Whenever possible, prior notice of candidate or surrogate interviews shall be given to the COPE Board, UFAS Steering Committee, and UFAS membership

- (b) Whenever possible, updates to the interview list will be communicated to the COPE Board and other attendees

## **ARTICLE VIII—Recommendations for Candidate Endorsements**

### **Section 1. Authority**

Pursuant to Article III, Section 2 of these Bylaws and by sanction of the UFAS Steering Committee, the COPE Board recommends endorsements of local, state, and federal candidates to the UFAS General Membership

### **Section 2. Endorsement Process**

If UFAS COPE chooses to be involved in a race, there are six (6) steps to a UFAS endorsement of a candidate

- (a) An appropriate party requests consideration for an interview
- (b) The COPE Board may consider candidates' voting history (if one exists)
- (c) The COPE Board considers candidates' questionnaire responses
- (d) The COPE Board interviews the candidates or their surrogates
- (e) The COPE Board, by two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast, recommends a candidate
- (f) The UFAS membership shall consider the COPE Board recommendations at its next membership meeting

### **Section 3. Request for an Interview**

- (a) Interviews are most likely to be initiated by the COPE Board Chair or a Co-chair, given their authority to set the COPE Board agenda pursuant to Article V, Section 1(d)(2) of these Bylaws
- (b) Requests, to the COPE Chair or Co-Chairs, for candidate interviews may also be made by:
  - 1. a COPE Board member
  - 2. a UFAS Steering Committee member
  - 3. any UFAS member in good standing

### **Section 4. Voting Records, Questionnaires, and Interviews**

- (a) Whenever possible, recommendations for endorsement shall be made on the basis of each candidate's voting record regarding:
  - 1. education
  - 2. public service
  - 3. workers' rights
- (b) Recommendations shall be made without regard to party affiliation

### **Section 5. Questionnaires**

- (a) Whenever possible, candidate questionnaires will be distributed to all candidates in races the UFAS COPE Board intends to consider for recommendation
- (b) Questionnaires will be representative of the concerns of all of the UFAS constituencies
- (c) Questionnaires will be appropriate to the type and level of the office sought

- (d) In the case of federal and statewide candidates, whenever possible, the COPE Board will work with AFT National and AFT-Wisconsin, respectively, for information and questionnaires
- (e) Completed questionnaires will not be posted on the UFAS website

**Section 6. Interview Format**

- (a) Interviews for the COPE Board will be formatted by the Chair or Co-chairs
- (b) Format will be based on:
  - 1. the number of candidates or surrogates likely to be interviewed
  - 2. the number of members who plan to attend
  - 3. the physical space of the room
  - 4. time constraints

**Section 7. Recommendation Criteria**

- (a) Whenever possible, candidate recommendations shall be based upon two of the following:
  - 1. a candidate's voting record
  - 2. responses to the UFAS COPE questionnaire
  - 3. a COPE Board interview
- (b) Any recommendations by COPE requires two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast by COPE Board members in attendance
- (c) Recommendations will take into consideration, whenever possible, the endorsements of SCFL, Wisconsin AFL-CIO, AFT-Wisconsin, and AFT National
- (d) Recommendations for political endorsement shall be sent to the UFAS Membership for final approval
- (e) This process does not preclude the COPE Board from making recommendations for referenda, campaign committees, or independent expenditures

**Section 8. Final Approval of Recommendations**

- (a) No recommendation for the endorsement of a candidate is legitimate or final until it is approved by the UFAS membership
- (b) After the COPE Board makes a recommendation, the UFAS membership shall consider the COPE Board recommendation at its next meeting
- (c) When the time sensitive nature of campaigns makes it necessary, the President may ask the UFAS membership to approve COPE recommendations electronically, pursuant to Article 7 of the UFAS Bylaws

**Article IX—Compliance**

**Section 1. Legal**

The COPE Board shall comply with all local, state, and federal election laws

**Section 2. UFAS Constitution**

The COPE Board shall comply with all requirements of the UFAS Constitution and Bylaws

**Section 3. UFAS COPE Bylaws**

The COPE Board shall comply with all requirements of these Bylaws

**ARTICLE X—Finances**

**Section 1. Operational Costs**

The operational costs of the organization shall be borne by UFAS

**Article XI—Reports**

**Section 1. Annual Report**

A report and account of COPE activities shall be provided to the UFAS membership at least once a year and at any Membership meeting when the President calls for it

**ARTICLE XII—Amendments**

**Section 1. Proposed Amendments**

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by:

- (a) Any COPE Board member in good standing
- (b) A sub-committee appointed by the COPE Board to review these Bylaws
- (c) Any UFAS member in good standing

**Section 2. Written Submissions**

All proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing before they may be considered by the COPE Board

**Section 3. COPE Board Consideration**

No more than ninety (90) days after receipt, the COPE Board shall review and consider all proposed amendments to these Bylaws and make recommendations to the UFAS Steering Committee

**Section 4. UFAS General Membership Consideration**

The UFAS membership shall act on COPE Board recommendations for Bylaw amendments at its next meeting

**Section 5. Effective Date**

The amendments shall take effect immediately upon ratification by the UFAS General Membership

**Section 6. Distribution**

Upon ratification of amendments to the UFAS COPE Bylaws, revised copies shall be distributed to the UFAS COPE Board, UFAS Steering Committee, and UFAS General Membership