

## **Charter of GRACE, Employee Organization, U.S. Department of State**

This GRACE Charter establishes GRACE as an Employee Organization, based on the State Department's decision to end the existence of Employee Affinity Groups and convert all such groups to Employee Organizations. This GRACE Charter is ratified by the Board of Directors (formerly known as the Steering Committee) on [insert date] and replaces, the GRACE Employee Affinity Group Charter drafted on April 25, 2016, and approved by the Undersecretary for Management with the establishment of GRACE on September 7, 2018.

### **I. Mission**

Advancing diversity and equity in U.S. foreign affairs agencies by promoting human rights and religious tolerance, Christian expression, and inclusion.

GRACE represents an employee-based organization concerned with the promotion, protection, inclusion, and utilization of the cultural, personal, and professional assets Christian State Department professionals commonly share and seeks to ensure they feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging, engagement, and connection to the mission of the Department.

GRACE works to secure fair treatment of religious colleagues in the United States and overseas. For Foreign Service, Civil Service, contract, or other employees, we exist to break down barriers. We provide a support network and information resources for all employees and their families, especially those who face prejudice, misunderstanding, and/or indifference within our institutions. As foreign affairs professionals, we support religious people around the globe struggling against discrimination and persecution.

GRACE is founded on the belief that all people have the right to freedom of religion. This right includes the free practice and expression of their religious beliefs in ways that respect the rights and beliefs of other believers and non-believers. This foundational right is upheld in the Constitution of the United States. In championing freedom of religion and religious expression, GRACE emphasizes love and respect for all people, regardless of their background or faith, as demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

These beliefs guide the work of GRACE to promote greater understanding of religious people generally and Christians specifically, with the goal of promoting openness and tolerance.

## **II. Membership**

GRACE membership is open to all Foreign Service, Civil Service, Personal Services and Third-Party Contractors, as well as Local Employed Staff who are deployed stateside or overseas and are supportive of GRACE's mission. Membership is not contingent upon race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, military service, political affiliation, marital status, or one's involvement with legally protected activity (such as the EEO process or reporting prohibited personal practices or waste of public funds, violations of the law, or abuse of authority) or any other defining characteristic.

## **III. Leadership and Direction**

The primary leadership group will be the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be responsible for managing the affairs of the organization to include, adding/removing members, communicating with members, organizing events and engagements, advocacy for member's interests, and oversight of philanthropic efforts. The Board of Directors will consist of at least seven members.

## **IV. Elections**

Members interested in joining the Board of Directors will submit short statements summarizing their bios, interest, and qualifications for dissemination to the Membership prior to the election. Members will be elected for two-year terms by the GRACE Membership. Candidates will not run for specific positions on the Board; rather, they will run just to be on the Board. Membership will be staggered, so that every year new Board Members are elected. No Board Member can remain on the Board for more than 4 years uninterrupted. After 1 year off the Board, a former Board Member will become eligible to return to the Board through election. The Board will establish a document posted on the SharePoint page that will be available to the GRACE Membership showing the current and historic Board Members. Elections will be held in mid-October of each year and newly elected members will begin serving on the Board as soon as the standing Board confirms their election. For a certain time thereafter, the board will include both outgoing and incoming members, as the outgoing members will end their service on the Board on December 31.

## **V. Requirements for Serving on the Board**

All GRACE Members are eligible to run in the election to join the Board, unless they have served on the Board for the past four years. Once elected, Board Members are required to participate in at least 80% of the bi-weekly Board meetings to remain on the Board. Exceptions may include periods of leave or other excused absence not to exceed 90 days. In cases when a Board Member serves in a time zone that makes live participation unreasonable, the Board Member may participate by providing written comments based on the agenda before each meeting and/or a response to minutes provided after the meetings. If any Board Member fails to attend 80% of the meetings, they will be offered a 90-day probation period to improve their participation rate. If the Board Member declines the probation period or fails to improve their participation rate after 90 days, they will resign their position and an interim Board Member can be appointed by the Board by a simple majority vote to serve out the term vacated by the elected Board Member.

## **VI. Positions on the Board**

The following official positions will be established. Each position will be filled by a Member of the Board of Directors. At least one Member will also be given the title of Vice President. Each position will be responsible for a portfolio of issues related to the position title along with general participation in board meetings and deliberations. Each year after the elections, the Board Members will collectively decide who will hold which positions. If elected Board Members cannot reach agreement on position designations, the standing President of the Board is responsible for making final assignments.

1. President of the Board
2. Secretary and Treasurer
3. Director for External Relations (other EAGs, ODI, OCR, etc.)
4. Director for Internal Domestic Membership (members based domestically)
5. Director for Internal Overseas Membership (members posted abroad)
6. Director for Communications (newsletter, Department Notices, etc.)
7. Director for Planning and Programs (events, ministries, etc.)

## **VII. Supporting Units**

To support the Board of Directors, each Board Member will be encouraged to establish a committee of volunteers to support the work of that Board Member. The Board of Directors will solicit volunteers from the general membership for each committee. Board Members should actively recruit new volunteers to join their committees throughout the year. The Board

Member has the authority to accept any GRACE Member as a member of their committee. A Board Member must consult with the full Board before declining a volunteer for their committee. There will be no limit on the term someone can spend on a committee and former board members will be encouraged to participate on committees. A member may serve on more than one committee simultaneously but should be careful to ensure they have the time to devote to multiple lines of effort.

Former Board Members will be listed as GRACE Board of Directors Alumni, as long as they maintain membership in the group. The Alumni will serve as a resource for future Boards and will be encouraged to provide input and serve as the institutional memory.

### **VIII. Record Keeping**

The Board of Directors will hold bi-weekly coordination meetings to promote GRACE business. The Board President, working with the Secretary, will be responsible for creating an agenda before each meeting and producing basic notes following each meeting. These notes will be circulated to, at a minimum, all Board Members. Board Members who are unable to participate in meetings for any reason are encouraged to participate by email by responding to either the agenda or meeting notes with their contributions.

### **IX. Dues**

The Board has the authority to establish annual dues, not to exceed \$50 per person unless and until the general membership votes to increase this maximum cap. Donations in excess of the cap are allowed but cannot be mandatory. A banking account will be established to administer the funds. The Board will vote on expenditures and must identify which specific goal each expenditure supports. All transactions and accounting will be published on the group's website.

### **X. Leadership Liaison**

GRACE will seek a senior Department official to serve as the group's official leadership liaison. The following are the expectations of the leadership liaison and the preferred qualifications

Expectations for GRACE's Leadership Liaison

- Advocate on specific issues with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and other offices to expedite appropriate responses as necessary.
- Maintain a dialogue with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer to ensure GRACE prerogatives are understood.

- Help promote GRACE events by participating and putting his or her name in notices for the event.
- Participate for at least 30 minutes of one GRACE steering committee call per month to stay up-to-date on all relevant issues and programs.

#### Preferred Qualifications

- Senior Civil or Foreign Service (required)
- Prefer career officer for knowledge of the bureaucracy
- Prefer individuals based in Washington DC for proximity
- Prefer individuals who are personally familiar with Christian beliefs and values and supports the ability of the Membership to integrate them into their work

#### CLEARANCE:

Al Murphy, President ( OK )

Logan Krusac, Vice President ( OK )

Al Gombis, Vice President ( OK )

Anuliina Santry, Committee Member ( OK )

Christina Li, Committee Member ( OK )

Jeff Austin, Committee Member ( ok )

Phil Skotte, Committee Member ( ok )

Kurt Finley, Committee Member (OK)