

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE RESOLUTION – submitted by D. C. Chapter

Whereas:

1. Guild membership is now less than one-half of what it once was. This decline has occurred over the last 25 years. Despite the sizable increase in the total lawyers in the U. S. and the continuing legal needs of the working class and people's struggles, Guild membership has declined to its present level and stayed there. We have no strategy or structure for building membership. We need to establish a national membership committee to rebuild Guild membership.

2. This decline in membership has and will continue to have a very negative effect on the political impact and effectiveness of the Guild. Certainly there may be some external reasons assisting this decline. But, in order to rebuild our membership we need to first look inward and recognize that building and maintaining the membership of the Guild has not been a priority of the organization for a long time.

3. With our declining membership we have overspent our income over the past several years and last year did so by a very substantial amount. This has created an immediate and dangerous financial crisis for the organization. Dues have always been a primary method by which the Guild has financed itself. Dues have given us a solid financial base in the past. With a rebuilt membership this can be true again.

4. The national office staff has only one staff person whose responsibility is building and maintaining membership. This staff person works only three days per week. This staff person is charged with everything - soliciting renewals, keeping membership and dues records, communicating with chapters regarding membership, etc. This staff person's previous membership budget for occasional temporary assistance has recently been eliminated. Limited assistance to the membership staff person is given by the three day a week student organizer.

5. The strategy, planning, and much of the work required to rebuild membership will have to occur within a broad chapter and region based national membership committee. It can no longer be deferred to the national office or NEC. With their other responsibilities, commitments, and interests, it has not been possible for the national staff and the NEC to prioritize membership issues.

Now therefore, be it resolved that:

1. A national membership committee shall be formed immediately. The members of this committee shall be members and representatives of all chapters, regions, and other national committees, who are committed to building the membership of the Guild.

2. The national membership committee shall strategize, plan and work to build the Guild using all appropriate methods and focusing on all areas of need. A very partial and preliminary list of these methods and areas may include:

- a. Develop plans and programs to transition graduating Guild law students into city chapters in wherever city the graduating student locates.
- b. Implement a program to effectively contact long time and moderately long time Guild members whose membership lapsed some time ago.
- c. Establish a program for prompt and effective follow up with current members who do not renew.
- d. Coordinate with the national office and make recommendations regarding national office membership activity.
- e. Identify potential sources of new, and diverse, Guild members; develop recruitment plans.
- f. Identify areas where current membership policies and practices are having a negative effect on building and maintaining membership, and also those that are having a positive effect - and take action or make proposals accordingly.
- g. Review and improve Guild brochures, application and renewal forms, and other written materials directed towards joining or renewing members.

3. The committee shall meet at each national convention to deal with committee business and to elect a steering committee that shall coordinate its activities and be empowered to act for the committee between conventions. Members of the steering committee shall serve until replaced or resigned. The committee membership and steering committee shall communicate between conventions through a list serve, conference calls, and other means as they determine.

IMPLEMENTATION: The D. C. Chapter volunteers to initiate getting this membership committee off the ground. To begin this process the D. C. Chapter will arrange for and call an initial meeting during this Chicago convention of all persons interested in participating in a national membership committee. A list serve and an interim coordinating body may come out of this initial meeting. If it does not the D. C. Chapter will assist in the formation of an interim coordinating body for the committee after communicating with various chapter leaderships around the country.

CONSENT: All entities tasked under this resolution have consented to the work required.

