

Their dog must've eaten it... University brings no counterproposals to talks with GEO

According to GEO representatives, the plague of coming to class unprepared has spread from the undergraduate population to the UM bargaining team.

Symptoms of the problem showed up during the Jan. 24 bargaining session when the administration showed up with no new counterproposals to the contract ideas that GEO had put on the table.

During the talks, GEO Lead Negotiator Colleen Woods expressed the union's frustration. "We recognize that you have to consult people, but we're concerned that we gave you many of these things a month ago and still have not received counters," she told UM lead negotiator Ron Dick near the close of the bargaining session.

GEO officials noted the irony that on Jan. 17 Dick had asked for an extended bargaining session on Jan. 24, then came to the table with no proposals.

Under ground rules agreed to by GEO and the administration, the administration has until Jan. 31 to offer counterproposals.

Dick said that it was the administration's "intention" to provide counters on time.

He explained that the administration was concerned with some of the legal implications of various GEO proposals.

Woods asked him to bring administration concerns directly to GEO first to discuss them to clear up the union's goals and save time.

"I would prefer that you bring it back to the table and talk about it here, instead of having you worry about something that is not our intent," Woods said.

Without any administrative proposals, the time was spent with GEO negotiators encouraging the administration to discuss its thoughts on previous GEO proposals.

In particular the two sides clashed over the ramifications of adding anti-bullying language and ensuring disability access for GSIs.

GEO bargaining team member Emma Garrett dismissed UM administrator Jim Berquel's claims that anti-bullying language and expanded discrimination protection were rad-

Oh yeah, *that* article...

After not responding to any GEO proposals last week, listed here are just a few the proposals that UM must offer counterproposals this week, or violate the negotiating ground rules it agreed to with GEO:

- Salaries (article X)
- Health care benefits (article XI)
- Antidiscrimination (article IV)
- Parental leave (article XIII)
- Summer bridge pay (article XXVIII)
- Tuition waivers (article XXII)
- Training (article XXI)
- Job Posting (article IX)

Negotiations take place Thursday Jan. 31 from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Koessler Room on the second floor of the Michigan League. GEO *highly* encourages members to attend in order to witness and discuss possible counters to UM's proposals. Members can show up at their convenience and stay as long as they can.

ically new ideas and would lead to frivolous lawsuits.

"We understand your concerns on anti-bullying language, but 17 states have introduced legislation on these concerns, and we think that concept is well developed," Garrett said.

Woods added that the concerns over lawsuits were a straw man.

"Worry is unfounded," she told Berquel and Dick. "When protections against sexual harassment began to appear in the early 1990s, there were concerns about numerous lawsuits and a flood of lawsuits never materialized."

GEO also offered a counter to UM's counterproposal on childcare subsidies. The two sides reached agreement on having GEO rep-

resentation on a childcare committee. GEO also offered compromise language on extended times at UM day-care centers, withdrawing a proposal to demand 24 hours access to day-care centers and substituting a plan that would leave one center open until 10 p.m.

GEO's counterproposal leaves all proposals in UM's court.

"We're waiting for them now," Woods said after the session.

Bargaining takes place this week, this Thursday, Jan. 31 from 11 to 4:30 p.m. on the Koessler Room of the Michigan League. Major proposals due from the administration include those on wages, health care, tuition waivers and summer bridge pay.

FROM THE GRASS ROOTS:

Marta Murray-Close

For Marta Murray-Close, a fourth-year student in Economics with one year's experience as a GSI, the university's inability to present counterproposals in a timely fashion has been galling.

"We're not getting much back at this point – there's not a lot in terms of university proposals to discuss" she said after the Jan. 24 bargaining session.

Murray-Close, who is the steward for Econ, said that the lack of counterproposals has limited the benefits of attending negotiations to gaining information about the process and GEO's own proposals.

"Caucus sessions are pretty much clarification at this point," she said in reference to the internal discussions held among GEO

members during bargaining sessions. However, Murray-Close did add that attending bargaining is still quite valuable. "It's the easiest way to get up to date on the details of proposals and learn about the needs of

other GSIs and GS-SAs."

She suggested that a good reason to attend bargaining in coming sessions would be to learn about issues that were most important to you. "If you care about a particular issue, it's good to

come," and listen and contribute, she said.

This Thursday Jan. 31, in the Koessler Room of the Michigan League, UM will present counterproposals on health care, wages and summer funding. Bargaining takes place from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"It's the easiest way to get up to date on the details of proposals and learn about the needs of other GSIs and GSSAs."

(on attending bargaining)

COMMENTARY:

Protecting health care; expanding child care are critical for International GSIs

During caucus on Jan. 14, I made a few comments about the plight of International GSIs with foreign national spouses trying to live off a meagre income.

At the time, I didn't have anything to say about how this disparity might translate into a contract proposal, but I have a few thoughts now.

Clearly, it would be unreasonable to propose some sort of differential wage structure. But the plight of IGSI's with dependants does highlight the importance of the health care and child care proposals.

If IGSI's with dependants had to face inadequate wages and inadequate health- and child-care coverage, the burden would be prohibitive. At least with no-premium comprehensive health and child care, IGSI's and their families can cope with inadequate wages. Without the former, the wages aren't merely inadequate; they're irresponsible.

All this points to the necessity of a holistic proposal that emphasizes wages, health care, and child care.

I know that GEO is fighting for the maxi-

mum on all these fronts; but the improbability of IGSI's ever getting a wage that is sufficient to live with dependants, coupled with the probability of maintaining no-premium health care and getting more adequate child-care highlights how much more important the latter are than the former.

— DAVID WIENS

Graduate Student Instructor,
Department of Philosophy

If you have any comments or thoughts you'd like to have printed in a GEO newsletter, feel free to send them on to umgeo@umich.edu. We'll find a way to get them into the discussion.

GEO Membership meeting:

Jan. 31 7 p.m. Rackham Amphitheatre

— Get an update on contract talks and discuss what GEO must do now
Then mingle at the Arbor Brewing Company after the meeting

Remember: THE UNION ONLY SUCCEEDS WITH YOU