

## GEO opens bargaining, proposes job posting changes

GEO met with U-M's bargaining team for the first two negotiation sessions of the new contract during the first week of December. GEO's team worked to establish a foundation for successful bargaining and began presenting proposals for improving the contract.

Negotiations opened in a spirit of cordiality and progress. "We feel that we have a great contract based on the work people have done in the last 30 years, and we want to improve on it and establish positive ground by working together," said Renee Echols, GEO's lead negotiator.

On Dec. 1, the first day of negotiations, GEO and the U-M bargaining team agreed to ground rules. One significant result was that both sides agreed to share the cost of several sessions. CART (captioning) service will be provided at more sessions than in the past to make bargaining sessions accessible to more members. GEO also made proposals regarding union dues, union rights, and the right to request information from the University relevant to collective bargaining.

On Dec. 3, GEO made proposals to clarify and streamline the GSI job posting process. The union proposed that contract language be tightened in order to make it clear that departments are responsible for posting all jobs. Currently, members consistently experience issues with administrators not following the provisions of the contract concerning the posting and distribution of jobs.

Further, the bargaining team proposed that all GSI assignments be made no later than 60 days before the hiring term. This would allow members a reasonable amount of time to plan for the term to come and ensure that they could participate in any departmental orientations taking place before the start of the term.

The union also proposed that GSI jobs be included in the central University job site. This would allow members to have a single site from which to access all potential jobs for a given term. GEO pointed to the fact that lecturers' intermittent appointments and other temporary positions are already included in this site, so posting temporary appointments

there has a precedent. A centralized job search tool is crucial to providing fair access to all potential GSIs.

Throughout the session, both sides asked questions of each other in order for the intent of each proposal to be clarified.

The goal of revising the contract to make job posting and hiring requirements clear and easier for both departments and GSIs to navigate seemed to represent the common interests of both the administration and the union. Yet GEO had to consistently push back on claims that the proposed language was unclear and the necessary changes were too burdensome to enact. The team looks forward to continuing productive discussions. The next bargaining session is Wednesday, December 8th at which GSI training will be discussed. International students are particularly encouraged to attend this session.

"We feel that we have a great contract.. and we want to improve on it." *Renee Echols*, GEO lead negotiator

### Mark your calendar!

Dec. 8: Proposals on GSI Training (Plaza Room, 3rd Floor)\*

Dec. 10: Proposals on Disability Access & Salaries (Plaza Room, 3rd Floor)\*

Dec. 15: Proposals on GSRAs, Child Care, Medical and Parent Leave (Great Lakes North, 4th Floor)\*

Dec. 17: Proposals on Employee Rights (Plaza Room, 3rd Floor)\*

\*All rooms in Palmer Commons

### A look at Article 9: Job Posting, Notification, and Hiring Procedures

The union's goal in making changes to this article is to make it more clear to all stakeholders, and to craft language that is more enforceable. We consistently experience issues with administrators not following the provisions of the contract for posting and distribution. GEO is committed to fighting for transparency in the job application process. The jobs available and the requirements for performing them should be readily accessible to all potential GSIs.

GEO's proposed changes will address:

- 1) the failure of departments to properly post jobs for the required length of time (14 days prior to application deadline)
- 2) the failure of departments to post jobs at all, under a misinterpretation (we believe) of contract language on exceptions
- 3) increased access to job postings by having jobs distributed via listserv and online
- 4) tighter schedules for application due dates and notification
- 5) clarity in contract language throughout to enhance interpretability by all stakeholders
- 6) clarity in organization

### It's easy to get involved!

- Come to bargaining on Friday, December 10 (for any amount of time).

This session will contain the major presentation of our platform issues - *your attendance will make an impact.*

- Friend us on Facebook: Michigan GEO
- Follow us on Twitter: geo3550
- Check out the website: [www.umgeo.org](http://www.umgeo.org) - includes RSS updates