

## 'U' Salaries proposal anticipated

Talks between GEO and the University continued in a vein of productive communication during sessions on January 26 and 28 that focused on Article 9, Job Posting, Hiring, and Notification Procedures, and Article 19, Employee Training. The University also signaled that it would soon address economic proposals.

On Wednesday, the University presented its counterproposal on Article 9. Friday's discussions centered on Article 19, Employee Training. A particularly fruitful exchange developed over the topic of training for GSIs who are responsible for supervising undergraduates in labs where hazardous materials may be used.

Work groups on Disability Access and Childcare continued to meet during the week's sessions. On Wednesday, Lead Negotiator Renee Echols and bargaining team member Patrick O'Mahen, along with consultant and former GEO president Denise Bailey, participated in an informative and lively discussion with the administration team, whose consultants for the work group on disability access included Anthony Walesby Senior Director, Office of Institutional Equity. The work group conversation provided the framework for the establishment of shared commitments between the union and the university regarding the ADA and the job accommodations process for graduate employees with disabilities. This conversation also allowed the GEO team to formulate further questions to broach with the Administration team at the next disability accommodations work group in the coming week.

GEO continues to wait for the University's response to key economic proposals, but the wait may be coming to an end. The Administration's bargaining team indicated that it expects to present a counterproposal on Salaries during the coming week of bargaining, and hopes to do so on Wednesday. "We eagerly await the University's ideas," said bargaining team member Patrick O'Mahen.

### *From the grassroots:*

Federico Helfgott, Anthropology & History

It was really exciting on January 21 when we signed two agreements with the University. One of them, having to do with the Union Rights article, means that in the future the University will provide GEO with a list of department contacts for orientations at the beginning of each term. This may seem trivial, but it will speed up and facilitate the process by which we communicate with our new members. Orientations are one of the most important moments in the year for a union like GEO that's based on member awareness and involvement.

At the same time, however, it is somewhat frustrating that the University is delaying getting back to GEO on some of our most important proposals. Our bargaining team has maintained a very professional attitude throughout, as is clear from their timely counterproposals across the table and their statements during bargaining which show a lot of preparation and knowledge of the issues. I was also impressed that members of the team took time out from their busy schedules to participate in the Organizing Blitz days to reach out to RAs on January 18 and 19.

What our members most need to remember right now is that our bargaining team needs SUPPORT. And that means coming to bargaining sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays 1-5pm. It's incredibly easy. You can come and go as you wish, bring your grading, reading, children, whatever. I know it's hard to believe, but more people in the room really does translate into bigger gains at the table. That's just the way it works. Even 20 minutes makes a difference. Plus it's a great chance to make your voice heard. You can either pass a note to the bargaining table or wait for a caucus and speak up.

**Come to Bargaining!**  
**SALARIES proposal expected Wednesday, February 2**  
**1-5pm @ Palmer Commons, 4th Floor, Great Lakes South**

**Bring your reading, your grading, and yourself for any amount of time you can !**

## 1 + 1 = A Strong Contract

Bargaining, GSRA organizing, committee meetings--there's so many pieces in the puzzle of how to communicate our needs to the University and win a strong contract. How can any one member do enough?

Let's keep it simple and get it done: if every member commits to doing at least two things to get involved with GEO in the next month, we'll be in a strong position as the expiration of our contract approaches. We can all do a little to get a lot done.

Here's a plan for the time-strapped GSI, aka every last one of us:

**1:** Commit to attending the next General Membership Meeting on February 23. We'll be a week away from contract expiration, and there will be critical decisions to be made.

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**1 other thing:** Come to bargaining (5 min to 4 hours), call President Coleman on Feb. 10 (5 min), come to the Regents' Meeting on Feb. 17, and more actions to be announced.

## GMM Update



**On Wednesday, January 26, members met for an update on bargaining and to begin setting priorities for the critical stage ahead.** Here's the lowdown on what went down:

- Chelsea Del Rio, from the History department, was elected Interim Vice-President of the Union.
- Lead Negotiator Renee Echols presented on the progress of bargaining thus far and, along with other members of the bargaining team, answered questions and listened to members' feedback on what the Union's priorities should be.
- Letters in support of GSRA recognition were circulated and signed by members. These letters will be hand-delivered to President Coleman's office in the upcoming week.
- Campaign Committee Chair Samantha Montgomery rallied members with a call to get involved as bargaining moves into critical stages. **Every member can help us win a strong contract--there are plenty of options to fit all time availability! See the Calendar of Events below for how you can help.**

## Mark your calendar!

**Come when you can, leave when you need to.  
To win a strong contract, we need you in the room.**

### ***This week's bargaining sessions:***

**Feb. 2:** Salaries proposal anticipated, other topics TBD. (Palmer Commons, Great Lakes South, 4th Floor)

**Feb 4:** Topics TBD (Palmer Commons, Plaza Room, 3rd Floor)

Closed captioning TBD. Bargaining runs from 1-5pm, but come at any time to make our union's presence known.

### ***General Membership Meeting***

**Wednesday, February 23** @ the Michigan League, Vandenburg Room, 6-8pm

### ***Upcoming Campaign Actions***

**Thursday, February 3:** Hand-delivery of GSRA support letters to Pres. Coleman. Meet 1pm @ the Cube.

**Thursday, February 10:** Member call-in day. Stay tuned for details!

**Thursday, February 17:** Regents' Meeting. Save the date--time and location for this important event TBD.

## Getting involved is getting easier!

- We want feedback! Tell us what you think about bargaining @ <http://umgeo.org/webcaucus>
- Come to bargaining! (see calendar above for times and locations)
- Friend us on Facebook: Michigan GEO & Follow us on Twitter: [geo3550](https://twitter.com/geo3550)
- Check the GEO Events Calendar @ <http://umgeo.org/events> (& subscribe via Google Calendar)
- Check out the website: [www.umgeo.org](http://www.umgeo.org) - includes RSS updates