



GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION BARGAINING BULLETIN



BARGAINING KICKS OFF WITH A BANG!

OPEN BARGAINING: WHY WE INSIST!

In 2023, GEO members made an important decision: no more bargaining behind closed doors. We waged a long fight to open our negotiations to all graduate students. HR tried its best to resist—to prevent grads from witnessing the university's hypocrisy firsthand—but after months of organizing, we won open bargaining.

As a result, over a 1,000 graduate students were able to attend bargaining sessions and participate in the development of a new contract that improved wages, healthcare, and working conditions for many of us.

This cycle, HR proposed ground rules for bargaining that again severely limit who is allowed to participate. These rules reduce the number of attendees allowed in the room and on Zoom; restrict participation to GSIs and GSSAs; and require attendees to provide HR with their names to gain admission.

This proposal offers a more limited form of open bargaining than we won in 2023; it shows us that HR is afraid of letting us all into the room.

We responded to this proposal by reiterating our commitment to negotiations open to all interested parties, without any caveats—telling HR that, like last time, **we are ready to fight for open bargaining**. Despite dragging their feet, HR responded by accusing us of delaying negotiations. The state mediator, requested by HR, also suggested that fighting over open bargaining was "boring" to union members.

But these are just excuses; we know it is not "boring" to win a seat at the table for all workers. The 150+ grads who showed up to the room this past Friday weren't bored—they were powerful, and HR knows it.

FROM THE BARGAINING TABLE

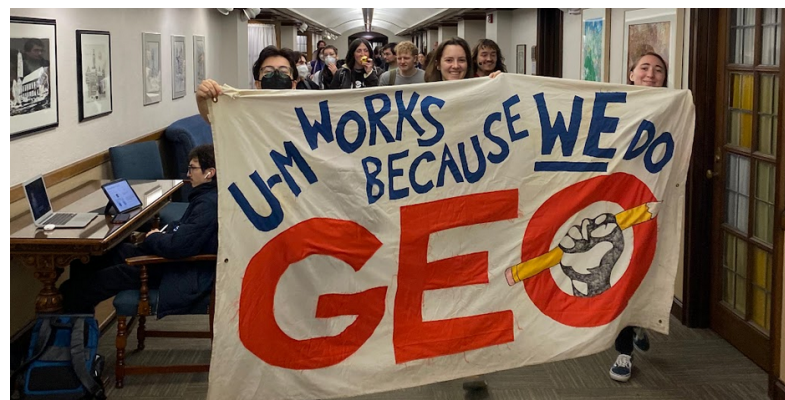
On Friday morning, 150+ graduate workers showed up to the small room HR had booked for our first bargaining session. We sat on the floor, filled the corridors, and joined in remotely through Zoom. In our first caucus, we came to a consensus: we'll make decisions together, and we won't enter into any closed-door sidebars with HR.

"When I sat down at the bargaining table I felt confident because of all the help my co-workers gave me in the months leading up to this. It was great being in a room with 150 other grads, sitting in chairs and on the floor, discussing the things that matter to us."

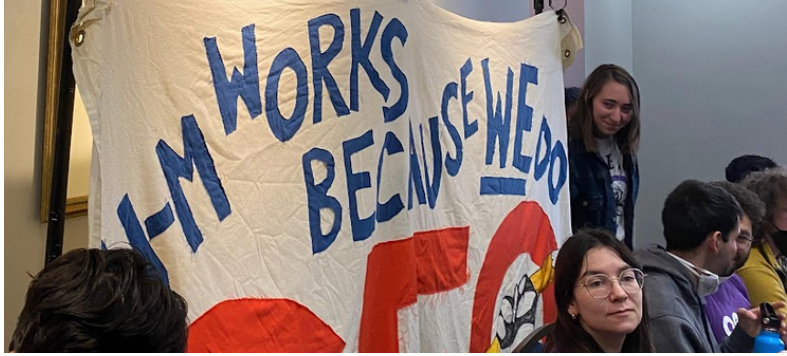
— Vita, Romance Languages & Literature

Over the course of the morning, HR moved us to an even smaller room; then refused in-person talks to dodge being recorded; sent a 'neutral' mediator to push a proposal that aims to introduce new forms of surveillance over GEO members and lays the groundwork to rollback class-size protections; and finally, they refused to discuss urgent issues regarding international workers' safety.

We'll continue debriefing at OA on Wednesday! See you there!



WHAT'S NEXT?



SEE YOU AT:

- **Organizing Assembly: Wednesday @ 6 PM, GEO Office and on Zoom**
- **Bargaining Session #2: Friday @ 8:30 AM, Pendleton Room in Michigan Union and on Zoom**

Join us at **Organizing Assembly on Wednesday at 6 PM in the GEO Office** (213 W Liberty) and **on Zoom** (bit.ly/GEOMemberPortal).

We have lots to discuss on Wednesday— including whether we want to organize around the right to record our bargaining sessions with HR. Read more about that here: bit.ly/GEORECORDING.

We will also make plans for **bargaining, scheduled for Friday at 8:30 AM in the Pendleton Room at the Union.**

Let's pack the room and show HR that graduate students are committed to having a real voice in our negotiations!

In the coming days, consider reaching out to grads in your department to invite them to bargaining and to talk to them about our proposal to record negotiations. You could do this by door-knocking offices or calling a meeting!

And lastly, an update on the Researcher Unionization campaign — we've hit 30% card signatures! But to widen our margins before submitting to the Michigan Employment Relations Commission, we need to keep collecting cards! Sign up to door-knock and phone-bank through bit.ly/GEOUTREACHPLANS!



BARGAIN! TOGETHER! NOW!



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