

Issue
#4

GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION BARGAINING BULLETIN



TEMPERATURES DROP TO ALL-TIME LOW—BUT HR SINKS EVEN LOWER!

On Friday, over 50 grad workers faced frigid temperatures to show up at the bargaining table, **but HR wasn't there—again.**

HR has refused to meet us in-person unless we concede to their proposal for ground rules, which seeks to exclude GSRA and fellows from the bargaining process, limits observers to 45 people, and demands the names of all attendees. These radical new restrictions undermine the open bargaining structure which we won in our last negotiation cycle. **HR has explicitly refused to negotiate on ground rules**, and they will not consider the ground rules counterproposal we passed in October. Instead, they want to force us into an unproductive process of shuttle mediation, in which a state-appointed mediator delivers messages back and forth between the two parties.

We came to the table with over 50 questions about HR's first round of contract proposals and UM's recent treatment of international grad workers. We asked Micki Czerniak, the mediator, to deliver questions to HR and come back with their answers. As expected, shuttle mediation proved to be a disastrous game of telephone. Micki frequently forgot to relay parts of our questions, and demonstrated a complete lack of knowledge about our existing contract.

After four hours, we only managed to get answers to two questions. We asked about the University's decision to strike two contract clauses: one which guarantees healthcare coverage during parental leaves, and another which requires notification about increasing class sizes. HR claimed these protections are "redundant" and have been removed to make the contract "easier to understand." **The truth is that they want us to forgo contractual protections and rely on policies that the University can change at will.** When pressed to point us to existing policies that guarantee the same protections, HR-Micki provided information that proved to be incorrect.

HR is actively preventing us from holding meaningful dialogue. **We were in the room, fighting for each other and for a contract that improves the lives of grad workers at this university.** We need HR to come to the table.

FROM THE BARGAINING TABLE



"Sitting at the bargaining table on Friday was both energizing and frustrating. On the one hand, it was really exciting to be there with a room full of grad workers, supporting each other and making decisions collectively. But I was infuriated to see that once again, HR refused to show up. HR is holding our contract hostage because they want closed-door meetings where they can manipulate grad workers in private. But they know that when we come together through open bargaining, we win. Their continued absence shows us just how scared they are."

– Anna, English Department

WHAT'S NEXT?

We need to build a coordinated pressure campaign that organizes our coworkers around two clear goals: winning our contract demands and forcing HR to come to the bargaining table. **This Friday we will be going to the table with Article X: Salary.** To read the salary proposal go to [bit.ly/GEOContractDashboard!](https://bit.ly/GEOContractDashboard) We demand that HR is at the table as we try to bargain in good faith to ensure that every graduate student can afford to live in Ann Arbor & Dearborn. **To do this, we need every worker to talk to their coworkers about our contract fight and come to bargaining to show HR that we want a living wage!**

Next steps:

- Go door knocking in your department with the bargaining bulletin and the salary contract demands: bit.ly/GEOContractDashboard
- Hold a departmental meeting to discuss bargaining last week and key issues in your department

IMPORTANT UPDATE ABOUT THE RESEARCHER UNIONIZATION CAMPAIGN

Graduate workers voted to move forward with the election to add GSRAAs to GEO's bargaining unit now!

This decision does **not** mean the fight for fellow's protections are over. We will be fighting for protections for **all** graduate workers at this University! **But first, we need to build a strong contract campaign by talking with our coworkers and building power together.**

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR COWORKERS:

- How can we make HR recognize the unequal power structure they are asserting by requiring registration to attend bargaining sessions?
- How can we get HR to recognize grad workers as one unified body, so that everyone—including non-bargaining unit members and allies—can attend all bargaining sessions?



SEE YOU AT:

- Contract Committee Meeting: Monday @1PM on Zoom
- Organizing Committee Meeting: Monday @3PM on Zoom
- Organizing Assembly: Wednesday @6PM, GEO Office and on Zoom
- Bargaining Session #5: Friday @11AM Location TBD

👉 Hear from our coworkers about what *actually* went down in the bargaining room on our new podcast, **This Week at the Table!** bit.ly/GEOPodcast



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