

GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION BARGAINING BULLETIN

Issue

#8



WE WON OPEN BARGAINING!!

What happened?

Simply put: a lot! At the end of our state-imposed 28-day “cool down” period, we gathered at a General Membership Meeting, on Thursday, March 12th, to review our fight thus far and discuss next steps. We decided that we would pass a revised proposal for open bargaining at a meeting with HR and the new mediator, Richard Ziegler, the following day.

On Friday, March 13th, six graduate students on our bargaining team — Anna (English), Daniel (English), Gabe (Law), Hiab (PIBS), Major (SEAS), and Nathan (SI) — met with HR and the mediator to discuss these ground rules. In this meeting, **HR signalled that they were ready to give in to our demand for open, transparent negotiations.** After they passed a counter-proposal the following Tuesday that largely reiterated our proposed ground rules, we discussed collectively at Organizing Assembly to accept their minor revisions to our original ground-rules language.

This past Friday, March 20th, **after months of asserting our right to collectively bargain this contract, HR finally sat across the table from us.** We packed the room, with many allies and other graduate student workers attending via Zoom. **When we fight together, we win.** And by refusing to concede to shuttle negotiations, despite HR’s disrespectful scare tactics, **we won open bargaining for all graduate workers!**

At this last bargaining session, we passed articles for ICE-off-campus (Article XXI, Section new P) as well as Article IV (Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity) and Article VII (Information). HR did not pass over any counters on Friday.



FROM THE BARGAINING TABLE

Our first day of bargaining face to face, and we had more members in the room than chairs to fit them. It was clear that HR was on their heels as the bargaining team articulated GEO's proposals and HR sat stonily across the table making a few curt replies.

The major item discussed was protections from ICE, including formalizing policies around privacy of a GSI's personal information and instituting alerts in the case of ICE being present on campus. I was incredibly impressed with how the bargaining team reasoned this proposal, its importance to our safety and the safety of everyone on campus, outlined how it could be implemented practically through the existing alert system with little effort on the part of the University, anticipated HR's objections, and demonstrated how the lack of such policies has endangered our coworkers in the past. It was encouraging to see GEO members push HR for a safe and equitable campus.

– Matt Dhillon, Masters Fine Arts, English

WHAT'S NEXT?

During Organizing Assembly on Wednesday, March 11th, we discussed the Platform Petition (bit.ly/GEOPlatformPetition) as a tool to talk with every graduate student in our department, so we can build power and decide together how to win a contract that protects our right to work and learn at this university. Organizers worked on a conversation guide (bit.ly/GEOContractPetitionGuide) to help reflect the goals of this petition and to help answer some questions we may receive from our coworkers. Organizers in each department are establishing weekly targets for the number of conversations they plan to have, and are using the petition to track the power we are building.

Have you and your coworkers signed the petition? And have you talked to your coworkers about the contract? If not, **make those plans!** And come to OA on Wednesday, March 25th, at 6 PM in the GEO office to discuss.

Moving on, now that we've secured open bargaining, it's critical that **we show up strong**. Let's continue packing the room so we can hear how HR responds to our demands, and demonstrate, together, that we're united and serious about winning the changes we need to improve our working conditions. We will be bargaining again **this Friday at Palmer Commons in the Great Lakes Room (4th floor) at 11am!**

We will only win what we're organized enough to take, and that requires building power in every corner of the University, outside and inside of the bargaining room. Let's get to work – we have a university to win.

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

NEXT STEPS:

- Talk to your coworkers about the contract petition (bit.ly/GEOPlatformPetition)! Use the conversation guide (bit.ly/GEOContractPetitionGuide).
- Make a plan with your co-workers to come bargaining this week on Friday, March 27 at Palmer Commons in the Great Lakes Room (4th floor) at 11 am RSVP at <https://bit.ly/GEOBargainingRSVP>.
- Join us for a work in on Tuesday, March 31, at 11:30 am at Mason Hall. RSVP at bit.ly/GEOWorkIn
- Let's continue to strategize and organize! See you at:

SEE YOU AT:

- **Contract Committee Mondays @ 1 PM, GEO Office and Zoom**
- **Organizing Committee: Mondays @ 4 PM, GEO Office and Zoom**
- **Organizing Assembly: Wednesdays @ 6 PM, GEO Office and Zoom**



BARGAIN! TOGETHER! NOW!



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