

Issue

#9

# GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION BARGAINING BULLETIN



## GSRAS IN THE UNION! BARGAINING UNDERWAY



*"I had such a fun time at the bargaining session this Friday, meeting old and new comrades. This is my third bargaining cycle, and it has been heartwarming to see the effort and energy into the process. Huge win for us in getting open bargaining again! And also... kind of bonkers that we had to fight for it again!!! This is a good reminder that we can't take any of our wins for granted. We've got to keep showing up and pushing.*

*We win a good contract by exerting collective power and not merely by making smart arguments across the table, and for that, open bargaining really is one of the best organizing tools. You get to meet folks from across the union, catch up, and sit together, listening to HR bring nothing to the table! I'm really looking forward to the next sessions and hope we keep packing the room. The energy makes a difference! It reminds everyone (including the HR and university) that we're in this together. There's strength in numbers.*

*On a personal note, as a new parent, I'm especially excited about pushing for stronger childcare support. And really proud of my union for fighting to keep the community safe from ICE!!! Let's keep it going! Wear your union shirt, show up, organize, and keep the pressure on. When we fight, we win."*

– Garima, RLL

### What happened?

First, we won the election to unionize Graduate Student Research Assistants, with 92% of GSRA votes in favor of joining GEO! This major victory follows 2 years of dedicated organizing and adds over 2000 members to our bargaining unit. Hooray!

On Friday, March 27th, we reconvened with HR for another bargaining session. Our mighty team came to the table and passed articles for Child Care (Article XII) and Leaves of Absence (Article XIII). We advocated to expand eligibility childcare subsidies to all grad workers, provide childcare at no cost to grad workers, and more. We pushed to increase medical leave to 8 weeks, to add leave policies for visa renewals, to expand childbirth leave policies, and added leave for a variety of other personal reasons. HR did not pass any counters. And the mediator did not attend—maybe because the reason for their intervention was entirely made-up...

In a previous proposal, HR had tried to strike contract language guaranteeing paid leave for jury duty, replacing it instead with a reference to existing provisions under the Standard Practice Guide (SPG)—a set of policies that are not legally enforceable. U-M can change these "standard practices" anytime they like; in fact, they revised the SPG four times in just the past month. We rejected this attempt to weaken the contract. If contract language merely points to external policies that can shift at any time, HR has the power to rewrite contract language at will and push unilateral changes to existing benefits and protections.

Finally, with the results of the GSRA election and accretion to our bargaining unit, HR has asked for a separate meeting to discuss including GSRAs within the contract. More on that soon!

# WHAT'S NEXT?

We demonstrate our strength not just at the bargaining table, but through events that showcase our unity in numbers! Come to a **Work-in in Mason Hall from 11:30-1:30 on Tuesday, March 31st**, to spotlight two areas of our contract fight: **expanding access to gender-affirming healthcare**, and **reversing U-M's austerity program**— i.e., fewer GSI positions, expanding class sizes, and shrinking funding, especially for PhDs past their fifth year. **WE WILL HAVE FOOD!**

We continue to collect signatures to track the graduate students' interest and support of the platforms! **Sign the GEO Platform Petition here: [bit.ly/GEOPlatformPetition](https://bit.ly/GEOPlatformPetition)**

What else can you do? Speak to your coworkers and allies about the ongoing campaign! And stay in the loop by chatting with your stewards, and come to the **Organizing Assembly on Wednesday, 6 pm, at the GEO office and on Zoom.**

Will the mediator show up for our next bargaining session? Will they ever come back, or was it all just a mirage? Only one way to find out! Come pack the room at the **next bargaining session on Friday, April 3, at Palmer Commons in the Great Lakes Room (4th floor) at 9:30 am!**

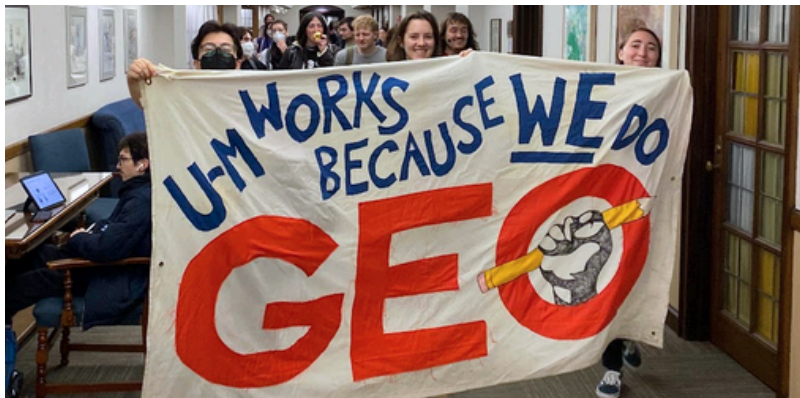


## NEXT STEPS:

- Talk to your coworkers about the contract petition ([bit.ly/GEOPlatformPetition](https://bit.ly/GEOPlatformPetition))! Use the conversation guide ([bit.ly/GEOContractPetitionGuide](https://bit.ly/GEOContractPetitionGuide)).
- Make a plan with your co-workers to come bargaining this week on Friday, April 3 at Palmer Commons in the Great Lakes Room (4th floor) at 9:30 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](https://bit.ly/GEOWorkIn)
- Let's continue to strategize and organize!

## 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**



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](https://bit.ly/GEOPodcast)

# BARGAIN! TOGETHER! NOW!



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