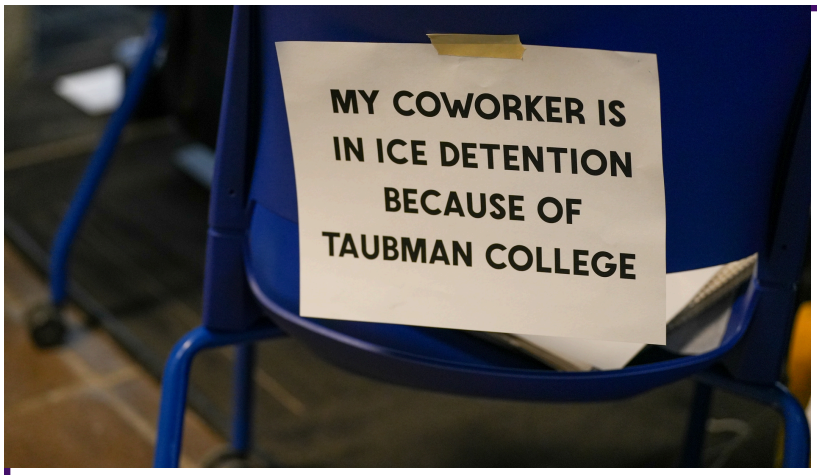
A University for the Common Good

April 10, 2026

Issue #11

GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION BARGAINING BULLETIN

HR'S LOOPHOLE: IF YOU FIRE EMPLOYEES, THEY DON'T NEED PROTECTIONS



WHAT HAPPENED?

At the April 10th session, we passed our **Salary, AI, Grievance** articles, and an MOU for DMAs to be included in the so-called "Rackham Plan" guaranteeing five years of 12-month funding for PhD students. Several testimonies were shared on each of these issues, explaining how instructional quality was degraded by AI and how grads in the School of Music, Theater, and Dance are discriminated against for lower pay.

We also spoke to them about an urgent case in Taubman College of a graduate worker being fired because of administrative error, having their tuition revoked, being incorrectly classified as having graduated, and **being abducted by ICE and held in North Lake, Michigan as a result.** HR refused to discuss the matter except for a single comment that fired employees are not eligible for protections against firing – a shameful retort.

HR also passed back their counterproposals for Articles on Information, Child Care, Special Conferences, and Anti-Discrimination. **HR's strategy is not to offer a counterproposal with alternative protections or subsidies that we can work with, but simply to reject and say our proposals are not possible.** When asked about eligibility requirements determined by the Office of Financial Aid for childcare, HR responded that "we spoke with them three years ago" and said that they're unwilling to change eligibility requirements for the childcare subsidy. They simultaneously struck our proposal to reinstate a steering committee for childcare access and establish a new childcare facility -- signaling a total disinterest in meaningfully improving access to childcare for grad workers.

Their counterproposals also included several contradictions. They revised Article 7 (Information), insisting that they need us to share a list of departmental stewards so that department administrators can verify that members' requests are "legitimate," assuring us this was not to share outside of administration --- yet, in Article 4 (Anti-Discrimination), **they refused our demand for a commitment to not sharing any information on union membership with the federal government**. They were unable to provide meaningful responses to our questions about how they would address the chilling effect that would result from us being forced to share information on union membership without a guarantee that that information won't be shared.

WHAT'S NEXT?

NEXT STEPS:

- Join Organizing Assembly on Wednesday at 6pm to confirm language and pass new language
- **Bargaining next week (4/17) is 11am in Palmer Commons: Healthcare, trans rights, curriculum, and tuition waiver**
- GMM on April 23, 2026 at 6pm – STRIKING! When, why, who, and how?
- Michigan Democratic Party on April 18th, 2026. If you're a registered Dem, join other GEOs to push for Regents and other elected officials to protect us all!

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 YOUR CO-WORKER

This summer I am traveling to Brazil to premiere a new work by composer Hudson Nogueira as a guest conductor with the Orquestra do Recife, which I have commissioned expressly as part of my doctoral work. I may be visiting Tatui Conservatory to present my research and/or lead a concert there as well. While visiting this places I will also be carrying out ethnographic work to support my interpretation and understanding of this music. I will also be presenting a 45-minute session at the international WASBE Conference in Rio de Janeiro before heading back to the states. The total cost of all of this work will come to well over $10,000 (commissioning fee, travel, lodging, food, etc.); but because I am doing this without a fellowship or summer stipend/funding, the amount of money through Rackham which I can access is paltry. The work matters to me and it will be key to differentiating my CV from others, so I am committed to doing it even if it requires me to go into debt. But it is demoralizing to know that as a DMA student my scholarly and professional efforts are not supported the way PhDs are. Are we not all seeking terminal degrees in our respective fields? What rationale - besides cynicism and penny-pinching - justifies this unevenness?

-John Mange, 2nd year DMA

BARGAIN! TOGETHER! NOW!

GRADUATE EMPLOYEES ORGANIZATION

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