

Issue

#14

# GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION BARGAINING BULLETIN



## 1% WON'T PAY THE RENT!

### WHAT HAPPENED?

Following an energizing International Worker's Day rally this past May 1, we met HR in the room for the last bargaining session of the winter semester. We passed contract proposals that touched upon job security, protections for international workers, reinvesting into education and research, and more. Grad workers delivered powerful testimonies about their own experiences and on behalf of their coworkers which directly informed our contract language and demands. HR, however, passed back more lackluster "counter proposals" that struck out most of our proposed language, citing the adherence to the "status quo" as justification.

### WE SAID / THEY SAID

Grad workers were giving us everything and HR was giving us nothing – let's see how grad student experiences and demands line up with U-M's counterproposals:



### GRAD WORKERS SAY: U-M IS ENGAGING IN REPRESSION

Grad workers shared about how the university has attempted to silence and punish them through institutional means, using DPSS, OSA, and OSCR to discipline and brutalize workers standing in solidarity with Palestinians.

### U-M IS ILL-EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL WORKERS

In addition to our co-worker who was kidnapped by ICE because of the school's negligence, international workers have expressed frustration at having to educate university staff on DACA, as well as austerity and lack of protections that put not only their job security but also their statuses in the U.S. at risk.

### WE ARE OVERWORKED AND EXPLOITED

Grad workers, especially GSRAs who hadn't been unionized, shared about working through the weekend for demeaning PIs. Grad workers have seen their co-workers bring toiletries to the lab because they don't have time to care for themselves at home because of their demanding workloads.

### HR SAYS: TAKE A PAY CUT!

U-M's counterproposal of a 1.5% - 1.5% - 1.5% raise allegedly accounts for historical data, the "financial world" and "everything that's going on" and what other unions are doing. For some context, we won 8% - 6% - 6% during the last bargaining cycle, our current salary is about \$7k below a living wage according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, and the U-M Survey of Consumers reported that year-ahead inflation expectations are at 4.7% as of May.

### WE DON'T CARE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL WORKERS

U-M made it clear that they're uninterested in providing sufficient protections for international workers. In recent counterproposals, for example, U-M excluded GSRAs from SEVIS fee reimbursements, and on Friday, they refused to grant workers leave to renew their visas, suggesting that international workers should just stay in the United States throughout their entire degrees.

### GSRA EXCLUSION IS THE STATUS QUO - LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY!

Against our efforts to bargain for a contract for all grad workers, U-M excluded GSRAs from nearly all demands, citing the "status quo" as their justification.

# WHAT'S NEXT?




## NEXT STEPS:

- Join us for OA at 6 PM on May 13!
- We are going on a short break before our next bargaining session, so take a break, attend a committee meeting, then **join us back on May 15! Time and location TBD!**
- Join us for our May Organizers' Retreat on May 17!

## SEE YOU AT:

- **Contract Committee Mondays @ 1 PM, GEO Office and Zoom**
- **Organizing Committee: Mondays @ 3 PM, GEO Office and Zoom**
- **Organizing Assembly: Wednesdays @ 6 PM, GEO Office and Zoom (Next: May 13)**

Interested in writing an op-ed? Have a passion for graphic design? **Reach out to us at [commchair@geo3550.com](mailto:commchair@geo3550.com)** if you're interested in getting involved in all things GEO communications!

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



## HEAR FROM YOUR CO-WORKERS

Notes from Discord. Join at [bit.ly/GEODiscord](http://bit.ly/GEODiscord)

Here's what grad workers had to say about U-M's counter proposals during bargaining in real time:

Is the short of this is that GSRAs get none of the provisions of this article?

 6

 1

They've applied gsras all to the proposals by separating out gsras and excluding them

 3

Katie herself got a 13%, 3.5%, and 3% salary increase over the past three years. just in case anyone was wondering

 16

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**GRADUATE EMPLOYEES ORGANIZATION**

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