



GSOC-UAW LOCAL 2110

The Union for Graduate Employees at New York University

OVER 1200 UNION GRAD WORKERS DEMAND “NYU, STOP STONEWALLING”

Petition Calls For New York University To Engage Or Risk Worker Strike

For Immediate Release:

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GSOC Press Committee

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- Petition of 1,200 graduate workers to be delivered at event Monday, March 1, 2021
- NYU has been stalling bargaining for eight months
- Next bargaining session March 2, 2021; open for all graduate students to attend

New York, NY: In a petition by the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC-UAW Local 2110), over 1,200 graduate workers at NYU demanded that the university stop stalling and engage in negotiations for a fair contract. GSOC’s demands include a living wage and equitable working conditions, complete health coverage, and stronger protections for the most vulnerable grad workers, from international and immigrant students to Black and formerly incarcerated students who regularly face the threat of violence from the NYPD, which currently enjoys unfettered access to NYU buildings.

“**The petition calls out NYU’s slow and indifferent response to workers,**” said GSOC bargaining committee member Colin Vanderburg. “Bargaining between NYU and GSOC began in June 2020. In the eight months since, we’ve presented NYU with over 25 detailed proposals and counter-proposals, while NYU has offered only a handful of meager counter-proposals.”

Among the union’s key demands is a living wage of \$40/hour for hourly student workers, up from the current minimum of \$20/hr established in 2015. NYU bars graduate employees from working more than 20 hours per week. Many cannot find even 10 hours of work on campus, leaving workers—especially master’s students, who also face NYU’s [infamously high tuition costs](#)—struggling to make ends meet.

“We’ve made clear for months that NYU’s counter-offer of a \$1 raise for hourly workers, with tiered pay rates for PhD and master’s students, is unacceptable—yet the university refuses to move on compensation,” Vanderburg said. “NYU’s insistence that \$1 is a ‘significant’ increase is insulting.” NYU has a [fiscal budget](#) of \$3.7 billion in 2021, and an even bigger [endowment](#) of \$4.7 billion.

The petition demands NYU take contract negotiations seriously and make meaningful counter-proposals in future bargaining sessions, the next being March 2, 2021.

If NYU continues to stall negotiations, GSOC’s bargaining committee is prepared to call a strike authorization vote. A GSOC strike would mean thousands of grad students working as adjunct

instructors, teaching assistants, course assistants, research assistants, and clerical workers would withhold their labor to fight for a fair contract. **In December 2014, during negotiations for GSOC's current contract, 95% of GSOC workers voted yes to striking. The following March, on the night before the strike was set to start, NYU settled the contract and gave in to final GSOC demands.**

GSOC members organized this petition to reassert their resolve to fight for a fair contract with NYU. But NYU has literally been asleep at the table.

"Back in August, we organized a bargaining session around our proposals addressing international and immigrant workers," said GSOC bargaining committee member Mariko Whitenack at a rally organized by Columbia graduate workers, who have [set a March 15 strike deadline in their own negotiations with Columbia University](#). "Four international grad workers gave testimonials about their experiences with NYU, illuminating the importance of our demands for subsidized tax and legal support, and a sanctuary campus. **During these testimonials, one member of NYU's bargaining committee fell asleep.**"

GSOC's contract proposals would benefit many communities beyond graduate workers and strengthen racial and social justice efforts to improve NYU. "In our bargaining sessions, we have heard powerful testimonials from graduate workers, including formerly incarcerated graduate workers, about the atmosphere of intimidation, fear, and violence created by the NYPD presence on campus," Whitenack said. **"GSOC maintains that cutting ties with the NYPD is a worker issue critical to the health and safety of grad workers. Grad workers have the power to improve our working conditions and reshape the university at the same time."**

Upcoming Events:

- Petition Delivery Event Monday, March 1 at 9:30AM. Contact gsoc.press@gmail.com
- Open bargaining session: Tuesday, March 2 at 10:30am EST. All NYU graduate students are invited to observe the bargaining session.

Photo/Video/Infographics: [View our Google Folder Here.](#)

About [GSOC-UAW 2110](#): In 2001, the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC), part of United Auto Workers Local 2110, became the first recognized union of graduate employees at a private university in the United States. We are a member-run union of over 2,000 NYU teaching assistants, adjunct instructors, research assistants, and hourly workers. Our last collective bargaining agreement was signed March 9, 2015, on the deadline for a worker strike.

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