



GSOC-UAW LOCAL 2110

The Union for Graduate Employees at New York University

NYU GRADUATE WORKERS ANNOUNCE STRIKE VOTE

Vote Kicks Off at Rally 12pm Tuesday, March 23, 2021

For Immediate Release:

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GSOC Press Committee

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- GSOC calls vote to authorize a strike at NYU after 9 months of contract bargaining
- Vote to kick off with in-person and virtual rally
- After GSOC delivered a 1200-signature petition calling for a living wage, NYU maintains offer for \$1 raises

New York, NY: The bargaining committee of the Graduate Student Organizing Committee ([GSOC-UAW Local 2110](#)) has [called for a strike authorization vote](#) after 9 months of negotiations with New York University. Starting March 23, union workers will vote to decide whether to empower the bargaining committee to call a strike to pressure NYU to take meaningful steps toward negotiating a fair contract.

“We were eager to see what NYU would bring to the table after our last session, where we presented a petition signed by 1200 graduate workers in support of our demands. But after yet another disappointing meeting with NYU, we’re coming together to take action,” said Arundhati Velamur, a GSOC bargaining committee member. **“Our workers refuse the lack of response by NYU and are ready to strike if necessary.”**

GSOC bargaining committee members cited a living wage, expanded healthcare coverage, protections for international and immigrant students, and removing the NYPD presence from campus as among the union’s core demands.

“In response to GSOC’s opposition to NYU’s proposal for tiered raises—\$1 for master’s students and \$2 for PhD students—NYU’s most recent move was just to modify their proposal to offer \$1 raises for all graduate workers,” said Mariko Whitenack, a bargaining committee member and PhD student in American Studies. “That NYU is **doubling down on its proposal for \$1 raises is insulting and unacceptable**. Graduate workers deserve a living wage, and we know that NYU can afford it.”

An in-person rally will take place at NYU’s Washington Square campus on March 23, the first day of the strike authorization period. The rally will feature NYU graduate workers and speakers from other graduate worker unions, NYU employee unions, and campus groups. Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC, also part of UAW Local 2110) [have been on strike](#) since March 15 in an effort to reach their first contract with Columbia University.

Whitenack explained that GSOC's proposals emerged from months of membership phonebanking, surveys, and town halls. All union members are able to participate in shaping proposals and rallying support.

"One of the demands I am most concerned with is protections for international students," said Jose Octavio Orsag Molina, a PhD student in history. "As an international student, I was afraid that without a social security number, I wouldn't be able to receive payments or file taxes. When I reached out to NYU to clarify the lack of clear hiring and pay protocols, I never received any answer. Our proposals for subsidies for tax and legal support would help international students navigate the exclusionary U.S. political and legal landscape. "

Undergraduate students have voiced support for GSOC's organizing toward a potential strike.

"As undergrads, we are appalled by the university's treatment of grad workers, including our TAs," said Jake Colosa, an undergraduate activist in the NYU chapter of the Young Democratic Socialists of America. "We know that graduate student working conditions are our learning conditions. Failing to pay grad workers a living wage and failing to guarantee a safe work environment is an attack on the entire NYU community, students and workers alike."

To authorize a strike, the bargaining committee first calls a strike vote of union members. If two-thirds of voters approve, a strike can be called or a strike deadline set. GSOC members last voted to authorize a strike in 2014, when more than 1,100 grad workers voted 95% in favor. This action pressured NYU at the negotiating table to meet GSOC demands on the eve of the strike deadline. The resulting contract, settled on the eve of the strike deadline, raised the minimum wage of hourly workers from \$10 to \$20 by the end of the contract, provided healthcare and dental coverage to all graduate workers, created a childcare subsidy fund, and established a grievance and arbitration procedure to settle contract violations, including cases of discrimination.

The socially distanced rally will be simultaneously broadcast online.

Event Details:

- Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:00–1:30pm EDT at Gould Plaza, [27 West 4th Street](#)
- Socially distanced gathering with speaker presentation starting at 12:00pm
- Simultaneous [virtual event on Zoom](#)

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.

<https://makingabetternyu.org>

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