

# GSOC Activist Sign-up

We're **GSOC-UAW Local 2110**, a union representing graduate student workers at NYU. Chances are, at some point in your career as a grad student here, you will work in a union position and thus you will become part of our organization. But you don't have to wait until then to get involved!

**PLEASE NOTE:** This sign-up sheet is NOT a *union membership card*. You can only sign a membership card when you begin your first union job at NYU. This sign-up sheet will connect you to GSOC organizing and semi-regular email updates. *Please sign a union membership card if you are working this semester.*

Name

Non-NYU E-Mail Address

Phone Number

School (e.g., GSAS, Tandon, etc.) Department Year Masters PhD

Will you be working for NYU in a union position this semester?  
(If so, please also sign a *union membership card!*)

Yes  No  Maybe

Have you worked for NYU in a union position in the past? If so, please write the most recent semester you worked

Yes  Most recent semester worked

No

Have you signed a union **membership** card before?

Yes  No  Other

Do you plan to work for NYU in a union position in the future?

Yes  No  Maybe

Are you interested in taking collective action to improve the conditions of graduate student workers at NYU?

Yes  No

What are your major concerns as a graduate student worker?



THE GRAD WORKER  
**Rank & File**

## Issue Eight

of the NYU graduate  
union newsletter



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back to school



# How to Get Involved

We have a Member Meeting every third Tuesday from 4:30-6:30pm at the Judson Memorial Assembly Hall (239 Thompson Street). Please feel free to drop in to meet fellow grad student activists, get a sense of our current campaigns and concerns, and add your voice to the discussion.

And, if you want to participate in the union in a more specific and sustained way, we have several committees that need you:

## Organizing

Do you love on-the-ground conversations with our comrades across schools and departments? Want to develop skills to grow our union power? Then get in touch with Organizing – [gsoc.organizing@gmail.com](mailto:gsoc.organizing@gmail.com) – so you can help plan to hit the ground running this fall.

## Communications

We write emails to you, we answer your emails to GSOC, we handle press inquiries, and we maintain our website and social media. Comms is looking for folks with skills in design, journalism, and chasing inbox zero. Get in touch – [gsoc.com@gmail.com](mailto:gsoc.com@gmail.com) – if you're interested in being a part of our crew!

## Internal Governance

If you're interested in legalistic work, care about organizational process, and/or enjoy managing online elections or staffing ballot boxes, email our Unit Reps – [gsoc@2110uaw.org](mailto:gsoc@2110uaw.org) – for more info.

## Political Solidarity

If you have a cause you really care about and want to get our Union on board, this is the place to be. PoliSoli drafts solidarity statements, liaises with allies in labor and activism, and keeps us all aware of the political issues of our times. Shoot them an email to join in – [gsocpoliticalsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:gsocpoliticalsolidarity@gmail.com)



# Welcome Back!

## GSOC welcomes our rank and file to campus for the 2017-2018 academic year!

If you are a returning member, you will find tons of useful information in this edition of the *Graduate Worker Rank & File* about what your union is doing and how you can get involved. If you're new to NYU, please allow us to introduce ourselves.

We are the union that tirelessly represents and delivers big wins for graduate workers at NYU. We want you to be treated fairly while you work here, and we will be there for you if you are not. Our efforts put money in your pocket, placing critical benefits such as healthcare within financial reach for you and your family. (For more about your benefits visit our website, which includes

a very helpful primer on healthcare: [makingabetternyu.org](http://makingabetternyu.org))

Our work never ends, and we need your help. We encourage all rank and file members to get involved, and this issue includes many ways to make that happen. Also, if you're working this semester, be sure to fill out a union card at [makingabetternyu.org/become-a-member](http://makingabetternyu.org/become-a-member). Hand it to a union representative, and you will have full voting rights and an easy way to pay the union dues that keep us in the fight for you. If you aren't currently working (or if you're just keen) then fill out an activist sign up card on the back of this issue to get involved with the organizing & political work of your union.

First a little context...

## GSOC Timeline of Wins

This old adage holds true: *collective action gets the goods*. GSOC's been around for many years and has won many fights through this principle. The benefits we enjoy today are the product of sustained activism and organizing from past generations of members and the ongoing vigilance of current stewards and members. Here's some highlights of what a union can do:

### Before our contract:

In an attempt to discourage grad students from forming a union, the university restructured the GSAS financial aid packages in 2009 in a process they called FAR-4. Unique among American universities, FAR-4 decoupled work requirements from academic funding and bumped TAs into the same pay rates as ad-

juncts. This meant more money and more flexibility for working grad students. But, since this still fell short of the kinds of full job protections and benefits we needed, and didn't affect our most vulnerable colleagues, we unionized anyway.

### During our contract:

Our contract came into full effect September 1, 2015. It includes multiple benefits, such as:

- 90% subsidies for NYU/CHP health insurance costs in the semesters in which you are working
- Reimbursements of up to 75% of the cost of dependent health insurance
- A childcare fund for parents with kids under the age of six
- Free Stu-Dent dental services
- Paid sick leave (+5 days) and paid vacation time (1-2 weeks, after working 26 consecutive weeks)
- 'Just Cause' job protections (mandating that NYU can't fire you for no reason!)
- Paid-on-the-job travel
- Free personal and financial counseling for workers and their families
- Legal protection from ever being asked to pick up coffee or dry cleaning for your boss
- Broad and powerful anti-discrimination protections
- A huge hike in the minimum wage, which was previously as low as \$8.50 for some grad employees
- Annual raises for both hourly & salaried folks

### After our contract:

Although negotiating a contract is a key part of how a union wins better working conditions for its members, the effects of our campaigns have been felt outside of the contract and in our continued efforts to expand and enforce its language. Here are a few highlights of the union's victories post-2015:

- A big part of our contract campaign involved raising awareness about the shortcomings and unaffordability of NYU's health insurance pricing, bringing these issues uncomfortably into the spotlight. Sure enough, in Fall of 2015, NYU/CHP made some changes, moving to a flat rate for dependent health insurance (rather than having to pay for each family member) and a discount for GSHIP dependent costs. These huge savings affect some of the most financially precarious students at NYU, even when they are not working.
- In several departments NYU grad students were being formally or informally pressured into work as TAs without any pay. In the years after our contract, we've seen those practices stop and back pay being awarded to those wrongfully asked to work for free.
- At the engineering school MSc students were recruited into NYU's Incubator program where they worked at for-profit tech companies for paltry honorariums equivalent to less than the federal minimum wage for their skilled time and labor. We hired a lawyer and took NYU to arbitration on this issue. The result: back pay for all affected interns.
- One of our ongoing priorities is to secure student parental leave policies. Currently, and shockingly, NYU has no such policies.

We've successfully pressed NYU several times to extend NY state minimum paid disability leave to workers who give birth. Each time we've won settlements that have provided financial support and academic leave for these new parents.

- Our contract specifically states that doctoral students who work don't have to pay matriculation or related fees. At the Steinhardt and Silver schools NYU argued

that this didn't apply to its PhDs because matriculation was assessed via a bogus 1 credit course that essentially had no instruction. We got a lawyer, took the matter to arbitration, and won soundly. Now these students save \$4,150 a year.

- Along the way, we've settled a score of individual grievances, including some pretty outlandish abuses of managerial power on the part of profs and NYU admin.

This all wouldn't be possible if not for the collective power of our members, their passion and time, their dues dollars, and their leadership in the fight for a better university. If you aren't already a member, lend your support to your fellow grad students by signing a card today.

## Priorities for the Future

While we've accomplished a lot over the years, we still have a lot to fight for at NYU. Some priorities for this year's efforts include:

- The end to NYU's arbitrary mid-semester cut-off dates for health insurance and other financial subsidies. This has no basis in the contract and is shameful conduct. We have an arbitration hearing on this matter in September.
- Gender & Parental Equity, including securing better leave policies for all student parents
- Building our power before a tough contract fight in 2020 when we'll face NYU + 45's nasty National Labor Review Board

### Contact Info

Got a question? Here's how to get in touch:

Email: [gsoc@2110uaw.org](mailto:gsoc@2110uaw.org)

Twitter: [@gsocuaw](https://twitter.com/gsocuaw)

Facebook: [@gsocuaw2110](https://www.facebook.com/gsocuaw2110)

[www.makingabetternyu.org](http://www.makingabetternyu.org)