



GSOC-UAW LOCAL 2110

MAKING A BETTER NYU SINCE 1998

The Union for Graduate Employees at New York University

For a Stronger Contract at CUNY

We at GSOC-UAW support a “no” vote on the tentative agreement between the Professional Staff Congress, American Federation of Teachers Local 2334 (PSC) and the City University of New York (CUNY). The vote on the agreement ends today, and we urge members to make their voices heard on a proposed contract that does far too little to improve their working conditions. Further, we applaud the militant, rank-and-file organizing of the [7K-or-Strike movement](#), and encourage PSC members to engage in the ongoing struggle for a more democratic and militant union.

In an age when austerity budgets and the corporatization of higher education have plunged academic workers across the country into poverty and precarity, a strong contract is urgent for ensuring the economic security of PSC’s 30,000 members. But the tentative agreement falls far short of the urgent demands of rank-and-file members on a number of scores.

The agreement fails to make good on the demand for \$7,000 per three-credit course, which the union took up under pressure from the 7K-or-Strike movement and is acutely necessary for lifting adjuncts out of poverty. The contract would only get PSC members to \$5.5K in 2022, a poverty wage for workers in New York City. It also includes an end to seniority raises: while currently, adjuncts are eligible for a salary step increase every three years, under the tentative agreement, the steps end in 2022. And the contract forfeits 10 months of retroactive salary increases that members were owed from the previous lapsed contract.

Additionally, the proposed contract premises raises on an increase in workload for already severely overworked adjuncts. It stipulates that adjuncts would be paid for one office hour per course taught (currently, adjuncts teaching two or more courses get only one extra paid hour total). Because the union did not win adequate protections for how the paid hour can be used, this provision would require adjuncts to spend extra time on campus, which is simply not manageable for the many adjuncts who spend hours each day commuting between the multiple jobs they must work to make ends meet.

Finally, the proposed agreement does nothing to secure precarious jobs or cap class sizes. CUNY is already slashing up to 15 percent in adjunct budgets at its campuses, with hundreds of spring courses canceled and class sizes increasing. This leaves adjuncts in an urgent state of economic insecurity as they do not know how many courses they may lose next semester.

Failure to include language around funding or class sizes is not only harmful for adjuncts themselves, but also, of course, for CUNY's 250,000 students. We've been inspired by educators across the country who are bargaining for common good demands that make it clear that educators' working conditions are students' learning conditions. In contrast, this agreement fails to realize its potential as a tool to win better learning conditions for CUNY students due to lack of language around funding or class sizes, as well as protections against tuition hikes.

We believe, like many PSC members, that the weakness of the proposed contract is in part a result of the union leadership's failure to undertake a real campaign. The union did not focus its efforts on mobilizing its membership, eschewing engagement and transparency for closed-door bargaining. There was no effort by the union to organize toward a disruption of university operations. This failure to create a proactive, democratic campaign ultimately means that many of PSC's most vulnerable members will bear a heavier burden. And it means the union, without the intervention of movements like 7K-or-Strike, cannot as effectively challenge the intensified exploitation of the corporate university.

At GSOC, it was only because our membership adopted militant, democratic organizing that we were able to win a strong, social justice contract. In the face of stalling and weak counter-proposals from NYU, deep organizing, open bargaining sessions, and an escalation strategy that built up to a credible strike threat all played a critical role in winning the contract we have today. We applaud the efforts of the rank-and-file organizers across CUNY's campuses who have been engaging in the fight for a better deal. Members' support for a bolder, more militant contract campaign has been made clear by the 11 PSC chapters who passed resolutions supporting a strike if the contract did not win 7K for adjuncts, and the five chapters who have voted for a strike authorization campaign this semester.

This organizing lays the foundation for a renewed struggle to win a much better contract now, and to keep building workers' power in the fight against state and city austerity. We therefore urge members to vote "no" on the proposed contract, and join the fight for a better CUNY.

In solidarity,
GSOC-UAW Local 2110