

Dear President Young,

The CSSA is writing in support of UAW Local 4121, the Union representing Teaching and Research Assistants and other Academic Student Employees, in their efforts to maintain strong tuition/fee waivers for graduate assistantships.

As a campus student organization representing 3000 students, mostly international, CSSA understands the need for strong waiver programs. International students, in particular, are burdened by increases in unwaived tuition/fees because we do not legally have the option of supplementing our salary with other income. As a more vulnerable population, living far from familial support and already dealing with the challenge of integrating into the University community, sudden increases in fees create more tension and difficulty in our work lives. It is discouraging to learn that the University is taking the position that the waiver system agreed to through collective bargaining allows for unlimited increases, even after a neutral Arbitrator ruled to the contrary.

Graduate Assistantships, with competitive compensation and tuition waiver packages, enable the University to bring the best and brightest from around the world to Washington State. We came to Seattle because UW offered amazing opportunities to develop skills and work with world-class faculty, but we fear that the trend of waivers covering less and less each year will jeopardize our institution's future by making it less financially attractive to prospective students. UW and the Union bargained an agreement (including strong tuition waivers) that was meant to ensure long-term stability of these programs and enhance recruitment of top graduates.

Please work with the Union to settle this matter and respect the Arbitrator's decision.

Sincerely,

Chunxiang Zheng

President, Chinese Student and Scholar Association at University of Washington