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E-mail from Provost Huntsman to Deans, Directors and Chairs

Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2001 4:38 PM

To: UW Administration

Subject: GSA Issues

Deans, Directors, and Chairs

Dear Colleagues:

The University continues to meet with GSEAC/UAW. However, the possibility of a strike this quarter still exists. Therefore, I have been asked to provide some guidance on institutional policy regarding the way departments, schools, and colleges should respond to Graduate Student Assistants (GSAs) who refuse to complete their assignments. This is an important question with regard to all GSAs, not just TAs, because of the union's recent inclusion of Graduate Research and Staff Assistants in their efforts to unionize.

Public employees, unionized or non-unionized, are not legally authorized to withhold their labor at the expense of the public they serve. Therefore, regardless of one's views about the GSAs' right to unionize, or one's views on the legitimacy of the University's position on exclusive representation, a strike is a violation of the terms of a GSA's appointment, contrary to the interests of our students, against public policy, and not authorized by law.

GSAs who do not work will be taken off payroll every day they strike. If a strike extends for more than one pay period in a quarter, GSAs will be required to pay back their tuition waiver, health insurance fees, and technology fees.

Other responses, particularly the decision whether or not to continue a GSA's appointment after the conclusion of a strike, will be left to individual departments. Executive Order 28 specifically provides that the continuation or reappointment of a GSA is, in part, to be based on performance. Failure to perform assigned teaching, grading, or research-related duties is a failure of performance. This is compounded for those who struck last June and therefore failed previously to bring their assigned work to a satisfactory conclusion. The departments, through their chairs, are best able to decide if a GSA's appointment should be continued beyond the date of a work stoppage. The impacts will be local, so the decision should be local. You can be assured that the University administration will support any chair who chooses to discontinue or non-renew a GSA appointment for failure of performance.

These are important decisions, and we suggest you discuss these matters with your Dean. All GSAs

have been informed of the possible consequences to their appointment for failure to complete their assigned duties. However, you may want to reaffirm with the GSAs in your department the possibility that they face losing their GSA appointment as a consequence of withholding their labor as a part of a strike.

We remain hopeful that this matter will be resolved without a strike. But, we must be prepared to staff and complete all courses in future quarters with alternative personnel, if necessary, and to ensure that all work assigned to GSAs is completed.

Sincerely,

Lee L. Huntsman

Provost

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