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## **UAW Local 4121 Bargaining Committee Enters Final Days of Negotiations with Strong Support of Members**

Will the University avert a strike by more than 4,000 Academic Student Employees?

Monday April 27<sup>th</sup> marked the beginning of the final days of negotiations between the UAW Local 4121 and the University of Washington. The current contract expires April 30th. Bargaining will continue for four day-long sessions leading up to the contract expiration date.

In preparation for a possible strike, union representatives are holding departmental meetings across campus this week to discuss questions and logistics. Among other items, union members will discuss ways of keeping students who might be affected by a strike informed and involved.

“We care deeply about our students, and want to be sure they know we do not take a decision like this lightly,” says Victoria Thomas, graduate student instructor in Communication. “We believe our students also benefit from a stronger contract, and so are working with them to help in whatever way we can while still remaining committed to striking if circumstances warrant.”

“It is the intention of the bargaining committee to reach an inclusive and equitable contract for our members by the expiration date,” says Elizabeth Mills, UAW 4121 Bargaining Committee member. “We hope the University will move quickly to reach a deal that our members will enthusiastically support to avoid forcing a strike.”

As the contract expiration date draws near, the University community is beginning to speak out in support of Academic Student Employees. Already dozens of UW faculty have signed on to a letter to Interim President Ana Mari Cauce, expressing support for the bargaining committee and the membership’s demands. The letter urges the University to avoid forcing a strike and to engage meaningfully in the bargaining process. A MoveOn.org petition has also been started by students, faculty, and staff further urging UW to reach a fair deal.

Members are agitated, frustrated, and impatient, and they have spoken by a historic margin in the recent strike authorization vote. On Thursday April 30th, starting at 4:00pm, UAW 4121 members will converge

on Condon Hall, where bargaining negotiations are being held, to count down to the expiration of the contract at midnight.

UAW Local 4121 represents more than 4,000 Academic Student Employees on UW's campus.