



17 April 2015

UW Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Readers, Graders, and Tutors

Subject: Responsibility to Our Students

Dear Academic Student Employees,

We understand that a vote to authorize a strike is currently being undertaken by your union, the United Auto Workers Local 4121 (UAW). We are sending this message to you because we believe that it is important for you to understand your responsibility to the University of Washington and especially to the other students that study in the classes and laboratories you work in, and the implications that a strike would have on you and the students you serve through your employment by the University of Washington.

Participating in demonstrations, rallies, or other expressive activities before or after work hours or during lunch or break periods is fully within your rights. However, it is important for you to know that, as a public employee, you do not have the right to strike under Washington State law. This right does not exist because it would be in conflict with employees' responsibility to the public they serve, in this case, the students and research laboratories of the University of Washington.

In addition, the UW/UAW contract does not provide for a right to strike, and in fact prohibits the union from even authorizing such a work stoppage. While this contract expires on April 30, 2015, under Washington State law, the terms and conditions of a contract carry forward for up to a year from expiration while efforts are made to agree on a new contract.

It is important for you to understand that, as is true for any UW employee, you will not be paid for unapproved, unscheduled absence from work and may be subject to losing your benefits, which could include your tuition waiver or health insurance.

As TAs, RAs, Graders and Tutors, you are often the first line of contact with UW students, and their success depends in many ways on you. Our students justifiably expect to complete their courses on time, with limited deviation from course syllabi—and they rely on the University to make sure this happens. As terms of your employment, you have each accepted a role that is an integral part of the UW educational experience in both classrooms and research laboratories. The UW is very fortunate to have an exceptional and hard working group of graduate and undergraduate student employees fulfilling its mission. As Deans of the Graduate School and Undergraduate Academic Affairs, we are

both proud of the contributions our graduate and undergraduate students in the ASE make to the University's teaching, research and service mission.

We understand that as of July 1, 2015, the base wages of 50%-FTE ASEs (TAs/RAs/SAs) at the UW will have risen by approximately 30% over the last three years in order to take the UW to the median of our Global Challenge State peers. In addition, hourly ASEs have all been brought up to at least \$11/hour as of April 1, 2015. The University has proposed to continue for the next 3 years the same formula adopted by the UW and the Union in 2012 to maintain the "market median" of peer institutions. These raises were important not only to the students that received them, but also to the University's ability to compete with our peers for the very best and brightest graduate students. While a new contract has not yet been finalized, we are confident the University will continue to bargain in good faith toward achieving a fair agreement.

We encourage you to exercise your right to vote on this important issue. Should the vote of the Union members be in favor of sanctioning a strike, whether or not you choose to participate in a strike or work stoppage is a decision that is yours alone to make. But we hope you will carefully consider how your actions will impact the students you have been hired to help in your classrooms, lecture halls, and labs.

Thank you for your service to the University of Washington and the thousands of students that depend on you to receive the ultimate 'Husky Experience'.

Sincerely,



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The Graduate School



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