

As we enter into the voting period for authorizing a strike, many students who rely on TAs, graders, and tutors for much of their education are probably wondering what a strike might mean for them. The following are some talking points to help TAs and tutors explain the current bargaining situation, what a vote to authorize a strike actually means, and what a strike would entail.

- **The bargaining process:** Many students are unaware that their TAs are working under a contract with the University and that every time the contract expiration date comes up, they are represented by elected members of UAW Local 4121 who negotiate on their behalf at the bargaining table. This current contract expires on April 30th.
- **The bargaining demands:** The four main demands that the University has not engaged with UAW on are based on: compensation, fees, health care, and micro-aggressions.
- **Why the demands are important:** This is not simply the “TAs wanting more money”, although all of us understand that wages as they are are not acceptable (especially given the annual 8% or so rise in rents across the city). Our demands also seek to improve the working environment for all Academic Student Workers and the general campus environment. A good working environment for TAs means high quality education for students.
- **What a Strike Authorization Vote is:** This week, ASEs are voting on whether or not to give the Union’s Bargaining Committee the authorization to call for a strike should bargaining circumstances warrant it. The Committee is *not* saying that circumstances warrant it at this immediate moment. A Strike Authorization Vote is a part of the contract bargaining process and an important way to show the University that members of the Union are upset with how the University has responded to our demands thus far. It requires  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the voters to vote yes.
- **What an actual strike would mean for students:** If the Bargaining Committee thinks that circumstances warrant it and that union members are behind it, they can call for a strike. This will mean that TAs, tutors, graders, and some instructors (e.g., graduate students teaching their own classes) who participate in the strike will not work. When ASEs went on strike for 15 days in 2001 to gain the right to unionize, the University responded in the following ways:
  - Many courses were altered so that grading could be done via scantrons, eliminating assignments like papers and written exams which are essential for understanding course material in many subjects.
  - Some faculty members took over classes.
  - Some final exams were cancelled.
  - Some students’ grades were delayed in being processed.
  - More information can be found here:  
<https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/uwunions/gseac.htm>

As difficult as these conditions have and would be to encounter, it is critical to do everything we all can to urge UW administrators to avert them by agreeing to a fair contract with ASEs.

- **What students can do to help:** Standing behind their TAs, graders, and tutors is the best way to avoid a strike even happening. You can show the University that you believe it should bargain in earnest with the union by:
  - Signing on to the letter of support which will be delivered to the President (the faculty are currently signing on to a similar letter) which will be circulated after the results of the strike authorization vote are released.
  - Joining us as we protest the quarterly fees that amount to pay cuts at Schmitz Hall this Friday at 2pm.
  - Talking to other students about what's happening and how to help.

It is important to stress that TAs do not want to go on strike because we enjoy our jobs and would hate to for our students' education to suffer, but we refuse to work in unfair conditions. The support of our students in this is key to avoiding this situation. Please contact the UW administration and urge them to avert the strike by agreeing to a fair contract with the TAs, Readers, and Tutors.