



# UAW Local 4121

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2633 Eastlake Ave E, Suite 200 • Seattle, WA 98102 • 206.633.6080

November 17, 2020

Open Letter to:

Banks Evans, Assistant Vice President, Labor Relations,  
University of Washington

Dear Mr. Evans,

We, the undersigned members of UAW Local 4121, support the incorporation of the new Ruth Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) salary/stipend levels into our collective bargaining agreement.

The Kirschstein scale comprises a national standard for Postdocs that typically follows from an increase in the NIH Budget<sup>1</sup>. Incorporating the revised Kirschstein rates will therefore enable UW to keep pace with peer institutions and will provide Postdocs with a salary range adjustment this year, similar to the ones received by other employees at UW (including Academic Student Employees, classified staff, nurses, research technicians, and others).

Fair wages are fundamental to our success in research, and to creating and sustaining a more equitable work environment. Through our Union, Postdocs have been working to reduce or eliminate precarity within our profession: including high instances of sexual harassment and discrimination and unequal access to benefits. While improvements in policy, greater transparency and the creation of additional peer-based support networks have helped, economic security is vital to ensuring that we can fully implement and enforce our negotiated improvements.

Moreover, we believe that it is critical to implement the new wage increases now, as soon as they are released. The NRSA scale was released four months into the fiscal year due to delays in the FY2020 Congressional budgeting process, so acting now enables us to avoid lagging behind national standards. It also creates a more predictable budgeting process.

We applaud the University Administration's actions to improve equity and inclusion at UW and throughout the nation. We look forward to bargaining and respectfully request immediate incorporation of the NRSA scale into our CBA to ensure that fair wages continue to be part of an overall system of improvements.

Signed,

Amanda Clouser, Postdoc Head Steward  
Elena Pandres, Postdoc Head Steward  
Max Friedfeld, Postdoc Unit Chair

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<sup>1</sup> The FY2020 NIH budget increased by \$2.6 billion (7%) compared to FY2019.

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