

Statement of the AAUP-Penn Executive Committee in Solidarity with GETUP

We stand with graduate research and teaching assistants in [GETUP-UAW](#) in their campaign for their first contract with the University of Pennsylvania. As faculty, we value the essential work they do as researchers and teachers, and we affirm their right to organize and bargain collectively for a fair contract under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act—a law that also requires the Penn administration to bargain in good faith. In the face of the Trump administration's latest [extortionary threats to this university and to all faculty, staff, and students](#), GETUP's efforts to win a democratic voice at work and an enforceable contract that guarantees their rights are all the more important.

GETUP's contract proposals would make Penn a better place to teach, research, and learn. Members of the union are negotiating for two main goals: improved support for international graduate workers, and fair pay and benefits, including six years of guaranteed funding, comprehensive health coverage, and a living wage (Penn's \$39,425 minimum stipend falls substantially below the [living wage threshold](#) in Philadelphia). The terms that GETUP proposes are not only equitable and just, but they are also now standard at peer institutions, and they would make Penn's graduate programs more competitive, helping faculty recruit strong applicants.

GETUP has been in negotiations with Penn's central administration for over a year. Disappointingly, administrators and their costly antiunion lawyers have stonewalled at the bargaining table. At other universities, graduate unions facing intransigent administrations have understandably voted to authorize strikes, and a supermajority of graduate workers at Penn have voted by a 92% margin to authorize a strike here.

It is entirely within the Penn administration's power to avoid a strike by bargaining in good faith and settling a contract. Yet instead of doing so, Penn administrators are preparing for the possibility of a strike by circulating [anti-union messaging](#) to faculty, instructing us to make "teaching continuity" plans to break a potential strike. **We urge all our colleagues to [consult this guidance, written by Penn faculty for Penn faculty, on what strikebreaking entails and the reasons that faculty absolutely should not do it](#).** When administrators ask you to be a strikebreaker—by teaching a striking worker's sections or labs, doing their grading, assigning their work to someone else, or reporting strikers' names to facilitate illegal retaliation—they are asking you to take sides against the RAs and TAs whose work is essential to your own, compromising your integrity, your professional relationships, and your ability to recruit graduate students for years to come. When administrators tell you that strikebreaking will help your undergraduates, they want you to ignore the plain fact that the best way to ensure teaching continuity is to stand in solidarity with graduate workers today, sending the message that the administration must arrive at a fair contract now.

If GETUP's bargaining team calls for a strike in order to win a fair contract, they will have AAUP-Penn's support and solidarity.