

From: Local 2110 UAW [<mailto:local2110@2110uaw.org>]

Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2015

To: NYU Membership

Subject: Concerns about bylaws vote

Dear GSOC members,

We are the democratically elected Executive Board of Local 2110 to which GSOC belongs. We all come from different workplaces that are part of our local union including Columbia University, Barnard College, the Museum of Modern Art, the Village Voice, Teachers College and NYU itself. We welcome you to Local 2110 and congratulate you on winning back union recognition and a great second contract. We are excited about working together and look forward to GSOC's participation in our elected Joint Council and other local union activities.

We are concerned about the Unit Bylaws that have been circulated to you for your approval by electronic ballot. We have discussed these proposed bylaws with the GSOC Unit Representatives on several occasions and we want to make the general membership aware of the issues we have raised.

- Local 2110 already has bylaws and it is extremely unusual for a bargaining unit like GSOC that is part of a larger, amalgamated local union to have separate unit bylaws. None of the other workplace units within Local 2110 have separate unit bylaws and it has not prevented them from taking on and winning cutting edge contracts or fostering a high degree of activism and participation. In fact, GSOC during the first contract did not have its own bylaws and still functioned effectively and democratically within Local 2110.
- Under the UAW's constitution, if GSOC has separate unit bylaws, they cannot conflict with the larger Local's bylaws. The proposed unit bylaws as written do conflict with Local 2110 bylaws and the UAW constitution including:

- The definition of members who would be eligible to vote and run for office goes far beyond those working in the bargaining unit to include any graduate student at NYU even if that person has never worked in a union position, may never work in the future and contributes no union dues. This is not only inconsistent with the UAW constitution and the 2110 bylaws but is contrary to the GSOC contract, and undermines the legal case to establish collective bargaining rights for graduate workers. Recognizing that GSOC members do not necessarily work consecutive semesters, our Executive Board proposed a compromise to GSOC Unit Reps to allow membership eligibility to anyone who has worked one semester in a 12 month period even though such persons would not be working or contributing dues throughout the 12 month period. This was rejected.
- Insistence that GSOC have its own separate budget although none of the other 20-odd units within 2110 have such a separate budget. Not only is this contrary to the basic principle of collectively shared resources within Local 2110 and the UAW, it is especially dismaying since it was the dues revenue of Local 2110 members and members from other UAW local unions that made it possible to win an eight year organizing campaign to regain union recognition for GSOC. During this period, no one in GSOC paid any dues; rather, other workers -- office workers, legal workers, adjuncts, auto workers, retail workers, state workers, casino workers, agricultural and aerospace workers -- recognized the importance of this national fight for the future of higher education and financed the campaign through their dues contributions.

We also strongly reject the mischaracterization of our union in the "Bylaws Primer" distributed with the draft bylaws which claims to support "coalition-building participation in broader struggles for socio-economic equity" in contrast to the "philosophy of business unionism espoused by UAW leadership over the past sixty year." This is simply untrue and insults all of us as members of the UAW. The UAW played a key, highly respected role in the civil rights movement,

the anti-war movement and the anti-apartheid movement. Today, the UAW nationally is fighting to organize auto workers in the deep South, and its legislative agenda is one of the most progressive in the country. Closer to home, the UAW was a founding member of the Working Families Party in New York, and Local 2110 and the other local unions in Region 9A were highly involved in the Occupy movement, participated in every major march and demonstration against police violence and racism, and are actively organizing thousands of contingent workers such as adjuncts, freelance writers and graduate workers. The UAW's commitment to long, multi-year battles to change the law for graduate worker rights -- at NYU, in Massachusetts, in California, in Washington State and now at Columbia and the New School -- exemplifies its commitment to fundamental social justice and democracy.

Regardless of the outcome of the vote, we cannot recognize provisions which conflict with our own bylaws and constitution or are not in the best interest of the membership as a whole. We urge you to reject an approach which unnecessarily divides you from other workplaces within our union. Instead, we would like to work together to strengthen our union, organize new members in higher education, and fight for the strongest collective bargaining rights possible.

Signed,

Local 2110 UAW Executive Board:

- Maida Rosenstein, President
- Booker Washington, Vice President
- Michael Cinquina, Secretary-Treasurer
- June Benjamin, Recording Secretary
- Sharon Walls, Trustee
- Jesus Diaz, Trustee
- Stacy Thomas, Trustee
- Julie Wokaty, Sergeant-at-Arms
- Patrick Gallagher, Guide