



# Technical, Office and Professional

## Union - Local 2110 - UAW - AFL-CIO

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August 3, 2015

Seana Lymer, Chris Nickell, Anne Pasek  
GSOC Staff Representatives

Dear Seana, Chris and Anne,

Welcome to Local 2110! We congratulate you on your contract. It has been a long, ongoing struggle to regain collective bargaining rights for graduate workers at private universities. As fall approaches, the first semester in which NYU graduate workers will become dues-paying members, we look forward to working together to strengthen our union and take on future challenges.

We are delighted that GSOC is once again a part of Local 2110. Local 2110 has won ground breaking agreements, including addressing race and gender-based pay inequities at Columbia University, being the first U.S. union to negotiate child care subsidies and domestic partner coverage, fighting to preserve and improve health care benefits and union rights, and taking on tough employers. Now, we can all be proud of having successfully won back collective bargaining rights for graduate workers in the private sector!

As we move forward with the inclusion of GSOC in our local union, we wanted to address some issues directly:

We are aware that you have drawn up “Articles of Representation” (ARE) which you’ve characterized as temporary until formal unit by-laws are passed by the membership. As you know, unit by-laws cannot conflict with 2110 by-laws or the UAW constitution. We think the ARE conflict in several instances including:

- **Membership eligibility.** As we’ve stated before, an individual is not eligible to run for office or vote in union elections unless they are a member in good standing, i.e., a worker who is a dues-paying member of the union. Granting voting rights to graduate students who are not working and/or have not joined the union is a violation of 2110 by-laws and the UAW constitution and moreover, is fundamentally undemocratic.

We understand that unit jobs are not necessarily structured as 12 month positions. To address this, we previously suggested that GSOCers would be considered eligible to run for GSOC office if they worked at least one semester out of the 12 month academic year (and were otherwise compliant). We reiterate this now. We also recognize the inherent interest in gaining support from NYU graduate students who are not currently working but may be at some future date. We welcome a discussion about ways in which non-member supporters can be meaningfully involved aside from running for office, voting in elections or acting as collective bargaining representatives. As you know, during the organizing campaign, only bargaining unit employees were allowed to vote in the representation election but many non-employee supporters helped organize support, resulting in a 98.4% yes vote among a majority of current workers voting in person.

- **The ARE conflates the three staff representatives with the Unit Chair position.** Under the Local 2110 by-laws, each unit within the local can elect one Unit Chair who serves as chief steward for the bargaining unit. This position is elected at large by the membership, not by stewards. Under the contract, we negotiated for three staff positions, paid by NYU, explicitly to administer the contract, e.g., signing up workers for the union, answering questions about the contract and assisting members with grievances. The elected Unit Chair may be appointed to one of these positions but there is no requirement to do this. There is also no requirement that these staff positions be elected. The 2110 by-laws state that the president of Local 2110 appoints and supervises staff. The contract requires the

union (by contract definition, Local 2110 and the UAW) to submit nominations to the university. This did not occur with your recent appointments and is a violation of the 2110 by-laws and the contract. Instead, the selection of reps was done behind closed doors without discussion with Local 2110 or the UAW and without any prior posting to the eligible union supporters.

You have expressed a desire for unit governance over how such positions are filled and by whom. We would welcome a discussion with you centering on fair job requirements, a transparent application process and ongoing accountability.

- Your recent steward meeting included a motion for the provision of an independent budget and separate bank account for GSOC. This conflicts with 2110 by-laws and UAW practice. It is contrary to the 20+ year successful operation of an amalgamated local union with numerous diverse units of varied size, including multiple years in which GSOC was part of 2110. Over the years, our executive board and joint council have approved expenditures to organize new workers, take on tough contract fights regardless of workplace size, and fight for justice on a daily basis. Our commitment and militancy stood GSOC well in 2005 when NYU withdrew recognition. Despite the magnitude of the fight, Local 2110 was there, and we put our money where our mouth was.

During the lengthy GSOC campaign after the strike, dues contributions from 2110 and other UAW members paid the cost of all the resources that were necessary for fighting and winning this long struggle. It was necessary to spend millions of dollars to win this very difficult campaign and it will be many years before the dues paid in by the GSOC membership match the outlay other members made in order to win this important national struggle for all university workers.

This proposal also ignores the current status of GSOC. You have requested that dues collection not occur until the fall semester. We have agreed and to date, no one in the unit has paid any dues. Despite this, Local 2110 has and will continue to commit resources to GSOC, providing staff, pursuing grievances and if necessary, arbitration and agreeing to your requests for mailchimp and CGEU funding.

- Before this motion on the budget was discussed, you insisted that Patrick Gallagher and Scott Sommer leave the meeting. This is troubling since as a new group, it would be helpful to you to get input from experienced union representatives and we wonder why you felt a closed door session (with only 9 people) was necessary or advisable. In similar fashion, you have rejected using [gsoc@2110uaw.org](mailto:gsoc@2110uaw.org) as a general email address for the unit although it was the address used by GSOC in the past and you would have direct access to any emails received at the address. Instead, you insist that members emailing GSOC do so at [gsoc.comm](mailto:gsoc.comm), an address which you are operating privately and to which neither Local 2110 or the UAW has access. Again, we wonder why you think this is necessary, advisable or in the interest of the union membership. We are accountable to the membership for expenditures and we cannot justify paying for a mailer program if you are going to use it to deny Local 2110 access to members who we legally represent.

Local 2110 has supported GSOC with more than our dues money. We actively campaigned starting in 1999 during the initial organizing drive, assisted the first negotiating committee and worked closely with GSOC members and leaders during the first contract. Many of us were arrested while protesting NYU's withdrawal of recognition. We participated in countless demonstrations, rallies, pickets and events in support of GSOC during the strike of 2005 and after. We are proud of GSOC's history and accomplishments and justifiably view Local 2110 as an integral part of this important struggle. We are committed to building the strongest union possible, at NYU and throughout our local union. To do that, we must work together. That is what is in the interest of our union membership. We look forward to further discussion.

On behalf of the Local 2110 Executive Officers,

Michael Cinquina\*Jesus Diaz\*Patrick Gallagher\*Maida Rosenstein\*Sharon Walls\*Booker Washington\*Julie Wokaty