

Bargaining Starting Positions

Please use this form to vote on our unit's Bargaining Starting Positions. Your responses will help us determine consensus within union membership. Voting **yes** for these positions will commit the Bargaining Committee to fighting for them. Voting **no** for these positions means that they will not be incorporated into articles in their current form. Amended versions of rejected positions may be sent out for a unit-wide vote at a later date.

The Bargaining Committee will not be able to suggest major changes to any of these positions or give them up without a prior discussion in a general body meeting followed by a unit-wide poll. These positions represent neither a minimum nor maximum and how they shape our contract will be determined in open membership meetings throughout the bargaining process. Specific contract language and figures (i.e. compensation) will be **collectively finalized** at meetings open to all membership.

Vote **YES** or **NO** on the provisions listed under each contract section below.

1. **YES** - I support this as our bargaining starting position
2. **NO** - I do not support this as our bargaining starting position

REMEMBER: This campaign is a unit-led campaign. For that we need YOU, the unit! We need your voices and your energy to win a contract we deserve.

- Working groups, open to all unit members, are currently co-drafting our contract language with BC, because we believe that affected workers have the best understanding of what they need. Join a working group today to contribute your ideas (no previous experience required)
- Regular updates and open discussion on the bargaining process with membership through Town Halls and General Body Meetings. These will be used to discuss bargaining strategies, and priorities, and vote on any major changes to our bargaining strategy.
- Open bargaining is the only venue where we will negotiate with Columbia, and where article language may evolve outside of membership meetings. During open bargaining, we will work collectively as a unit to respond to Columbia's positions at the bargaining table through **caucusing**, where we pause bargaining with the University to confer, debate, and vote on contract changes with rank-and-file membership. This is a crucial aspect of union transparency, mandated by our referendum, and we believe it makes us stronger at the table! When everyone has a direct view into bargaining, we can all strategize with a clearer picture of what's going on.
- Surveys, polls, and asynchronous forums will provide opportunities to give input on our strategy if you cannot attend meetings, as well as to vote on any major or contentious changes to our bargaining strategy, and to ratify our new contract.

Academic Freedom and AI

Rights

- We will fight to contractually define academic freedom and guarantee academic freedom to all student-workers in our capacities as researchers and instructors. This means that we will be guaranteed the right to teach and research the topics of our choice, and to speak as individuals internally and externally to the university, without facing unreasonable discipline or censorship by our supervisors, the University, or government entities.

Appointments

- We will fight to protect the current level of appointments from unnecessary reductions, expand the required information for appointment letters to promote transparency, and require the university to provide salaried appointments to all students who would otherwise qualify for such appointments in our new contract.

Artificial Intelligence

- We will fight for a new contract that protects student-workers from AI job replacement and AI-related theft in our new contract. We seek full transparency from Columbia regarding use of student-workers' creative or intellectual products and/or personal data in AI training, and a guarantee that any and all use of student-workers' creative or intellectual products or personal data in AI training is disclosed, consented to, and fairly compensated.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

- We will fight for a new contract that recognizes that student-workers, like faculty, are often significant contributors to or originators of many scientific concepts/inventions, and ensure we are allowed to object to any abuses of the products of our intellectual labor. We will also seek better protections for, and greater control over, the products of our teaching labor, including the ability to retain control of course content we develop while at Columbia and to refuse recording of our teaching.

Health & Safety

- We will fight for a new contract that recognizes doxxing to be a threat to the health and safety of student-workers, which, in addition to our Health & Safety article, will affirm that the University is committed to enforcing its own policies to protect student-workers from doxxing, and ensure Columbia covers all costs incurred by student-workers as a result of being doxxed.

Grievance

- We will fight for a new contract that removes the "statute of limitations" on grievances, and extends the timeline for escalating grievances. This will make it easier for us to pursue workplace problems without any falling through the cracks. We will strive to expand possible informal resolutions at the department and school level through designated third parties, removing decision making power from the hands of university admin. Finally, we will fight to make Columbia University pay for arbitrations they lose so they can't drain union resources by making us pursue easily-winnable cases, and also force them to accept our desired remedies if they simply don't respond to our requests.

Compensation

- We will fight for a new contract that includes a base pay commensurate with cost of living, that allows workers to build savings, and increases that meet or exceed inflation, without affecting cuts to the PhD program that the University may resort to in response. We will also bargain for the university to use central funds to cover the short-term costs of increased compensation so PIs and grants don't have to bear the brunt of it. We will also work to establish a preset pay schedule with penalties for Columbia University when they fail to pay us on time.
- We will fight for a new contract that matches employer contributions to the voluntary retirement savings plan (which we will ensure is accessible to all members of the bargaining unit) that meet common workplace standards.

- We will fight for a new contract where all graduate student-workers are on 12 month appointments at pay parity with 6 years of guaranteed funding, regardless of department or discipline.

Campus Surveillance and Policing

- We will fight for a new contract where Columbia University is prohibited from endangering members of our bargaining unit by voluntarily bringing local, state, or federal law enforcement, and/or any private security agencies onto campus. We will limit the university's ability to surveil its students, faculty, and employees without our knowledge or consent.
- We will fight for a new contract that prohibits Public Safety or any other third-party security contractor from using verbal or physical force against its workers.

Healthcare

- We will fight for a new contract that includes better, more flexible, and protected healthcare that works for us. This includes free dental and vision insurance for all student-workers, improved and more timely access to Columbia Health, and the ability to choose between student and faculty health insurance plans so that all student-workers and our dependents can have a choice in picking the insurance plan that's best for us. We will also fight to ensure that gender, sexual, and reproductive healthcare is protected for all members and dependents.
- We will fight for a more comprehensive health fund in our new contract, which: covers more student-workers and dependents, increases year-on-year to match inflation, and covers full healthcare for student-workers living abroad.

Working Conditions

- We will fight for a new contract that affirms every student-worker's right to access all documents relevant to their academics or employment.
- We will fight for a new contract that ensures Columbia University covers the cost of any coursework, training, and software/equipment related expenses required to perform appointment-related duties. In addition, any training required to perform work duties will be compensated.
- We will fight for a new contract that includes improved working conditions for student-workers, including: increased paid vacation days and leave days; a larger and more accessible emergency fund which provides support for non-medical expenses such as housing loss, theft, bereavement and childcare, and relocation assistance for all out-of-city and international student-workers; an annual MetroCard for all student-workers; and reinstituting the paycheck advance program.

Parents' Rights

- We recognize that the current Columbia University policies present a substantial obstacle to student-workers with families. We will fight for a new contract that overhauls the current parental accommodation policy and simplifies the process of applying for and receiving childcare subsidies. The parental accommodation period at full pay will be increased with an option for additional leave at reduced pay. If taken while on stipend, the funding that will otherwise have been received while on parental accommodation will be deferred and student-workers will be guaranteed to continue receiving funding upon returning from leave. We will fight for these benefits to be extended to all eligible undergraduate and masters' student-workers.

International Students

- We will fight for a new contract that designates Columbia University as a “sanctuary campus” that advocates for and protects undocumented and international students. To that end, we will call on Columbia to refuse federal enforcement agencies’ voluntary requests for international student-worker documents until Columbia has notified the worker, and sought the worker’s consent.
- We will fight for a new contract where Columbia University provides greater financial assistance to undocumented and international students via reimbursements and a hardship fund, as well as individualized support for visa and tax related issues.
- We will fight for a new contract where Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) restrictions are removed so that international student-workers have access to the full allotment of CPT/OPT days as specified by USCIS.

Non-discrimination & Harassment

- We will fight for a new contract that strengthens our existing Non-Discrimination and Harassment article by: instituting stronger protections against discrimination on the basis of gender identity, simplifying access to third-party neutral arbitration, outlining a timeline for securing disability accommodations, and providing guidelines for remediation and interim protective measures for cases of discrimination and harassment.
- We will fight for a new contract that requires Columbia University codify recommendations from the [Anti-Bullying Working Group](#), including creating a faculty code of conduct.
- We will fight for a new contract that prohibits the university from maintaining or establishing campuses, facilities, or centers (including Global Centers or satellite campuses) or running academic programs (including dual degree programs) that would discriminate against students and employees on the basis of race, color, religion/creed, caste, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, medical conditions, national origin, citizen or immigration status, ancestry, age, military or veteran status, disability, status as a victim of domestic violence, genetic information or carrier status, unemployment status, partnership status, or any other applicable legally protected status.

Discipline & Discharge

- We will fight for a new contract that standardizes the process for discipline and discharge across all departments and secures the rights of the student-worker and the union to access all investigatory reports related to a disciplinary charge.
- We will fight for a new contract that protects workers from discipline and discharge in proceedings predicated solely on information gathered through surveillance.
- We will fight for a new contract that includes non-reappointment protections such as a minimum notice period before reappointment, just cause protections for non-reappointment, and severance pay for firing.

Just Financial Investments and International Law

- We will fight for a new contract that affirms student-workers’ rights to participate in a workplace compliant with international law and human rights law, and commits Columbia University to divesting from any private company, state actor, or financial institution violating international law and human rights law.

Financial Transparency

- We will fight for a new contract where Columbia University commits to financial transparency in all facets of the institution, including investments and holdings, government contracts, administrator salaries, and expenditures from public safety and facilities, including private security contractors.

Union Rights

- We will fight for a new contract which establishes an "agency shop," meaning that all workers, as a condition of employment, will be automatically enrolled in our union. If they do not wish to join the union, workers may pay a "fair share fee" equivalent to dues to help pay for the cost of running the union. This provision is common in graduate student unions and unions in general, and will allow us to spend more time building relationships with members and solving problems, rather than individual outreach for the sole purpose of signing union cards.
- We will fight for a new contract that makes the union more accessible to members, allowing us to reserve campus rooms, have union billboards, and get more time during our union orientations. We will also seek the ability for a select number of elected union officers to swap out their teaching or research appointments for union work, making union organizing more accessible to everyone.

Centralized Transitional Funding

- We will fight for a new contract that includes adequate, accessible, and advisor-independent transitional funding for graduate students who wish to switch advisors or research labs for reasons that include issues of harassment, discrimination, or moral disagreement. There will not be a requirement to prove or justify the concern to the University to access this funding.

What would be the best method for you to stay up to date with contract campaign events and bargaining?
(Check all that apply)

- (1) Instagram
- (2) Twitter
- (2) Unit-wide emails / Wednesday Worker
- (3) Physical posters posted in common spaces
- (4) Department organizers
- (5) Text updates in the WhatsApp General Chat
- (5) other...