

To:

From:

Subject: Research Scientist bargaining and strike plans

Dear,

As you are almost certainly aware, research scientists/engineers (A-4) elected to unionize in June 2022 and are in the process of bargaining over our first contract. I'm writing to provide you with information about our negotiations as I do think it's important that you are aware of the current state of bargaining, and the implications for our work together. I also would appreciate your supporting our efforts to move central administration to agree to fair terms.

Background:

We began bargaining with UW's Labor Relations team in August of 2022 and to date we have had over 30 bargaining sessions. In this time, we have had extremely difficult negotiations, and filed an unfair labor practice charge alleging bad faith bargaining by the University administration. Despite this we have reached tentative agreements on more than two dozen articles. Our bargaining team has negotiated improvements to career development and job security including an increase to the [layoff notice period](#), security that we will be recognized for our contributions to scientific publications, and a pathway for research scientists in all schools and departments to become [PIs](#) on their own grants; all of which we believe will not only benefit research scientists, but will improve the capacity of the university to meet its research mission goals.

The central issues:

Despite these wins, there are still major issues on which we have made little or no progress. UW Compensation has for nearly 10 years now commissioned and published reports showing that RSEs are the most underpaid professional staff group at UW. According to UW's own [stated goals](#) for what Professional Staff should make, Research Scientists are underpaid by [about 30%](#) relative to the market. These wages make living in Seattle increasingly untenable for research scientists. We are tired of losing valuable, talented colleagues because they simply cannot afford to live on a research scientist's salary, and we're sure you are too. Despite this, Labor Relations has refused to provide a Compensation counter proposal that includes a meaningful market adjustment for research scientists.

Research scientists are also fighting for stronger protections from harassment and discrimination. We work in the same labs and spaces as academic student employees and postdocs, but we do not have access to the same peer-led harassment-prevention program that they agreed to for our Postdoc and grad student colleagues. We've gotten insufficient explanation as to why.

Because of the UW Administration's refusal to move on these issues, 92% of research scientists and 96% of Postdocs voted YES to a strike authorization vote, and **an indefinite strike has been scheduled to begin on June 7th.**

What is needed from you:

If you would like to help us ensure a strike is not needed, please reach out to your Chair and to Labor Relations (laborrel@uw.edu) and let them know how damaging the loss of research scientists' labor would be to your work. Please encourage them to move on the critical issues of Compensation and Nondiscrimination outlined above. We have also maintained complete records of the entirety of our bargaining history: you are welcome to review these [here](#). Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

RSE Bargaining Committee

Thaddeus Armstrong

Nick Bolten

Jai Broome

Erin Carll

Morgan Crotta

Iván Cruz

Abby Gambrill

Jay Mas Gilvydis

Anya Kalata

Julia Kobelt

Katherine Lasdin

Ellen MacLachlan

Katie Osterhage

Deborah Nemens

Van Redila

Annelise Smith

Galen Stewart

Jacob Tietsort

Stacey Wedlake

Ryan Will

Tricia Wu