



Workers Center of Central New York
2013 E. Genesee St. Suite 8
Syracuse, NY 13210
315.218.5708 • workerscny.org

MEMO OF SUPPORT

Graduate Student Unionization Effort at Syracuse University

The Workers Center of Central New York is proud to support the Graduate Student unionization effort at Syracuse University. As an organization dedicated to fighting for economic justice, improving working conditions and promoting dignity and human rights for all workers, we fully support the goal of student workers to create more dignified and just labor conditions within the University.

We hope that the University will voluntarily recognize the Graduate Student Union and their right to organize to fight for livable wages and to democratize working conditions at the University. We believe unionization will increase accountability in University labor relations and improved labor conditions for student workers, benefiting the entire University community and ultimately the community at large. Graduate students live, shop and recreate in the wider Syracuse community. Their economic well-being is a fundamental strand in the web of our larger community.

There are approximately 1,200 grad students employed at SU, fulfilling essential tasks such as teaching, grading, mentoring, and, research among many other roles for the University. SU works because its students do. Yet, this highly skilled and essential labor has been met with poverty wages and precarious working conditions. Whereas a 12-month living wage for Syracuse is \$32,000, grads working full-time earn, on average, only \$20,000. Hundreds of grads also endure part-time employment. Meanwhile, rent and health insurance premiums rise yearly even as student workers lack basic protections from overwork, harassment, and discrimination.

We see graduate workers across the country unionizing and winning big improvements. Often these efforts are sadly (yet predictably) met with significant pushback from university administrators using scare tactics and anti-union law firms. We sincerely hope the Syracuse University administration will not engage in such abhorrent practices, which run counter to the university's own values. And we pledge to stand with graduate student workers to ensure they're fight is successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jessica L. M...".

