

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Georgetown graduate employees hold “virtual sit-in” for fair contract with university**

April 7, 2020, Washington, DC-

Graduate teaching and research assistants rallied throughout Tuesday on social media to demand a fair contract from their employer, Georgetown University. With Georgetown’s campuses closed and classroom instruction moved to virtual platforms in response to the CoVID-19 pandemic, members of the Georgetown Alliance of Graduate Employees (GAGE) have continued to pressure the university’s administration to come to agreement on their first union contract. Joined by community supporters, graduate student assistants wearing GAGE t-shirts posted images to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram expressing messages of support for a fair contract reflecting the union's bargaining platform.

Georgetown graduate employees currently earn significantly less than a living wage for the DC area and often face high out-of-pocket healthcare costs. According to a member survey, 70 percent of GAGE members have skipped medical care because of cost or lack of access, and 80 percent say they spend more than 40 percent of their income on rent. GAGE’s bargaining platform calls for stipend increases, improvements to health insurance coverage, provision of dental and vision insurance, better quality and coverage of mental health services, greater transparency in job opportunities and grievance procedures, and paid family and sick leave.

GAGE’s bargaining committee has been negotiating with the Georgetown administration since March of last year. In November 2018, graduate employees had voted in an election overseen by the American Arbitration Association to form a union by an overwhelming margin of 555 to 108.

“The Provost [Robert M. Groves] has told the university community that Georgetown hopes to reach an agreement with GAGE by the end of the academic year,” said Douglas McRae, a PhD candidate in the History Department. “Our bargaining team has been working overtime with the administration’s team and outside counsel on significant proposals on which the university has been reluctant to cede ground. We sincerely hope that they are not using the current pandemic crisis to drag out this process.”

Bargaining sessions have been conducted through Zoom video conferencing since Georgetown began restricting access to its main campus on March 16.

What: Virtual Sit-In for a Fair Contract

When: April 7th, 2020

Where: Twitter: [@wearegage](#) , #WeAreGAGE

Contact information: Email: [gageorganizing@gmail.com](mailto:gageorganizing@gmail.com)

Twitter: [@wearegage](#)

Instagram: [@we\\_are\\_gage](#)

Facebook: [Georgetown Alliance of Graduate Employees - GAGE](#)

Website: [www.wearegage.org](http://www.wearegage.org)

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