TL;DR: We got all remaining counter-proposals on non-economic items, TA'ed two proposals (union security and moonlighting), and exchanged essential information that will help us continue bargaining effectively and come to a compromise on other items.

Our first bargaining session of the year was productive and reciprocal. Administration provided us with a comprehensive counter-proposal package to address the remaining non-economic proposals we had been negotiating. We were happy to see that some counter-proposals contained language that we had previously discussed and requested. We ended up tentatively agreeing on two proposals: union security and check-off and extracurricular medical practice, or moonlighting. This brings our total tentative agreements to 11 and we are confident we can come to a few more agreements at our next session.

During the session, discussions on certain proposals allowed each side to see the other's perspective. The bargaining team learned more about how GME monitors ACGME standards within programs and addresses changes in program status and outcomes, illuminating the efforts of GME to deliver quality training. On the other hand, we got to provide insight into our health and safety considerations. Our bargaining chair, Andrew Gilmore, shared how providing quick care for a decompensating patient by intubating them in the ICU exposed the healthcare team to COVID-19 since the test did not result till after the procedure. It is not routine anymore to test everyone for COVID, yet the remnant limitations on accessing N95s, such as making them only available in vending machines on the first floor of the hospital, make it difficult to protect ourselves; running down for a mask to do an emergent procedure is usually not possible.

Our exchange demonstrated how bargaining is an opportunity to learn more about each other's scope of work and how improving working conditions ensures that our respective duties and responsibilities are met. Overall, we started the year strong and look forward to continued productive negotiations, especially on pay and benefits.