

April 2005

Richard Levin
President
Yale University
New Haven, CT 06511

Lee Bollinger
President
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

Dear President Levin and President Bollinger:

We, the undersigned graduate employee unions, write to express our profound concern about your refusal to recognize and negotiate with GESO/UNITE HERE and GSEU/UAW.

We are unions representing thousands of higher education workers nationwide. Together with our international unions, we stand behind the graduate employees at Yale and Columbia who are striking for recognition and call on you to recognize GESO and GSEU and to bargain contracts without further delay. We understand that the striking graduate employees on your campuses are standing up for the best values of the academy: for the value of teaching and research; for job security and good working conditions for university teachers and researchers; for equality within the academic workforce; and for academic freedom.

Your refusal to recognize GESO and GSEU, and your decision, instead, to leave those graduate employees no alternative but to strike repeatedly for recognition, represents a profound failure of leadership and vision. We expect more of the presidents of two of the most prestigious institutions of higher education in the nation; indeed, you should welcome, not resist, the efforts of your own teachers and researchers to advocate for their work and for themselves.

The solidarity professed by the labor movement is not an ideal – it is very real. To that end, we have a stake in any struggle by academic workers to organize and advocate for themselves whether it be on our campuses or yours. As long as the conflicts at Yale and Columbia go unresolved, we will consider the fights of GESO and GSEU our fights. Academic workers across the country are watching the events at Yale and Columbia very closely, and we stand ready to lend the members of GESO and GSEU whatever support they need.

Sincerely,

Graduate Employees and Students Organization / UNITE HERE
Yale University

Graduate Student Employees United / UAW Local 2110
Columbia University

Professional Staff Congress / AFT Local 2334
CUNY

Graduate Employees Union / AFT Local 6196
Michigan State

Graduate Students Organizing Committee / UAW Local 2110
New York University

Graduate Employees and Student Organization / AFT
Ohio State

Coalition of Graduate Employees / AFT Local 6069
Oregon State

Rutgers AAUP
Rutgers University

Graduate Student Employee Union / CWA Local 1104
SUNY – Albany
SUNY – Buffalo
SUNY – ES&F

Temple University Graduate Students' Association / AFT Local 6290
Temple University

UAW Local 2865
University of California – Berkeley
University of California – Davis
University of California – Irvine
University of California – Los Angeles
University of California – Riverside
University of California – San Diego
University of California – Santa Barbara
University of California – Santa Cruz

Graduate Student Employee Union / CWA Local 1104
University of Delaware

Graduate Assistants United / NEA-AFT
University of Florida

Graduate Assistants United/NEA-AFT
University of South Florida

Graduate Employees' Organization / AFT
University of Illinois-Chicago

Graduate Employees' Organization / AFT Local 6300
University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

Campaign to Organize Graduate Students / UE Local 896
University of Iowa

Graduate Employee Organization / UAW Local 2322
University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Graduate Employees' Organization / AFT Local 3550
University of Michigan

Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation / AFT Local 3544
University of Oregon

Graduate Employees Together – UPENN / AFT
University of Pennsylvania

Graduate Assistants United / AAUP
University of Rhode Island

United Campus Workers / CWA Local 3865
University of Tennessee – Knoxville

Graduate Labor Union / CWA
University of Virginia

Staff Union –UVA / CWA
University of Virginia

UAW Local 4121
University of Washington

Teaching Assistants' Association / AFT Local 3220
University of Wisconsin – Madison

Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association / AFT Local 2169
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee