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## **Statement by the Postgraduates' International Network (PI-Net) on the Rights of Graduate Teachers in the United States to Trade Union Recognition**

20 April 2005

Academic trade unions help to preserve the values of academic freedom and protect intellectual standards. Trade union recognition is a part of every democratic system and leads to higher standards for both the staff delivering the service and those receiving it.

The decision of the US National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) on 13 July 2004 to withdraw the protections of US labour law for graduate teaching and research assistants to organize unions at private U.S. universities is seen as a major blow to the internationally recognized human right to Trade Union representation as well as intellectual standards in institutions for higher education. PI-Net is convinced these measures will prove counter-productive and is therefore very disappointed with the actions of NLRB and the Bush administration.

We at PI-Net affirm our solidarity with our colleagues in GESO and GSEU, the graduate teachers' unions at Yale and Columbia universities. We applaud their actions and offer them our support in their continued campaign to seek trade union recognition for their members. Furthermore, we call upon the presidents of Yale and Columbia Universities to voluntarily recognize GESO and GSEU, respectively, and to immediately commence contract negotiations.

Enrico Piazza  
President of PI-Net

