

GESO sets deadline for recognition

Rachel Sulkes

Yesterday, GESO released a public petition of membership, demonstrating majority support for the union among both current teaching assistants and among the graduate student population generally on Yale's central campus. In December 2004, Connecticut Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz certified majority support for unionization among last semester's teaching assistants as well.

GESO Co-Chair Melissa Mason formally gave President Levin a one-week deadline to

respect the will of the majority and recognize the union of graduate teachers. If President Levin refuses to recognize the union, there will be a strike vote set for April 13th. If approved, the strike will run from April 18th through the 22nd.

"We hope that President Levin will do the right thing and respect the democratic will of graduate teachers," Melissa Mason said. "If not, though, teachers are prepared to stand up together with our colleagues at Columbia University and continue to fight until our union is recognized."

Discrimination at home undermines Yale's global image

Cong Huang

Yale strives for a global image; Richard Levin is devoting tremendous resources to developing close relationships with the Chinese and Indian governments. But he cannot claim to be a global

leader in higher education while the international scholars at his own university are being treated unfairly in their departments and in university housing. He cannot tell the Chinese and Indian governments to follow his lead while his own international scholars are left to fend for themselves

in a difficult visa and immigration process that often leaves us stranded, restricted, and at an academic disadvantage.

President Levin cannot say he values the work of international scholars while letting the children and spouses of those scholars go with-

out health care and child care. He can't claim to lead the world in a global vision while he profits off of market-rate rents for rooms in tax-exempt dorms-where most of the tenants are international students. Or when every Chinese-language poster in Helen Hadley is promptly ripped down, while English posters remain up. This is why over 100 residents of Helen Hadley Hall signed a petition protesting discrimination and calling for democracy in Yale housing. We want a voice in deciding how our dorm is run.

Last week we gathered in front of Helen Hadley to demand equal rights, a real voice and a union contract. We will make language testing fair, win a third-party grievance procedure, and get universities across the country to lobby for passage of our visa reform bill.

Anytime an international student on this campus faces expulsion, loss of funding, a visa delay or discrimination, we will take on that fight. Yale continues to insist that these are cases that should be resolved on an individual basis. But we know this is not an individual problem, it is a problem that affects the international student community, and the physical and social sciences overall.

Next week, I am voting yes to strike to insist that this "world-class" institution live up to its global image its international students with respect.



Li Yanping speaks out against housing discrimination in Helen Hadley Hall.

Grad teachers demand health benefits for their children

Jennifer Seaich

I am 33 years old, and though I do not have any children, I do hope to have them soon. I don't know how much longer I'll be able to have children: 5 years or 8 or 10, nor do I know how long it might take me to find a good academic job, but I do know that the numbers don't add up. It's scary math. So is the idea of trying to raise children on my teaching salary, paying for family healthcare, and paying for childcare. Even though I teach in the history department, because I am enrolled in a masters program, I pay \$6000 for dependent health-care.



"I shouldn't have to choose between having a family and having an academic career."
— Danijela Matkovic-True

At Yale, if a faculty member earns less than \$65,000/year, dependents are eligible for free coverage. That is the point under which the university administration believes that having to pay for dependent health care coverage is an unreasonable burden. Members of the local unions who work at least 20 hours a week have the same medical benefits as the faculty. At UMass Amherst, a state school with a graduate union, health coverage is free for grads, with 85% of the health fees for dependents waived and childcare vouchers of \$30,000/year.

Certainly people who have children while in graduate school are making a choice, and should expect some sacrifices. They should expect some sleepless nights, they should expect to do much more laundry, expect to balance child-rearing responsibilities with teaching and research. But some of those choices are

unavoidable, and others are not. Graduate teachers who are parents should not expect to choose whether to insure their children.

That is why grad students are demanding that the university address parents' issues by providing: affordable, flexible, onsite child care; uniform parental leave policies, and health care for families, all of which can be gained through a union contract.

Membership Meeting Agenda

April 13th, 2005 5:30pm – 7:00pm
The Sanctuary, First & Summerfield Church
425 College St., New Haven CT

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks
2. Remarks from Representatives of CSEU/Columbia, Bob Proto, President, Local 35 & the New Haven Central Labor Council, Laura Smith, President, Local 34
3. Introduction of Strike Vote

For TAs:

We, the members of GESO in the humanities, languages, social sciences, and professional schools, do hereby vote to engage in a one week strike of our teaching work beginning Monday April 18th through Friday April 22nd.

For members not teaching this semester:

We, as members of GESO, do hereby vote to support the one-week strike of our colleagues who are teaching by fully participating in all aspects of the strike such as picket lines and rallies. As per our by-laws, Article 3, Section 9: Any proposed strike or other major job action shall be decided by secret ballot majority vote of those members then-employed in the bargaining unit involved present and voting at the membership meeting.

4. Discussion
5. Vote

Making my union happen

Gabodery Rodriguez

When it comes to fighting for my union at Yale, I've been around the block. I struck in March 2003, I joined Locals 34 and 35 picket lines in August 2003, I've committed civil disobediences several times. I have talked to tons of students in my department, I've been in City Hall fighting for a social contract for the New Haven community. I helped publish "The Few the Proud" on diversity at Yale and "The Unchanging Face of the Ivy League" on diversity in the Ivy institutions.

Now, shouldn't all of that gotten me a union?

Yes, but Yale Administration says "no way." But I and my brothers and sisters at GESO, 34, 35 and the community say "way." We are making our union happen.

Why does this strike need to happen?

Because Yale has one black woman with tenure in the whole university, and feels no shame for it. Because my department has zero African Americans or US Latinos among its tenured ranks. Because currently the good-paying, high-status jobs still go to white males while the bad non-tenure-track jobs go to women and minorities. Because if we had a university that provided affordable child care, dependent health care, an independent grievance procedure, and more funding for the Office for Diversity and Equal Opportunity, I can assure to you that we would see more women and minorities finishing their degrees. Because this would achieve a more diverse tenured faculty.

This is why I am voting to strike.