

GSEU strike momentum building at Columbia

The momentum for our one-week strike is strong and building. Since our vote, letters

of support have been rolling in from elected officials nationwide and from the labor movement around the

world. Supportive faculty signed a letter to colleagues urging them to move classes off campus, and many more requests for re-location have come in.

Undergraduate supporters are organizing fellow students in their dormitories and classes. Unions around the city are mobilizing for Wednesday's labor rally.

Our allies are doing their part to help us; to maximize our impact, we must do ours. Picket lines will go up at 8 am on Monday and we need everyone there to start the week off with strong visibility and a clear message.



Yale TAs strike for recognition

Recognize us! Value our work!

by Mary Reynolds

On Wednesday, April 13, graduate teachers at Yale and Columbia voted to hold a coordinated five-day strike from April 18 to April 22, the first multi-campus coordinated strike in the Ivy League. In December 2004, Connecticut Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz and New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer certified that a majority of graduate teaching assistants at both Yale and Columbia were members of their respective unions. Last week, GESO published a petition demonstrating majority membership among all graduate students in the teaching divisions. On this basis, GESO and GSEU are calling on our administrations to recognize our unions.

Our picket lines aim to demonstrate the work done by graduate teachers at Yale, to highlight the issues we face, and to invite discussion and participation by other members of the Yale community.

In addition to building the national campaign to protect the right of academic workers to organize, GESO and GSEU continue our fight to improve conditions on the ground for graduate teachers at Yale and Columbia. With this strike, we are safeguarding the significant gains we have made over the last decade,

including increases in stipends, teaching pay and health care benefits. We are also highlighting remaining issues that face graduate teachers, such as equal pay for equal work, a fair grievance procedure to protect women and people of color, affordable childcare and



GESO members Phillip Ziesche and Annemarie Strassel stringing strike posters for Monday's picket lines.

dependent healthcare, and equal benefits for graduate teachers in the professional schools.

As teachers and scholars, we are striking our teaching to demand recognition for our union. We will be in the streets to express our ideals for what universities can and should be.

GESO Picket Schedule for Monday, April 18

8:00am Breakfast

8:30am Picket in Central
Campus

9:00am Connecticut Attorney
General Richard Blumenthal
visits our picket line

9:45am Connecticut
Secretary of State Susan
Bysiewicz visits our picket
line

12:00 Rally at York/Broadway
with US Representative
Rosa DeLauro

GSEU Picket Schedule for Monday, April 18

8:00am Picket lines

11:00am Buses to City Hall
for hearing on unionization in
higher education

12:30pm Press conference
on steps of City Hall

1:00pm Hearings begin
(buses return to picket lines
after hearings) breakfast and
lunch provided for picketers
at the Main Gates

GSEU to Testify at City Council

Academics, including faculty, graduate students, and adjuncts, will testify Monday afternoon at a City Council hearing on organizing rights in higher education. The hearing was called jointly by the committees on Education and Civil Service and Labor, chaired by Eva S. Moskowitz and Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., respectively, and will begin at 1pm at City Hall following a 12:30 press conference on the City Hall steps.

Several witnesses will testify on behalf of GSEU, and buses will take strikers to and from the hearing, returning to the picket lines later in the afternoon. The Columbia University administration was also invited to testify.

***Why strike?* The reasons are clear**

"I voted to strike because I want to teach in a diverse academic community. Real equal opportunity to become a professor begins with being able to afford to get through graduate school. We're going to educate the next generation's leaders: it matters who gets to be part of higher education."

Deblia Hannah, GSEU (Philosophy)

"Our requests are simple. We ask for health care and tuition remission relative to other graduate students working on their terminal degree. We ask for reasonable wages when we are teaching assistants. And we ask for this wealthy university to recognize the vital contribution and critical cultural research that goes on within the School of Art."

Eric Garduno, GESO (Art)

"I am striking because we are taking a very powerful first step in building a national and international coalition of academic workers."

Sumanth Gopinath, GESO (Music)

"The right to collective bargaining is a natural right - we have it no matter what the administration or the NLRB or anyone else might say. I intend to assert my right."

Sam Handelman, GSEU (Biology)

"I am picketing to gain a voice for those who teach and in that way to secure the conditions and institute practices that allow for greater access and ultimately academic freedom."

Rebecca McKenna, GESO (History)