

April 16, 2018

CC: President Lee Bollinger, Provost John Coatsworth, Jerome Davis

Dear Columbia University Trustees,

We write to inform you that 93% of 1,986 participating research and teaching assistants (RAs and TAs) at Columbia University, voted decisively (1832 to 136) to authorize a strike.

We extend a sincere hope that you will use your authority to urge President Bollinger to finally honor the legal and democratic obligation to commence bargaining with Graduate Workers of Columbia-UAW (GWC-UAW Local 2110), instead of allowing such a serious disruption of Columbia's world-renowned research and teaching programs.

We do not take this action lightly. However, after deep reflection and deliberation over the course of the last 16 months, we feel the administration has left us little choice.

RAs and TAs voted 1602 – 623 in favor of unionization in December 2016, an overwhelming 72 percent mandate in the largest National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election in all of 2016. Since then, even as the Bollinger administration attempted to nullify our vote, support for our union among RAs and TAs, and from allies on and off campus – including more than 200 elected and community leaders, hundreds of faculty, students, and more than 1,000 alumni – has only grown.

When President Bollinger recently announced that he would defy the legal certification of our union by the NLRB and refuse to bargain, RAs and TAs from all across campus immediately pushed us to call for a strike authorization vote. That vote concluded on Friday, April 13.

Thousands of RAs and TAs in New York City already engage in collective bargaining at NYU, The New School, CUNY and SUNY. Those administrations have respected their democratic right to unionize.

We ask that you urge President Bollinger and the administration to do the same: to follow their legal obligations, respect our democratic rights, and begin the process of bargaining in good faith.

We understand the significance of calling a strike and would prefer not to strike, but will be forced to do so if President Bollinger continues to defy both the democratic will of the majority

of RAs and TAs and labor law. And we will do so with the confidence that growing sectors of the campus and larger community stand behind our action.

Sincerely,

Julie Kushner, Director, UAW Region 9A

Maida Rosenstein, President, UAW Local 2110

Graduate Workers of Columbia – UAW Local 2110, Bargaining Committee

Tania Bhattacharyya, History

Ian Bradley-Perrin, Sociomedical Sciences

Olga Brudastova, Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics

Noura Farra, Computer Science

Trevor Hull, Chemistry

Kate Jackson, Political Science

Rosalie Ray, Urban Planning

Justin Steinfeld, Integrated Program

Takaya Uchida, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Angela Woodall, Communications