

Graduate Workers of Columbia Initial Bargaining Goals

SA = student assistant

Compensation

Goal: Improve standard of living of all SAs, including (but not limited to):

- **No SA will have their wages decreased as a result of this bargaining agreement**
- Establish minimum pay/stipend increases commensurate with or above those paid by competitor institutions
- Guaranteed annual wage increase for all SAs
- Ability to opt for taxes to be withheld from taxable income
- Maintain and extend to other departments “top-off” compensation, at least equal to the present rate, for those who win outside funding
- Additional compensation, if necessary, to establish and maintain a fair and consistent ratio between university housing costs and SA compensation
- Improve opportunities for summer work, including additional summer fellowships as necessary to address circumstances unique to international SAs
- Guarantee that summer pays are not less than other semesters
- Ensure pay is disbursed in even bi-weekly increments, regardless of funding source, to begin during the first week of work.
- Ensure timely disbursement of stipends
- Extra compensation for extra work, including but not limited to extra work attributable to, for example:
 - TAing and RAing in the same semester
 - TAing a course outside the SA’s concentration of study or main line of work
 - TAing a discussion section with more than 15 students
- **PhDs guaranteed funding for 7 years**, with the ability to reallocate or “bank” guaranteed funding for additional years if SA secures outside funding
- Masters and undergraduates get tuition waiver and payment the same as PhDs (same job, same benefits)

Health Insurance

Goal: Secure quality, accessible and affordable dental, vision, and medical insurance for all SAs:

- **Ensure full coverage for all SAs, their dependents, and domestic partners for at least the “platinum” plan currently offered**
- **Dental and vision coverage**
- Streamline administration of the plan and the benefits (e.g. referral system)
- Protect SAs from health care tax liabilities.
- Expand off-campus in-network, out-of-network, and specialist medical services.
- Decrease out-of-pocket costs (e.g. lab work, copays)
- Improve coverage of mental health services
- Improve coverage for urgent care services
- Preventative care
- Free birth control of SA’s choice

Fee and Tuition Waivers

Goal: Secure full fee and tuition waiver/remission for all SAs.

For more information go to www.columbiagradunion.org or email gwc.bargaining@gmail.com

- Lower tuition costs for SAs who have completed all coursework required in degree program
- Ensure no new fees are charged to SAs during the life of the contract
- Ensure waiver of International student fee for all SAs

Childcare/ Dependent Care

- Expand definition of subsidy to include all dependents, including but not limited to elderly
- Ensure increased child-care subsidies for all SAs at rates at least commensurate with those at competitor institutions
- Expansion plan should include a childcare center

Holidays/Vacations

Goal: Establish a paid vacation policy for SAs and provide SAs with flexibility in using vacation time.

- Ensure SAs are not required to work on, and are paid for, holidays and a minimum number of personal days.
- Ensure that any year-long appointment is accompanied by at least four weeks of paid vacation time.
- The university recognizes that there are religious holidays that are not currently university holidays. The university shall make every good faith effort to accommodate an SA who wishes to observe other recognized religious holidays.

Paid Leaves

Goal: Establish paid leave policies for all SAs, which:

- Guarantee SA paid leave of at least one semester, including but not limited to for disability, sickness, bereavement, jury duty, military duty, maternity/paternity, childbirth or adoption
- Equal access to paid leave for international SAs
- Toll degree completion dates, fellowships, funding, and visa availability if a SA invokes any leave provision
- Ensure that SAs are entitled to paid leave to care for a sick family member, including domestic partners
- Make clear that department or hiring unit is responsible for providing any necessary replacements while a SA is on leave
- Provide flexibility in usage of leave.

Transit

Goal: Improve SA access to affordable, safe transit year-round for on-campus and off-campus worksites.

- Cover transportation costs for travel to work (e.g. transit pass, electric charging station, increasing shuttle frequency or expand security pickups, especially at night)

Travel

Goal: Ensure that SAs are advanced or reimbursed in a timely manner for travel and per diem expenses necessary to fulfill their job duties.

- SAs are covered under existing travel accident insurance

Retirement

- Establish access to retirement benefits with university contributions
- Provide free financial consulting

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Disability

- university will cover costs of mandatory procedures required to qualify for disability services.
- Increase the number of bathrooms on campus.

Housing

Goal: Ensure access to affordable housing.

- Ensure rent and security deposit not due until stipend issue
- Maintain consistent and reasonable housing-stipend ratio
- Provide housing subsidies that are at least commensurate to those at competitor institutions (include utilities, internet)
- Provide summer housing subsidy OR include summer housing in cost of living calculation for compensation
- Maintain sublet policy
- Ensure that an SA can immediately transfer their security deposit when they move
- Guaranteed university housing until end of degree (length of I-20), extended along with program length during leaves (medical, maternity, etc)
- Ensure transparency in availability and allocation of apartments

Titles and Classifications

Goal: Establish a fair classification system for all SAs and guarantee that any new titles and classifications for SAs will be included in unit and compensation will be mutually agreed to by the Union and the university.

- If you do the work of someone in a higher position you should be paid the difference.

RIGHTS & PROTECTIONS

Contract Enforcement

Goal: Establish a fair grievance procedure for all contract provisions, including the option of appealing to neutral and binding third-party arbitration.

- Option to have union representation at every step of procedure.
- Right to file individual and class-action grievances.
- Expedited procedure for time-sensitive cases, including but not limited to issues involving health and safety, discharge

Appointment Notification

Goal: Ensure that SAs receive advance written notification of appointment, in a timely manner, with information about the terms of the appointment, before the appointment starts.

- Implement procedures to incorporate SA preference with regard to appointments offered, where practical
- Ensure that, prior to accepting a position, SAs receive a job description so that SA has a clear understanding of the nature of required duties and expectations.

Appointment Security

Goal: Ensure that SAs are protected from having their appointment withdrawn, reduced, or relocated.

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- Upon cancellation of an appointment after an appointment letter has been received by the employee, the employer shall pay the full payroll or appoint another job title with equal pay and benefits.
- If the appointment is hourly, guarantee a minimum number of hours for which the SA will be compensated.

Discipline and Dismissal

Goal: Protect the SA from being disciplined and/or discharged from employment without just cause.

- Guarantee that international SAs facing termination will be compensated for all travel, visa, and other costs associated with participating in arbitration, regardless of when arbitration takes place
- Expedited arbitration (which will protect you from losing your work authorization while you appeal an unjust termination).

Employment Files and Evaluations

Goal: Ensure that SAs can review, copy, and supplement their own employment files and evaluations and maintain the confidentiality of those files and evaluations.

Health and Safety

Goal: Ensure that all SAs are provided with a safe, ergonomic workspace, with necessary supplies, training and equipment in properly maintained facilities, and that facilities in which SAs work are ADA compliant.

- Require bi-annual health and safety inspections in all university workspaces
- The university will pay for testing for exposure to toxic substances, including periodic tests for chronic and acute exposure (including but not limited to testing for asbestos, lead, and cadmium exposure)
- Ensure that GWC is represented on existing EHS committee (check 2110 language)
- Ensure accessibility
- Require bi-annual air quality control testing and installation and maintenance of ventilation and filtration systems (Mold problems)
- Notifications of construction work with high noise level in the neighboring office spaces

Intellectual Property

Goal: Improve intellectual property rights for all SAs.

- Reasonable compensation for opportunity costs (e.g., foregoing publication of research) incurred by SAs as a result of the need to maintain trade secrets or confidentiality of intellectual property held by a person other than the SA
- **No provision under this section shall prevent or impede an SA from entering into agreements involving third party funding or projects.**
- Protection of/reasonable compensation for any intellectual property independently developed by the SA in the course of their duties
- Reasonable compensation and legal acknowledgment for any work contributed by the SA towards intellectual property rights held by a person other than the SA
- Intellectual property provisions to be subject to grievance procedures

Job Posting

Goal: Information, including job qualifications and selection criteria, about open SA positions shall be made available reasonably in advance to all qualified applicants.

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International Students

Goal: Insure that international SAs are protected from restrictive visa and immigration procedures and unjust labor practices.

- Declare Columbia a sanctuary campus
- Maintain protections in place so that international SAs are not exploited for extra workload
- Provide affordable and accessible housing for international SAs, including summer housing in the case of forced stay in the country due to immigration bans
- Maintain registration status for international SAs on paid or unpaid leave
- Provide all possible support to preserve and expand fair work opportunities for international students after graduation (e.g. OPT, STEM extension to OPT) in coordination with the union.
- Pay SEVIS and all other visa-related fees
- No loss of compensation/funding for absence due to visa renewal delays
- Joint labor management international student/union/university committee
- Ensure access to free legal services independent of Columbia (provide subsidies for legal costs, or allow recommendation of lawyer by union) related to taxes, visas, immigration, and employment/internship services
- Establish an emergency fund for international workers (compensation for costs incurred by travel ban, summer housing (IHouse is already providing))
- Expand writing center for graduate workers with training for TAs and RAs on English, writing, etc.

Nondiscrimination / Harassment

Goal: The university will not harass or discriminate against SAs and shall make special efforts to develop and implement appropriate programs.

- Incorporate very thorough non-discrimination language from UC Post-doc contract
- Incorporate federal non-discrimination language (including protected classes/groups); extend protected groups/classifications beyond what is federally mandated (e.g., individuals who test HIV-positive; predisposed genetic makeup; alienage/citizenship; gender and gender identity; marital status; political belief; military status; mental health) (check Barnard language and incorporate all categories)
- Expedited grievance procedures
- Ensure and improve access to adequate, comfortable, and pleasant private lactation facilities
- Make all bathrooms to be gender inclusive
- All university communications should use the singular “they” pronoun.

Training

Goal: Ensure that all SAs have the option of receiving adequate training to maximize quality service to the university:

- Increase SA participation in determining the content of training
- Guarantee that all required training and orientations are paid
- Ensure the availability of training necessary to fulfilling job responsibilities
- Guarantee that training will include adequate information about the Union and the collective bargaining agreement covering the position.
- Establish union training/ professional development fund

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Workload and Work Quality

Goal: Establish fair and reasonable workload protections, which:

- Enable SAs to perform quality work
- Establish a right for SAs to grieve unreasonable workload
- Include all duties required of SA positions (including preparation time and required training).

Workspace and Materials

Goal: Guarantee that SAs are provided with the facilities, services, equipment, supplies, and materials needed to safely and adequately fulfill their job responsibilities.

- Software licenses across campus
- Free access to textbooks for TAs or RAs if required for teaching and research appointments
- Compatible/one printing system for uptown and downtown
- Additional printing quota for SAs
- Guaranteed access to workspace for all SAs with appointment, with adequate internet access
- No out-of-pocket costs for instruction or research (e.g., ArtsLink, laptops, clickers, cables, calculators, computer mouses, adaptors, keyboards, notebooks, chalk, staplers, blue books, etc.)

Past Practices

Goal: Maintain past practices involving terms and conditions of employment which are not in conflict with the contract.

Union Recognition

Goal: Affirm that Columbia recognizes GWC-UAW as the exclusive bargaining representative for SAs in the bargaining unit.

Union Rights

Goal: Enable the Union to represent SAs effectively

- Union shall have access to facilities, SAs, office space, and information about the bargaining unit
- GWC-UAW representatives shall receive compensation for duties undertaken as a representative.

Severability of the Contract

Goal: Establish standard that if one section of the contract is found to be invalid or unlawful, the rest of the contract remains in effect.

Subcontracting

Goal: Ensure that there is no subcontracting of SA work.

Successorship

Goal: Preserve a contractual relationship in the event of a change in employer.

Duration

Goal: Establish a reasonable term for the contract, which will remain in full force and effect for the duration of the term agreed upon by the two parties.