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THE GRAD UNION CHRONICLE

Official Newsletter of
the United Graduate Workers of UNM



Welcome Back - Spring 2025

BY ASHLEY BERNARDO

January 2025 felt like a million years, but we made it to the end of the month! We hope that everyone is doing what you can to take care of yourself and that you are finding joy through community. It is through the power of the many that we can prevent abuses of power by the few. Take a look at the UE General Executive Board's statement on the new presidential administration's actions in the past two weeks at the [link here](#) to see our national union's stance and commitment to workers everywhere.



January 30, 2025 General Membership Meeting in Graduate Commons

Our communication inboxes have been chock full of inquiries and questions, so please excuse any late responses as we work to get through the messages. UNM graduate workers are already reaching out and organizing to support one another on campus, including putting together resolutions, creating and distributing resources for our community, and brainstorming actions we can take together to support each other. Remember, each and every one of us are our union - check out some of the events being planned by fellow graduate workers or reach out to your steward or a member of the bargaining committee to get support with planning an event or campaign that YOU want to see happen.

We have two big events coming up:

The first Contract Action Team (C.A.T.) Meeting is happening next Tuesday, February 11th at 5pm at the UGW office and via Zoom. The C.A.T. is the main organizing structure during bargaining with the university outside of the bargaining table, and this is where our power is based! Every graduate worker is welcome to join the C.A.T. to help in whatever capacity they are willing and able to do. It will take all hands on deck to get the protections we need for our community - fill out the [C.A.T. Interest Form](#) to let us know your availability and interest in volunteering.

During our February GMM, we will be voting on the Bargaining Priorities proposed by the Bargaining Committee. Come virtually or in person on February 20th from 5:30 to 6:30 pm to discuss the proposed priorities and to vote to approve these priorities.

Remember all - lobos protect the pack. Together we will fight for ALL graduate workers at UNM and across the country.

Upcoming Events

Feb 7th 6:00 PM-7:00 PM
International Workers Town Hall
UGW Office and via Zoom
Zoom Meeting ID: 825 0841 5719
Passcode: 0D7QfU

Feb 11th 5:00 PM-6:00 PM
Contract Action Team (C.A.T.) Meeting
UGW Office and via Zoom
<https://unm.zoom.us/j/98957078607>
Passcode: 020668

Feb 20th 5:30 PM-6:30 PM
General Membership Meeting
• Vote on Bargaining Platform

Future C.A.T. Meetings TBD!

(See more on our website!)

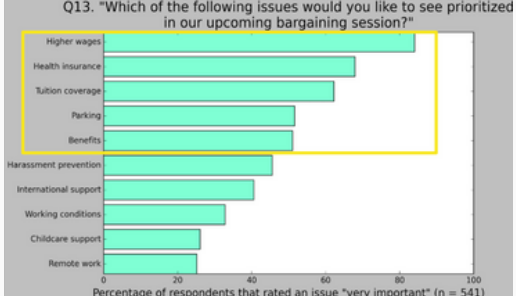
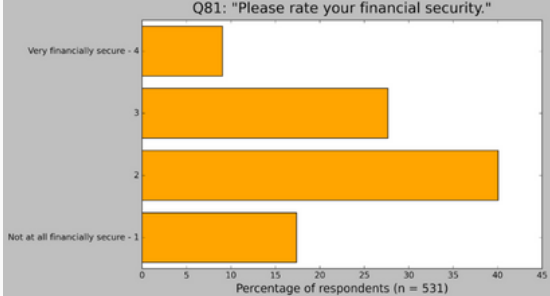
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Bargaining Survey Preliminary Results

BY UGW DATA TEAM

The preliminary bargaining survey results are in. There is still more work to do in order to make sense of the data we have collected, but Zach Strasberg and Meirah Williamson presented the preliminary results at the January General Membership Meeting on January 30th. The figure below provides a visual representation of worker responses to the question “Which of the following issues would you like to see prioritized in our upcoming bargaining session?” The top five issues that more than fifty percent of all respondents marked “very important” are: higher wages, health insurance, tuition coverage, parking, and benefits.



The survey also indicated that sixty percent of respondents to the survey are rent-burdened, meaning that they spend greater than thirty percent of their own gross income on rent. As the cost of living gets higher in Albuquerque, the data talks: our graduate workers need rent relief. In addition, less than ten percent of respondents indicated that they are “very financially secure;” fifty-seven of all respondents indicated that they have low financial security.

A more detailed report of the results from the bargaining survey will be released to graduate workers next week - keep an eye on your emails!

Know Your Rights - Part 2: Article XII

BY ASHLEY BERNARDO

In the last issue we discussed “Just Cause,” or the seven steps that the University MUST take before disciplining or firing a graduate worker.

Another important right that graduate workers have from Article 12 is the right to bring a Union representative, usually a steward, with them to ANY meetings that could result in discipline or discharge. The union representative’s job is to be witness to anything that is said within the meeting. This helps to protect the worker from their employer disciplining or firing them without following Just Cause.



Photo Credit: “Weingarten rights,” UE

IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO STOP ANY CONVERSATION OR MEETING THAT COULD LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO ASK FOR YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE.

Union stewards have handy “Weingarten Rights” cards that include language you can use to invoke your right to representation. These cards are handy to keep in a wallet or purse, so reach out to a steward if you’d like one!

Lastly, bargaining unit members (YOU!) must be provided with written charges and notice of a predetermination meeting if your employer is disciplining you for something. This predetermination meeting gives the bargaining unit member an opportunity to respond to the charges provided to you in writing. This is another meeting that you have the right to bring union representatives with you.

The following is what you can say to invoke your right to union representation:

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working condition, I respectfully request that my union representative or steward be present. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

Grad Worker Spotlight: Ruben Loza

Each month, we'll be featuring a different member of our local in order to spread awareness and build solidarity around the work being done by the members of UGW local 1466. [Click here](#) to nominate a grad worker for a feature!



Ruben Loza

Ruben Loza is a second-year Masters student in the Chicana & Chicano Studies (CCS) program and a Graduate Program Assistant with the Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color (PNMGC) program. Ruben's Master's project explores the political, cultural, and social effects of border art, with particular focus on the San Diego and Tijuana border.

"It's a wild time to be writing this project because a lot of things are developing and happening with the current political environment," said Ruben.

In particular, Ruben is interested in the ways individuals take the border with them in their travels: "You could be living on the whole other side of the country and still feel it. In TJ the city goes right to the border, but even in Albuquerque you can feel the effects of the border. You always take the border with you in a different way."

Before coming to UNM's Chicana & Chicano Studies department, Ruben earned his Bachelors of Fine Arts in graphic design from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia. In both CCS and through his position with PNMGC, Ruben uses his background in graphic design to develop materials and designs to support the work of each organization.

"I like to do a lot of digital art. My time at UNM has given me a platform for my art that I haven't experienced before. By being in New Mexico, I have been able to meet other artists and exhibit my art in a small gallery," said Ruben. You can access Ruben's art on Instagram (@luchaflan).

For Ruben, art as a subject of study requires both theory and action:

"I can't just be an observer when writing about art; I want to be a participant in the art. One of my professors in the Chicana and Chicano Studies department got me into music. Never in a million years did I think I would be a musician, but by coming here I have been able to be a participant in the art and the music. Now, I am a part of a music group with the department and we go to different spaces around campus to play the afro-mexican genre of son jarocho," said Ruben.

During his time at UNM, Ruben has also been involved with United Graduate Worker actions and the newly rebranded Chicana Studies Graduate Student Association (XGSA). As a first year graduate student, Ruben became a union steward with the encouragement of two other graduate workers in CCS and participated with other members of the UNM Son Jarocho Collective at a UGW rally where they played their instruments and helped to occupy Scholes Hall.

"Being a steward and being involved with XGSA have been really cool experiences. It opened my eyes to how graduate students aren't just doing grad school, they have their lives already and they have things outside of school that are important to them. This impacts how we create programming and advocate for graduate worker needs."