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# THE GRAD UNION CHRONICLE

Official Newsletter of  
the United Graduate Workers of UNM



## End of Semester Recap

BY ASHLEY BERNARDO

We've finally hit the end of the semester! We hope that your end of semester work has gone well.

November and December have been chockfull of events, but one of the most exciting things we have to announce is **the accretion of the UNM Law Students into our union!** Accretion describes the process of adding unrepresented workers to an existing bargaining unit. Grad workers at the Law School perform very similar work duties as we do on Main Campus and are also severely underpaid. **United Graduate Workers just submitted the paperwork to the New Mexico Labor Board and are looking forward to adding UNM Law Students to our union.**



UGW Luminarias at The Hanging of the Greens Dec 6th, 2024

On Trans Day of Remembrance, UGW launched a petition demanding that UNM administration address the issues with LoboWeb and other university software that frequently deadnames and misgenders UNM students, workers, and faculty. [Sign the survey today](#) to let the UNM administration know that they need to fix these problems now! The petition will be delivered at the Board of Regents meeting Thursday December 19th.

UNM Grad Workers have been working hard to prepare for bargaining in the Spring by participating in a number of trainings to strengthen our organizing strategies. United Electrical and Radio Workers (UE), our parent union, held a Building Union Power training series. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) also held two all day trainings November 16th and 17th focused on Jane McAlevey's "Skills to Win" program. UGW members from both trainings are excited to apply their learning!

The International Workers Committee (IWC) was convened! On Nov 27th, the IWC met for the first time to discuss international worker needs and struggles at UNM. International workers are a valuable part of our community, and the committee aims to be a space for international workers to be a space for camaraderie in working together to advocate for ourselves. **Our next meeting will be on Dec 16, 7pm, on Zoom (PW: intsol).** Reach out to Phoebe at [pmruteng@unm.edu](mailto:pmruteng@unm.edu) for questions or to add something to the agenda!

Lastly, UGW participated in UNM's oldest student tradition, the Hanging of the Greens. While the university has done everything it can to downplay our involvement and inclusion in campus life, graduate worker participation in this event reminded the University admin and the wider UNM community that this university runs because WE do - without our hard work and labor, this university would grind to a halt.

## Upcoming Events

**Dec 16th 7 PM-8PM - International Workers Committee Meeting via Zoom (PW: intsol)**

**Dec 19th 9:00 AM-12:00 PM - UNM Board of Regents Meeting; Delivery of Petition**

**Jan 20th, Time TBD - National Day of Action**

**Jan 30th 5:30 PM-6:30 PM - General Membership Meeting**

**Jan 31st All Day - End of Bargaining Survey Data Collection**

[\(See more on our website!\)](#)

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# Bargaining Survey Updates

BY ASHLEY BERNARDO

This past October, the UGW Data Team launched a bargaining survey to all graduate workers at UNM. The purpose of this survey is twofold: first, it records the conditions graduate workers are facing at the University of New Mexico. Second, this survey collects the priorities of all graduate workers so that the UGW Bargaining Committee can craft a bargaining platform rooted in the needs of ALL UNM graduate workers. The more responses that we are able to collect, the better our bargaining platform will reflect YOUR priorities!

We will be collecting responses in the bargaining survey in earnest until the end of January 2025. Once we hit January 30th, 2025, our Data Team and Bargaining Committee will analyze the results of the survey responses. This analysis will create the backbone of the Bargaining Platform that will be drafted by the Bargaining Committee and presented to membership at our February GMM. UGW membership will then vote to approve the platform or send it back for revisions. As you can see, YOUR voice is extremely important in helping guide our negotiations come Spring.

At present, we have 587 responses to our bargaining survey from the past three months; our goal is to hit 1000 responses prior to February of 2025.

**Complete the bargaining survey today to help us achieve this goal - Howl and be Heard!**

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## Know Your Rights - Part 1: Article XII

BY GABRIEL GARCIA

All grad workers covered by our union's Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) have enumerated rights, benefits and protections. Each issue, we'll highlight a section of the CBA so that you know these rights and can take action if they're ever violated.

Article XII of the CBA describes the process for discipline and discharge as a graduate worker. Importantly, this article ensures that all graduate workers cannot be disciplined, suspended, or fired unless they have been provided just cause.

Just cause outlines seven different principles that employers must meet before they can discipline an employee:

1. Fair Notice
2. Prior Enforcement
3. Due Process
4. Substantial Evidence
5. Equal Treatment
6. Progressive Discipline
7. Mitigating and Extenuating Circumstances

To learn more about each of these principles of just cause, check out UE's "[The Seven Tests of Just Cause.](#)"

Check back for our January Issue for more information on Article XII!

# Grievance Updates

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There are a number of possible areas where grievances can arise at the end of the semester. For this issue's Grievance Update column, we will go over a few of these possibilities and what you can do to combat them.

### Spring Contracts:

Many graduate workers see their contracts for the upcoming winter and spring semester issued in the months of November and December. Remember, per our CBA, your contract must *specifically* describe and outline your duties and responsibilities (including naming specific courses to be taught if applicable and known). **Review your contract draft carefully before approving it!**

### Overworking:

The end of the semester tends to be hectic for everyone. Be careful that you are only working the allotted amount of time per week as described in your contract. Usually, this amount of time is determined by your FTE - if you are not able to complete the required work in that amount of time, we can help you fight for a higher FTE.

### Contract End Dates:

Pay attention to your contract's End Date - you are not obligated to do any additional work for your position past that date in your contract. (If you do, you're giving away your labor for free!)

### Remote Work Requests:

The university has implemented new deadlines and policies for requesting remote work for future semesters. If you need to work remotely in the Spring but have not yet reached out to your supervisor and the Office for Academic Personnel, please contact us at [unmgrads@ueunion.org](mailto:unmgrads@ueunion.org) immediately! We can help you navigate the new process.

Think you may have seen a violation of our CBA? [Let us know here!](#)

# Grad Worker Spotlight: Alex Apgar

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!



**Alex Apgar is a second-year PhD student in Earth and Planetary Sciences working as a Teaching Assistant and researching vertebrate paleoecology and taphonomy.**

“My research focuses on how we can examine patterns in vertebrate fossil preservation in order to learn more about what the prehistoric ecosystem looked like, and to hopefully be able to predict to some degree across large terrestrial fossil deposits which fossils from what parts of the ecosystem are going to end up where and how pretty they’re going to be,” said Alex.

Outside of her direct research, Alex has a passion for science communication, outreach, and museum collections.

“Scientists aren’t always super eager to talk to other people,” said Alex. “I love the science side, but I also love the people. And science communication is so important, especially in paleo, because we’re a gateway science. Dinosaurs, they love them, they’re absolutely obsessed with them. It’s almost like the first time in their lives when they understand a concept that their parents don’t and so that gives them power, which is kind of a cool feeling to have as a kiddo!”

“But even if you don’t stick with fossils the way I did, it can lead you to asking questions about the world that involve physics, chemistry, and biology. So getting kids engaged with this now I feel, is incredibly important for furthering the future scientists of our nation,” said Alex.

To best follow her interests in interfacing between research and outreach, Alex got into museum work. Here, she actively works in a collection and conducts research while still building out hands-on activities and programs for visitors in the museum. So far, Alex has digitized most of the specimens in UNM’s paleo collection and she will be helping with upgrades to the Silver Family Geology Museum which is currently under renovation in Northrop Hall. Through her work in outreach, she has secured a donation of over 10 thousand fossils from a private collector which will be added to UNM’s collection.

Alex has been an informed member of our graduate workers’ union at UNM since starting her Master’s degree here just prior to winning recognition as a union. Ultimately, she is hoping to help our union win more support for more students so they can have the opportunity to engage in the greater campus and academic communities as she has.

“I feel very lucky to have the support that I do, but I am also well aware that a lot of my projects have gone as far as they’ve gone because I am passionate about them and therefore am willing to sacrifice my time and sometimes my own funds to make them happen. And it would be awesome if there was more support for students like me that have that ambition and drive to want to make a change in the university where they’re at.”

Alex Apgar in the Field

