

Dear Cornell Community:

Cornell Graduate Students United (CGSU) with its affiliates (NYSUT-AFT), and Cornell University write to announce to students, staff, and faculty that we have come to an agreement to guide a union campaign and election, should current federal labor law change to deem graduate students at private universities employees (<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/assets/docs/union-university-conduct-rules.pdf>). This joint communication serves to inform the Cornell community of what it should expect in the near future, and to outline resources for anyone who would like more information.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the federal agency responsible for governing relationships between private employers and unions, is currently considering cases involving Columbia University and the New School. At these universities, graduate teaching and research assistants and their unions are advocating for the Board to rule that graduate assistants at private universities have status as employees. An NLRB decision is expected before fall.

Should current federal law change, Cornell and CGSU are committed to ensuring that graduate assistants are able to make their own decisions about whether to join the union or not in a free and open environment, one that ensures dignity and respect for all parties involved. We believe this agreement provides a fair and expeditious process to determine whether a majority of graduate assistants wishes to unionize and select CGSU as its collective bargaining representative should federal labor law change. If an election is held, eligible voters will be all graduate students enrolled in the Graduate School in Ithaca and Geneva campus-based programs who hold titles under University Policy 1.3 (TAs, GRAs, RAs, and GAs). Should graduate students choose unionization, Cornell agrees to recognize that decision and will enter into good faith negotiations with the union to reach a collective bargaining agreement.

The campaign and election agreement includes guidelines for administrators, faculty, students, and CGSU to help maintain fairness throughout this process. It also creates election procedures, voter eligibility guidelines and dispute resolution processes. In addition, a Union-Management Committee (UMC), made up of representatives from both Cornell and CGSU, will be formed as a resource to answer inquiries from Cornell community members. It will provide a space for engaging in any necessary problem solving.

We encourage the Cornell community to watch for more information, and utilize all available educational resources.

Sincerely,

Katryn Evinson, Cornell Graduate Students United Administrative Liaison

Mary Opperman, Vice President, Cornell University

Barbara Knuth, Senior Vice Provost and Dean, Cornell University