

Fellow Graduate Student Workers,

The general structure of our institutions of higher learning has greatly changed. The academy has shifted its design to a corporatized business model preoccupied with profit versus intellectual production. This design seeks to over utilize what they deem as cheap and vulnerable labor indicative of historic private enterprises. Those cheap and vulnerable laborers are today's adjuncts and graduate students. Historically, to remedy this institutional practice by private enterprises was the organization of strong, vocal, dedicated unions.

By passing off the vital tasks of academic instruction to precarious workers who lack the protections of tenure, institutions can more easily implement reactionary disciplinary policies and stringent control while, also, redistributing funds to other initiatives that have very little to do with student education. This must end now. Graduate students are constantly placed in such volatile positions that include unfair close surveillance, constant scrutiny of pedagogical practices, and unwavering fear of disposability thus making us less and less capable of successfully matriculating through our specified programs. This continuous plight has contributed to mental illness being on the quickly accelerating rise amongst graduate students, many of us are accruing insurmountable debt for career aspirations that are becoming less feasible. We need our union and its leaders to passionately and persistently fight to overcome the many challenges that lie ahead of us.

My aim in seeking the position of Co-Chair of the Graduate Student Union is to adopt my principles and practices of social justice into a clear and precise plan to organize the vulnerable population of graduate students on this campus. Our position as graduate students becomes a lot less volatile when we organize, mobilize, and present a united front that seeks to advocate for change in the academy. I know that this organization has an outstanding proven history of social advocacy, social justice, and community coalition building, and I seek to only further this impressive tradition.

As a doctoral student of Sociology, I am fully aware of the challenges unfairly placed on graduate workers. Encounters with unruly undergraduate students when having to teach sensitive topics and having your legitimacy constantly scrutinized from both the students and department higher ups, difficulties securing funding once you've gone above funding eligibility, or having your intellectual property robbed by unfair faculty and feeling like you don't have the power or position to report your troubles.

I have fought to bring voice to the concerns of those who have been silenced and targeted. I have fought to actively engage our academic community in conversations and substantive initiatives that seek to eradicate systemic forms of oppression and exploitation on this campus. This is not just my passion, but my life's work. This platform only further allows me to continue serving my fellow workers, and ensuring they have access to resources and protected healthy spaces where

they are allowed to thrive intellectually. I hope to empower my community of graduate student workers to speak truth to power and speak with conviction and without coercive compromise.