

NEWS RELEASE
CGE LAUNCHES DAY OF ACTION

From the Coalition of Graduate Employees

Contact: Katie Warczak (920-527-9009)

EMBARGOED UNTIL
2:00 P.M., Wednesday, December 6th



Doug Kulchar, *President*
Garrett DuCharme, *Chief Organizer*
Katie Warczak, *Media Officer*
Liana Glew, *Records Keeper*
Roman Jaramillo, *Treasurer*

December 6, 2017 -- *University Park, PA* -- The Coalition of Graduate Employees (CGE) at Penn State launched a “Day of Action” Wednesday afternoon in protest of the Penn State administration’s refusal to address employee concerns.

On November 15, 2017, CGE released its issues statement, identifying a number of employee issues CGE is committed to solving. They include reliable and affordable healthcare, a living wage, dignified working conditions, better handling of sexual- and gender-based harassment and misconduct, a grievance process, commitment to racial, gender, and disability justice, and protections for international graduate workers.

“Solutions to these problems are achievable, reasonable, and necessary for the well-being of graduate workers and Penn State,” said Liana Glew, CGE’s Record Keeper. “Open communication between administrators and graduate employees is key to working on solutions. We’re willing to talk. It’s up to Penn State’s administration to take the next step and work with us on these issues.”

Graduate employees and supporters marched on Old Main at 1:00 P.M. to deliver a letter outlining their concerns and asking the administration for a meeting before December 20, 2017, to discuss them. Following the march, three banners were dropped at Nittany Parking Deck, Osmond Laboratory, and the Information Sciences and Technology Building highlighting executive compensation, legal fees, and Penn State’s opposition to allowing a democratic union vote.

“The banner drop is about highlighting these issues for the Penn State community,” said Katie Warczak, the Media Officer for CGE. “Many graduate assistants are on food stamps while administrators are making six-figure salaries and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to fight a democratic vote on unionization. These facts get swept under the rug; the banners are designed to bring them to light and spark a conversation.”

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The Coalition of Graduate Employees is an employee-led campaign organizing Penn State’s 3,724 graduate assistants.



December 6, 2017

To President Barron, Provost Jones, Dean Vasilatos-Younken, et al.,

We, the Coalition of Graduate Employees, fight for better working conditions at Penn State. However, graduate employees have consistently been shut out of conversations that affect our working and living conditions and have been unable build the workplace we envision. This time last year, we attempted to meet with administrators to discuss our concerns and were evaded. Just last month, we applied to speak with the Board of Trustees about these issues and were denied.

While administration has closed the door on us, we have continued to work together to create a better workplace. For the past three years, we have been canvassing and having conversations with graduate employees and have heard consistent themes in their concerns, hopes, and needs. Based on these conversations, we've crafted the attached demands. We demand stable healthcare; a living wage; dignified working conditions; protection from sexual and gender-based harassment and misconduct; a grievance process; commitment to racial, gender, and disability justice; and protections for international graduate employees. These solutions are achievable, reasonable, and necessary for us to produce the high caliber of work expected of Penn State scholars.

In keeping with the University's stated commitment to open dialogue with graduate employees, **we hereby request a meeting between CGE leadership and higher administration to discuss the attached concerns, solutions, and the University's role in them before December 20, 2017.** Without open, respectful communication between administrators and CGE, we cannot fully address the concerns we've heard from graduate employees over the past three years or build the type of workplace where we can thrive.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,
The Coalition of Graduate Employees
CGE-psu@gmail.com