

Undergraduate Organization Statement on the Coalition of Graduate Employees

April 9th, 2018

Dear President Eric Barron and Board of Trustees,

Statements made by Penn State University paint graduate student unionization as a hindrance to mediation between administration and employees, undemocratic, and detrimental to the needs of individuals. These statements come as part of a prolonged campaign against the Coalition of Graduate Employees and their struggle for an independent union.

To the contrary, a graduate union is a key tool to represent the interests of graduate employees. Administrative channels of conflict resolution fundamentally skew the playing field to those in positions of power, instead of those who do the vital labor that keeps this university functioning.

We, as undergraduate students, see the hard work and effort our graduate employees put into making this university a world-class institution every day. They teach our classes, work with us, engage in research, produce scholarship, and make our campus community vibrant.

According to graduate employee surveys, almost half work beyond the 20 hours that are specified in their contracts. The 2015 Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey found only 63% of graduate and professional employees trust Penn State will handle reports of sexual misconduct fairly. In State College, about 60% of tenants are designated as rent-overburdened. These facts make the need for an independent employee union not only important but necessary at this time.

Graduate employees have a right to organize, as the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board decisions have shown. We are undergraduate students and workers united for better conditions on campus. We condemn the actions of the administration in blocking the formation of a graduate employee union. This is an attack on our best interests, which only students and workers can represent.

Sincerely,

3rd Way Collective
College Democrats
Cominidad Andina Y Amigos
Penn State Cubaniches
Planned Parenthood Generation Action

Students Organizing the Multiple Arts
Student Works at Penn State
Triota
United Socialists