

Resolution to Build Student Worker Solidarity: Inclusive Units, Wall-to-Wall Unions, and Sectoral Strategy

Whereas, student workers require protections based on the labor they perform rather than:

1. The job **title** provided to them by their employer (e.g. Teaching Assistant, Grader, Research Fellow, etc.);
2. The **degree** they are pursuing (e.g. PhD, BA, MA, JD, etc.);
3. The number of **hours** they work per week;
4. The source of their position's **funding** (e.g. stipend, external/internal fellowship, their principal investigator's research grants, etc.).

Whereas, universities often aim to divide the student workforce by arguing that workers are not legitimate workers and do not deserve protections, on the basis of their title, degree, hours, funding, or any intersection of these distinctions. At the core of universities' false claims about union representation not being appropriate for some workers who happen to be students is a material interest in eroding our unions' membership and undermining coalitions of workers.

Whereas, workers can realize greater collective power through solidarity among all workers who perform the same types of labor for the same employer, and who therefore both have a stake in shared demands and could play an integral role in labor actions.

Whereas, workers who are paid hourly, funded externally, non-PhD, etc. are disproportionately at risk of exclusion attempts by management. An inclusive definition of student-worker Units will bolster collective power and prevent the future exclusion of in-Unit workers.

Whereas, beyond individual Units, establishing a strong basis for sectoral bargaining and democratically developing cross-Unit and cross-workplace strategy, including through alignment of contract expirations, will strengthen the bargaining power of members and Locals to win a COLA, protections against harassment and discrimination, and other key demands.

Therefore be it resolved, that the UAW will adopt a sectoral bargaining strategy that prioritizes defining the scope of the Unit protected by the Agreement (commonly found in the Agreement's Recognition article) based on job duties rather than by title, degree, hours, or funding. In particular, the scope should include at least all instructors and researchers enrolled as students, **in the broadest set of contexts possible**.

Be it further resolved, that it has been effective in bargaining collective student worker demands to also include other categories of workers, beyond instructors and researchers, within the scope of the Unit protected by the Agreement. The scope should thus further include any other categories of workers that are strategic to the context of the workplace or actively organizing within the unionization campaign.

Be it further resolved, that to prevent unit erosion and enable unit expansion during bargaining, the UAW will adopt a parallel strategy in all Representation Election (RC) and Unit Clarification (UC) Petitions, to define the scope of the Unit based on job duties rather than title, degree, hours, or funding. The UAW will support members and Locals in proactively filing UC Petitions, as has been [done recently by the Student Workers of Columbia](#) at Local 2710.

Be it further resolved, that this new sectoral strategy will be carried out through the following:

- New student-worker organizing campaigns will begin with a survey of the categories of work performed by student workers. Unit breadth will be determined by democratic decisions, made by student workers who represent a variety of work duties;
- When new student-worker Units are initially filing ~~with the NLRB~~, petitions should include an inclusive scope of workers, including at least all instructors and researchers, **in the broadest set of contexts possible**;
- UAW staff will never make a decision to exclude workers from a Unit; any such decision will always be made democratically by workers who are organizing;
- Within the categories of workers included in Unit definitions, special attention will be dedicated to organizing workers at risk of exclusion, to ensure management cannot roll back unit scope during future contract negotiations;
- Existing student worker unions **should make efforts to include any carved-out workers when bargaining contracts in the broadest set of contexts possible and** will be supported in pursuing concerted organizing campaigns and UC petitions to expand and engage membership across divisions and distinctions, to lay the groundwork for unit expansion in future contract negotiations.

Be it further resolved, that the focus on Unit scope and Recognition provisions is only the first step in the UAW's sectoral bargaining strategy for student workers. The UAW will support members and Locals in beginning to pursue the democratic development of a sectoral strategy, including through developing an educational program for building student-worker awareness of and militancy for sectoral bargaining.