



GLU-UE: May/June 2023 Newsletter

The University works because WE do!

We WON!

We voted 2487 to 70 (97.2%) in favor of forming a union to fight for higher pay, lower fees, better benefits, clearer job descriptions, workplace protections, increased support for international students, and justice for our Minnesota communities.

Read on to hear about what's next in the unionization process (sneak peek: bargaining), how you can get involved, and much more...

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WE are GLU-UE. What now?

This section contains important information!

Before we win the strong contract that we all deserve, we need to elect a **Bargaining Committee (BC)** that will negotiate with the University.

- The BC will consist of **25 elected graduate workers** (all grad workers are eligible)
- They will serve as our **sole negotiators** (alongside a UE representative) with the U through the 2023-2024 academic year.
- They will regularly communicate about the negotiations with their constituents.
- The BC will serve as **GLU-UE's primary executive body**
- Through their hard work, we will WIN a contract that improves working conditions for all graduate workers.
- Do you know someone that would be a good fit for the BC? We are **accepting BC nominations now!**

Town halls will be hosted by areas over the next two weeks (**check your email!**) where members from across the union will discuss the role of the BC and how we can win a strong contract. Graduate workers running for BC should also be communicating with graduate workers in their area to get to know them and their bargaining priorities.

The **BC election** is tentatively scheduled for the week of June 12th. Each area will elect 1-2 BC members, depending on the number of graduate workers in that area. All graduate students are eligible to vote for the BC members who will represent their area, regardless of whether you currently have an appointment. And don't worry if you work in a different area than you study – you can vote in up to two area elections if that applies to you!

For those looking for other ways to get involved, GLU-UE is forming a **Contract Action Team (CAT)** to support the BC. The CAT will serve as a means for the GLU-UE general body to be involved in everyday union activities (e.g., public communications, internal outreach, event planning, etc.). *There are a variety of ways to be involved and help out, all with different levels of time and energy commitment; please feel free to reach out and ask questions!*

[Reach out to us here](#) to find out how you can get involved in the CAT!

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TLDR: Nominate a peer for Bargaining Committee, and/or consider helping out with behind-the-scenes-activities (the new CAT) that keeps GLU-UE functioning and growing

THIS Edition's BIGGER PICTURE:
We are not alone in this search for better graduate working conditions!

After voting with high margins to authorize their Grad Workers Unions, UChicago and Johns Hopkins have begun bargaining. Northwestern will begin their process shortly.

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Rutgers Workers Win Big After Strike with United Adjuncts, Faculty and Graduate Workers (by David M.)

Members of the Rutgers faculty, graduate student, librarian, and clinician unions voted overwhelmingly in favor of a new contract after a five-day strike in April. This strike was historic for Rutgers, being the first in its 253-year history and involving all instructional workers, including full-time faculty, graduate workers, and adjuncts. The new contract brought significant improvements, such as substantial salary gains for adjuncts, including a 30 percent increase in the first year and a total of 43 percent over the contract's duration. Additionally, graduate teaching and research assistants received 33 percent raises, and adjuncts gained multi-semester and multi-year appointments, professional development funding, and improved paths to advancement.

The decision to go on strike was influenced by previous experiences of low job security and inadequate raises for adjuncts. Union leadership prioritized organizing efforts and created a more democratic union focused on empowering adjuncts. They collaborated with the full-time faculty union and embarked on a campaign to merge bargaining units, successfully garnering support from adjuncts and strengthening the union's position. Throughout the bargaining process, the unions fought for open negotiations and unity across all job categories, which the administration initially resisted but eventually accepted.

During the strike, picket lines and creative protests showcased the unions' strength and garnered media attention and political pressure on the university. Although New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy offered to host negotiations and provide additional funds, the unions refused to postpone the strike, recognizing that their power lay in collective action. Negotiations were eventually shifted to Trenton, where the governor's office exerted pressure to reach a framework for the contract. The unions decided to suspend the strike while negotiations continued, emphasizing that the strike was only suspended and not ended, and they were prepared to return to the picket lines if necessary.

While there was debate within the union about the decision to suspend the strike, the gains achieved through the strike were significant. Although there is still progress to be made, the unions celebrate their accomplishments and the historic nature of their strike. This strike demonstrated the power of a unified front of graduate workers, full-time faculty, and adjunct faculty, and we stand in solidarity with them and their struggles for better working conditions.



Courtesy of AP/Seth Wenig

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Mass Comms Feedback? Content Ideas?

[Let us know here](#) or contact us at graduatelaborunion@gmail.com

We have received multiple endorsements, statements of support, and news coverage:

- UMN's Council of Graduate Students and Council of International Graduate Students passed statements of support; Twin Cities AAUP Chapter [issued a statement of support](#); and the Minneapolis City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting GLU-UE.
- Local news outlets have featured our story in [Racket](#), [Minnesota Reformer](#), and this [MPR article](#). Also, check out [this Labor Notes article](#) featuring GLU-UE in a national context!

This Edition's RECOMMENDATIONS

- Check out this [article \(2020\) from Labor Notes](#) spotlighting intersections between labor and LGBTQIA+ activism
- Want to learn more about UE? [This podcast](#) examines the untold stories of the United Electrical workers
- “Everyone who hasn’t already should watch [Pride \(2014\)](#) for that good good gay/labor mashup.” – Anya A.



THIS EDITION'S TESTIMONIAL

Mary Kate Wolken
History of Science, Technology and Medicine



The main issue I face as a graduate worker at UMN relates to **making ends meet on \$20k/year**. I chose to come to graduate school, and I knew that that included lifestyle and financial sacrifices. Unfortunately, the financial element is a huge stressor for me. I am lucky that I can have part-time side gigs in addition to my university contract. However, the sheer energy that requires is beyond what I can sustain. Questions that frequently run through my mind include: When will I be able to see my family? Why did I buy that fresh fruit instead of the canned fruit cocktail? Can I stand biking in today's frigid wind to avoid rideshare costs?

I believe unionizing graduate students at the U will solve critical problems by creating a respected entity to demand negotiations. I'm involved in advocacy groups on campus who are engaged in great work, but **we need a union to have the resources and strength to demand effective change from the University** on big things such as pay, benefits, and working condition protections and improvements.

At the end of the day, I'd like to build a little for my future. I'm not asking to make oodles of money – I dream of a respectable wage that meets the standard of living and acknowledges my professional status. **I support UMN GLU-UE because we're building a better future for me AND those who come after me.** I got involved once upon a time to help spread the message (and thus the newsletter was born) and here I am. We all deserve more, and I feel a sense of peace knowing all this hard work will lead to a net gain and improvement in our quality of life – today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

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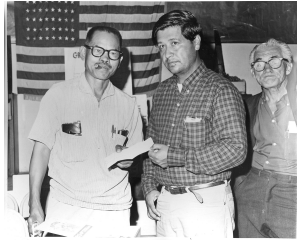
Shameless advertising: do you like or even love the newsletters/mass emails? [Help me/us put them together](#) :) Even if you're not a fan of the mass comms, still [send us what you want to see!](#) We're super excited to keep growing GLU-UE, especially the comms team.

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In the meantime, [SHARE YOUR STORY HERE](#) or email graduatelaborunion@gmail.com

Labor History SPOTLIGHT

Manongs, Filipino Farm Workers, and US Farm Labor



As May comes to a close, we want to use this little section to highlight AAPI labor history. A wave of Filipino immigrants to the US in the 1920s and 1930s are remembered and celebrated as “*manongs*.” Facing discrimination and violence, these *manongs* have been key players in labor history and organized and staged strikes in the 1930s-1960s. In the 1960s, the Filipino-led Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC, led by Larry Itliong, pictured here with César Chávez) came into existence; they organized the **1965**

strike against the Delano grape growers. The Mexican-led National Farm Workers Association joined the strike against Delano, and the two groups eventually merged into the United Farm Workers union and won new wages and conditions in 1970. [Read more here!](#)



ICYMI - Check out previous newsletters from
[March/April](#),
[January/February](#),
[December](#),
[November](#)

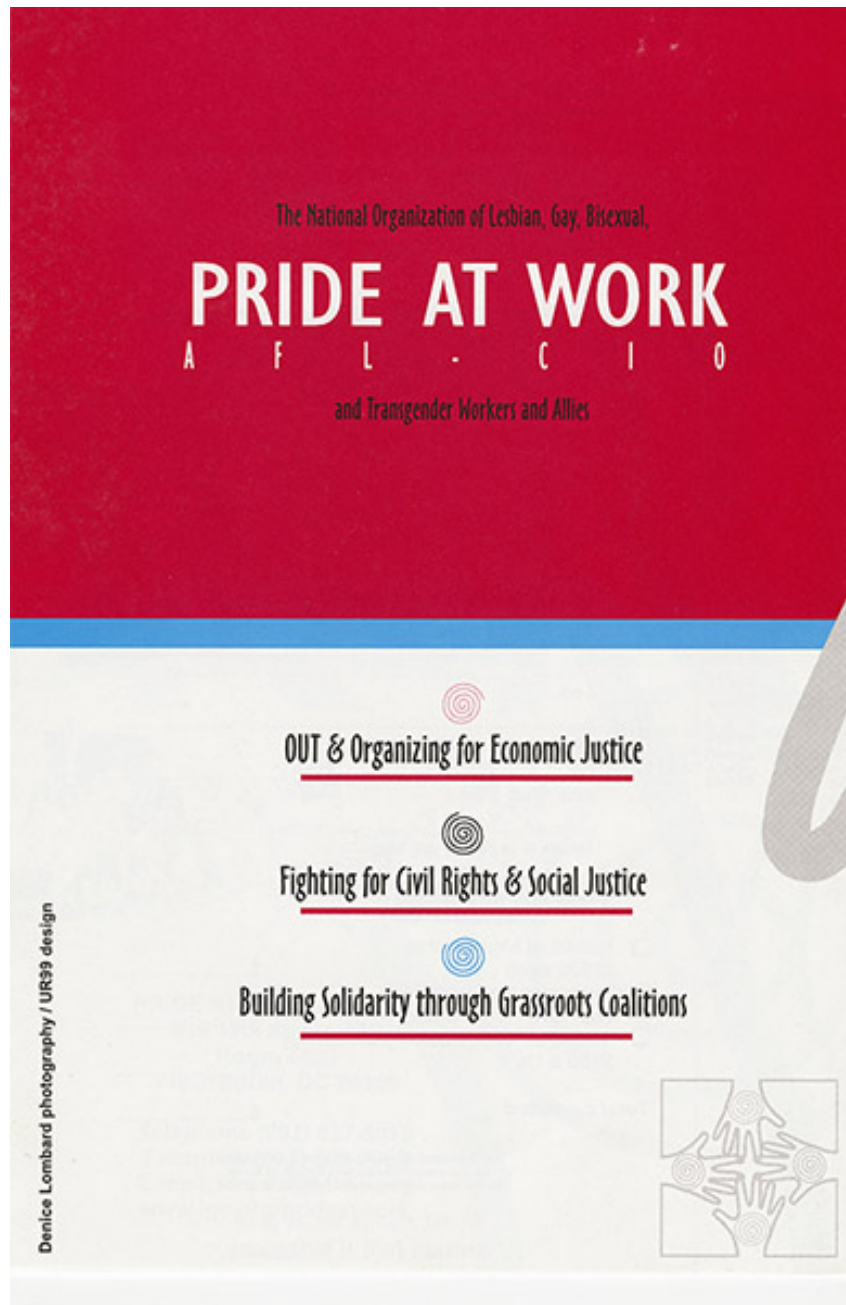
This Edition's UNION VOCAB

Area - A collection of departments grouped together based on geographic and/or academic similarities. Prior to the union election, GLU-UE operated using a structure of 17 area committees to organize support and communicate effectively at the department level. Bargaining committee (BC) representatives will be elected based on their area to utilize these existing lines of communication.

Remember - even if you are NOT a current member of the Bargaining Unit, your support in organizing and spreading GLU-UE's work is valuable

INTO THE ARCHIVE

In this edition, we draw your attention to UMN's very own [Tretter Collection](#)! The collection has oral histories as well as archival and digital resources, available online and in-person.



Courtesy of [University of Maryland](#) - University Libraries - Pride at Work Records