



April 18th, 2022

To:

Chancellor Michael D. Amiridis

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Javier Reyes

Dear all,

We, the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) work diligently to ensure Undergraduate Students are given the full value of their educational experience at their time in The University of Illinois at Chicago. With the recent 2022 Graduate Employees Organization strike on April 18th 2022, we as a body think it necessary to make a statement regarding Graduate student workers and their experience.

Graduate student workers provide a vital service to the university and the study body. Whether it is grading papers, administering exams, or teaching students these workers do an often overlooked job that is the lifeblood of the academic experience. Many of these classes cannot function without their crucial services as evidenced by the effects of this strike.

We recognize the difficulties facing Graduate employees. We believe these workers deserve a fair wage that is in line with the modern cost of living in Chicago. The cost of living and inflation has risen significantly in Chicago and the Chicagoland area since the last raise. We, the Undergraduate Student Government, call for the University of Illinois at Chicago to pay the graduate student workers a living and increased wage. We discourage the University's insistence on allowing a lockout of workers. We call for the University to engage in good faith bargaining and to work in the interest of putting students, both undergraduate and graduate first. To ensure that graduating seniors and that the grades and coursework of undergraduates are not affected.

For many graduate student employees their work for the university is their only and main viable source of income. Many are international students and are not given the freedom to explore other job opportunities due to their visa status. International students are restricted to work positions that have federal work study, but many of those positions don't provide a livable wage. The current relationship is inherently exploitative of student employees. Student employees work long hours with low compensation in order to pay for groceries and housing. This creates a constant flow of employees who are willing to work with little compensation out of necessity.

The Undergraduate Student Government is here to offer our support to help facilitate an agreement of any kind to the benefit of both Graduate employees and undergraduate students. We encourage an open dialogue about the experiences of graduate workers to continue even after the strike ends to ensure that similar events do not need to happen every few years. A fair contract must be proactive and future planning.

Signed,

The University of Illinois at Chicago Undergraduate Student Government