

**Improving the Graduate Student Experience at UConn through GEU-UAW Local 6950**  
**Issue Before Collective Bargaining After Collective Bargaining**

<b>Stipends</b>	Wage increases were unpredictable, determined unilaterally by UConn, and often contingent on fluctuations in the state budget. Average increase 1.4% per year between 2006-7 and 2013-14.	<u>Up to \$2200 more per year over the life of the contract.</u> 4% raise during bargaining for 2014-15. Contractually-guaranteed stipend increases of at least 3% per year, regardless of state budget fluctuations, during contract.
<b>Fee/Tuition Waivers</b>	Graduate Assistants received waiver of tuition but had to pay more than \$2200 per year in additional mandatory fees.	<u>Nearly \$900 in new fee waivers (equal to additional 3.2%-7.6% pay increase).</u> In addition to continued waiver of tuition, GAs will receive a waiver of nearly \$900 of other fees each year by end of the contract.
<b>Health Insurance Coverage</b>	Unilateral removal from state employee health plan in 2003, then subsequent erosion, including major cuts in 2013, all of which led to significant out-of-pocket cost increases for GAs.	<u>Restoration of state employee health benefit levels:</u> dramatically-improved coverage means significantly reduced out-of-pocket costs (e.g. elimination of 10% co-insurance and reduction of prescription costs by as much as 1000%).
<b>Health Insurance Premiums</b>	UConn determined premium rates unilaterally for GAs and their families, with significant increases over time.	<u>GAs pay less for better benefits.</u> The annual premium will remain flat for three years at \$200 for GA, \$1440 for GA +1, and \$1822 for GA + family. [because the initial union organizing led to a freeze on GA premium costs, these reflect 2013-14 rates for far inferior coverage] In 2015-16, this represents a 95%, 82% and 84% subsidy by UConn, respectively. As the cost of coverage goes up each year, GAs will pay an even smaller percentage.
<b>Parking and Transit</b>	Increased parking costs each year and elimination of transit lines with no input.	<u>[\$ _____ per year saved] 50% reduction in cost for GA parking pass.</u> Union seat on University Parking and Transit Committee.
<b>Childcare Subsidies</b>	No childcare subsidies for GAs.	<u>Establishment of GA childcare subsidy fund.</u> Fund will grow from \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year by the end of the contract.
<b>Paid Family Leave</b>	No guarantee of paid family leave.	<u>Contractually-guaranteed paid family leave.</u> Six weeks paid maternity leave (eight weeks if Caesarian) and three weeks of parental leave for non-birth or adoptive parents.
<b>Sick Leave</b>	No guaranteed sick leave; TAs often had to find someone to cover their classes when sick.	<u>Contractually-guaranteed sick leave.</u> GA may take up to three days sick leave per semester without stipend reduction, and the University has ultimate responsibility to cover class.
<b>Holidays and Time Off</b>	Time off on holidays or for vacation at the discretion of the department or PI, with requests often denied or ignored.	If required to work on a holiday, GA must get another day off. GAs may request additional time off (e.g. for vacation), which cannot be unreasonably denied.

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<b>Dispute Resolution and Non-Discrimination</b>	No neutral, fair dispute resolution process. The only neutral recourse for discrimination or harassment claims was through costly and time-consuming state and federal agencies.	All workplace disputes (including discrimination/harassment) are resolvable by a fair and expedient grievance procedure and, ultimately, <u>appeal to a neutral arbitrator</u> . State and federal agencies can also be utilized for discrimination/harassment claims.
<b>Appointment Security</b>	GA appointments could be withdrawn after being offered.	<u>Contractually-guaranteed appointment security</u> . Once a GA accepts an appointment, the University must honor it at the level of pay and benefits offered.
<b>Paid Training</b>	UConn decided whether required training was part of paid work time.	UConn must consider required training for GA positions as part of paid work time.
<b>Workload Protections</b>	No guaranteed recourse for excess workload	<u>Contractual access to workload relief or extra pay</u> . If a GA is required to work more than 20 hours per week on average, they can utilize an expedited grievance process to resolve problem.
<b>Discipline and Dismissal</b>	Graduate assistants could be disciplined or dismissed arbitrarily or “at will” at any time.	<u>UConn must prove “just cause”</u> in order to discipline or dismiss graduate assistants.
<b>Employment Files</b>	No guaranteed access or right to respond to content in an individual’s employment file	<u>GAs have the right to inspect and respond to content</u> in their employment file
<b>Health and Safety</b>	UConn unilaterally set and enforced health and safety standards. Some GAs did not receive the proper training or equipment when requested.	<u>GAs have contractual rights to a safe and healthy work environment</u> , including the right to health and safety training and to proper safety equipment. UConn policies are now subject to grievance and arbitration procedure.
<b>Workspace and Materials</b>	Provision of workspace and materials necessary to carry out job duties was up to the university	<u>UConn must provide space and materials</u> necessary for GA assignment.
<b>International Student Rights</b>	No unified GA voice in state or national policy making	Through the Union, GAs have organized visa seminars, helped make the particular concerns of international student workers a priority in efforts to secure comprehensive immigration reform, and have advocated on efforts to expand Optional Practical Training (OPT).
<b>Protecting Federal Funding for Science Research</b>	No unified ASE voice in state or national policy making	Through the Union, GAs have advocated effectively for federal research funding in conjunction with GAs and postdoctoral researchers at other universities.