

**Dr. Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *ad interim***

One Silber Way  
Boston, Massachusetts 02215  
T 617-353-2230 F 617-353-6580  
[www.bu.edu/provost](http://www.bu.edu/provost)

February 20, 2024

Dear Deans and Faculty,

I am writing to update you on negotiations with the Graduate Workers Union (BUGWU).

Last Wednesday, February 14, our negotiating team shared counterproposals with BUGWU to address the issues that are most important to them – compensation and benefits. Our proposals included a significant increase in stipends, representing a 13% increase over three years, with a 7% increase occurring in year one. Our proposal also includes a 20% increase in hourly graduate student worker wages and a 67% increase in childcare subsidy support. The wage and benefit proposals, along with several others, place us in line with local peer institutions that also have graduate worker union contracts. Specifically, the wages proposed would place us in the middle of wages agreed to by Boston College, Tufts University, MIT, and Harvard University. Last Friday, the negotiating teams met again, and the University was able to share its workload counterproposal and address many questions that the union had with respect to gender affirming care, other healthcare related items, transitional assistance, and a variety of additional issues.

Additional bargaining is tentatively slated for this week. Our hope is that these collective and focused efforts will move us closer to resolution with BUGWU. Meetings with BUGWU have offered valuable insight into the concerns of many graduate students, and we are identifying ways to make our community work better for everyone through these discussions.

I am grateful to our graduate student workers for the way in which they have come to the bargaining table, and they have our support and encouragement as they work with our negotiations team. I appreciate both negotiating teams' staying the course as they navigate their way toward a historic first-ever contract of this type and scale. There is more work to be done and we need to keep talking.

We understand that some graduate student workers have expressed frustration that we have not yet reached agreement and authorized the union to start the process of scheduling a strike vote in the future. This vote does not mean that a strike is imminent nor that it is time for the University to adopt a more confrontational posture. Instead, the time is right for us to continue to negotiate in good faith, remind ourselves that these are *our students* on the other side of the table, and commit to further progress. Such progress is important to their degree completion, and to our obligation to provide an excellent educational experience for our undergraduate students.

I also wish to express my gratitude for your assistance in thinking about contingencies in the event of a strike. Our overriding goal is to reach a settlement; however, should a strike occur in the future, that work puts us in the position of being able to continue our educational and research mission.

Thank you again, and I will continue to keep you informed as negotiations continue.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KL' followed by a stylized flourish.

Kenneth Lutchen  
University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim