

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

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June 6, 2024

Dear Faculty Colleagues and Graduate Students,

With commencement behind us and Summer Term underway, we are continuing to diligently work to reach a contract with our graduate student workers (BUGWU).

Our team has met with the BUGWU negotiators three times in the past two weeks – including this past Tuesday, June 4, for our 28<sup>th</sup> bargaining session.

So far, we have reached tentative agreements with BUGWU on 16 contract articles, most recently (on May 14) addressing union security and sharing bargaining unit information.

We continue to be disappointed, however, at BUGWU's lack of urgency around tackling the core economic proposals that remain on the table – compensation, as well as the variety of paid benefits they have requested from the University (including parental leave, subsidies for childcare, paid time off, and health and dental benefits). BUGWU continues to maintain their original position that all graduate workers should receive an annual stipend of \$62,440.

As you may know, we proposed to move all PhD students to a 12-month stipend at our May 14 bargaining session. **Our offer means that all PhD students within the five-year funding guarantee would receive a minimum annual stipend of \$42,159.** For hundreds of our PhD students, this amounts to an increase of more than 50% above their current stipend level. This is a big move for BU, and something the union requested. We have heard that many PhD students appreciated this offer.

We were hoping our good faith offers on compensation would spur progress and a response from the students at the table. If we do not settle the contract by the fall semester, our compensation offers – including the 12-month stipend – will remain proposals, and not be implemented for our current and incoming students.

The lack of progress is not limited to compensation. Currently, all 14 outstanding contract articles remain in BUGWU's court. Despite this, BUGWU declined to present a single counterproposal at each of our last three negotiations sessions. This Tuesday's session lasted only 15 minutes when they again declined to offer any counterproposals on these outstanding items.

We believe strongly that we must try to come to resolution on a contract as soon as possible. We have worked in good faith to offer specific contract proposals that our graduate workers asked for, and we will continue to do so. With that said, bargaining is a two-way street. We hope BUGWU will respect

the urgency of the moment and come to future bargaining sessions ready to meaningfully tackle some of the outstanding economic issues on the table with our team. We remain ready and willing to meet them in good faith to do so.

Sincerely,

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