

What undergrads need to know about GSOC, the union for graduate employees at NYU



Did you know...

77% of the teaching hours in undergrad courses at NYU are taught by part-time teachers, such as TAs and adjuncts.

33% of the teaching hours in undergrad courses at NYU are taught by graduate employees.

67% of MAP teaching hours are taught by grad employees, compared to 19% by tenure-track faculty and 14% by non-tenure track faculty.

NYU: How it really works

Over the course of the last decade, NYU has attracted more and more applicants, and raised the university's rankings in indices like those in US News and World Report. NYU has been celebrated for its fundraising, its real estate developments—building new facilities and remodeling others—and for its recruitment of big name “star” faculty to conduct their research under the NYU banner.

NYU undergraduates need to know where your tuition money is going and to insist that your teachers are adequately compensated.

During its ascent into the top tier of U.S. colleges, NYU has centralized decision-making at the university, shifting power from students and faculty into the hands of a small group of administrators. At the same time, NYU has relied more heavily on adjuncts and TAs to teach undergraduate courses. The result is that the people who spend the most time in the classroom have the least to say about the important decisions that affect everyone at NYU.

NYU works because we do!

Graduate Assistants at NYU perform essential work across the university, including:

- ✓ teaching stand-alone courses, such as language classes and statistics
- ✓ teaching recitations for large lecture courses, such as first-year surveys and MAP classes
- ✓ running lab sections in science courses
- ✓ grading papers and exams
- ✓ assisting faculty with their research and teaching
- ✓ organizing departmental events, such as colloquia and seminars

GSOC members' working conditions are your learning conditions!

To improve their working conditions and advocate for a better, more democratic university, graduate assistants at NYU formed a union, electing democratically to form GSOC in 1999. GSOC's first contract was historic – it was the first ever at a private university (there have been unions at public universities for over 30 years). NYU's adjunct faculty have also formed a union – ACT/UAW Local 7902 – and bargained a contract in 2004.

Our union contract ensured better pay, healthcare and working conditions for our members, meaning that TAs no longer have to take a second or third job to pay their rent, or go weeks without treating a cold or flu, making them better able to focus on their teaching and advising, not to mention our own studies.

Some of the benefits gained for TA's, RA's and GA's with the first contract include:

- ✓ workload limits, meaning smaller classes and recitation sections
- ✓ mandatory, compensated training
- ✓ safer working environments in labs
- ✓ better pay
- ✓ employer-paid health insurance (instead of \$1000+ a year out-of-pocket)
- ✓ a grievance procedure to address problems in their working conditions, including failure to receive paychecks on time and mold in offices

These gains are at risk...

Before that contract ended in August 2005, NYU announced its refusal to negotiate a second one. Last November, the members of GSOC/UAW went out on strike for a second contract. Grads were threatened with the loss of their jobs for a whole year. Despite such threats, a majority of the grad workers at NYU signed a petition last spring reaffirming their commitment to getting a second union contract.

The NYU administration has assured its employees and students that the gains we made under the contract won't go away, but they are already chipping away at our benefits and undermining the workplace standards we set:

- ✗ healthcare coverage has been dramatically cut two years in a row
- ✗ enrollment in recitations and stand-alone classes is climbing

Have your voices heard! Join with others on campus to fight for our NYU!

Undergraduates have fought side-by-side with GSOCers for a more democratic and inclusive university by supporting GSOC, through:

- ✓ rallies in Washington Square Park
- ✓ joining striking GSOCers on the picket line
- ✓ marching into Bobst library and demanding negotiations
- ✓ visiting other undergrads in classes and informing them about the issues.
- ✓ Planning teach-ins and other events to raise awareness about labor on campus

This year, we still need your help to fight for the university that NYU could be!

If you want to get involved, contact gsoc@2110uaw.org or call (212) 529-2580.