



GWSLUUnion - UAW Initial Bargaining Demands

Ratified 24 April 2025

We, the Graduate Workers (GWs) of Saint Louis University (SLU), present the following contract demands. These demands are based on bargaining surveys completed by hundreds of the graduate workers currently employed by SLU. With these demands, we aim to substantially improve our working conditions, ensure dignity, and guarantee security for all SLU graduate workers.

These demands reflect the specific needs of graduate workers. This vision for our research and teaching community comes at a time of great social and economic change in Saint Louis. These demands address the specific challenges of living here, such as the need for reinvestment in research and instruction, and the need for an academic pipeline that supports greater diversity among early-career educators, researchers, and professionals. We aim to ensure fair pay and benefits for all GWs; to support all GWs' career development; to actively safeguard the civil rights of non-citizen GWs; to ensure that GWs with families can afford childcare and associated costs; and to build a truly inclusive, accessible, and diverse research and teaching community free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. We expect that SLU's dealings with graduate workers will be standardized across departments. Graduate workers must have a reasonable expectation that they will not lose their funding or appointment prior to completing their degree.

We believe that attaining these goals will better support SLU's mission to pursue truth for the service of humanity, and its commitment to free, active, and original intellectual inquiry, as well as *cura personalis* (care for the whole person). Catholic Social Teaching is clear on how better material conditions are a critical factor to ensure social justice. In [paragraph #1928 of the Catholic Catechism](#) the church magisterium explains: "Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation." Graduate workers cannot fulfill their intellectual vocation without their due living wages. The Society of Jesus (aka Jesuits) the religious order under which banner this university exists, also says in its Constitutions and Complementary Norms #4:

The mission of the Society consists in this...the service of faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement ...The service of faith and the promotion of justice constitute one and the same mission of the Society. They cannot, therefore, be separated one from the other in

our purpose, our action, our life. Nor can they be considered simply as one ministry among others, but rather as that ministry whereby all our ministries are brought together in a unified whole.

Nowhere within this stated principle does exploitation and unjust treatment of graduate workers have a place to exist. All of our demands below are written within this spirit of the Jesuit tradition. Faith and justice either go hand in hand, or there is no real faith in the first place.

Additionally, improved conditions for GWs will facilitate the recruitment and retention of a talented and diverse group of GWs, therefore enhancing our ability to continue producing first-rate instruction and research at SLU. As an R1 university, SLU has a responsibility to compensate its graduate worker researchers accordingly.

Broaden access to and improve retirement and other benefits

We demand the right to better plan for our futures through improved access to retirement benefits and other benefits including life insurance, disability insurance, tax withholding for all GWs, and access to free financial, legal, and tax advice.

Budget and Financial Transparency

We demand expanded transparent access to SLU's budget and finances, including but not limited to research grant expenditures.

Create a more family-friendly workplace

We demand fully paid parental leave, priority access to and significant financial support for childcare, caretaker needs, after school programs, tuition benefits, and affordable insurance coverage for dependents.

Establish fair wages

We demand improved pay for all GWs, commensurate with the value of our work and the increasing cost of living, including a significant increase to pay minimums and guaranteed annual salary increases. We demand that campus fees be waived, as they significantly detract from our total compensation.

Ensure freedom from harassment and bullying

We demand a fair, timely, and enforceable process for addressing racial, sexual, gender-based, and other forms of workplace harassment and bullying.

Ensure a safe and accessible work environment

We demand to establish strong protection for graduate workers with disabilities and improve access to disability services and protections.

Expand access to educational resources and professional development

We demand access to funds supporting individual professional development opportunities, including courses offered by SLU, tuition waivers, expansion of support for career development, and immediate coverage for work and travel-related expenses.

Foster a safe and productive work environment

We demand a fair and timely process to resolve health and safety problems, improve access to wellness resources and recreational facilities, and guarantee adequate workspace and workplace accommodations to all graduate workers.

Improve healthcare for all

We demand improvements to the quality and affordability of medical and mental health care, including family coverage, as well as improved vision coverage and the addition of dental coverage, greater access to healthcare providers, and meaningful involvement in the decision-making processes for any changes to GW benefits.

Improve rights to paid time off and leave

We demand guaranteed access to paid holidays, vacation, and medical, family, and other leaves of absence.

Improve transit and parking benefits

We demand improved and equitable transit and parking benefits to relieve the burden of commuting costs and support graduate workers utilizing bicycles, cars, and other forms of transportation.

Increase access to housing

We demand accessible and affordable housing support for all graduate workers and their families, including guidance on housing resources and affordable options for on-campus housing.

Increase support for international GWs

We demand that Saint Louis University fulfill its responsibility to protect the civil rights, equity, and safety of its international graduate workers. International graduate workers must have access to legal assistance for visa and/or immigration procedures, financial assistance in all visa processes (such as payment of fees for visa renewals), and assistance in securing housing, transportation, and other basic living necessities. We demand stronger institutional protections against discrimination and/or exploitation of visa-holding graduate workers.

Increase transparency for job appointments and dismissals

We demand transparent job posting, appointment, and renewal procedures, including detailed offer letters that include but are not limited to responsibilities, salary, benefits, access to the resources necessary to perform the work, access to the GWSLUUnion-UAW contract agreement, and just-cause dismissal proceedings. In addition, we demand stronger security of funding throughout GWs' employment.

Protect academic freedom and intellectual property

We demand improved intellectual property and academic freedom rights, including clear guidelines on authorship criteria and protection against listing without consent. We expect the university to defend graduate worker research against threats to academic freedom, in accordance with its Jesuit principles.

Recognize and promote union rights and representation

We demand a contract that maximizes the ability of our union to engage in effective representation, including a variety of standard provisions on union representational rights and contract enforceability, as well as ensuring that all new GWs receive adequate orientation about rights and benefits under our contract.

Year-long financial security

We demand adequate compensation and contract coverage throughout all twelve months of the year, since graduate workers do work every month during that time. Summer months are typically used for intensive research, presentations and collaboration at professional meetings, and professional development. Compensation should be given accordingly.