

THE AMPLIFIER

YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE

October 30, 2020

Volume 1 Issue 1

Email: gau.siu@gmail.com

Web: <https://gaunited.org/>

A Message from our President

Anna Wilcoxon

I want to take a moment to thank our existing members and welcome our new members. We are so glad you decided to join us in our important work to stand for and with graduate assistants at SIU! What makes GAU unique in our current cultural context is our focus on collectivity. We see rugged individualism as diametrically opposed to the work we do with the union. Every choice we make, every action we take, is for the greater good of the collective, of which you are a part. We may not always get everything we ask for and need, but we are always doing what we can to amplify your voices and represent you to the best of our abilities.

However, we can't do this alone. We need your feedback – when we ask for your input on issues we are working on, we truly want to hear from you so we can best represent your concerns. We also need your activism, outreach, and enthusiasm for what we do here to spread across campus. Last year, we were able to grow our membership by 25%, which was an important achievement, as we will be bargaining our contract this summer (2021).

However, each spring, as students graduate and move on, we always lose members. Typically, we recoup them by August during orientation, but with orientation being online this year, we ended up losing more than that 25% increase we made last year. Let me be transparent: we currently have 1089 graduate assistants on campus, and we only have 68 current members of GAU. This is simply not enough for the battle we have ahead with bargaining this summer while still fighting for your rights during the pandemic.

There is power in numbers. And if we don't have the numbers, we have less power at the bargaining table, which means less protections, rights, and benefits will be won in bargaining. If you're not a member yet, I really hope you'll consider becoming a member. If you still have questions about what being a member means, you can always reach out to us at gau.siu@gmail.com. If you are a member already, I want to encourage you to talk to your colleagues about becoming a member. Help them understand why right now, more than ever, it is so vital for us to have members and representation across campus. We are very fortunate to be on a unionized campus where we are afforded the right to collective bargaining – let's exercise this right to the best of our abilities by growing our membership! To become a member today, just scan the QR code at the bottom of this newsletter or go to this [link](#).

It is my honor and pleasure to serve you, especially during the various challenges we are all facing right now. Please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know how we can help you.

Solidarity Forever!

*Stewardship
Opportunity
From OJ Duncan,
Steward Council Chair*

We are looking for volunteers to be Stewards. Stewards have two main roles. First, we are the liaison between our academic unit, and the union. We work with other members of our own unit to encourage union membership, disseminate any information from the union to our unit, and bring any complaints or concerns from our unit to the union.

Second, as Stewards we generally have 1-2 events per year to bring awareness to the union and issues that graduate assistants face. We work with the VP of Membership to help recruit graduate students campus-wide into becoming dues paying members.

If you are interested in becoming a Steward, contact OJ at: gau.siuc@gmail.com

*Virtual Office Hours
Come and Chat with us!*

Whether you have questions about timesheets, an issue with your job, membership benefits, or how you can help, members of the GAU Executive Committee are ready to provide you with the answers, or at least point you in the right direction!

Waiting rooms have been created and will be completely confidential. Just use the Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/97442540316>
Virtual Office Hours are available from 1pm-2pm on the following dates:

November 6th: Anna Wilcoxen and Antonio Salazar
November 20th: Anna Wilcoxen and Madelyn Fox DeFago
December 4th: Anna Wilcoxen and Alex Lockwood

*Graduate Assistants United Executive Committee
2020-2021*

President.....Anna Wilcoxen
Vice President of Membership.....Courtney Simpkins
Vice President of Communication.....Antonio Salazar
Secretary/Treasurer.....Alex Lockwood
Steward Council Chair.....OJ Duncan
Grievance Officer.....Dianah McGreehan
Grievance Officer.....Madelyn Fox Defago

We Want To Hear From You!

Throughout the year, President Wilcoxen will be participating in nationwide meetings with presidents of other graduate assistant unions to amplify our representation within the NEA.

If you have any issues you want Anna to bring up in these meetings, let us know at gau.siuc@gmail.com.

*Become A Member!
Scan the QR Code*

Please note when you fill this out, you MUST specify under "Membership Type" that you are "Higher Education – Quarter Time (Less than 10 hours). Do not select a higher "Type", as this will result in paying more dues than is necessary. This has been confirmed with the IEA Office. Once the form is filled out, President Wilcoxen will be notified, and we will mail you your free GAU mask!



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