

**Doctoral and Graduate Students' Council (DSC) Steering Committee
Statement on Proposed PSC Bargaining Agreement**

October 29, 2019

On Wednesday, October 23, 2019, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) released to its members a “historic” [Memorandum of Agreement](#) (MOA), reached after two years of bargaining with the City University of New York (CUNY). PSC leadership is touting gains for doctoral students at the Graduate Center (GC) as a significant component of the agreement, including:

- tuition waivers for Ph.D students in their sixth and seventh years; and
- gains toward health insurance for unfunded doctoral students.

These are demands that the DSC has made repeatedly since 2014 in the form of resolutions on [tuition remission](#) and [healthcare for all students](#) and through support for the “[full and fair funding](#)” campaign of the Adjunct Project. The DSC celebrates the fact that the PSC has acknowledged the demands of GC student activists on these issues.

This proposed contract promises more than it delivers. The touted benefits to “unfunded students” fall far short of demands the DSC has made in the past for tuition remission for both masters students and adjuncts. The clause that appears to expand healthcare to unfunded students would limit that benefit to students with positions covered by the PSC bargaining unit who are already eligible for NYSHIP. As PSC GC chapter chair Luke Elliott-Negri explained at a meeting with chapter members on October 25, the new agreement would simply allocate some funding for this purpose and set up a committee to discuss how to move forward.

The DSC is especially concerned about the implications of this proposed MOA for adjuncts. Many of the students represented by the DSC are also adjuncts. The DSC has supported the adjunct demand for \$7,000 per three-credit course since 2014. To that end, it resolved in [2015](#) and again in [2018](#) to support a movement to strike if this demand was not met. The contract proposed by the PSC commits CUNY to raising adjunct pay at the lowest step to \$5,500 in 2022 and to eliminating any further step increases for length of service. This is nowhere close to the \$7000 required for a living wage in NYC in 2019. Even worse, it is to be paid for by adding an extra weekly “professional” hour to each adjunct position, mandated for contact with students in ways that could easily translate into extra labor

Finally, we are concerned that this proposed MOA is not accompanied by promises of sufficient public funding. This means CUNY will have to cannibalize its budget and/or raise tuition to pay for adjunct raises. Already hundreds of courses have been cancelled across CUNY for the spring semester because of budget cuts, and things would only get worse under this new agreement.

The DSC Steering Committee opposes this proposed contract. It encourages GC students to communicate questions and concerns about the MOA to the [elected GC chapter leadership](#) before Thursday, November 7, when the Delegate Assembly is expected to vote on whether to recommend the MOA to the membership for ratification.

Signed,
The Steering Committee of the DSC
Former DSC Executive and Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee of the DSC:

Elizabeth Che, Co-Chair for Student Affairs
Roderick Hurley, Co-Chair for Communication
Raj Korpan, Co-Chair for Business
Giacomo Bianchino, Officer for Student Life and Services
Michael Greer, Officer for Library and Technology
Isatou Bittaye-Jobe, Officer for Grants and Funding
Ming Chen, Officer for Health and Wellness
Adam Kocurek, Officer for Governance and Membership
Jane Guskin, University Student Senate Delegate
Mary-Jean McNamara, University Faculty Senate Delegate
Sharanya Dutta, Officer for Outreach

Former DSC Executive and Steering Committee Members:

Anick Rolland, DSC Steering 2009-2011
Christina Nadler, DSC Steering 2011-2013
Stefanie A. Jones, DSC Steering 2012-2014
Colin P. Ashley, Co-Chair for Business 2012-2014, DSC Steering 2011-2012
Dominique Nisperos, Co-Chair for Communications 2014-2015, DSC Steering 2012-2014
Hamad Sindhi, Co-Chair for Communications 2015-2017, DSC Steering 2014-2015
Alison Parks, Co-Chair for Student Affairs 2018-2019, DSC Steering 2016-2018
Liza Shapiro, Co-Chair for Business 2016-2018, DSC Steering 2015-2016
Teresa Ober, Co-Chair for Communications 2017-2019, UFS Liaison 2016-2017
Jennifer Prince, Co-Chair for Business 2014-2016, DSC Steering 2013-2014
Amy Martin, Co-Chair for Student Affairs 2013-2016
Ana Perry, DSC Steering 2018-2019
Tellisia Williams, USS Delegate, 2016-2018
Anais Wong, UFS Delegate 2018-2019, DSC Steering 2017-2018