

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3rd, 2022

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CUGWU-Teamsters

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Teamsters Local 170

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As of 10:30 AM on Monday, October 3rd, Clark University Graduate Workers United (CUGWU-Teamsters) are on strike! The union is demanding a living wage, affordable healthcare, and better working conditions for its members, who perform essential teaching and research services for the University.

Both the union and the strike have strong support among graduate workers. The union swept its official certification election 100-7 in April 2022, and voted 97% to authorize a strike on September 14th. This strike authorization vote came after many months of bad faith negotiating by the University's representatives, who received the union's initial contract offer in April but refused to discuss economic aspects of the collective bargaining agreement in six separate meetings through late August. Additionally, in direct response to the workers' democratic decision to unionize, Clark reneged on a previous commitment to fully subsidize the majority of doctoral student worker health insurance premiums.

CUGWU-Teamsters stresses the urgency of a fair contract. Masters student workers, many of whom hold undergraduate degrees from Clark University, often work for minimum wage. Many doctoral student stipends are low enough that these workers qualify for food stamps and other government assistance programs. Grad workers' annual pay raises are currently capped at 1.5%, which does not keep up with yearly inflation of 8.5%. Masters student and Course Assistant Lester Carver (they/them) explains: "I have to work two Clark University jobs and an outside job to cover just my rent, not including tuition or other living necessities."

CUGWU-Teamsters hopes to return to the work we love—teaching students and driving research—as soon as possible. This can happen quickly if the administration brings a serious offer to the negotiation table commensurate with the services we provide and our basic living expenses.

To support graduate workers on strike, we invite you to donate to our mutual aid strike fund (@CUGWUMutualAid in the Business tab on Venmo).

About CUGWU-Teamsters:

CUGWU-Teamsters represents graduate students working for the University as Instructors, Teaching Assistants, and Research Assistants. CUGWU-Teamsters is affiliated with Local 170 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Local 170 is one of the largest and most powerful labor unions in Central Massachusetts and is affiliated to Teamsters Joint Council 10, which represents 45,000 members in 21 locals throughout New England.

