



November 6, 2017

HAND DELIVERED

Open letter to:

Ana Mari Cauce, President
University of Washington

CC: Kelly Edwards, Deans of Arts and Sciences, Environment, and Engineering
Robert C. Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Michael B. Bragg, Dean, College of Engineering
Lisa J. Graumlich, Dean, College of the Environment
Gerald J. Baldasty, Provost
Jeffrey F. Scott, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration
Mindy Kornberg, Vice President Human Resources

Dear President Cauce,

We are Postdocs from University of Washington departments that hire Postdocs in the Research Associate, Acting Assistant Professor, and Acting Instructor job titles. We write to urge you to stop trying to exclude us from bargaining with our Postdoc colleagues who are hired in the Senior Fellow job titles.

We find it unacceptable that the University Administration would seek to deny our collective bargaining rights in this way, and would try to direct our process of forming a union towards protracted legal deliberation at the Washington Public Employment Relations Commission, particularly given that:

- 1) We are Postdocs. The NIH, NSF, National Postdoc Association (NPA), and UW Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) define Postdoctoral Scholars as “individuals engaged in temporary periods of mentored advanced training to enhance their professional skills and research independence needed to pursue their chosen career paths.” This is as true of us as it is of Senior Fellows at UW, who the University does not dispute are Postdocs. The University’s own policies and practices, as well as our — and our Senior Fellow Colleagues’ — experience also define all of us as Postdocs.

- 2) The University's position misrepresents Washington State Law. RCW 41.76 (faculty collective bargaining statute) and RCW 41.56.513 (Postdoc collective bargaining statute) make clear that Postdocs are excluded from the faculty bargaining unit. "Faculty" status is not coextensive with a faculty bargaining unit. Even if we are "faculty" by virtue of our job title being included in the UW Faculty Code, the Legislature determined that our status as Postdocs means we are to be included in a Postdoc, not the faculty, collective bargaining unit.
- 3) The University Administration's position at PERC extends its pattern of delay and denial of other UW academic employees' collective bargaining rights: Academic Student Employees (who UW Administration claimed were "students" not employees — delaying unionization by over 100 weeks), Medical Residents/Interns (who UW Administration claimed were "students" not employees — delaying unionization at least 37 weeks), Faculty (who UW Administration claimed as faculty shouldn't be in a union — stopping them from even filing a petition), and now us. We'd hoped better of this administration that it would not practice standard union avoidance.

We therefore urge you in the strongest possible terms to drop the position that our "faculty" status excludes us from Postdoc collective bargaining, and instead work with UW Postdocs United / UAW Local 4121 to ensure the prompt processing of our petition to form a union and productive contract bargaining that improves Postdoc working conditions and therefore research at UW.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss working together on this and other matters. Please contact us at uwpostdocsunited@gmail.com to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

Maroun Abi Ghanem, Mechanical Engineering (Research Associate)
Dan Amrhein, Oceanography (Visiting Scientist)
Pamela Baker, Biological Structure (Acting Instructor)
Leilani Battle, Computer Science and Engineering (Research Associate)
Sarah Baum, Psychology (Research Associate Trainee)
Mattias Cape, Applied Physics Laboratory (Research Associate)
Jonathan Craig, Physics (Research Associate)
Toni Ferro, Human Centered Design and Engineering (Research Associate)
Johanna Goldman, Oceanography (Research Associate)
Benjamin Groves, Electrical Engineering (Acting Instructor)
Winnie Ho, Biology (Research Associate)
Sarah Holliday, Materials Science and Engineering (Research Associate)
Hannah Horowitz, JISAO (Research Associate)
Andrew Laszlo, Physics (Research Associate)
Jake Levinson, Mathematics (Acting Assistant Professor)
Michael Mack, Chemistry (Research Associate)

Lindsey Madison, Chemistry (Research Associate)
Peter Mahoney, Environmental and Forest Sciences (Research Associate)
Shrirang Mare, Computer Science and Engineering (Research Associate)
Daniel McCloy, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (Research Associate Trainee)
Christopher Morrison, Astronomy (Research Associate)
Marina Oganyan, Linguistics (Research Associate)
Kelly Patton, Physics (Research Associate)
Brian Sargent, Sociology (Research Associate)
Anton Stepanov, Aeronautics and Astronautics (Research Associate)
Michelle Tigchelaar, Atmospheric Sciences (Research Associate)
Frederick von Netzer, Civil and Environmental Engineering (Research Associate)
Alex White, Psychology (Research Associate Trainee)
Haikun Xu, Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (Research Associate)