

Dear colleague,

As you may know, the Graduate Employee's Organization (GEO) has been negotiating a contract with the University since last November. As a result of having reached what GEO regards as an unsolvable impasse in negotiations, its members have unequivocally voted in favor of conducting a work stoppage on March 25 and 26. GEO's membership regards such action as a last –but effective– resort to pressure the University administration toward bringing acceptable offers to the table. GEO's contract –already extended twice– expires this Monday. Although negotiations will take place, a wide distance still separates the two sides on a number of key issues. Working without a contract is undesirable, but allows employees to lawfully hold a work stoppage. GEO's job action will consist of GSI's withholding their work for at least these two days, unless the administration meets the demands on their minimal strike platform.

The Lecturers' Employee Organization (LEO) supports GEO's position not only because we consider GEO's work action is well within the mainframe of tools that employees have to negotiate in a fair and reasonable manner, but because of the fundamental principle of solidarity with a sister union of teachers. This is even more salient given GEO and LEO's history of strong reciprocal solidarity and close cooperation.

While LEO's contract forbids our union to join in a strike, by no means does it require member lecturers to perform strike-breaking activities if requested by his/her unit's governing body or individuals. **For this reason, we ask tenured faculty and academic units' administrators not to request from lecturers –or exert pressure on them in any other way– to take on any GSI work during GEO's work stoppage.** LEO has encouraged its members not to undermine GEO's actions toward attaining a fair and equitable contract. It is, on the other hand, up to the discretion of individual lecturers to abide –or not– by the fundamental labor moral principle of not crossing other union's picket lines during a legal walk-out (which this one certainly is). Thus, many of our members may indeed wish to support GEO in this manner if the stoppage takes place.

GEO's work action means its members will not engage in any academic activity, including facilitating discussion sessions, supervising labs, hold office hours, attend classes and, ultimately, will abstain from using any University facility, physical or electronic, whichever the nature of such use may be. To reduce the impact on students without putting hesitant lecturer colleagues in the dilemma of having to cross picket lines, LEO has secured space in several non-university facilities in town to accommodate class meetings in most urgent cases –such as exams.

We thank you for taking the time to read this, for respecting the commitments of our members, and for considering where you yourself stand on the questions that labor conflicts raise.

Sincerely,

Iñigo G.-de la Cerda and Ian Robinson

Co-Chairs, Ann Arbor Campus Council

Lecturers' Employee Organization (LEO)