UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Office of the Provost

Dear UO faculty member,

The University of Oregon is currently negotiating with the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF). This afternoon, the union issued a strike notice to the university, which projects a strike to start Wednesday, January 17. University administrators managing academic and research operations are preparing for the strike.

The university's bargaining team will continue making itself available to meet with the GTFF bargaining team and state mediator in our ongoing effort to reach agreement. The next mediation session is scheduled for January 11.

As shared in the last email to faculty on December 7, 2023, salary increases remain the only outstanding term left to negotiate. A detailed description of the latest UO offer is provided on the HR website. Key components include:

- A new model setting all GE levels to a unified minimum salary rate, with greater increases for those currently earning the least.
- Across-the-board increases for those earning above the minimum.
- The new proposed minimum rate for all GEs is $34.39 per hour or $2,468.75 per month at 0.49 full-time equivalency. This is an updated rate following a recent adjustment to minimum salaries as defined in the current CBA.
- GEs at UO would earn more than the average minimum take-home pay rate of public AAU institutions when adjusted for cost-of-living differences between regions.
- The university continues to cover full tuition and mandatory fees except $61 per term and to provide 95 percent health insurance premium coverage for all GEs, their partners, and families.

University administration recognizes that a labor strike is disruptive. Our top priorities are to bargain in good faith to reach agreement while also maintaining our teaching and research operations. Your flexibility and patience as we navigate this situation together are greatly appreciated.

We respect the right of GEs to conduct a legal strike, and we hold as a shared value the desire for an agreement as soon as possible. In the meantime, our role as a public institution of higher education includes the responsibility of providing the best possible education for our students, despite a work stoppage. For both that reason and consistent with Oregon law, other employees will continue to be responsible for carrying out their assigned duties. Thus, faculty members represented by United Academics have an obligation to carry out their assigned responsibilities. Oregon statute makes clear that only members of the designated bargaining unit are permitted to take part in the strike and that those not represented by the GTFF are prohibited from striking.

Academic units and individual research groups are strongly encouraged to develop coverage plans for work that GEs perform. Guidance is available in the Frequently Asked Questions for researchers and instructors.

Deans and directors of academic units have been working with the Office of the Provost and departments to put academic continuity plans in place for each course where a GE is an instructor of record, lab or discussion leader, or provides grading support. These plans will help ensure there are strategies for covering classes and discussion sections. Please consult with your unit head for details on coverage strategies in your unit.

Academic continuity is guided by the Academic Continuity policy approved by the University Senate in 2019. This policy provides "a framework to guide planning and decision-making in the event that a significant disruption to campus operations impedes academic activity. The goal is to continue academic activities as

much as possible and to mitigate the effects of a significant academic disruption, which include particularly grave academic and financial consequences for graduating students, international students, and students receiving financial aid." The policy entrusts the Academic Council with making any policy changes necessary to ensure academic continuity during an academic disruption.

You can stay informed about the status of the GTFF bargaining and the potential strike by visiting the HR website, which lists updates on bargaining issues, including the university's latest salary offer, guidance for talking to GEs, as well as Frequently Asked Questions.

Best regards,

Karen Ford
Interim Provost and Senior Vice President

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