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*Dear HELU Supporter,*

*We are thrilled to write to you today with updates on some developments in the higher ed labor movement and to ask for you and your local union or organization to take actions that support unions that are on strike or who recently have authorized strike action.*

## The strike wave in higher ed marches forward.

- [Staff workers in UAW 2322 at Vermont's Goddard College are on strike](#) for better wages, improved working conditions, and to force the college to live up to its social justice ideals.
- Grad workers organized with [GEO AFT-MI 3550 at the University of Michigan are out on strike this week](#) for living wages, a fair contract, and worker and community justice.
- In New Jersey, thousands of full-time faculty, part-time faculty, medical faculty, librarians, postdocs, graduate workers, and EOF counselors of Rutgers AAUP-AFT, AAUP-BHSNJ, and Rutgers PTLFC [have voted 94% for strike authorization](#) after more than eight months without a contract.
- Hundreds of scholars of labor, the Black Freedom Struggle, and social justice have published an "Open Letter in the Spirit of Paul Robeson" urging Rutgers President Jonathan Holloway to rescind his threats to seek injunctions against any potential Rutgers strike. [Read their letter here](#). [Add your name here and share the sign-on letter with your networks](#) to build maximum pressure on Rutgers.

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[call a strike](#) if UW continues to bargain unfairly and not adequately address issues around wages and equity.

These developments are building on the dramatic wins of the past few months.

Recently, Temple grad workers held out for six weeks against a vindictive administration that cut healthcare, imposed tuition fees on workers, and threatened international workers. Against this intransigence, [TUGSA won big](#). They ended a tiered wage system and secured 40% raises for the lowest paid grads while advancing all of their core demands from dependent healthcare to bereavement leave to work loads. TUGSA not only showed incredible solidarity by consistently growing their pickets, but they also activated a broad community of support among unions, undergraduates, community organizations, and local elected officials.

Meanwhile, graduate workers continue to animate the sector through new organizing. Just this week in North Carolina, Duke Grad Workers of Local 27 of the Southern Region Workers United SEIU are [defending their winning drive at the NLRB](#). Watch out for more updates on this critical fight and the broader wave of new organizing that's reshaping our sector.

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## Dispatch from the Front Lines: Attacks on Higher Ed in Texas

Meanwhile, the State of Texas is following the path blazed by Gov. DeSantis' Florida with political interference in higher ed hiring, classroom content, research and funding. [Senate Bills 16, 17 and 18](#), introduced March 10, 2023, will require annual reviews for all faculty (eliminating tenure); forbid contracts longer than three years; allow for complaints by "any person" if a faculty member appears to be attempting to compel students to adopt a certain ideology; and eliminates offices, services, trainings etc. having to do with diversity, equity and inclusion. Violations and failures to report will result in blocked funding. Today, the Texas Senate is holding hearings on SB 18. Stay tuned for more information about how to support our Texas siblings.

## Solidarity Asks

Take action now to show your support for higher ed workers organizing from staff to grad workers to faculty of all kinds.

- Goddard: [Sign the Goddard College UAW Staff Union Petition](#)
- Rutgers:
  - [Donate to the Rutgers PTLFC Strike Fund](#)
  - [Sign the Open Letter to Pres. Holloway against his threat of injunctions](#)

Michigan:

- [Donate to their Strike Fund](#)
- [Sign up for a picket line shift](#) if you're in the area
- [Add your name to the public support letter](#)
- UW: [Donate to the UAW 4121 Strike Support fund](#)
- Temple: [Donate to TUGSA's strike fund](#) to cover remaining costs of their six-week walkout.
- United Faculty of Florida:
  - [Click here to oppose HB 999](#), which would eliminate academic programs and tenure.
  - [Take action on the Senate companion bill, SB 266.](#)
  - [Click here to email the members of the House State Affairs Committee](#) and ask them to oppose anti-union HB 1445.

[Reach out to us](#) if you have solidarity asks you would like included in the next HELU newsletter.

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## Upcoming HELU Event: Higher Education For All! Campaign Launch

HELU is launching our national coalition campaign with partners from the Debt Collective, Progressive Democrats of America, Young Invincibles. Our goal is to shift the narrative on U.S. higher education and build the power necessary to transform our colleges and universities into public goods operated in the public interest of students, debtors, workers, and communities.

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- LEARN about the history of free higher ed in the U.S.
- MEET the people fighting for the future of higher ed
- JOIN the movement to make higher ed work for students, workers, debtors, and communities

The launch event will feature organizations making progress to move us toward fully funded public higher education that respects workers, empowers communities, ends student debt, and transforms higher ed.

**Thursday 4/20/2023, Noon PT / 3pm ET**

Register here to attend [link to registration form will go here]

**In person:**

[Register now](#)

Portland State University

Smith Memorial Student Union - Public Entrance on SW Broadway

Room 296/298

Free Pizza Lunch

**Online on zoom:**

[Register now](#)

This event is a part of [Labor Spring](#).

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## A Message from Andrew Gothard, President of UFF

As you know, [Florida is the focus of coordinated national attacks on higher ed](#) and public institutions around the country. [The United Faculty of Florida](#) is fighting back, and we are so grateful to our colleagues and comrades in higher ed unions in other states who have, through HELU, responded to our solidarity asks. Each time we've asked for help, HELU's growing networks have answered with a larger response. For our national 3-7 Challenge on March 7, HELU helped us generate over 5500 calls and messages to Florida legislators and officials in one day. We jammed their phone lines in a way

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Right now, the best thing our union sisters, brothers, and kin across the country can do to support Florida's faculty in our fight for higher education is to [oppose HB 999](#) and [SB 266](#). These bills seek to ban majors and minors, compel speech, defund DEI, put hiring decisions in the hands of partisan appointees, gut tenure, and more. Anyone can easily take action on both bills by using the links above.

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## Get Involved in HELU!

Are you inspired by the pace-setting organizing HELU member unions and allies are leading? Get your union involved in HELU today!

- If you represent a union that has joined HELU, signed our vision platform, or is simply interested in getting your union involved, make sure you make it to our next General Meeting. [Email outreach@higheredlaborunited.org](mailto:outreach@higheredlaborunited.org) to receive the calendar invite and Zoom link.
- If your union has not yet formally joined HELU as a member and is interested in getting involved, [email outreach@higheredlaborunited.org](mailto:outreach@higheredlaborunited.org).
- If you are an individual who does not have a union or worker organization through which to be involved in HELU, [sign up for At-Large membership today](#).

And don't forget to keep an eye out for more updates and opportunities to support the higher ed strike wave.

Solidarity,

Rafael Jaime, HELU Interim Vice Chair and UAW 2865 President

Levin Kim, HELU Interim Secretary-Treasurer and UAW 4121 President

Ian Gavigan, HELU Interim Steering Committee and Rutgers AAUP-AFT Executive Councilor



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