



October 3, 2017

HAND DELIVERED

Open Letter to:

Ana Mari Cauce, President
University of Washington

Gerald J. Baldasty, Provost
Jeffrey F. Scott, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration
Mindy Kornberg, Vice President Human Resources
Paul G. Ramsey, CEO of UW Medicine and Dean School of Medicine
David L. Eaton, Dean, Graduate School
Kelly Edwards, Associate Dean, Graduate School, Student and Postdoctoral Affairs,
Robert C. Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Michael B. Bragg, Dean, College of Engineering
Lisa J. Graumlich, Dean, College of the Environment
Joel Kaufman, Interim Dean, School of Public Health

Dear President Cauce and University Administrators:

We, the undersigned, are Postdocs from academic disciplines across the University of Washington. As you know, Postdocs form a critical workforce that conducts cutting-edge research with real-world applications that range from the prevention of infectious disease, to the development of renewable energy, to ensuring equity in education.

While Postdocs make vital contributions to the world-class research conducted at the UW, many of us still struggle to pay rent in our expensive city, to care for our children and families, and to overcome the challenges associated with job insecurity and arbitrary treatment. The precarious nature of science funding, unstable regulation of visas, and new anti-immigrant federal policy all contribute to an even more uncertain future for early career researchers.

We have spoken with the vast majority of UW Postdocs about the pros and cons of forming a union, answered scores of questions, and studied and discussed how a Postdoc union could enhance UW's research mission. A majority of UW Postdocs have signed cards saying they authorize UW Postdocs United/UAW Local 4121 to represent them in collective bargaining (please see Attachment A) and we are now filing a petition with the Public Employment Relations Committee (please see Attachment B). We look forward to having an election as soon as possible to re-affirm our choice to be represented by UW Postdocs United/UAW Local 4121 for the purpose of collective bargaining.

Many of us admire the UW Administration's leadership in taking progressive positions: pushing for more research funding and against cuts to health care; supporting a welcoming and inclusive environment in spite of the discriminatory Muslim Travel Ban and DACA rescission; pledging to retain and strengthen protections in the face of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos's recent proposal to weaken Title IX; and working towards the goals of the Race and Equity Initiative on campus. We are hopeful that once we form our union, we can work together as allies in areas of mutual interest, such as these. We believe that our community, including both researchers and administrators, will be stronger when we work together and equally toward our common goals.

Postdocs play an essential role in advancing the UW's research mission. By bargaining over our working conditions on an equal basis with the UW Administration, we intend to improve the working conditions of Postdocs. We believe that by improving our working conditions, we will improve the quality of research produced by Postdocs, and, by extension, the UW.

We are hopeful that you will support our right to bargain collectively for ourselves and for our families. We strongly believe that better working conditions mean better research, and ultimately better outcomes for the University. Employees in the higher education sector of the economy are unionizing at one of the highest rates in the U.S.—generating positive outcomes for these employees and U.S. universities which continue to excel in teaching, service, and research.

But if you choose not to support our effort (as the University Administration has in the past with the Academic Student Employees, Interns and Residents, and Faculty), **we would make one request: join us for a public debate, and explain your basis for questioning whether collective bargaining could enable postdocs to improve our experience here at UW.** Such a debate would help Postdocs make an informed evaluation of your opposition.

We appreciate your leadership of the University of Washington, which is an engine of opportunity for so many throughout the state, and are hopeful that you will support the decision of a majority of Postdocs to form a union. Together, we can improve research at the UW by making Postdocs' working lives more stable, fair, and democratic.

Please communicate with us via electronic mail at: uwpostdocsunited@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Maroun Abi Ghanem, Mechanical Engineering
Delasa Aghamirzaie, Genome Sciences
Sweta Agrawal, Physiology and Biophysics
Dan Amrhein, Oceanography
Tina Angerer, Bioengineering

Tony Azevedo, Physiology and Biophysics
Pamela Baker, Biological Structure
Leilani Battle, Computer Science and Engineering
Carolyn Brotherton, Microbiology
Nikolay Burnaevskiy, Pathology

Mattias Cape, Applied Physics
Laboratory
Jonathan Craig, Physics
Matthew Crane, Pathology
Amy Chu, Chemistry
Alexis Courbet, Institute for Protein
Design
Ivan Cruz, Biological Structure
Naresh Doni Jayavelu, Medical
Genetics
Elizabeth Duke, Division of Allergy and
Infectious Disease, Department of
Medicine
Toni Ferro, Human Centered Design
and Engineering
Max Friedfeld, Chemistry
Glenna Foight, Chemistry
Ben Groves, Electrical Engineering
Hannah Gelman, Genome Sciences
Aaron Halpern, Chemistry
Sara Higa, Pharmacy
Winnie W. Ho, Biology
Sarah Holliday, Materials Science and
Engineering
Nancy Hom, Medicinal Chemistry
Hannah Horowitz, Atmospheric
Sciences and JISAO
Parisa Hosseinzadeh, Institute for
Protein Design
Caitlin Hudac, Psychiatry
Ajay Jajodia, Medical Genetics
Timothy Jones, Aquatic and Fishery
Sciences
Youngdoo Kim, Biochemistry
Kedar Kirtane, Radiology
Anna Kuchina, Electrical Engineering
Maxim Kostylev, Microbiology
Kevin Lang, Microbiology
Andrew Laszlo, Physics
Nancy Lau, Pediatrics
Jiae Lee, Biochemistry
Jake Levinson, Mathematics
Lindsey Madison, Chemistry

Peter Mahoney, Environmental and
Forest Sciences
Shrirang Mare, Computer Science and
Engineering
Dan McCloy, Institute for Learning and
Brain Sciences
Arpit Mishra, Medical Genetics
Chris Morrison, Astronomy
Vikram Mulligan, Institute for Protein
Design
Sarah E. Myhre, Oceanography
Naveen Neradugomma, Pharmaceuticals
Luiz Oliveira, Chemical Engineering
Kelly Patton, Physics
Vikas Pejaver, Biomedical Informatics
and Medical Education
Brian Sargent, Sociology
Maya Rosen, Psychology
Giovanna Scalone, Human Centered
Design and Engineering
Ryan Seguin, Medicinal Chemistry
Monisha Sharma, Global Health
Anshika Singhal, Laboratory Medicine
Anton Stepanov, Aeronautics and
Astronautics
Thomas Smith, Medical Genetics
Michael Taylor, Bioengineering
Michelle Tigchelaar, Atmospheric
Sciences
Max Turner, Physiology and Biophysics
Frederick von Netzer, Civil and
Environmental Engineering
Rama Subba Rao Vidadala, Chemistry
Alex White, Psychology
Alex Xiong, Biochemistry
Haikun Xu, Aquatic and Fisheries
Sciences
Clay Wright, Biology
Brian Weitzner, Biochemistry
Liang Zhang, Department of
Environment and Occupational Health
Sciences
Nicolette Zhou, Environmental &
Occupational Health