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GRADUATE STUDENT UNIONS

Bender, Daniel E. and Dave Kinkela. "Thirty years of academic labor: the language of antiunionism." *Radical History Review*, Winter, 2001, pp. 7-13.

Probably no single argument against unionization has been as powerful as the claim that academic labor is exceptional by nature, and therefore not amenable to the introduction of unions and collective bargaining units for the purposes of resolving differences. This emphasis on the special nature of the academic environment was an important part of the opposition stance taken by administrators at New York University during two unionization drives, those by faculty in the early 1970's, and by graduate students in the late 1990's. The authors believe that it is economic and financial, rather than academic, considerations that frequently guide university policies and decisions.

Casual in blue: Yale and the academic labor market. New Haven, CT 06511. Graduate Employees and Students Organization [of Yale University] (425 College Street). 1999. Available in electronic format at: <http://www.yaleunions.org/geso/archives/reports.htm>

In a report studded with valuable statistical material, Yale's Graduate Employees and Students Organization presents a sobering picture of the current situation of academic labor in the U.S. The report zooms in for a focused examination of the situation at Yale in particular. An increasing proportion of teaching responsibilities are being assigned to "casual" employees, that is, part-time adjunct faculty and graduate teaching assistants. While the Yale administration and GESO differ over the method of measuring 'teaching responsibility,' the report concludes that some 70% of undergraduate teaching at Yale is performed by non-permanent instructors.

Cavell, Lori J. *Graduate student unionization in higher education.* Washington, DC 20037. ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, George Washington University Dept. of Education (2121 K Street N.W., Suite 250). 2000. (ED446647)

In a concise review of the literature published on this subject, the author sets forth many of the major issues surrounding the unionization of graduate teaching assistants at universities across the United States. In essence, it is a guide to what scholarly writers and researchers have learned about the causes as well as the effects of graduate student unionization. The debate over the need for, and propriety of, such labor organizations has been hotly contested at a number of institutions, so that even though more than thirty years have passed since the first graduate student unionization effort began, graduate teaching assistants

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continue to find resistance to their organizing for purposes of collective bargaining. The article is accompanied by a useful, if brief, bibliography.

Fogg, Piper, Courtney Leatherman, and Scott Smallwood. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 17, 2000, pp. A18-20; March 16, 2001, pp. A10-11; August 10, 2001, pp. A8-9; February 15, 2002, p. A18; May 17, 2002, p. A16.

In a series of articles appearing between November, 2000, just after the landmark National Labor Relations Board decision in the case of the New York University teaching assistants' petition for collective bargaining certification, through May, 2002, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* covered the developments in this important test case for graduate student unionization rights at private universities. The NYU situation was watched closely by administrators and labor organizers at other private universities, given that many in higher education believed that a decision either way would have serious implications for higher education in general.

Greenhouse, Steven. "Grad students reject union in Yale vote." *The New York Times*, May 2, 2003, p. B1.

Among the most visible and contentious graduate student organization efforts at private universities has been the unionization drive at Yale University, where organizing efforts date from as early as 1987. The Graduate Employees and Students Organization (GESO), which sought recognition as collective bargaining agent, called for an election conducted by the League of Women Voters in an effort to strengthen its position. In a surprising upset, graduate students voted 694 to 651 against the designation of GESO as its collective bargaining agent.

Gross, Andrew. "Negotiating for the family: unions and the graduate student workplace." *WORKPLACE: A Journal for Academic Labor*, October, 2002. Available in electronic format at: <http://www.louisville.edu/a-s/english/gta/gross.html>

The author was on the negotiating team that worked out the first collective bargaining agreement between the University of California at Davis and the Association of Graduate Student Employees/United Auto Workers unit on that campus. He shares his observations on the process, and his thoughts on what it will mean for the future. He highlights the fact that issues of child care, dependent health care, and others that are of importance to families are moving to the forefront of collective bargaining negotiations.

Hayden, Grant M. "The university works because we do': collective bargaining rights for graduate assistants." *Fordham Law Review*, March, 2001, pp. 1233-1264.

In this lengthy article, the author follows the development of the graduate teaching assistant labor movement over the course of the last three decades. While the article addresses this issue as a national phenomenon, its focus is primarily on unionization efforts at the University of Kansas and Yale University, in order to examine the differences between public and private institutions in resolving graduate unionization issues. The author discusses the juridical and policy positions championed by those who oppose such organization efforts, and argues that graduate student unionization is an activity protected by the National Labor Relations Act.

Herman, Deborah M. and Julie M. Schmid. *Cogs in the classroom factory: the changing identity of academic labor*. Westport, CT 06881. Praeger Publishers (88 Post Road West). 2003. 232 pp. \$66.95, cloth.

The editors present a collection of nine essays that examines the graduate student labor movement from several perspectives. One group of essays discusses the emerging stratification of faculty that has divided full-time, tenured faculty from the more rapidly growing part-time, untenured faculty. A second section highlights the fact that graduate students have had to adjust their sense of themselves as well as their expectations in response to the demands of university administrators and collective bargaining agents. Finally, the editors look at factors that threaten or weaken the movement, such as the struggle maintained by graduate students to adopt the identity and role of "union labor."

Julius, Daniel J. "The current status of graduate student unions: an employer's perspective." *Collective Bargaining and Accountability in Higher Education: A Report Card; Proceedings of the 27th Annual Conference, National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions*. New York, NY 10010. School of Public Affairs, Baruch College (17 Lexington Avenue, Box F-2053). 1999. pp. 78-96. \$45.00, cloth.

Against a backdrop of revealing factual and statistical information, the author presents insightfully the complexities of the graduate student labor movement, examining the history of the movement, the variety of factors that led to its development, and the reactions it has engendered among faculty and administrators. The author looks closely at similarities and differences between faculty unionization drives and graduate student drives in order to explore the reasons for differences in their reception by university administrations, and offers his observations on what he believes to be the long-term implications for higher education.

Lafer, Gordon. *Organizing graduate students*. New York, NY 10025. Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas (310 Riverside Drive). 2001. 34 pp. \$3.00, paper.

This eloquent and well-researched apologia for the graduate student labor movement analyzes and responds to the most significant objections to that movement raised by university administrators, namely the characterization of tasks performed by graduate students as "training" rather than work, the detrimental effects of unionization on university collegiality, and the potential for introducing a chilling effect on academic freedom. He also describes the impulse that graduate student unionization has given to other academic employees at universities, such as part-time and adjunct faculty.

Miller, Toby. "Approach to the cultural study of law: what it is and what it isn't: cultural studies meets graduate-student labor." *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, Special Issue, 2001, pp. 69-94.

This article provides an interesting perspective on the graduate student unionization controversy, as told by way of commentary and in first person narrative by a professor of cultural studies who was called to testify at the National Labor Relations Board hearings held in the New York University graduate student collective bargaining case.

New York University and International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, AFL-CIO, Petitioner. 332 NLRB 1205 (2000).

In this very closely watched case, the NLRB upheld a Regional Director's determination that the substantial majority of New York University's graduate assistants (including both teaching and research assistants) were statutory employees for purposes of the National Labor Relations Act. The decision was a milestone, since it marked the first time that the NLRB had made such a determination with regard to graduate assistants at a private university, thus reversing thirty years of established administrative labor law.

Rowland, Joshua. "Forecasts of doom': the dubious threat of graduate teaching assistant collective bargaining to academic freedom." *Boston College Law Review*, July, 2001, pp. 941- 966.

The author, through a close review of decisions in the cases of Boston Medical Center and New York University, provides a thorough examination of two of the more troublesome issues related to graduate student unionization: the applicability of the National Labor Relations Act to graduate teaching assistants, and the more contentious and amorphous question of whether graduate student unionization would compromise academic freedom.

Stimpson, Catharine. "A Dean's skepticism about a graduate student union." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 5, 2000, p. B7.

Both sides in the unionization fray claim to have taken principled stances in either supporting or opposing the unionization of graduate teaching assistants. In this article, NYU Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Catharine Stimpson details her misgivings about the graduate student unionization process, her concern for the long term impact it will have on the collegial nature of academic decision-making, and her own efforts to improve conditions for graduate students at NYU.

Will teach for food : academic labor in crisis. Edited by Cary Nelson. Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520. University of Minnesota Press (111 Third Ave. S., Suite 290). 1997. 308 pp. \$49.95, cloth; \$19.95, paper.

In this anthology of fifteen essays on the state of "academic labor" at U.S. institutions of higher education, Cary Nelson and other authors examine critically, from moral, professional and societal perspectives, the struggle within the ranks of graduate student teaching assistants across the country to establish and maintain cohesive and productive labor organizations. The editor has selected as his centerpiece for discussion of this examination the ongoing attempt by graduate teaching assistants at Yale University to obtain recognition for their Graduate Employees and Students Organization.