

The Graduate Professional Council (GPC) sent a mass email to University of Missouri graduate and professional students and employees on Friday, April 8th, announcing the union authorization election on April 18-19. GPC received requests for clarification on a few related issues which we will address below.

First, the election is being coordinated by the Coalition of Graduate Workers (CGW) and administered by the League of Women Voters. GPC's only role with respect to the election, as authorized by its General Assembly, was to inform graduate employees of the election dates.

Second, the GPC General Assembly has passed multiple resolutions (Appendix A) regarding CGW and the labor rights of graduate employees who compose roughly 2,800 of the approximately 7,700 graduate-professional students at Mizzou. GPC also sent multiple mass emails encouraging graduate employees to participate in Open Forums last semester. These were lively discussions of the pros and cons of unionization, and we hope interested graduate employees were able to attend these sessions.

Third, interim Chancellor Foley's email (Appendix C) indicated both surprise with the election dates as well as a feeling of being disrespected by GPC. Both sentiments are premised on a misunderstanding of when the finalized dates were communicated to GPC. The finalized polling dates were provided to GPC on the same evening as they were to university administration. At no point did GPC intentionally withhold information nor intend disrespect. Indeed, doing so would be antithetical to the myriad of actions and countless hours of work we have poured into developing a robust relationship between GPC and campus administration. We remain hopeful that a formalized set of expectations between GPC and administration can avoid misunderstandings in the future.

Finally, it has been indicated that the initial email from administration had a number of contributors. It is possible that much of the confusion generated by the email may stem from mixed authorship. Contributors to the email may have been unaware that there have been many meetings between administrators and student leaders where unionization was discussed, that multiple educational Open Forums on unionization have occurred, and that GPC and CGW are distinct organizations representing distinct sets of interests among a partially-overlapping population.

We hope this helps better clarify the details surrounding Friday's mass emails and the upcoming union election. If you have questions related to unionization, we encourage you to read CGW's [FAQ](#) or to contact them at organizemizzou@gmail.com. If you have any questions related to GPC's relationship with administration or advocacy efforts, we encourage you to contact us at gpc@missouri.edu.

A unionization campaign is a significant undertaking that is governed by a complex set of laws and regulations. The GPC executive board will continue to do its best in playing its role in the campus community as our community navigates this process. We will also continue to strive toward building an autonomous and empowered voice for graduate-professional students on this campus.

Thank you,
The GPC Executive Board

Appendix A

Resolutions passed by the Graduate Professional Council General Assembly (GA)

[Resolution 1516-05](#) - introduced by GA Representative Kristofferson Culmer

A Resolution Regarding the Coalition of Graduate Workers (CGW) Union Campaign and Encouraging Graduate Student Worker Engagement

[Resolution 1516-08](#) - introduced by GA Representative Doug Valentine

A Resolution Affirming Graduate Workers' Status as "Employees" and Entitlement to Corresponding Labor Rights and Protections

Appendix B

Mass email from the Graduate Professional Council - April 8, 2016, 1:39/2:36pm

Dear Mizzou graduate student employees,

Pursuant to GPC General Assembly Resolutions [1516-05](#) and [1516-08](#), the Graduate Professional Council would like to inform graduate student employees that there will be an election authorizing union representation for collective bargaining, to be held on Monday, April 18th, and Tuesday, April 19th.

Polling stations will be located in both Memorial Student Union and the MU Student Center on both days, and will be open between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Student or other photographic identification will be required to vote, and active electioneering is prohibited within both buildings. The election will be conducted by the League of Women Voters, a neutral third party.

GPC encourages all graduate student employees to participate in the election.

Thank you,

Matt McCune

Director of Communication

[Graduate Professional Council](#)

Appendix C

Mass email #1 from interim Chancellor Foley - April 8, 2016, 2:55 pm

Dear graduate students—

We are aware you recently received an email from the Graduate Professional Council notifying you that there will be an election April 18 and 19 with the intent to pursue unionization. We are surprised by this announcement as we met with GPC leadership as recently as Tuesday and they did not indicate their plans

to move forward with any kind of vote at this time. It is surprising, and disappointing, that at the same time MU administration has responded to graduate student requests for improved communication that this announcement was made without any consultation with us.

Moreover, we have been working in good faith with this organization on key issues, including stipends, graduate student housing, and their desire to organize. In recent conversations, we indicated there was some question regarding the legality of unionization among graduate students, and until this question is resolved, it would be inappropriate to move forward. To this end, any vote to unionize at this time cannot be considered binding or recognized by the university.

Finally, the decision to unionize carries both significant pros and cons for our graduate students, and we feel it is in your best interest to be fully educated on the ramifications of unionization. Should graduate student leaders decide to proceed with such a vote at this time despite the lack of consultation with MU administration, and should such a vote indicate that graduate students would like to pursue a union, university leadership will begin an educational campaign to ensure that all graduate students impacted by this decision will be knowledgeable about what this means at the University of Missouri.

We continue to have the best interest of all our students in mind, and hope we can continue discussions on this important topic.

Hank Foley
Interim Chancellor

Appendix D

Mass email #2 from interim Chancellor Foley - April 8, 2016, 5:50 pm

Since distribution of my memo to graduate students this afternoon, leaders from GPC and CGW have met with me to go over the issues raised in my memo and to once again keep open lines of communication between us. We will issue further communications on these matters next week.

Hank Foley
Interim Chancellor

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Founded in 1983, the Graduate Professional Council (GPC) is the official student government for all graduate, professional, post-baccalaureate, and post-doctoral students at the University of Missouri.

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