Date of Election Is Set for Union Representation of Graduate Assistants

An election for eligible graduate assistants to determine if they will be exclusively represented for purposes of collective bargaining by Cornell Graduate Students United (CGSU), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) will be held on the Ithaca campus on March 27 and 28 and on the Geneva campus on March 28.

The American Arbitration Association confirmed that CGSU/AFT/NYSUT presented valid, signed authorization cards from at least 30% of the eligible collective bargaining unit.

Eligible voters are all Ithaca and Geneva campus-based graduate students enrolled in the Graduate School who currently hold titles under University Policy 1.3 as Teaching Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, Research Assistants, or Graduate Assistants (collectively, graduate assistants).

A secret ballot election will be conducted by the American Arbitration Association. Each eligible voter will receive an individual communication from the Graduate School with specific instructions including an assigned voting location.

Locations will be assigned based on graduate field. (Students conducting research in Geneva will be assigned to Ithaca voting locations based on their graduate field; if a Geneva student wishes to opt to vote in Geneva, the student should notify Associate Dean Jason Kahabka, jek15@cornell.edu, by 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 22.)

Voters must vote at their assigned location and must show valid photo-identification (such as a Cornell ID or a government-issued ID such as a driver’s license or passport).

Electioneering will be prohibited within 100’ of any voting location.

Students who are eligible voters and who are registered in absentia with the Graduate School will receive special instructions for filing their absentee ballot.

Students who are eligible voters but who will be off-campus on election days on graduate education-related activities may be able to request an absentee ballot; eligible voters who are in this situation should contact Associate Dean Jason Kahabka, jek15@cornell.edu, as soon as possible.

The outcome of the election will be decided by a simple majority of those who vote. All eligible graduate assistants, regardless of whether they signed a union card or
petition are strongly encouraged to participate in the election. Prior submission of an authorization card or petition signature does not count as a vote, nor does it commit the signer to vote in any particular way.

Graduate assistants who did not sign an authorization card or petition may vote “yes” or “no” on the question of union representation; similarly, a graduate assistant who signed an authorization card or petition may also vote “yes” or “no.”

Additional information on the election process, eligibility and conduct during an election is available on the Graduate School website and the Ask a Dean columns, along with a summary of graduate student policies and benefits and professional development programs.

Cornell remains committed to fostering an open and respectful environment in which graduate assistants at Cornell can learn factual information and make informed decisions regarding union representation.