



We Filed an Emergency Step 3 Grievance over Cornell's Violation of Our Union Security Article

1 message

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TL;DR:

- Last week, Cornell informed us that we were going to refuse to process our cards and deduct dues to force us to agree to stipulations that are not in our contract.
- By refusing to follow the Union Security article, Cornell is blatantly ignoring our contract, which is unlawful and irresponsible. It also undermines the entire basis of collective bargaining.
- We are filing an emergency Step 3 grievance over Cornell's violation of our Union Security article.
- Get involved: RSVP to our upcoming [steward trainings](#), [contract education session](#), and UE Higher Ed Conference Board ["Organizing for International Worker Power" panel](#)

Dear CGSU-UE Members,

Our Union Security clause guarantees that everyone who benefits from our industry-first contract pays their fair share to our union. People can do this by:

- **becoming a current member of the Union, you must sign a membership card and pay monthly membership dues. The most direct way to do this is to fill out the [digital membership/dues authorization form](#).**
- opting to be a non-member and forgo your membership rights, you can sign up to pay monthly fees through payroll deduction using [this form](#).

Alternatively, people have the right to become a religious objector. During our contract negotiations, we went above and beyond our legal requirement and enshrined this right explicitly in our contract, although it is already enshrined in federal law under the National Labor Relations Act. For over a year, the history and final versions of all articles have been available on our website through [our Bargaining Tracker](#). Our union cards FAQ is available on our website, and any questions can be sent to communications@cornellgradunion.org.

Per our contract, once we file our cards, Cornell must start collecting dues within 30 days. However, when we filed our cards, **Cornell informed us that they were going to refuse to process our cards and deduct dues** in order to force us to agree to stipulations that are not in our contract.

Here are the facts:

- There is **no statutory or contractual requirement** that we utilize a religious objection process preferred by Cornell or a requirement that we communicate to our members in a manner satisfactory to Cornell.
- Over the 27 bargaining sessions we held with Cornell, **at no point did Cornell propose** any language about religious objection communication or processing.
- Simply put, Cornell is now trying to hold us to arbitrary requirements that lie outside of the law or our bargaining agreement, and refuses to follow our contract if we do not comply. **This sets a dangerous precedent:** no party has the right to hold an article of our contract hostage in order to get what it wants.

This is a major violation of our contract. **By refusing to follow the Union Security article, Cornell is blatantly ignoring our contract, which is unlawful and irresponsible.** It also undermines the entire basis of collective bargaining, which relies on both parties abiding by the contract provisions they agreed to. **If Cornell can choose to ignore our Union Security article, there is nothing stopping them from ignoring the rest of our contract.** Everything from academic due process, non-appointment-related discipline protections, and even our raise and free TCAT passes is at risk.

Immediate Action: Grievance

We are filing an emergency grievance at Step 3 of our [grievance procedure](#) – the last possible step before the grievance goes to arbitration. We are filing this emergency grievance because Cornell has no right to steal our dues, and we demand that Cornell follows our contract and the law.

The grievance states:

- On June 2, the University sent an email to all graduate workers stating that it would not enforce the Union Security article.
- This is a violation of the Union Security article, the Recognition article, all other applicable articles, and applicable state/federal law.

- The Union deems this grievance to be of an emergency nature and is filing at Step 3 of our grievance procedure.
- As a remedy, the Union demands that the University enforce the CBA's Union Security article and make the Union and all affected bargaining unit members whole for all losses.

Our response letter to Cornell can be found [here](#).

Next Steps: Establishing Dues Collection Independence

The fight for Union Shop fueled our successful strike threat, which represented the views of 1000+ members. We did not fight so hard for Union Shop just for Cornell to deny its implementation. If Cornell does not comply with the contract and the law, our membership will respond in kind.

In addition to the grievance, the Interim Grievance Committee is recommending to the future Executive Board, which will be elected in July, to create an independent dues deduction system. A platform to collect dues outside of Cornell ensures that we can build the strength and longevity of our union through independent infrastructure and to prevent Cornell from using our members' dues money as leverage.

Get Involved and Upcoming Events

A strong steward network is the foundation of a powerful, effective union. We are offering **interim steward training** for anyone who is interested in department organizing, enforcing our contract, and advocating for grad workers. Upcoming sessions will be held on **June 17, June 20, and June 26 at 5 PM on Zoom**. [RSVP here to receive the Zoom link](#).

We are also holding a **contract education session** on **Tuesday, June 17 at 3:45 PM on Zoom**. At the session, we will be explaining the provisions of our contract in more detail and outlining the new protections and benefits that we have secured. The event is open to all graduate workers. [RSVP here to receive the Zoom link](#).

Finally, in collaboration with our UE siblings, we will hold an **“Organizing for International Worker Power” panel** on **Friday, June 20 at 3 PM ET on Zoom**. The Trump administration's attacks on working people have been particularly pronounced in his targeting for international workers on our campuses. At Cornell, international workers make up 50% of the bargaining unit. Our union met the fear on our campus with Know Your Rights trainings, equipping folks with their rights. Building on that, we now want to focus on how we can build power with and for international workers in our workplaces – moving beyond simply knowing your rights to fighting for them, either as active organizers, stewards, or engaged members in their unions. [RSVP here to receive the Zoom link](#).

Solidarity,

CGSU-UE Interim Grievance Committee

Sent via ActionNetwork.org. To update your email address, change your name or address, or to stop receiving emails from Cornell Graduate Students United, please click [here](#).