

Graduate Students United  
% 1525 E 55th Street  
Suite 300  
Chicago, IL 60615

October 5, 2018

Daniel Diermeier  
The University of Chicago  
5801 South Ellis Avenue  
Suite 501  
Chicago, IL 60637

Sent via Email

Dear Provost Diermeier,

We, the duly elected representatives of Graduate Students United at the University of Chicago (GSU), hereby demand to bargain with you and your designated representatives. A majority of graduate employees voted in favor of exclusive representation by GSU in the election of October 2017. Graduate employees made an informed decision in a fair and free election—it is time to respect our decision.

**Your refusal to recognize our collective voice is a violation of the free speech principles frequently espoused by the leadership of this University. We expect you to negotiate a Collective Bargaining Agreement in good faith with our designated bargaining representatives.**

Graduate workers across the nation simultaneously withdrew their petitions to the NLRB in order to protect the collective bargaining rights of graduate workers at private universities nationwide. **Our decision to withdraw our election certification, that you refused to acknowledge, does not mitigate your obligation to listen to the more than 2000 of your employees who are members of GSU.** You choose to align yourselves with President Trump's anti-worker labor board, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to undermine our election process and to appeal the decisive result of that election. The dogmatic beliefs of President Robert Zimmer to deny the right of graduate employees to unionize are well-known: while at Brown University, then-Provost Robert Zimmer spearheaded the 2004 *Brown* ruling that denied graduate workers their rights during the anti-labor Bush administration. We ask you to respect the democratic vote of your employees and resist the entrenched, ideological beliefs of one man.

Your colleagues at Harvard University chose to recognize the democratic vote of the majority of their graduate employees and enter into negotiations with the Harvard Graduate Student Union (HGSU-UAW) after their successful election in April 2018. Your colleagues at Brown University and at Georgetown University have set an admirable example in reaching an agreement with graduate workers, represented by Stand Up for Graduate Student Employees (SUGSE) and Georgetown Alliance of Graduate Employees (GAGE) respectively, in which they pledged to uphold the results of a fair and free election, and to move forward with bargaining in the event

of a pro-union vote. Your colleagues at Brandeis University, not to mention dozens of other private and public institutions, have shown that reaching collective bargaining agreements with graduate workers is not only possible, but moreover furthers the academic mission common to all members of our intellectual community. **Graduate workers at the University of Chicago will not stop organizing until our union is recognized. We are calling on you to end this unnecessary expenditure of institutional resources, and take the same steps as your peers.**

**Graduate Students United now represents a supermajority of graduate workers in the bargaining unit as determined by the regional National Labor Relations Board, and membership continues to grow.** We hope that you reconsider suppressing the demands of your graduate employees, the constituency that has continually shaped the reputation, renown, and prestige of this institution—it is time to come to the table.

We would like to meet promptly to begin our collaboration. Please inform us as soon as possible of who will be on your negotiating team. We are available on any date in October following the delivery of this letter. Please respond by Tuesday, October 9, 2018 to let us know of dates in this month that suit either you or your representatives. If not, please reply with alternative dates.

**Please consider this letter to be affirming a continuing demand.**

Sincerely,

The Steering Committee of Graduate Students United at the University of Chicago (GSU)

Claudio Gonzáles, President

Bellamy Mitchell, President

Yaniv Ron-El, Financial Secretary

Natalia Piland, General Secretary

Audrey Williams, Divisional Representative for Biological Sciences

Andrew Kunze, Divisional Representative for Divinity

Yueling Ji, Divisional Representative for Humanities

Gourav Khullar, Divisional Representative for Physical Sciences

Kristin Hickman, Divisional Representative for Social Sciences

on behalf of the membership GSU.

cc: Robert Zimmer, President  
David Nirenberg, Executive Vice Provost  
Brett Leibsker, Director of Labor Relations  
Samantha Jordan, National Representative, American Federation of Teachers  
Kira Schuman, Midwest Lead Organizer, American Association of University Professors