



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31815, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION urging the University of Washington to swiftly arrive at a fair and equitable contract with its academic student employees.

WHEREAS, the University of Washington (UW) is a premiere, dynamic, world-class public institution and the second-largest employer in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, UAW Local 4121 represents the 4,500 academic student employees (ASEs) on the University of Washington's (UW) campuses in Seattle, Tacoma, and Bothell, including research assistants, teaching assistants, graders, and tutors; and

WHEREAS, members of UAW Local 4121 report that, after four months of negotiations, UW has not agreed to a contract that meets their needs; and

WHEREAS, ASEs perform essential instructional and research work at UW, advancing scientific and humanistic knowledge, contributing to the intellectual and cultural life of Seattle and the region, and attracting investment from the federal government and industries, all contributing to the economic growth, ecological sustainability, social justice, and community development of Seattle and the region; and

WHEREAS, according to the UW 2017-2018 base rate salary schedule, ASEs are paid as little as \$20,655 for a nine-month appointment, out of which they must pay back \$951 in fees to the UW as a condition of employment; and

WHEREAS, ASEs at UW report that this low pay and mandatory fees, along with the rising cost of living in the Puget Sound area, have made it increasingly difficult for them to survive economically at UW; and

WHEREAS, according to a membership survey conducted by UAW Local 4121 last fall, the average ASE pays 44 percent of their income for housing, 82 percent are rent-burdened, and the majority of UW's ASEs make ends meet by cutting costs on food, clothing, child care, and other basic necessities; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council recognizes the urgent need for housing affordable to workers including the ASEs at UW; and

WHEREAS, the UW core values statement emphasizes a commitment to "recruit the best, most diverse and innovative faculty and staff from around the world, encouraging a vibrant intellectual community for our students;" and

WHEREAS, ASEs argue that fair pay and fee waivers are necessary to prevent the further gentrification of graduate education, so that people from low-income and working families, women, people of color, queer and trans people, immigrants, and working parents have a sustainable opportunity to earn advanced degrees and further contribute to their communities; and

WHEREAS, after four months of contract negotiations, on Tuesday, May 15, 2018, thousands of UAW Local 4121 members held a one-day strike to demand better pay and fee waivers to keep pace with the region's rising cost of living; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council is concerned that if UW and UAW Local 4121 do not reach an agreement, ASEs may be forced to strike again this spring, potentially disrupting classes and even final exams;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1. The Seattle City Council affirms that all workers in Seattle, including academic student employees (ASEs) at the University of Washington (UW), should be paid a living wage.

Section 2. The Seattle City Council urges UW leadership to reach a fair and equitable contract agreement with the members of UAW Local 4121 that addresses ASEs concerns about pay, fees, and affordability at UW.

Section 3. The Seattle City Council requests that the Office of Intergovernmental Relations communicate the content of this resolution to UW representatives.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2018, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2018.

President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2018.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)