



September 9, 2014

Dear President Coltrane,

We write to urge you to find a way to bring negotiations with the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation to a quick and agreeable conclusion. We also want you know understand that while we would find a Graduate Teaching Fellow strike lamentable, we will do everything that we legally can to encourage all faculty to stand with our union colleagues.

GTFs are central to the teaching and research mission of the University of Oregon. It is their work as students seeking advanced degrees and their collaboration with faculty in so many ways that make this a research university; it is their work as teachers that fulfills the teaching mission of the university and inspires thousands of undergraduates enrolled here. Prioritizing an agreement on a contract with their union is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for recognizing their essential role.

As faculty, we see every year how uncompetitive GTF salaries are, and how harmful it is that we can't offer scholarships that would allow GTFs to study without teaching. If the UO is not prepared to make GTF salaries truly competitive, it should certainly recognize the wisdom and cost-effectiveness of securing and enhancing the benefits the GTFF currently has. Improvements in this area could close the gap in terms of how graduate applicants perceive our offer and thus select their graduate program.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns, which ultimately are of course concerns we share: the wellbeing of our students and fellow-teachers; the strength and reputation of our graduate programs; and the healthy competitiveness of our graduate programs in recruiting the next generation of faculty.

Sincerely,

Michael Dreiling
President, United Academics

cc: President Joe Henry