



Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation

American Federation of Teachers, Local 3544, AFL-CIO

We write to affirm our support for the 1,400 graduate employees (GEs) at the University of Oregon (UO) and their requests for fair working conditions in higher education.

The UO is one of Oregon's core public institutions, and is critical to the overall health and accessibility of education within our state. It is home to many Oregonians' formative years in undergraduate and graduate education. And as a premier public university, the UO is a key pathway to diversifying our state and its industries.

Graduate students are the future leaders of higher education and the backbone of an educated populace that draws investment to our state. This is why we worry about the low wages the university is offering to GEs. Graduate compensation which falls short of the cost of living and peer institutions undercuts the university's role in providing quality teaching and research mission, because employee working conditions *are* teaching and research conditions.

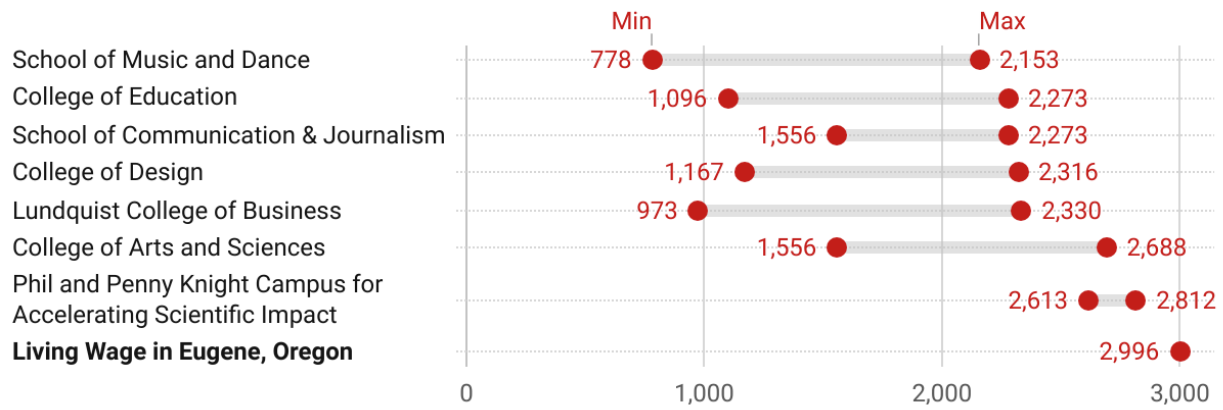
GE wages are currently [well below the average wage of UO's peers](#), and even further below [what is considered a living wage for the city of Eugene, Oregon](#). No GE currently makes a living wage. The average GE age is 33 years old and one in ten have children to care for. Nearly one third of GEs are international students with visa restrictions preventing them from working multiple jobs. Meanwhile, the [20% inflation since 2019](#) has further eroded the value of GEs' paychecks.

UO has enjoyed [revenues which exceeded expenditures by \\$597 million dollars over the life of the previous collectively bargained contract](#). Investing in the graduate student workforce is needed to help GEs pay for food, housing, and transportation, and for the UO to continue to deliver on core missions of quality education, cutting edge research, and supporting diversity.

GEs Deserve
DIGNITY



Monthly stipends for graduate employees at the University of Oregon



Source: GTFF, University of Oregon Employment Records • Created with Datawrapper

It is in the best interest of the University and the people of Oregon that educational workers like GEs are paid fairly relative to peer institutions and the local cost of living. Thus, we urge UO’s leadership to raise their compensation standards for the university’s 1400+ graduate employees.

Sincerely,

Sara Gelser Blouin
Oregon State Senator

Dacia Grayber
Oregon State Representative

Chris Gorsek
Oregon State Senator

Zach Hudson
Oregon State Representative

James Manning
Oregon State Senator

John Lively
Oregon State Representative

Farrah Chaichi
Oregon State Representative

Travis Nelson
Oregon State Representative



Rob Nosse
Oregon State Representative

Laurie Trieger
Lane County Commissioner

Randy Groves
Eugene City Councilor

Matt Keating
Eugene City Councilor

Lyndsie Leech
Eugene City Councilor

Jennifer Yeh
Eugene City Councilor

Austin Felnagy
*Lane Community College Board of
Directors*

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