Private university grad student unionizing effort

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Why unionize?

Grad student working conditions are often the subject of jokes, laughably bad

I blame my episodic binge drinking on grad school....
Why unionize?

Grad students are vulnerable to harassment as powerless members of academic community

Why It’s Harder For Grad Students To Report Sexual Harassment

They have even more to lose than undergrads who go public.

Prof accused of sexually harassing grad students in Antarctica

Worse Than It Seems

New study of harassment of graduate students by faculty members suggests that the problem is worse – both in level of offense and prevalence of repeat offenders – than many believe.
Why unionize?

Adequate pay and benefits shirked by administration, supposedly tradeoff for ‘training’

Don’t let Trump and the academic 1% outweigh the 72% at Columbia
Why unionize?
Unions as tool for collective action
Timeline

May 2007
UChicago Graduate Students United begins organizing.

Aug. 2016
Brown decision overturned.

Columbia students elect to unionize, 72% in favor.

Aug. 2017
Regional NLRB rules against UChicago and orders election.

Sept. 2017
University files appeal to try to prevent or nullify the election.

Oct. 2017
Grads vote to unionize with 70% in favor.

Now: Escalate?...!

May 2007
GSU organizing wins childcare stipend, increases in pay, and freezes in fees.

May 2017
GSU files for election. University requests regional NLRB review to prevent election from happening.

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Now: Escalate?...!

May 2017
Columbia appeals election, claims union interference.

Jan. 2018
Provost claims they will appeal in federal court – can they?

Now: Escalate?...!

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Through 2017...
Regional, then NLRB dismiss their objections; Certify union 1/2018.

Meanwhile... 8 other private schools (inc. U Chicago) unionize!
Potential for SftP involvement

• Conference actions - pass resolutions?
• Showing solidarity locally
  – Mobilizing base for rallies
  – Adding pressure on administrators as other academic staff, especially faculty
• Articles emphasizing scientists as workers, the role of unions in conducting ethical science
  – Tie-in with MFS, like Healthcare for All?