



Appropriations Committee

May 11, 2015

Testimony

By

Michael J. Eagan, Director, Office of Faculty & Staff Labor Relations

S.R. No. 37 RESOLUTION PROPOSING APPROVAL OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE GRADUATE EMPLOYEE UNION LOCAL 6950- INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA (GEU-UAW).

H.R. No. 32 RESOLUTION PROPOSING APPROVAL OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE GRADUATE EMPLOYEE UNION LOCAL 6950- INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA (GEU-UAW).

Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Michael Eagan, Director of the Office of Faculty & Staff Labor Relations at the University of Connecticut. With me today and signed up to speak in the public portion is Ken Lang, International UAW Region 9a. We are here seeking your approval of two resolutions, Senate Resolution 37 and House Resolution 32, concerning the collective bargaining agreement between the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees and the Graduate Employee Union Local 6950 – International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (GEU-UAW).

This agreement is the culmination of a process begun more than a year ago, when the University recognized the GEU-UAW as the collective bargaining representative for approximately 2,200 Graduate Assistants (“GAs”). GAs are graduate students who serve as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants at the University of Connecticut. About one third of UConn's 6,500 graduate students are GAs. While playing important roles in classrooms and laboratories, the GAs gain valuable experience as part of their own graduate educations and preparation for academic careers. They receive stipends, free tuition and subsidized health insurance, so such assistantships are sought after. The ability to offer attractive GA positions in the admission process is one factor that enables UConn to recruit some of the best and brightest candidates to its graduate programs.

The University’s goals throughout the negotiations were to ensure that Graduate Assistants are treated fairly relative to their counterparts at research universities across the nation with regard to pay, healthcare, workload, and opportunity; to maintain and enhance academic excellence in graduate education, with high standards for student scholarship and teaching performance; and to enable our faculty to teach and mentor all graduate students in ways appropriate to their disciplines in order to prepare them for careers.

The Union sought to improve the wages, hours and working conditions of the Graduate Assistants through a collective bargaining agreement that codifies their rights and is enforceable through a grievance and arbitration process. Both parties believe they achieved their respective goals. The Agreement also contains provisions governing discipline and dismissal, grievances, health and safety, non-discrimination, and workload.

The University and the GEU-UAW feel this is a fair and reasonable agreement. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of the University of Connecticut. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.