FAQs RELATING TO RESEARCH GUIDANCE DURING A POTENTIAL STRIKE
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Are academic expectations independent of or determined by source of funding?
Under current labor law, some, but not all of the effort students expend in the lab is compensable labor. Thus, a student worker may strike and withhold that labor, but as a student, they are responsible for maintaining academic progress toward their degree. The federal government has specifically acknowledged the dual role of student researchers as both trainees and employees contributing scientific work on federal awards. Academic expectations are not independent of nor determined by the source of funding. Faculty are ultimately responsible for determining whether a student is meeting academic expectations and PIs are ultimately responsible for effort reporting.

Will students be paid if they typically expend 100% effort on work funded by grants and they strike?
The determining factor is whether students are meeting their obligations to the research project. PIs should consider the number of hours student workers spend working on the award funding their salary and the corresponding effort certification. Faculty should tell student workers that they cannot be funded on any award if they chose to strike and do not make up the time/effort. Ability to make up effort will be at the discretion of the PI and depend on many factors, including the length of the strike.

December payroll for salaried student workers will close at or around the same time that any strike begins. As a result, student workers will receive their regular monthly salary on December 13. If student workers do not fulfill their academic and project responsibilities or otherwise meet the regular effort that is reported, then the amount of time that they did not work must not be charged to sponsored funds. For this reason, PIs or their designee must document effort expended by student workers during a strike. December payroll charges for those student workers who strike and do not make up the effort will be taken off of grants and moved to unrestricted funds as designated by each School. Once the strike has concluded, the University will determine whether any missed work can be made up, or whether the student will be required to reimburse overpayments made to them as a result of the strike.

Do PIs or faculty need to track students who are not paid from sponsored funds?
Yes. PIs and faculty must track whether student workers are meeting their research and academic obligations during a strike, regardless of how they are paid. PIs should have received a spreadsheet of all their student workers whose effort they are required to certify for sponsored awards. Faculty and PIs should use this same spreadsheet for remaining student workers, understanding that they will need to fill in these students’ names.

Will students be paid if they typically expend 100% effort on work funded by startup and other sources of research funding and they strike?
PIs or their designee must document effort expended by student workers during a strike. Once the strike has concluded, the University will determine whether any missed work can be made
up, or whether the student will be required to reimburse overpayments made to them as a result of the strike.

**How will striking students be paid if they are working part-time on projects funded by grants, but are supported by GSAS fellowships for the rest? How will the hours be calculated for each?**

Fellowship payments are generally stipends, which are not related to effort or time and will continue to be paid, provided the student remains in good academic standing. The PI will need to determine if the part-time work on the projects was completed. If it was, then student workers can receive that payment from the grant. If work was not completed, then the time should not be submitted for payment, or if the amounts have already been paid, the amounts must be removed from the awards.

**Will students who receive external fellowships continue to be paid?**

External fellowships will continue to be paid as they do not run through the University but are paid directly to the student, provided the student remains in good academic standing.

**Will students who receive federal fellowships or stipends continued to be paid? Are they being treated the same as students paid salary on sponsored awards?**

Stipend payments are lump sum payments to offset expenses and are not disbursed for work performed, provided the student remains in good academic standing.

**Will students who are supported by University funds (GSAS fellowships, departmental fellowships, etc.) continue to be paid?**

Fellowship payments are generally stipends, which are not related to effort or time and will continue to be paid, provided the student remains in good academic standing.

**What can be said to RAs in advance of a strike regarding their strike plans?**

From a labor standpoint, you cannot ask a worker whether they intend to strike. However, RAs have a dual role: they are students as well as workers. As a result, you can and should ask students whether they intend to fulfill their academic responsibilities and obligations to a research project, including during a potential strike. The Union has advised students that they should fulfill their own academic progress during a strike, so it’s in everyone’s best interest for these conversations with students to occur as soon as possible. In having these conversations, you should keep the focus on academic and project responsibilities and not on whether students are striking.

**Graduate students do not have set hours, so how can I determine whether they are on strike?**

If a student worker is in the lab suite or work area during the strike, then that is evidence that they have chosen to work. Once a strike begins, you may ask student workers if they are on strike since it may not be obvious, especially if students work remotely and/or still come to lab.
Can PIs or faculty ask a staff member to keep track of students? Is it acceptable to have the students self-report?
PIs and faculty can delegate this to a staff member or have the students self-report, although PIs will be ultimately responsible as they are the ones who sign the attestation on the effort reports.

What happens if a student strikes but they are the primary person responsible for the maintenance and care of biological research materials? Can I contact students and let them know my expectations in order to stay in good academic standing?
It is in everyone’s best interest for PIs to communicate academic expectations as soon as possible. PIs should keep conversations focused on the research project and academic expectations rather than on a student’s intention to strike. If, for example, maintaining a mouse colony is necessary to the research project, then that would be part of the student worker’s academic requirements, even if they are striking in their employee capacity.