

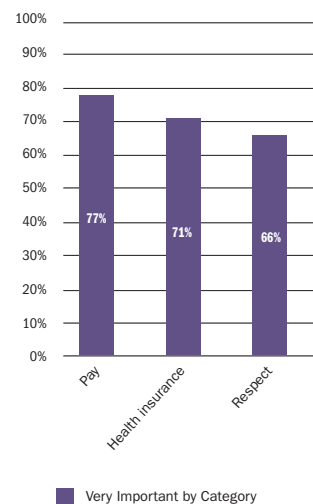
# Grad Students Speak Out about Low Pay, Lack of Respect

## Survey charts sources of discontent with working and learning conditions

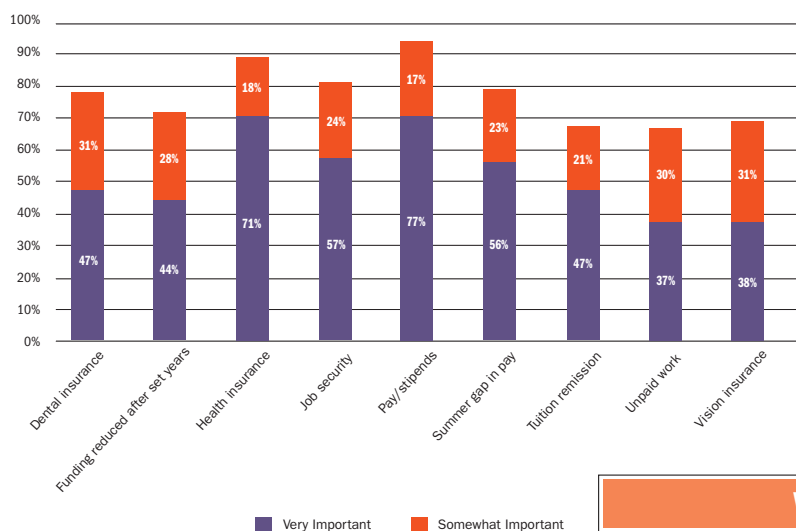
Displeasure with **low pay, sparse health insurance, and lack of respect** are sparking a burst of interest in forming unions among graduate teaching and research assistants.

A survey circulated among graduate student employees at 13 universities found very high levels of discontent with pay and working conditions across all academic disciplines. Nearly 1,000 student employees completed the survey.

### Pay, Health Insurance, and Respect Are Top Grad Student Concerns

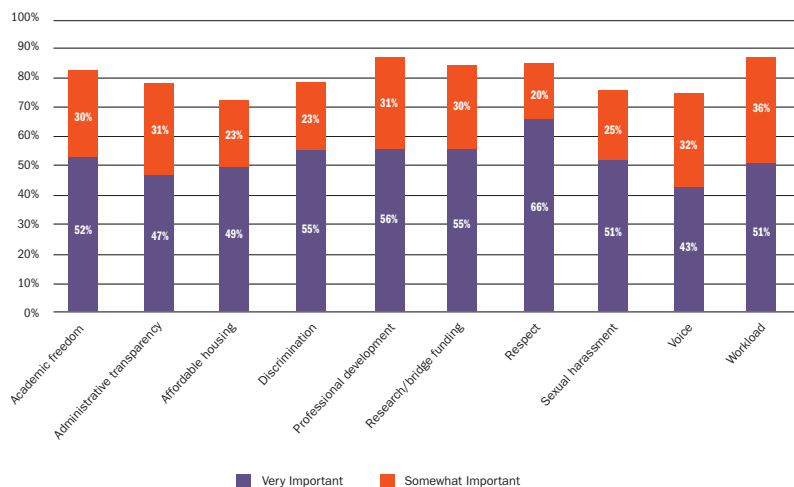


### Economic Insecurity



Many grad student employees expressed other ways that **low pay** was experienced: no pay in the summer, late or lagging checks, uncompensated work, or incomplete tuition reimbursement. Eight items rated **Very Important** or **Somewhat Important** by more than 2/3 of respondents.

### Working, Learning and Research Conditions



Fifty percent or more of respondents ranked these **working conditions** as very important: research funding, lack of respect, professional development, discrimination, workload, sexual harassment and academic freedom.

# We're Fighting to Improve Conditions across Higher Education



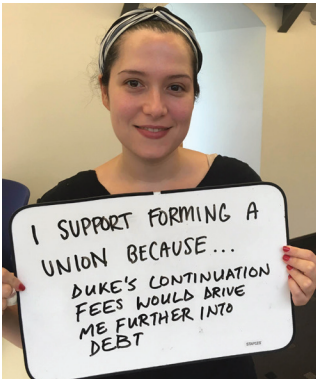
"As teaching and research assistants, it is our right to unionize. Work and study are not mutually exclusive, and we owe it to the university community as a whole to fight to protect and improve working conditions across higher education. As tenure lines continue to be cut and university budgets slashed, we cannot wait until after graduation to demand fairer and more sustainable treatment of university workers and faculty. The movement begins now, and at Wash U, it begins with joining SEIU."

**Amanda Scott**, Washington University in St. Louis



"I want to enhance student power, create affordable education, and empower others to take collective action."

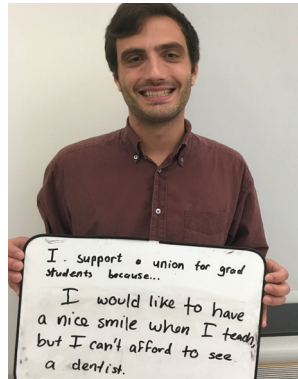
**Joshelyn Smith**, American University



**Laura Jamarillo**  
Duke University



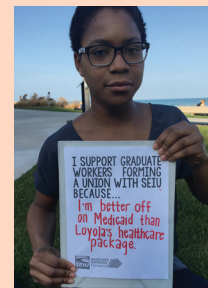
**Jessica Gokhberg**  
Duke University



**Brendan Higgins**  
Duke University



**Chad Osteen**  
Loyola University Chicago



**Michelle Adzido**  
Loyola University Chicago



**Yelyzaveta DiStefano**  
Loyola University Chicago

Graduate student teaching and research assistants at American University, Boston University, Brandeis University, DePaul University, Duke University, Loyola University–Chicago, Northwestern University, St. Louis University, Tufts University, University of Rochester, University of Southern California, Vanderbilt University and Washington University participated in the survey in the fall of 2016.