

# 2017: The year we won our union!



After nearly three years of organizing, this year we finally won our union! Here's our end of year review, which highlights the immense organizing we've done, the allies we've made, and the fight ahead, one whose challenges we can certainly overcome -- as we have those past -- with solidarity and collective action.



## December 2016

On December 21, SENS-UAW organizers delivered a letter to New School President David Van Zandt committing to prepare for a strike authorization vote if the administration continued to stall and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) refrained from taking action on our case.

On December 23rd, the NLRB remanded our case back to the Regional NLRB to take “further appropriate action consistent with *Columbia University*,” referring to the August decision affirming the right to collective bargaining for RAs and TAs.



## March & April 2017

Instead of voluntarily recognizing our union, the New School administration continued to spend their resources on expensive legal counsel. We spent March and April attending hearings at the NLRB, making our case that we are workers and we have the right to form a union. In our down time, we took to the streets for the Women’s Strike on March 8th.





As The New School continued to stall on recognizing whether or not the work we do teaching and researching actually makes us workers . . . we held a work-in at the University Center and started organizing for a strike authorization vote.



On April 7th, the NLRB issued a decision upholding our right to conduct a vote to unionize. The strike authorization vote was called off, and we started organizing for our vote on unionization!

## May 2017



In a historic vote on May 3rd and 4th, by a margin of 502 yes votes to 2 no votes, academic student workers at The New School voted to form a union! We decided to join the tens of thousands of student workers across the country in having a collective voice in how our workplaces function. However, we didn't find out about the outcome of our vote until July because . . .

## July 2017

... The New School filed a “Request for Review,” which questioned the NLRB’s decision to allow us to have an election. The New School maintained that only a select portion of student workers should be allowed to vote on unionization. However, in July, the NLRB determined that the university’s legal obstructions were illegitimate. Our ballots from May, which had been sequestered away, were finally freed, our votes were counted, and our union was certified by the NLRB!



## September 2017



After keeping it real at the NYC Labor Day Parade, we jumped right back into a busy semester, starting with our bargaining committee elections. Six academic student workers were elected to make demands on behalf of SENS-UAW members at the bargaining table.



It is no small feat that The New School agreed to bargain with us; our comrades at universities across the country continue to face hostile administrations that refuse to recognize their unions. We commend The New School for realizing that it is in the administration's best interest to recognize, and bargain with, our union to make a better university for everyone.

At the table, our bargaining team has been bringing informed demands based on hundreds of conversations, group meetings, and results from bargaining surveys. We have introduced bold demands such as across-the-board wage increases, fully-funded healthcare, extended reporting times for cases of sexual harassment, and stronger intellectual property rights.

One major issue that we uncovered is **systemic late pay across all five of our colleges**. We introduced a proposal demanding that the university include protections against late pay, which they still haven't agreed to; [sign our open letter here](#).



## October 2017



Throughout the semester, we held monthly membership meetings, where rank and file members could come out, get to know each other, eat pizza, talk about workplace issues, and strategize on demands.

## November 2017

We held another work-in at the University Center to demonstrate the immense value of our labor power. Student workers from across campus came out to teach classes, conduct research, grade papers, and do the critical work that makes The New School run.





In November, we also celebrated with our UAW Local 7902 comrades -- the part-time faculty members at The New School and NYU -- the 15th birthday celebration of our Local, which has and continues to fight for the rights of working academics!

In addition to bringing strong demands to the table, our Organizing Committee has been busy advocating student workers' rights on the ground, in actions ranging from supporting students with late pay sort out their issues at Human Resources, to trekking up to Columbia to demand that their administration respect their overwhelming vote to unionize.





## December 2017

In December, our Organizing Committee helped coordinate a New York City intercampus walkout with our comrades at Columbia, NYU, and CUNY to protest the GOP tax cuts, which threatened access to higher education.

We also held our last bargaining session with members Mark and Rose, who are leaving The New School at the end of Winter term. We will miss the passion, endless energy, and commitment to more equitable workplaces that they brought to every bargaining session, meeting, and rally. New elections will be held in January to fill their spots.



## January 2018....

When we get back from break in January, we will need to be better organized than ever. It's going to take rank and file power from every classroom, every department, and every college on this campus to demand that the university bargain a fair contract that includes the provisions we deserve.

When we fight, we win.

