

Dr. Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim

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May 14, 2024

Dear Members of the BU Community,

I am writing to share an update on our bargaining with the BU Graduate Workers Union (BUGWU). Today was the 25th bargaining session between the parties. For updates and summaries of past sessions, you can visit the [community updates](#) section of [our website](#).

At today's bargaining session, the University proposed moving all PhD students to having access to a 12-month stipend – a significant shift in our current model for PhD education. With our current offer on the table, this would mean that all PhD students who agree to perform service or scholarship with a deliverable over the full summer would receive funding for 12 months, at a minimum rate of \$42,159 annually in the first year of the contract.

We have heard from students and faculty throughout the negotiations process highlighting the importance and value of moving to provide access to a 12-month stipend for all of our PhD students. Students have repeatedly spoken of the challenges of living with an eight-month stipend and how it affects their financial security. Faculty have told us that continuing to recruit PhD students in the humanities and social sciences will be challenging if BU cannot offer students a guaranteed stipend of 12 months. The move to 12 months of stipend support will additionally allow us to initiate a set of valuable and innovative teaching, training, scholarship, and experiential learning opportunities for our PhD students.

We hope that this move at the bargaining table signals our goodwill and seriousness of purpose in moving toward resolution with BUGWU and reaching an agreement that supports our students.

As the semester ends, I want to acknowledge the incredible work that many in our community have done to support our academic mission this spring. Faculty and staff alike have shown great flexibility and repeatedly gone above and beyond – often in challenging circumstances – to ensure our students received the quality of education they deserved.

We appreciate the dedication and patience of everyone involved and are hopeful these efforts will produce significant progress as we head into the summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "KL", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kenneth Lutchen
University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim