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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

SHAWN FAIN, *PRESIDENT* • MARGARET MOCK, *SECRETARY-TREASURER*
VICE-PRESIDENTS: CHUCK BROWNING • MIKE BOOTH • RICH BOYER

Dear members,

Congratulations on the historic victory you have already won by unionizing as the Wellesley Organized Academic Workers. You are among those leading a growing movement of faculty organizing to improve working and learning conditions in higher education.

In the last decade, employers have aggressively fought to deny academic workers the right to grieve harassment and discrimination. As you have learned in your bargaining sessions, Wellesley College is playing the same game. They are purposefully mischaracterizing your proposal as attempting to replace or supplant Title IX in order to frame your demands as illegal and to pretend like their hands are tied. We know better.

We know there is a place for a worker to both *immediately* file a grievance, which entitles workers to non-punitive, supportive measures, clear timelines, and union support; as well as pursue a College investigatory process, which may impose sanction and discipline on a respondent, pending the findings of investigation. The College proposes workers may only file a grievance after exhausting internal processes, which may take months or even years, effectively rendering the grievance process immaterial. We know the supportive measures that grievants would be entitled to are critical while a worker is actively dealing with harassment and discrimination and while navigating the immediate aftermath.

The work your campaign is doing is critically important. You are showing academic workers everywhere that we do not need to grovel for the rights we deserve. For too long, we have witnessed employers treat harassment and discrimination protections like a bargaining chip. Your letter demanding protections from harassment and discrimination signed by over 70% of your unit offers a different path forward: one where we understand that these protections are essential for making our workplaces safe and for making the Academy more just and equitable. You are taking a stand for what is right, not only for your unit, but for academic workers everywhere.

We know that it is perfectly legal to allow academic workers the right to grieve harassment and discrimination—and in case there is any confusion, the Department of Education explicitly clarified that grievance processes in collective bargaining agreements are not incompatible with Title IX ([link](#)). We know that it's possible to offer workers both the right to grieve harassment and discrimination without exhausting internal procedures *and also* to seek redress through internal processes, like Title IX. The ability to file a grievance without having to exhaust an internal investigation, a process which often aims to finish within 75-180 days, is a hard-fought and won right for academic workers. Academic workers at the University of California, New York University, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Temple University, University of Connecticut, and more have won these rights.

In other words, you are not alone in this fight—the UAW has your back. With the power you are building at Wellesley through your unity and solidarity, you will win this fight and set a new standard for the higher education labor movement in Massachusetts and beyond.

In solidarity,

Brandon Mancilla, Director
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