



According to our CBA, the administration may ask faculty to cover work of striking Graduate Employees\*, and bargaining unit faculty members “will not unreasonably refuse to perform such work”.

Here are some *reasonable* reasons to refuse:

- Failure of the university to provide a contract for such work, including expected overload FTE and remuneration.
- Family or home obligations which prevent you from taking on additional work.
- An expectation that additional duties could lead to adverse physical, mental or emotional well-being.
- Lack of training or expertise on duties to be replaced.
- See the FAQ on back for more.

The administration has already telegraphed that they may discipline faculty who refuse to cover work of striking GEs because they are morally opposed to scabbing for striking workers. However, there are many reasonable reasons for refusing to do such work, so use one of those instead!

If you have questions, or concerns specific to your situation, please reach out to [info@uauoregon.org](mailto:info@uauoregon.org).

\*In the event of a strike by other employees of the university, bargaining unit faculty members, if requested by the University, will consult about how work which was previously performed by a striking employee will be covered. Any work previously performed by a striking employee assigned to a bargaining unit faculty member shall be considered an overload assignment. Bargaining unit faculty members will not unreasonably refuse to perform such work.

# Frequently Asked Questions:

## **Q: When would a GTFF strike take place?**

A: November 4. Bargaining between the GTFF and the administration broke down on September 26 when the GTFF informed the Oregon Employment Relations Board that bargaining had broken down. State law calls for a cooling-off period of 37 days before a union can go out on strike or the employer could impose their last-best offers.

The membership of the GTFF has not yet voted to strike, nor have they give the administration official notice of their intent to strike, so the date may change.

## **Q: What is the GTFF (potentially) striking over?**

A: There are a couple of issues that the administration and the GE union have not been able to resolve. They are still somewhat apart on raises, but the main issue is who will pay for future health care cost increases. The GTFF has proposed splitting costs should they be excessive, but the administration wants the graduate employees to pay for all but the most minimal cost increases.

## **Q: Do I have to do the work of a striking GE?**

A: Our Collective Bargaining Agreement says, "Bargaining unit faculty members will not unreasonably refuse to perform such work." What is "not unreasonable" in any given situation depends on the particular circumstances. We are working with the University of Oregon to develop some parameters of what is definitely unreasonable. At the bargaining table, they stated that asking faculty to cover for large discussion sections would be unreasonable. Asking faculty to grade a large number of papers would be unreasonable. We hope to develop firmer boundaries around what is unreasonable so that no one is even asked to perform "unreasonable" work.

## **Q: What are reasonable reasons to refuse to perform the work of striking GEs?**

A: Bargaining unit faculty have the right to refuse to perform the work of striking GEs if it is unreasonable for them to do so. Faculty have the right to declare an assignment unreasonable. The university may disagree and faculty should contact the union office - [info@uaoregon.org](mailto:info@uaoregon.org) - if they are being obligated to perform work they believe is unreasonable.

We believe faculty are already working full jobs, have full lives, both academic and personal, and it is unlikely that most faculty can be reasonably expected to add to their workloads. What follows is a list of some of the reasons we believe it would be perfectly reasonable to decline a request to take on additional work.

- It would interfere with other work responsibilities
- It would interfere with family responsibilities
- It would interfere with academic responsibilities, such as preparing a course for the following term
- It would interfere with completing research, a paper, or conference presentation
- It would force a difficult or costly commute to campus
- It would require spending hours acquainting oneself with new course material

## **Q: Should I volunteer to cover for a GE who goes out on strike?**

A: No. You have no obligation to volunteer to cover for striking workers.

## **Q: Doesn't our professional commitment to undergraduate education require us to volunteer to cover for striking workers?**

A: We believe that our professional commitment to undergraduate education requires us not to volunteer. Expecting faculty to step into a classroom situation and either teach or grade for a week or two is not pedagogically appropriate. Half measures such as scantron tests, essays unrelated to the classroom material, or assigning grades based on an incomplete term are rarely, if ever, appropriate. Asking faculty to participate in such processes is asking faculty to participate in the miseducation of undergraduates.

## **Q: Do I have to cross the picket line?**

A: Faculty are contractually and legally required to cross a GTFF picket line in order to fulfill their contractual on-campus obligations. If faculty do not have to be on campus to fulfill contractual obligations, it would show support for the GTFF if we did not cross their picket line.

## **Q: How much should I be paid if I am obligated to perform the work of a striking GE?**

A: Any work previously performed by a striking employee assigned to a bargaining unit faculty member is considered an overload assignment. Overload appointments will be assigned an FTE percentage commensurate with normal workload duties and compensated accordingly. Faculty may request that overload compensation take the form of class release.

We have every right to propose an overload FTE if you are assigned work. You might consider the following things when thinking of an appropriate FTE:

For a typical course that you teach, what % of the total time you spend on the course is spent grading exams? Grading papers? Calculating grades? Thought of as a % of the total time you put into a typical course, how much time would it take to familiarize yourself with the material and/or students of a course you've never taught before, in order to feel professional competent assigning grades to students in that course? What about for a course you have taught before, but not in the past two years?

## **Q: Can I ask my GE if they are going out on strike?**

A: No. When you supervise a GE, you take on a management role. State law forbids managers from asking employees about their strike plans or talking with GEs about their strike plans.

## **Q: Can International GEs lose their visas if they go out on strike?**

A: The GTFF has looked into this issue and they feel confident in stating that the right of international students to go out on strike is protected by Oregon law.

## **Q: How can I tell the university administration that I want them to settle their issues with the GTFF so that grads don't have to go out on strike?**

A: The GTFF is planning to launch a coordinated campaign of messages to the administration. In the meantime, you should feel free to write to your dean, Vice President or Provost, and the President of the University with your concerns. You do not have to write a lengthy email, just a note to say that you urge them to settle a fair contract with the GTFF will help them know that the faculty stand with the GTFF.

**Additional Questions? Contact [info@uaoregon.org](mailto:info@uaoregon.org)**

