



RAPUP-UAW Newsletter

Issue #1 | Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Dear <<First Name>>,

Welcome to our inaugural RAPUP-UAW Newsletter! Below, you will find a “reader’s digest” of news items detailing how postdocs and research associates at Penn have been building our union. Read on for updates on our successful “Going Public” event on Penn’s campus last month, our participation in a rally to protect federal research support, [dates for our upcoming orientation trainings](#), and how unionized academic workers nationwide have been pushing back against the Trump administration’s threats to research funding.

How are postdocs and research associates building our union?

As of this writing, **well over 800 Penn postdocs and research associates have voiced their support for a union** by signing an authorization card! To celebrate this growing majority, postdocs and research associates held a rally on January 30th announcing our efforts to the broader Penn community. Speakers included academic workers from across the university as well as faculty supporters, members from the graduate student union GETUP-UAW, and Pennsylvania State Rep. Rick Krajewski, himself a 2013 Engineering graduate, among others.



During her remarks, Estela Noguera Ortega, a Research Associate in the School of Medicine, told the crowd, “I believe that **one of the most effective tools we have as individuals in this society is our right to unionize**. As other universities have done, taking collective power at this moment will improve our working conditions and protect our jobs. **We need our union more than ever!**”

The [Daily Pennsylvanian covered our rally](#), and you can hear some of [Rep. Krajewski’s remarks here](#).

On Wednesday, February 19th, Penn postdocs and research associates joined a coalition of hundreds of students, graduate workers, postdocs, staff, faculty, and researchers from Arcadia University, Community College of Philadelphia, Drexel University, Rowan University, Rutgers University, and Temple University to rally at the Center City offices of US Senator Dave McCormick **demanding restored funding and protections for critical health, research, and education jobs threatened by recent actions by the Trump administration**. [WHYY covered the event](#), as well as [City & State Pennsylvania](#). Even [MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow briefly mentioned the rally](#) during her nightly broadcast.



How can you get more involved?

The best way to get involved in building is to have conversations with your coworkers about why you support building a union! **If you want to learn more about the logistics of forming a union, the history of higher ed unionization, and how to have effective conversations about unionization, attend an upcoming RAPUP orientation!** The orientation will connect you with other academic workers across Penn to discuss these topics in a welcoming environment. **Our next orientations will be on Thursday, March 6th from 12-1pm on Penn’s campus and Monday, March 31st from 2-3pm on Zoom.**

[Click here for more information and to RSVP for either RAPUP orientation date!](#)

Other upcoming events...

Phonebank to Defend Public Research Funding!

On **Thursday, March 6th at 11:00am on Zoom**, higher ed workers in UAW across Pennsylvania will be joining together to call our representatives in Congress to tell them: Fund the NIH! We’ll also be calling other UAW members across the state to ask them to make calls, as well.

[Click here to RSVP for the Defend Public Research Phonebank!](#)

Stand up for Science!

On **Friday, March 7th, at 11:00am at Philadelphia City Hall**, academic workers at Penn will be joining scientists and science advocates to rally in support of defending science as a public good and a central pillar of social progress.

[Click here to learn more about Stand up for Science!](#)

How are other academic workers across the country organizing?

Labor for Higher Education, the coalition of higher education unions that helped organize the nationwide rallies to defend federal research funding, held a press conference in Washington, D.C. on February 24th. **Emilya Ventriglia, the president of UAW Local 2750 - NIH Fellows United, which represents postdoctoral workers at the NIH, spoke at the event.** [A recording of that is available on their website](#). Labor for Higher Education’s website also includes [numerous other articles](#) on how unionized higher ed workers are fighting back against the Trump administration’s threats to our research. **By building our union, we are increasing our ability to act collectively with other academic workers and researchers across the country to influence policy decisions that affect our lives and work.**

Meet an organizer!

WE ARE RAPUP-UAW
I SUPPORT FORMING A UNION BECAUSE...



Kosta Plakas
Radiology



Join us at
pennpostdocunion.org

“I’m interested in securing **retirement benefits with a matching contribution** from my employer. Completing a postdoctoral fellowship should not mean I have to fall behind in retirement.”

In solidarity,

Kosta Plakas, Radiology
On behalf of the RAPUP-UAW Organizing Committee

