



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109-1340

Received

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Office of the Provost
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June 24, 2011

Provost Philip Hanlon
3074 Fleming Building
503 Thompson Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340

Confidential
By Hand Delivery

Dear Phil:

We write to express our deep and collective concern about the potential negative impacts that would result from unionization of the University's graduate student research assistants (GSRA). We believe that such a union would put at risk the excellence of our university and the success of our graduate student research assistants.

Research assistantships provide graduate students with opportunities to develop their research skills while working in a lab or on a project under faculty supervision. As students assist with various aspects of scholarly work, they gain in their capacity for independent research. This is an important part of their academic training. A union would be a third party intervening in the educational program, in the middle between faculty mentors and their students. This would compromise the essential nature of doctoral preparation.

We note that graduate student research assistants are not unionized at the peer institutions against whom the University competes for faculty and graduate students. The Board of Regents in their public statement at the June 16, 2011 meeting included a list of other public institutions at which research assistants are unionized; although they are fine institutions, none of them competes in research at the same level as Michigan. It would be a great loss to the state and the nation if our research efforts were to decline to the quality seen at lesser universities. We worry that a GSRA union would make Michigan an outlier when the best and brightest graduate students compare research opportunities, and when we work to recruit excellent research faculty. A vast majority of the faculty members with whom we have spoken do not support GSRA unionization because of the potential negative impact on their one-on-one relationships with students and the University's competitive position among its peers.

We want to make it clear that we respect the Board of Regents' decision to move to an election, and we are fully committed to a fair and open election process. To ensure a fair and open election process, careful thought must be given to the composition of the bargaining unit, and students must be encouraged to educate themselves on the issues related to unionization

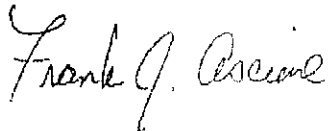
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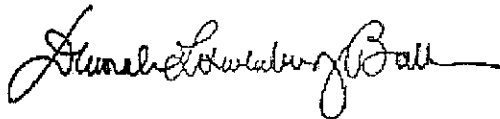
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and to participate in the election. We must give faculty and the administration the time and opportunity to state their positions to members of the bargaining unit. It will take time for GSRAs to hear both sides of the story and to educate themselves on the issues, and so it is crucial that there be a reasonable time period before an election. It is also crucial that the election take place during a regular (fall or winter) semester so that all GSRAs are in residence and have an equal and fair opportunity to be informed and to participate in the election. We ask that the university leadership do whatever it can in working with the AFT to ensure a fair and open election within a carefully designed bargaining unit.

Yours truly,



Frank J. Ascione
Dean and Professor of Social and Administrative Sciences
College of Pharmacy



Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Dean, School of Education
William H. Payne Collegiate Professor
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor

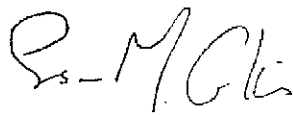


Rosina M. Bierbaum
Dean and Professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy
School of Natural Resources and Environment

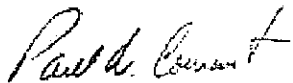
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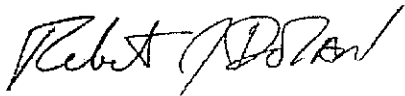
Evan Caminker
Dean, and Branch Rickey Collegiate Professor of Law
Law School



Susan Collins
Joan and Sanford Weill Dean of Public Policy
Professor of Public Policy and Economics
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy

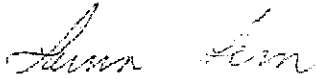


Paul N. Courant
Harold T. Shapiro Collegiate Professor of Public Policy,
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor
University Librarian & Dean of Libraries

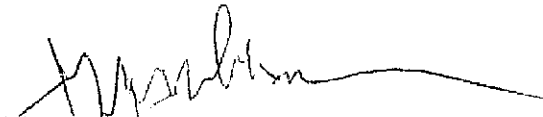


Robert J. Dolan
Edward J. Frey Dean
Stephen M. Ross School of Business

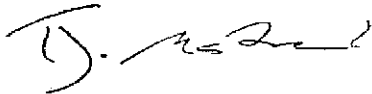
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Laura Lein
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Professor of Anthropology
School of Social Work



Jeffrey K. MacKie-Mason
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Arthur W. Burks Collegiate Professor of Information and Computer Science
Professor of Economics and Public Policy



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History, and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts



David C. Munson, Jr.
Robert J. Vlasic Dean of Engineering,
Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science,
College of Engineering

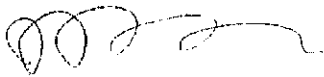
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Martin A. Philbert
Dean and Professor of Toxicology
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Peter J. Polverini, DDS, DMSc
Professor of Dentistry and Dean
School of Dentistry

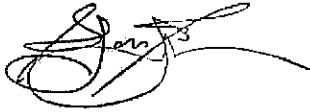


Monica Ponce de Leon
Eliel Saarinen Collegiate Professor of Architecture,
Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning and Dean,
A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

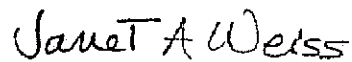


Kathleen Potempa, PhD, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
School of Nursing

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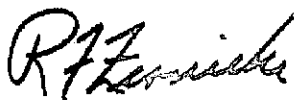
Bryan Rogers
Dean, School of Art and Design



Janet A. Weiss
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, and
Dean, Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies



James O. Woolliscroft, MD
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Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery &
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