

We, The Dartmouth Graduate Student Council (GSC), are sharing our perspective on the recent statement and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) shared by the Provost's office regarding the Graduate Organized Laborers at Dartmouth (GOLD).

After launching on October 11, 2022 and having a supermajority of graduate students sign cards, GOLD requested voluntary recognition from administration on February 14, 2023. On February 21, the administration rejected this request, leading to GOLD filing for an National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) administered election. Additionally, Provost David Kotz publicized a statement and FAQ about unionization, which was brought to the attention of many students via email and slack on March 2. The GSC previously published a statement in support of GOLD in November, which can be found [here](#).

The GSC was not consulted on the published FAQ, which cites unionization as “counterproductive” and that the “Dartmouth and the Graduate Student Council have had a productive and successful partnership in advocating for graduate student needs”. While there have been some successes on behalf of GSC advocacy, our successes depend on whether leadership agrees to implement the changes we seek for graduate students, and neglects the amount of work it takes for students volunteering in their roles on the GSC to bring about needed change for graduate students. The toll of pleading for affordable housing, accessible transportation, and other basic needs of living is burning out bright graduate students who put themselves in a position of advocacy. No member of the GSC is paid for their time and labor, we contribute because we value our fellow graduate student and our community; improving issues affecting graduate students should not solely be the responsibility of graduate students.

**As a body we want to reiterate our support of a graduate student union at Dartmouth, GOLD.**

While the Provost's statements describe that unionization and collective bargaining may slow down Dartmouth's ability to “respond quickly and decisively” , members of the GSC find that advocating for changes with administration may take years to implement, if implemented at all.

For example, the reinstatement of the Ombuds Office in September of 2022 is listed as a victory of this “collaboration” between administration and the GSC. However, this was a process that started in early 2020, with a proposal written by the Ombuds Office Planning Committee, and continued into Fall 2020 as a petition to President Phil Hanlon facilitated by the GSC that had to be signed by many students and faculty. The existence of this office had to be justified to Dartmouth and the groundwork laid for the reinstatement to be considered, requiring extensive work and advocacy on behalf of the GSC. With the reestablishment of this office taking over two years, it is by no means timely either. While we recognize that institutional change can take time, there are changes that are needed now.

Listed as an additional “positive result” of the collaboration between the GSC executive board and Dartmouth is the “expansion of graduate housing”. Current and previous GSC executive boards have prioritized affordable housing for graduate students. While housing in the Upper Valley has been expanded by the leasing of Dartmouth land to The Michaels Organization

(TMO), leading to the opening of Summit on Juniper (SOJ), any stipend supported graduate student living there is automatically rent burdened (according to the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)). Students leasing at SOJ face a 7% increase in rents only after one year. Additionally, when the Upper Valley hit record low temperatures of -20 degrees Fahrenheit and lower, there were still [students at SOJ](#), predominantly international graduate students, who did not have [central heating](#). This is a safety hazard, as recognized by Dr. Mark Reed, Director of Dartmouth College Health Services, who sent an email out on February 1 warning students of the real dangers of hypothermia and frostbite. During this time, GOLD ran a space heater distribution program, as well as provided mutual aid to those affected, via housing in the homes of student volunteers. Dartmouth administration has stated that they do not have the leverage nor the legal responsibility to work on these issues, as SOJ is not Dartmouth graduate student housing, but rather Dartmouth “supported housing”.

The GSC has worked extensively attempting to improve housing issues for graduate students, with members of the current executive board intermittently meeting with SOJ management since August 2022. Most recently we have been meeting on a regular basis with TMO leadership in an effort to improve conditions for students. **However, without contribution from administration, we feel the collaboration between GSC and administration is ineffective and demoralizing.**

When the GSC Executive Board met with President-elect Sian Beilock, we discussed the primary issues affecting graduate students, with the most urgent and pressing issue being housing. In response to the GSC detailing our meetings with TMO leadership and SOJ management, she said the GSC [graduate students] should not be the ones meeting with TMO and SOJ, and the GSC agrees; we need more representation to aid us in eliciting progressive change to benefit graduate students.

So how does the existence of a union change the role of the GSC? To reiterate our previous statement, GOLD will assume responsibility for some issues the GSC currently advocates for, such as housing, benefits, stipends, and childcare policies. The GSC will continue advocating for students, with a strong focus on community building, service projects, and diversity and inclusion, to improve the graduate student experience and bring our community together.

**The GSC supports the establishment of the graduate student union, GOLD. Our hope is to accomplish much needed change for graduate students as separate organizations with the same goal: improving the lives of graduate students at Dartmouth.**