

Vote “no” on the UAW-New School contract for part-time faculty! Continue striking until workers’ demands are met!

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The decision by United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 7902 officials to back a wholly inadequate tentative agreement and abruptly shut down the nearly four-week strike by 1,600 part-time faculty at The New School is a betrayal that must be opposed by all workers.

After the bargaining committee reached the deal late Saturday night, the union immediately ended the strike and ordered part-time instructors back to work to start grading before they had a chance to study, let alone vote on, the proposed contract. To add insult to injury, workers were only given a 10-page “contract highlights” document rather than the entire proposed agreement.

As of this writing, UAW officials have not publicly announced when members will be able to vote on the deal.

Part-time adjuncts in New York City have waged a courageous struggle against the university for livable wages, better health care coverage and job security, while strongly speaking out on their highly exploitative conditions. They joined 48,000 academic workers at the University of California system engaged in the largest strike of its kind in US history.

But like The New School workers, the experience UC workers have had with the UAW bureaucracy has been no happier. Last week, UAW officials pushed through a separate agreement for 12,000 post-docs and academic researchers that included a no-strike clause, essentially forcing them to cross the picket lines of the remaining 36,000 teaching assistants and student researchers. The UAW, which has dropped strikers’ demands for substantial pay increases and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA), has now accepted mediation.

Adjunct professors at The New School should overwhelmingly reject the proposed contract, which ignores all of their major demands. Part-time faculty, who make up 87 percent of the school’s teaching staff, have not seen a raise since 2018. The proposed increases will not make a dent in their lost income over the last four years and will

largely be eaten up by increased health care premiums and inflation, which is still over 7 percent.

The new tentative agreement increases pay for the lowest-paid part-time faculty teaching lecture, seminar or Mannes College (a music conservatory at The New School) courses by 9 to 15 percent in the first year of the contract, depending on how many “contact hours” (class hours) they teach. The current minimum for a 45 contact-hour course is \$4,300. The lowest-paid part-time studio and lab instructors will see a raise of 12 to 19 percent, also depending on how many instructional hours they teach. Instructors who are currently paid above the minimum rate will see smaller raises.

Given the estimated 19 percent rise in the cost of living since their last raise, the new contract would mean that the overwhelming majority of part-time faculty members will continue to suffer cuts in real wages. Even UAW officials admit the compensation rates are low and below comparable universities.

In October, the bargaining committee proposed “a major shift in the way that the university compensates part-time faculty” and was demanding \$14,000 per 45-hour course, citing the Modern Language Association’s (MLA) compensation recommendations for part-time faculty. But now, under the oversight of a federal mediator, the bargaining committee agreed to just \$5,125 (studio/lab) or \$6,475 (lecture/seminar/Mannes College) per 45-hour course. This would go up to \$6,875 or \$7,820 respectively by the end of the five-year agreement in 2026.

One of the demands of striking faculty was compensation for the many tasks instructors perform outside the classroom without pay. The tentative agreement gives a mere \$400 per course for this important out-of-class work in the first year.

Another key demand of the strikers is job security for new faculty. Currently, part-time faculty members gain job security and become “annualized”—ensuring the university reappoints faculty each year—after 10 semesters, or 5 years. Adjuncts on the picket line told *World Socialist Web Site*

reporters that it was common for part-time teachers to be fired after teaching their ninth consecutive semester.

The new agreement fails to address this and merely changes the necessary time to gain job security from ten to nine semesters. The university will still have a free hand to lay off a worker before reaching the necessary time.

As for health insurance, the new agreement expands health care eligibility to instructors who teach one 90-contact-hour course (down from two), while it raises annual premiums by 3 to 5 percent.

Significantly, the one contract term that has a considerable increase in university funding is the “union rep fund.” According to the proposal, the university will increase its payment to UAW reps by 55 percent, from \$90,000 a year to \$140,000, and the number of reps will increase from five to ten. This is, no doubt, only a down payment to the UAW bureaucracy for selling out the strike.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) urges The New School part-time adjuncts to campaign for a rejection of this sellout tentative agreement. The UAW 7902 bargaining committee should be removed and replaced by a committee, which is elected by the rank and file and committed to fight for workers’ demands. At the same time, New School workers must form a rank-and-file strike committee to fight for the immediate resumption of the strike, and the mobilization of undergrads, full-time faculty and broader sections of the working class in New York City to win the strike.

It is absurd to think that The New School cannot afford to pay part-time faculty living wages above inflation. The private university has an endowment and other assets of over \$1.2 billion, and vast private equity, real estate and other investments. Its board of trustees includes former and current executives from corporate giants like Avon Products and Duracell, along with various financial firms controlling massive assets.

Part-time instructors have won widespread support from students and workers at the university, throughout New York City and beyond. The day before the strike ended, The New School student supporters began a 24/7 occupation of the University Center in response to the administration’s threat that it would withhold pay and health care benefits from adjuncts if they continued striking. Students issued a list of demands, including a tuition refund for lost instruction time, a tuition freeze, the resignation of President McBride, the disbandment of the board of trustees and its replacement by a body run by the school’s faculty and students.

A school-wide vote of no confidence in the current administration and board of trustees has already been signed by over 1,000 students, staff, part-time and full-time faculty, alumni, parents and other New School community members.

As important as these expressions of opposition are, the fight against the subordination of academic life to private profit can only be successful if it is expanded beyond the campus.

Part-time faculty are part of the working class and, like millions of workers in the city, the country and the world, they face the same problems and confront the same enemies: the powerful corporate and financial powers and their political representatives. This was demonstrated clearly when the US Congress and the Biden administration intervened to block a strike by 120,000 railroad workers earlier this month and imposed a pro-company contract, which workers previously rejected. This dictatorial measure was backed by both corporate-controlled parties, including so-called progressives in the Democratic Party like New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

New School academic workers must take the conduct of the struggle out of the hands of the UAW bureaucracy and fight for the broader mobilization of the working class, independent of the union bureaucracy and the Democratic Party, who are both bitterly hostile to the interests of workers.

Educators and students at The New School should appeal to students and youth, faculty and educators, health care and transit workers, as well as industrial workers, to develop a powerful counteroffensive against capitalism and the social inequality, dictatorship and war it produces.



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