

*Introducing*

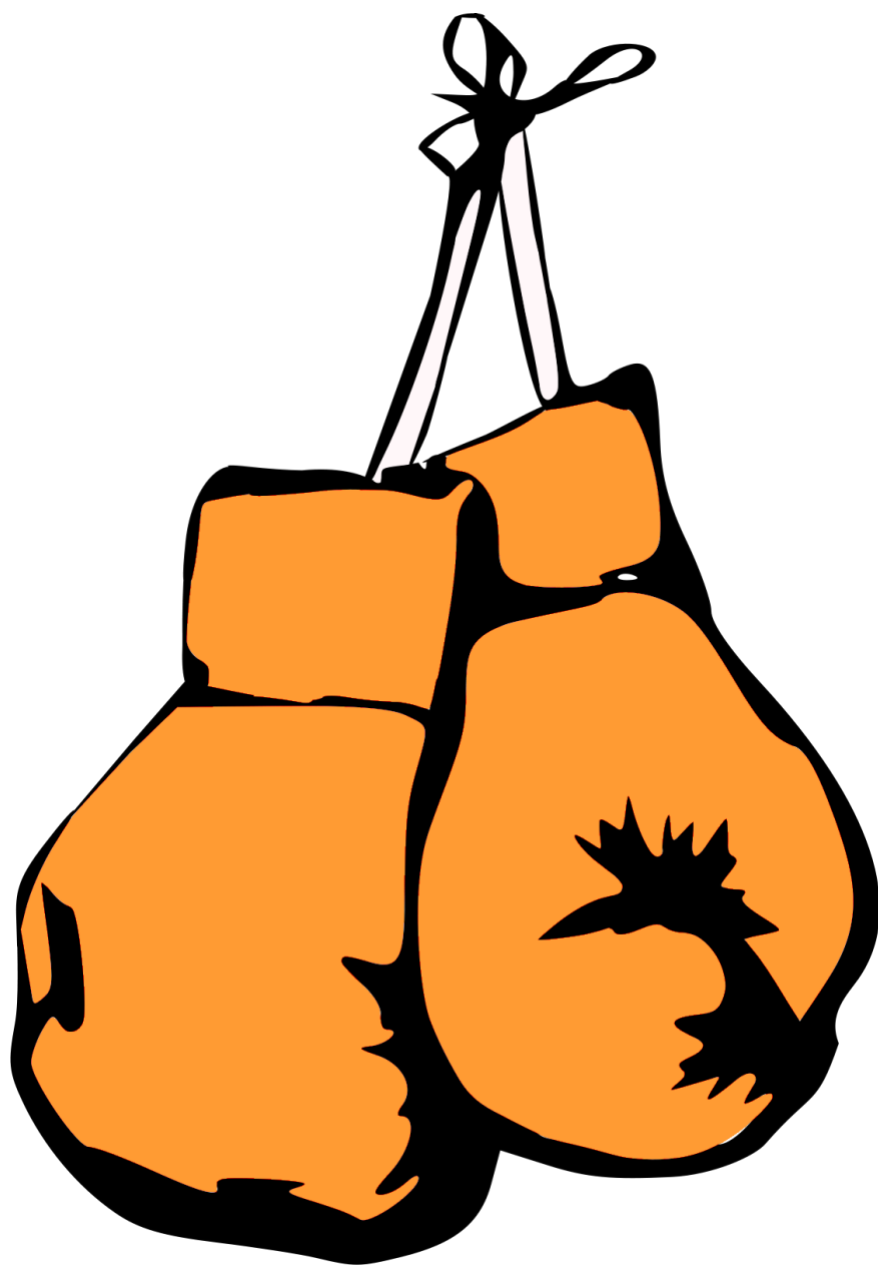
# CLASS STRUGGLE

The CRC Newsletter



SPRING 2019

ISSUE 1



## **In this issue**

- 1. Note from the Board**
- 2. CRC Union Update**
- 3. National Movement News**
- 4. Grad school is hard –  
organizing doesn't have to be.**
- 5. Strategy & Tactics**

**What does Mark Kennedy mean for the CRC?**  
**Alex Wolf-Root**

**Understanding “Strike-Ready”**  
**Janet Ruppert**

- 6. Meme Zone**
- 7. Summer Calendar**



# Note from the Board

Thanks for reading the inaugural issue of *Class Struggle*. We, the members of the board of directors for the Committee on Rights and Compensation (CRC), are excited by this organization's growth over the past 3 years.

Since incorporating as a 501(c)(4) in 2017, we have grown our network of department leaders, mobilized effectively for a spectacular rally and fee waiver campaign, and exceeded the membership goals we set out in 2018.

Among a year of bright spots, we are especially proud of our work training new leaders for the struggles ahead. Indeed, the majority of this new board are in their first year of graduate school at CU Boulder.

As we say goodbye to our previous board and to our wonderful comrades who have finished their time at CU, this new group of CRC organizers represent an important moment for the long-term stability of our union.

We look forward to seeing where our new organizers will take the CRC, and we are excited for the future of our union.

This issue of *Class Struggle* highlights important lessons from our history and prospects for action yet to come. Please read, share, and enjoy this newsletter with your colleagues.

Signed,

Janet Ruppert  
Brandon Daniels  
Kylene Solvik  
Tarah Donoghue  
Peter Shaffery

**The CRC Board**



# Union Update

## **Spring 2019 Growth Summary**

For the CRC to have any influence over the university, we need power. Power is determined by many different factors, but membership is the strongest and most reliable form of power.

In the past year, we have more than doubled in size. While 270 members is only ~10% of the 2500 graduate workers at CU, we have a foothold in nearly every department on campus.

With our current level of organization, we can influence a sphere far greater than just our membership.

For example, at the Fee Waiver Walkout we mobilized three times the number of our dues-paying members.

Nonetheless, every new member further extends that sphere of influence. Moving forward, we need to place a greater emphasis on membership in every conversation about the union. We need members in every laboratory, classroom, and office on campus. You can help us get there.

[www.bouldercrc.org/join](http://www.bouldercrc.org/join)



## **BFA Support**

This past February the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) stood in solidarity with graduate workers by passing a resolution calling on the CU Boulder Administration to waive fees for graduate workers.

This follows a similar BFA resolution passed last year calling for a living wage for graduate workers.

Indeed, our petition which launched the fee waiver campaign was signed by over 130 current CU faculty members.

Faculty at CU understand that graduate workers are underpaid and overcharged, and they are acting accordingly.

It's time for the administration to listen to their faculty and graduate students. Fee waiver now!





# Movement News

## **Two big items:**

- 1. Grads at UNC won a fee waiver!**
- 2. 2-week long strike in Chicago ends victoriously**

More and more graduate workers around the country are calling for an end to student fees.

The following schools have organized campaigns for a fee waiver:

- University of Wisconsin
- University of Illinois
- West Virginia University
- UNC Chapel Hill
- Stony Brook University
- University of Georgia

And more universities will soon have a fight on their hands. Grads at other schools have reached out to the CRC because of our campaign!

## Victory at UNC!

As of this semester, all eligible graduate workers at UNC, including instructors, teaching and research assistants, will no longer pay the annual \$1900 in student fees.

[On UNC's website](#), they explain that this waiver is necessary to remain a competitive graduate program. CU Boulder is a flagship state school, just like Chapel Hill, and the cost of our fees used to be almost identical. We may become non-competitive.

Most of all, graduate students should learn from the example set by grads at UNC. While they do not have a legally recognized union, graduate students there are organized and calling for change. Last semester, graduate workers voted to go on strike to stop the protection of a racist statue on campus. The recent decision to waive all fees for graduate students is inseparable from their use of the strike last semester.

## Strike at University of Illinois Wins!

After two-weeks of picket lines and empty class rooms, graduate workers at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) [have reached an agreement](#) with their university for an increase in pay and decreases in health care costs and student fees.

This strike was meticulously planned by student organizers in Chicago. After months of failed negotiations with the university, the union at UIC (GEO) began to prepare for a strike.

They held an in-person strike authorization vote with a majority of graduate students participating. After the date was set, organizers began determining strike captains, held trainings for the picket lines, and prepared to pressure the administration.

Going on strike is not easy, but the rewards are worth it. Graduate workers everywhere should consider what we can win together.



# Tips for Organizing

## **Help your colleagues stop late paychecks!**

We've added a web tool to the CRC's website: [www.bouldercrc.org/wagetheft](http://www.bouldercrc.org/wagetheft)

Filling out this form automatically notifies the university that they have 14 days to pay you, or they may be required to pay an additional 125% for the mistake.

On our tight budgets, every paycheck is needed to survive. When those paychecks come late, it makes us vulnerable. The university takes the same slow pace to pay us as it does with any administrative task. Graduate students are regularly forced to accept paychecks that come two weeks to over a month later than promised.

Unions are about solidarity. Our best tool for fighting wage theft is each other. If we fight every instance of wage theft together, the university will be forced to fix this issue.

Once a complaint is filed on our online tool, another CRC member will reach out and assist you through the process. Make sure everyone in your department knows about this tool!



## Strategy and Tactics

This section of *Class Struggle* is dedicated to publishing the views of graduate workers at CU. In order for our union to be successful, it must be democratic. Democracy isn't just voting for board members once a year, but a continuous process of reaching consensus. Since not every worker can attend all meetings, watch the Slack channel at all hours, and be fully involved, this space can hopefully serve as a forum for debates over strategy, sharing lessons from organizing, and general reflections on higher education. If you are interested in publishing a short (250 word) memo, send an email to: ***[classstruggle@bouldercrc.org](mailto:classstruggle@bouldercrc.org)***

# What does Mark Kennedy mean for the CRC?

By Alex Wolf-Root

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Regents selected Mark Kennedy as the sole finalist for University of Colorado president. Here are just some of the reasons why he is a terrible choice:

## As a Congressperson:

- In 2003, the [ACLU gave him a 0% rating](#). Zero.
- He cosponsored the [2006 Constitutional Amendment](#) to ban same-sex marriage.
- He voted to restrict grassroots political action committees while voting against campaign finance reforms.
- He voted to restrict healthcare benefits, including to restrict a women's right to choose.

## As a university administrator:

- [Gave raises & perks to friends](#) to work for his office despite living out of state.
- (Allegedly) [discriminated against staffers](#) due to their sexual orientation.
- Created a “[repressive culture](#)” where employees were scared of retaliation.

A Kennedy presidency would likely be one in which graduate workers – and really all workers – are

further devalued. Kennedy is likely to treat CU as a business, and as [CU Professor Keegan explains, he wasn't even a good businessperson](#). One possible bright side is that Kennedy has so much bad press against him already that our future efforts to shame the University into treating its workers with respect are likely to gain more traction. But there's no doubt that we will continue to face an uphill battle if he does become CU's new president.

## **Understanding “Strike-Ready”**

**By Janet Ruppert  
CRC Board Member**

If we are going to win a full fee waiver, we have to be prepared to hit the University where it hurts the most: withholding our essential labor, which keeps research labs running, classes and recitations taught, administrative offices staffed, and more.

We need to organize a united front of graduate students, from every college, prepared to walk out at any moment. This is what being strike-ready means.

The huge number of people in our bargaining unit and our broad reach across campus make a strike our most effective tool, but also the most challenging to coordinate. Strike-readiness ensures that our



base is unified, secure, and committed if the time comes to walk the picket lines.

By laying the groundwork for success, strike preparation is as important as the strike itself.

How can we become strike-ready?

We need to offer trainings for graduate students in the language and tactics of our strike.

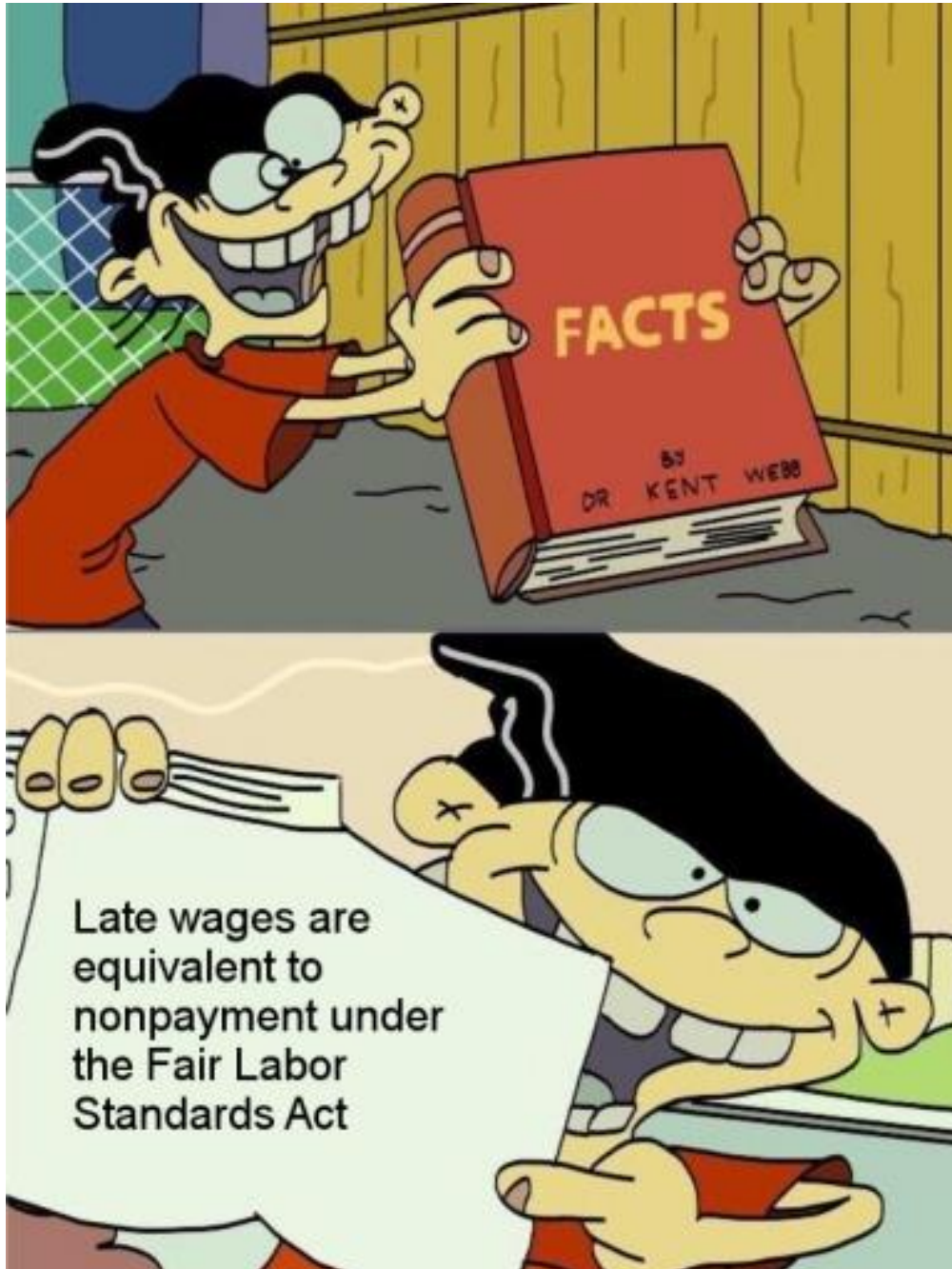
We need at least one graduate student in each department and office comfortable speaking with their fellow workers about the importance of our movement and the power of mobilizing.

We need signs, slogans, and songs ready.

We need a commitment to our goals so strong that we are willing to delay grading, researching, teaching -- any and all workplace duties -- until the strike is over.

# Meme Zone

Meme-zone is the name of a channel on slack where organizers share memes about the university. Email us to join our slack!





# CRC Calendar

**MAY**

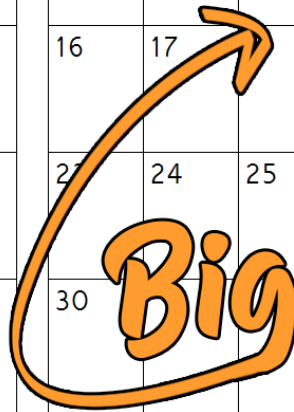
**2019**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Two Day Retreat and Skill Build
12 Two Day Retreat and Skill Build	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**JUNE**

**2019**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Board of Regents Meeting in Boulder Protest for Fee Waiver	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



**Big Deal**

# Class Struggle Issue 1 Spring 2019

---

**Contact:**

**Editor:**

**Art Director:**

**[info@bouldercrc.org](mailto:info@bouldercrc.org)**

**Brandon Daniels**

**Interested? Email us!**