

# **The Effects of Graduate–Student Unionization on Stipends**

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# This Presentation

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# Purpose of this Study

- Since the 1970s, graduate assistants (GAs) have unionized on campuses.
- There is little empirical data on the impact of unionization on the GA's stipends.
- The purpose of this study is to measure any effects of unionization.

# GA Unionization Background

- First campus to unionize was University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1969.
- The ability for state universities to organize depends on state law.
  - Some states allow unionization and collective bargaining, other states do not allow collective bargaining, while others bar all forms.
- Unions at private universities depend on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)
  - Until 2001, GAs were not allowed to unionize. In 2005, GAs were barred from unionizing again.

# Related Literature

- Ehrenberg, Klaff, Kezbom, & Nagowski is the only other study investigating GA unions.
- Their study showed that stipends for nonunion campuses rise *faster* than unionized campuses.
- Further evidence can be gathered from studies of post–secondary faculty unions.
- Studies found that coefficients (usually positive) depended on a few key variables”
  - Length of organization
  - Cost–of–living
  - Union types

# Data Set

- Collected from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions (CGEU).
- *Chronicle of Higher Education* provided stipends amounts, institution, majors, health care coverage, and pay period.
- CGEU provided the “type” of unionization and years organized.
- Other variables were collected from public data sources (e.g. Census Bureau).

# Model

- Types of unionization:
  - Coverage - unions were allowed to form and collectively bargain.
  - Membership - unions are allowed to form, but not collectively bargain.
- Length of organization
- Region (west, midwest, northeast, south)
- Major (economics, biology, English, mechanical engineering)
- Institution type (e.g. public or private)
- Pay period (annual or academic year)
- Health–care coverage (student and/or spouse)

# Results

UCOV	−0.026386	PUBLIC	−0.1533**
UMEM	−0.003669	NORTHEAST	0.1125**
YRSORG	N/A	MIDWEST	0.07897**
ANNUAL	N/A	WEST	0.1498**
ENGLISH	−0.08468**	STUDENT	0.05078*
ECONOMICS	−0.02739	SPOUSE	N/A
BIOLOGY	0.06433*		
$\alpha$	9.732**	$n$	155
$\bar{R}^2$	0.3383		

\* indicates significance at the 10 percent level

\*\* indicates significance at the 5 percent level



# Conclusion

- The conclusion of this study is that unionization does not seem to impact wages.
- The student's major and location seems to be major influences.
- Why then do students unionize?
- There are other potential explanations:
  - Bargaining only helps certain majors.
  - Bargaining increases the chance for health–care coverage.
  - Wage increases may only been seen in longitudinal studies.
- For more information see <http://genericface.com/egsus>