



Embargoed Until Monday, May 22, 2017 at 10:30am  
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## THOUSANDS OF YALE GRADUATE TEACHERS AND ALLIES DEMONSTRATE AT GRADUATION, CONGRATULATE GRADUATES, AND DEMAND NEGOTIATIONS

NEW HAVEN — Thousands of Yale graduate teachers and allies gathered outside of Yale University's commencement ceremony in a massive demonstration Monday morning to congratulate the graduates—many of them union members—and demand that Yale begin union contract negotiations with graduate teachers in eight departments. The demonstration came following a month of [escalating daily protests](#) including [a fast](#) by eight union members.

"Graduate teachers voted to unionize months ago and the results were certified by the federal government, but still Yale refuses to negotiate with the certified units," said Local 33-UNITE HERE Chair Aaron Greenberg, a PhD candidate in the Political Science Department. "Today we celebrate all that we've accomplished and we say to Yale with one voice—this is just the beginning."

Thousands of graduate teachers and allies gathered on Yale's campus in downtown New Haven wearing orange t-shirts and mortarboards and signs saying "Just the beginning, Yale." Large columns of demonstrators marched around the city separately before converging outside of Yale's Old Campus, where the Commencement proceedings were held.

The massive crowd sang "We Shall Not Be Moved" while observing the procession of Yale President Peter Salovey and the members of the Yale Corporation, then applauded the graduates who followed them. "It felt great to see all those people out there. Some of the graduate teachers in that crowd were formative mentors for me," said graduating senior Hudson McCormick. "That movement represents the best of Yale, and I'm glad my family and my classmates got to witness it."

Graduate teachers in eight departments voted to unionize in February, but Yale has refused to negotiate, delaying for a chance at securing a more favorable hearing from a National Labor Relations Board reconstituted with Trump appointees. Yale's own [labor](#) and [legal scholars](#) have denounced this move.

In recent weeks the graduate teachers' call for Yale to negotiate with the eight department units has garnered support from national elected officials, academics, and activists including DNC Chair Tom Perez, DNC Deputy Chair U.S. Representative Keith Ellison, DNC Vice Chair Maria Elena Durazo, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown, U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO General Counsel and former NLRB member Craig Becker, Grammy award-winning singer Melissa Etheridge, Pulitzer Prize-winning writers Junot Díaz and Viet Nguyen, Barbara Ehrenreich, and endowed faculty from leading universities around the world, including celebrated French economist Thomas Piketty.

"I am deeply inspired by the resolve of Yale's graduate teachers as they fight for better wages, benefits, and protections," said Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez. "To those fasting in New Haven, and to any worker fighting for a fairer contract, know that you have a fierce ally in the Democratic Party."

Graduate teachers engaged in a fast to protest the University's refusal to negotiate, not eating or drinking anything except water. Following the demonstration, union members and allies gathered on New Haven's Church Street to celebrate and break the fast.

LGBTQ rights activist Cleve Jones addressed the crowd, "The members of Local 33 have not only fought bravely for justice and a voice. They've also built a community of love and solidarity. Once you've done that, nothing will stop you."