

# COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

between

THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION FOR THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

and

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA, LOCAL 1104

August 28, 2020 to June 30, 2023

## 1. AGREEMENT

- 1.1. This Agreement is by and between The Research Foundation for The State University of New York ("RF") and The Communications Workers of America, Local 1104 ("Union").

## 2. RECOGNITION

- 2.1. The RF, pursuant to the certification issued in 29-RC-11666, recognizes the Communications Workers of America, Local 1104, as the exclusive bargaining representative for collective bargaining with respect to wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment of Research Project Assistants ("RPA") employed by the RF.

## 3. MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

- 3.1. Management retains all rights and powers not limited by an explicit provision of this Agreement. These rights include without limitation the right to take any action, make any decision, and make any change with respect to all aspects of the business and the workplace. The only exception to this rule is that management may not violate an explicit provision of this Agreement.
- 3.2. Management has the sole and exclusive right to determine the number of bargaining unit positions; the number and types of job positions; qualifications, duties, responsibilities, standards of performance and standards of conduct; and the availability of work. Management may establish and enforce any rules, regulations and procedures, provided only that they do not violate an explicit provision of this Agreement.
- 3.3. There are no limitations on management's right to assign work to persons outside the bargaining unit, including but not limited to supervisors and subcontractors, regardless of whether that work has been or is normally performed by bargaining unit members. There are no limitations on management's right to take any action or to make any changes in accordance with the terms of the applicable sponsored project and/or the wishes of the applicable sponsoring agency.

- 3.4. The right to reasonably accommodate disabled persons in accordance with applicable laws, notwithstanding other provisions of this Agreement, is vested exclusively with the RF.

#### **4. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

- 4.1. The parties understand and agree that the relationship between a Principal Investigator ("PI") and a bargaining unit member is both academic and supervisory in nature. Academic issues are outside the scope of this Agreement.

#### **5. LETTER OF APPOINTMENT**

- 5.1. A Letter of Appointment will be issued by the RF to each bargaining unit member and will include the following information:
  1. Appointment title;
  2. Effective date of appointment and anticipated end date of appointment, subject to available funds and academic eligibility;
  3. A statement that bargaining unit members are expected to perform duties in scholarly and scientific investigation;
  4. Salary at time of appointment;
  5. Benefits information;

A statement that the position is covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the RF and the RA Union, CWA Local 1104 and that further RA Union information is available at: <http://cwarauion.org/node/306>; (The Research Foundation is not responsible for the accuracy or updating of the link to be provided in the Letter of Appointment or to any content to which the link directs the bargaining unit member).

- 5.2. The RF will forward a copy to the affected unit member whenever it processes an Employee Change form. The RF encourages all PIs to notify RPAs as soon as practicable of changes in funding that will affect their appointment.
- 5.3. Providing the information in 5.1 via the Letter of Appointment shall be the RF's sole obligation to provide RA Union information to bargaining unit members

#### **6. EVALUATIONS**

- 6.1. Supervisors or PIs may perform written performance evaluations of RPAs in which case the evaluation will be shared with the RPA and placed in his/her personnel file. If no evaluation is provided, up to once per academic year the RPA may submit a request for an evaluation to RF's Human Resources officer who will then formally request that the supervisor or PI complete at least an abbreviated evaluation form which will be shared with the RPA and placed in his/her personnel file. The parties acknowledge and agree that no

performance evaluation may be used for the purpose of challenging a course grade or other academic determination.

## **7 PERSONNEL FILES**

- 7.1. RPAs may examine the contents of their personnel file by appointment with Human Resources, except for recommendations or letters of reference. Such appointments will be made within one to two business days of the request. A Human Resources representative will be present and no material may be removed, copied or taken from the file. If the RPA chooses, he/she may be accompanied by a union representative.
- 7.2. RPAs may prepare a written response to any statement or information contained in their personnel file, and such response will be placed in their personnel file.

## **8 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

- 8.1. The RF or its agents will conduct general orientation and/or training programs, such as an annual benefits program, and training provided by SBU's Environmental, Health and Safety office. Additional training may be provided as determined by the respective laboratories or programs.
- 8.2. If a bargaining unit member believes that additional training is needed, the individual may submit a written request for such additional training to his/her PI or supervisor. Such requests will be acknowledged in writing.
- 8.3. At the annual benefits program, the Union will be given space to set up a table adjacent to the entrance to provide information to bargaining unit members, provided such information is not critical of the RF, the University or any individual.

## **9 SAFETY**

- 9.1. All safety equipment and/or training required by RF and/or SBU policies, procedures and directives will be provided at no cost to individuals in the bargaining unit.

## **10 NO DISCRIMINATION**

- 10.1. Bargaining unit members will not be discriminated against by either RF or the Union based on race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual preference, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, disability, age, veteran status, or any other factor protected by applicable law. Further, the parties acknowledge that discrimination should not be tolerated based on any factor that is not relevant to his/her job duties. Alleged discrimination on grounds other than those protected by applicable law may be raised by bargaining unit members and/or their Union representative but will not be subject to a section 301 lawsuit, or an unfair labor practice charge, or the grievance process herein.

## **11 DISCIPLINE**

- 11.1. RPAs are subject to discipline up to and including separation from employment for unsatisfactory performance and/or inappropriate behavior, including non-compliance with RF policies and procedures,

SBU policies and procedures, specific Lab or Program policies and procedures, work-related instructions, and/or the provisions of this Agreement.

- 11.2. No bargaining unit member shall be disciplined without good cause. Discipline should be progressive, and initiated by a documented Verbal Counseling, except for the most serious offenses. Disciplinary actions include a Written Warning, Suspension, or Discharge from employment. Employees who receive a disciplinary action will be given an opportunity to respond in writing.
- 11.3. At Verbal Counselings, the RPA may choose to be accompanied by another RPA.
- 11.4. A Performance Improvement Plan ("PIP") may be implemented for serious and/or recurring offenses, and/or as a step in progressive discipline. The PIP is a formal plan of correction for a specified time period, usually 30, 60 or 90 days, by the end of which the employee must meet certain objectives.
- 11.5. The University's final determination that an individual's student status is suspended or terminated shall constitute good cause for the RF's suspension or termination of such employee as a RPA.
- 11.6. A Program Sponsor's decision to bar or remove an employee from its program shall constitute good cause for the RF's termination of the employee from such sponsored program.

## 12. STIPEND

- 12.1. All bargaining unit members are paid on an exempt salaried basis up to a maximum of 20 hours per week (.50 full-time equivalent "FTE") during the academic year and up to a maximum of 40 hours per week (1.0 FTE) during the summer. In most cases, PhD students who are not also employed by the State are appointed to a .50 FTE position during the academic year, and during the summer they are appointed to either a .50 FTE position or up to a 1.0 FTE position; but such appointments are subject to available funding and program needs as determined by the PI.
- 12.2. Research Project Assistants who (1) are on the active RF payroll on the date this contract is ratified or (2) hold an appointment letter which includes the date of ratification and ends after the date of ratification and have performed services for the RF on the date of ratification shall receive an increase of \$17.31 in their bi-weekly salary in Year One of the Contract (from date of ratification to the first anniversary of ratification). Research Project Assistants appointed after the date of ratification or whose appointments terminated before the date of ratification shall not be eligible for the Year One increase.
- 12.3. Research Project Assistants who (1) are on the active RF payroll on the first anniversary of the date of ratification or (2) hold an appointment letter which includes the first anniversary of the date of ratification and ends after the first anniversary of the date of ratification and have performed services for the RF on the date of ratification shall receive an increase of \$17.31 in their bi-weekly salary in Year Two of the Contract (from date of the first anniversary of ratification to the second anniversary of ratification). Research Project Assistants appointed after the first anniversary of the date of ratification or whose appointments terminated before the first anniversary of the date of ratification shall not be eligible for the Year Two increase.

- 12.4. Research Project Assistants who (1) are on the active RF payroll on the second anniversary of the date of ratification or (2) hold an appointment letter which includes the second anniversary of the date of ratification and ends after the second anniversary of the date of ratification and have performed services for the RF on the date of ratification shall receive an increase of \$17.31 in their bi-weekly salary in Year Three of the Contract (from the date of the second anniversary of ratification to the third anniversary of ratification). Research Project Assistants appointed after the second anniversary of the date of ratification or whose appointments terminated before the second anniversary of the date of ratification shall not be eligible for the Year Three increase.
- 12.5. Research project assistants on a full/half assistanceship are generally expected to provide 20/10 hours of service per week. Employees in the bargaining unit are engaged in professional activities of such a nature that the output produced or the result accomplished often cannot be precisely measured in relation to any given period of time. It is therefore anticipated that there will be reasonable fluctuations above and below these general expectations.
- 12.6. Research Assistants are not expected to perform non-critical work that is not essential to the research they are performing on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. No compensatory holiday leave pay shall be granted to an employee who is required to perform work on one or more of the foregoing holidays.
- 12.7. Research Project Assistants who perceive they are working in excess of the 20/10 hours of service per week or are asked to work outside of normal academic hours an unreasonable number of times may contact the Graduate School Advocate and/or the Union.

### **13. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

- 13.1 RF will establish a \$25,000 annual professional development fund ("PDF") to assist RPAs in paying for conference fees. \$12,500 will be available at the beginning of each of the fall and spring semesters. PIs will apply for reimbursement of conference fees on behalf of RPAs on a first-come, first served basis for each semester.

### **14. HEALTH, DENTAL AND VISION BENEFITS**

- 14.1. Bargaining unit members are eligible to participate in the RF's health insurance, dental and vision benefit plans for Graduate Student Employees. The RF shall notify the Union and all bargaining unit members no less than thirty (30) days prior to any change in health, dental or vision benefits.

### **15. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- 15.1. The purpose of this Article is to provide a fair and effective procedure for identifying and resolving disputes regarding the interpretation or application of this Agreement as specified below. It is understood that neither party will attempt to circumvent the grievance procedure by commencing an action under section 301 of the National Labor Relations Act during the term of this Agreement. This procedure shall not apply to any academic matters.

15.2. A Grievance is defined as a dispute or disagreement over the application of, interpretation of, or compliance with, an express term of this Agreement.

15.3. **Step One.** The Union or bargaining unit member who wishes to file a grievance must deliver to Human Resources Services ("HRS") a written grievance within forty (40) calendar days of when the affected bargaining unit member first knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation. The written grievance must clearly identify the case and contain the following information: (1) the date of the first known instance of the alleged violation; (2) the specific term or provision of the Agreement claimed to be violated; (3) a description of the facts giving rise to the grievance; (4) the specific remedy being sought; (5) the signature of the person submitting the grievance; (6) a statement whether the person who submitted the grievance requests a grievance meeting with HRS; and (7) the date signed. If the written grievance fails to satisfy any of the enumerated requirements it shall not be considered a proper grievance. HRS will notify the person submitting the grievance within ten (10) days of receipt of the grievance of its insufficiency. The person filing the grievance shall have ten (10) days to correct the insufficiency and resubmit the grievance.

A proper written grievance will be evaluated by an HRS Representative and a written response to the grievance will be issued within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt. The HRS Representative will meet with the affected bargaining unit member and his/her Union Representative upon request for the purpose of presenting the grievance. The HRS Representative will notify the Principal Investigator prior to the meeting and invite him or her to attend. If such a Step One meeting is held, then the written response to the grievance will be issued within thirty (30) calendar days of the meeting.

15.4. **Step Two.** If the matter is not resolved in Step One, the grievance may be advanced to Step Two by submitting a written appeal to HRS within thirty (30) calendar days of the Step One Response. The grievance will be reviewed by a representative of RF Central Office and a written Step Two decision will be issued within thirty (30) calendar days of the Step Two appeal. Except as otherwise provided herein, any issue that is not resolved in Step Two will be addressed in the negotiations for a successor Agreement. Any RF action resulting in a reduction in pay or benefits, or the withholding of a scheduled across-the-board pay increase, and not resolved in Step Two may be advanced to Step Three. However, reductions made by a PI based on sponsored funding needs are within the PI's sole discretion and are not subject to arbitration. In addition, any reductions made by RF pursuant to a system-wide change for all RPAs across the SUNY campuses are not subject to arbitration.

15.5. **Step Three-Arbitration.** For those issues that have not been resolved in Step Two and are subject to arbitration, the Union can advance the grievance to Step Three by submitting a written notice to HRS within thirty (30) calendar days of the Step Two Response. The Union must simultaneously file a Demand for Arbitration with the American Arbitration Association ("AAA") which will administer the case in accordance with the AAA Rules for Labor Arbitrations.

The Arbitrator shall not add to, subtract from, modify or alter the explicit terms or provisions of this Agreement. The jurisdiction of the Arbitrator shall arise solely from this Agreement and the Arbitrator shall be limited to the determination of the Grievance as described in the underlying Step Two Request. The Arbitrator shall confine the decision and award solely to the application and/or interpretation of this Agreement. Where provisions of this Agreement call for the exercise of judgment, the Arbitrator shall not substitute the Arbitrator's judgment for that of the employer's official making such judgment.

All administrative fees will be borne by the party filing the Demand for Arbitration. All fees and expenses of the Arbitrator will be divided equally between RF and the Union. Each party shall bear the cost of presenting its own case.

The parties will request that the Arbitrator shall issue a decision in writing within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing. The Arbitrator's decision shall be final and binding on the RF and the Union. Any determination by the Arbitrator in regard to benefits must be in accordance with the RF's plan document. If the Arbitrator finds that the RF caused a reduction in pay or benefits in violation of an express provision of this Agreement, the remedy will be to reinstate the conditions preceding RF's action and to reimburse the affected employee(s) the amount by which their pay or benefits were reduced; provided however, that such reimbursement shall be limited to thirty (30) calendar days prior to the date of initiating the grievance.

The RF will not call as a witness in the arbitration hearing any employee represented by the Union, unless such witness is issued a subpoena to testify. The Union will not call as a witness in the arbitration hearing any non-bargaining unit employee represented by the Union, unless such witness is issued a subpoena to testify.

15.6. **Time Limits.** The time limits set forth in this Article shall be strictly enforced and may only be extended by mutual written agreement. Grievances that are not commenced and/or advanced to the next step within the specified time limit are waived. A grievance may be withdrawn at any time by the Union or the employee.

## 16. UNION MEMBERSHIP

16.1. The RF and the Union agree to respect the right of each individual in the bargaining unit to decide whether to join the Union or not join the Union. Neither the RF nor the Union will discriminate against any individual in the bargaining unit based on the choice that he/she makes.

## 17. UNION SECURITY

17.1. As a condition of employment, every RPA covered by this Agreement shall, within thirty (30) days from appointment or within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Agreement (whichever is later), either execute a Union membership card, or pay a service fee to the Union if the individual decides not to become a member of the Union. In either case, individuals may exercise their right under *Communications Workers v. Beck*, 487 U.S. 735 (1988), to pay only that portion of the dues or service fee that the Union uses for collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjustment; and excluding that portion of the dues or service fee that the Union uses for other purposes such as political activity. The Union will ensure that union membership cards and union dues/service fee deduction forms contain language notifying RPAs of their *Beck* rights.

17.2. During the term of this Agreement, to the extent authorized by a signed written statement from each bargaining unit member which is revocable at any time, the RF will deduct from their wages such dues or service fees as specified in writing by the Union. The RF will remit such funds to the Union with a list of the names, departments and amounts for each bargaining unit member on a monthly basis. Under no circumstances, however, will the RF have any financial liability to the Union in the event of any oversights or errors. The Union shall indemnify and hold harmless the RF against any and all claims, demands, suits, judgments, settlements, or any other forms of liability, including the costs of defense, arising out of or by

reason of any action taken or not taken by the RF for purposes of complying with any provision of this Article.

17.3. This is a link to the RA Union membership card <http://cwaraunion.org/node/306/>

## **18. LISTS OF BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS**

18.1. Upon request up to three times per calendar year, the RF will provide the Union with a list of the names, addresses, salaries, department, and Supervisor and/or Principal Investigator ("PI") of all bargaining unit members. The list will be provided in an electronic format within two weeks of the request.

## **19. ACCESS FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES**

19.1. The Union will give the RF written notice of the representatives including name and contact information who are authorized to administer this Agreement, and of any changes to its authorized representatives. Such authorized representatives will be granted reasonable access to bargaining unit members for purposes of contract administration, provided that they do not interfere with anyone who is working and do not enter any laboratories without advance written permission from a designated RF representative at Stony Brook.

## **20. NO STRIKES OR LOCKOUTS**

20.1. During the term of this Agreement, neither the Union nor its officers or members shall engage in any work stoppage, sympathy strike, sick out, slow-down, boycott of the RF or picketing (excluding informational picketing). The Union will actively discourage any such activity by any bargaining unit members. Individuals who violate this provision are subject to immediate discharge (unless the RF decides to impose a lesser penalty within its sole discretion), and the only issue that may be grieved is whether or not the individual was engaged in the prohibited activity. RF will not lockout any bargaining unit members during the term of this Agreement.

## **21. COMPLETE AGREEMENT**

21.1. This document sets forth the final and complete terms of the Agreement between the parties with respect to all subjects addressed herein. The written terms of this Agreement supersede any and all prior agreements, understandings, representations and discussions between the parties with respect to any and all issues. No third-party shall infer nor impose any obligation that is not explicitly provided herein.

21.2. During the term of this Agreement, the parties waive bargaining with respect to any action, decision or omission. The Union's sole and exclusive remedy for any management action, decision or omission that is alleged to be improper shall be the grievance process which is limited to alleged violations of explicit provisions of this Agreement.

## **22. DURATION**

22.1. This Agreement becomes effective upon ratification August 28, 2020 and expires on June 30, 2023. It is understood that if no successor agreement is reached, the terms and conditions of this Agreement will



remain in effect following the expiration date hereof and there shall be no strike or lockout until such time as either party serves the written notifications required by Section 8(d) of the Act.

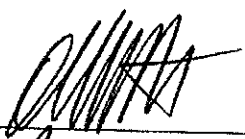
**23. SAVINGS CLAUSE**

23.1. In the event that any provision of this Agreement is found to be in contravention of any Federal, State, City or local law or regulation, or found by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such invalidity shall not impair the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Agreement.

**THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION FOR  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

**COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS  
OF AMERICA, LOCAL 1104**

By: 

By: 

Title: Operations Manager  
Vice President for Research

Title: PRESIDENT