



Office of Representative Verla Insko

North Carolina House of Representatives  
502 Legislative Office Building  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603  
**919-733-7208**

February 2, 2017

Office of the President  
Duke University  
207 Allen Building  
Box 90001  
Durham, North Carolina 27708-0001

Dear President Brodhead,

As a preeminent institution of higher education, Duke University is an important driver of research, education, and our economy in North Carolina. In part, the thousands of graduate student assistants who conduct research and teach courses at Duke enable this important work. As research assistants, they contribute to innovative inquiry that seeks to safeguard human health, revitalize our democracy, and spawn entrepreneurship. As teaching assistants and lead instructors, they mentor and inspire the next generation of leaders.

For all these reasons, we are encouraged by recent efforts by graduate students at Duke to join with a national movement of students and faculty uniting to improve higher education. The National Labor Relations Board's recent decision to restore their right to collectively bargaining was a long time coming.

As graduate students at Duke exercise this right, we urge your administration to commit to the following:

- Allow graduate students a free and fair process to form their union and collectively bargain without intimidation or threats;
- Avoid any action that delays or interferes with the right to seek union representation or collectively bargain;
- If a majority chooses union representation, begin negotiations in good faith without delay.

The collective bargaining process will allow Duke the opportunity to set standards for the larger region. Further, it will create a fair process for employees to improve working conditions and resolve disputes in a fashion that serves the teaching, learning, and research objectives of higher education.

We look forward to working with you on this important effort.

The following members added their signature by email:

Sincerely,

Rep. Verla Insko  
House District 56 – Orange County

Rep. John Autry  
House District 100 – Mecklenburg

Rep. Jean Farmer-Butterfield  
House District 24 - Pitt, Wilson

Rep. Philip A. Lehman  
House District 30 – Durham

Rep. Graig R. Meyer  
House District 50 - Durham, Orange

Rep. Garland E. Pierce  
House District 48 - Hoke, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland

Rep. Shelly Willingham  
House District 23 - Edgecombe, Martin

Rep. Bobbie Richardson  
House District 7 - Franklin, Nash

Rep. Susan C. Fisher  
House District 114- Buncombe