



December 11, 2022

Dear students and faculty,

We are writing to you as members of the New School Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP-TNS), a group affiliated with a national organization. Though we are not a union, we are an advocacy group that represents both full and part-time faculty, as well as other educators on campus. We are also a member of the New School Labor Coalition, which has been instrumental in shaping the moment of faculty-student-staff solidarity we are now in. Our mission is to ensure that The New School is attentive to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized, and we support a people-centered approach to the immense challenges facing our community in moments of crisis.

As members of the faculty, AAUP-TNS is deeply committed to students and education. We have watched with admiration and awe the student organizing that has taken place and the new bonds of solidarity forged between teachers and their students. Last night, the longest part-time faculty strike in U.S. history came to an end. This could not have been accomplished without the solidarity of students. This win is just the beginning of our work, in collaboration with students and staff, to imagine a more just, equitable, and sustainable New School.

Throughout the strike, AAUP-TNS and the part-time faculty union worked closely with a student-led campus advocacy group, [Student-Faculty Solidarity](#), to understand student demands for a re-imagined New School voiced by the Occupation. We are now also aligned with the occupiers of the New School University Center. **This moment—a win for solidarity and a better New School— should not be regarded as a return to “business as usual.”**

**On December 9, the AAUP-TNS voted to adopt the [demands](#) put out by the students currently occupying the University Center.** This is an expression of solidarity with students. The AAUP-TNS also endorses the “[Reuniting With Our Students](#)” statement sent by the Part-Time Faculty Union ACT-UAW Local 7902 on December 11, which includes the following:

- **No student will be penalized for not attending class after the strike.**
- **No student will be penalized for not attending class during the strike.**
- **No student will be penalized for not submitting work during the strike.**
- **No student will be expected to complete new assignments after the strike.**

With this endorsement, the AAUP-TNS encourages its members and all faculty at the New School to adhere to these demands. We further recommend the following:

- 1. Chairs, directors, and school deans should reach out immediately to their list of enrolled students today with a statement, plan, and/or offering of compassion.** Many students are worried about being penalized and do not know who to turn to. Make yourself known as a departmental or program leader, and express your willingness to help and answer questions. Chairs, directors, and deans should also reach out to faculty to help make them aware of student demands and provide guidance.
- 2. Faculty should make class in this remaining week of the semester optional.** Faculty should keep in mind that many students who left during the strike do not have the financial means to return at this time. We encourage faculty to develop a fair and caring plan immediately. Faculty should use this time to reconnect with their students in a meaningful way.
- 3. Faculty should come with students to the occupation, wherever possible, or exercise creativity in addressing the occupation.** Faculty can support the student-led occupation at the University Center in the following ways: 1) hold class in the occupation and support physically after; 2) hold class and bring students to the occupation; 3) teach class about the demands and encourage students to come to the occupation. Meet students at the occupation in the University Center, or join other activities linked to or independent of regularly scheduled classes. We stress that the occupation is a student-led space. We ask that faculty recognize that their role is to support, energize, and bring students to the occupation, rather than to engage in normal “teaching” or otherwise assume roles of authority.
- 4. Faculty should use the grading portal as a tool to act in concert with student demands, which are to issue “A” grades for all students where possible. The grading portal is currently open.** Keep in mind that chairs of departments will be aware of specific objectives that impact graduate students, and we ask faculty to adopt the student demands to the extent they can, considering the profound learning loss students have undergone. The goal of this action is to decouple the mandate for grades from actual learning.
- 5. Students should inform faculty about their particular situation and difficulties, and ask that faculty adopt the grading-related demands of the occupiers of the University Center. Students should also feel empowered to reach out to their course instructors, program directors and department chairs with questions and concerns about their courses and progress through their programs.** For students who don’t know how to reach these folks, go to the website of any program, school, or department, and it will list the name and email address of the right person to contact.

We know that many students have not heard directly from their teachers at this very difficult time, one which has introduced new fears and anxieties into students on the heels of profound disruption. Many questions have arisen, both today and over the course of the strike, and we are available as a resource and channel of communication. Going forward, we recommend that you check in regularly with the Occupation on their [Instagram](#) and [linktree](#), with the [ACT-UAW Local 7902](#), and with the [AAUP-TNS](#) on Instagram. You can always reach out to us at [aauptns@gmail.com](mailto:aauptns@gmail.com) and check in with our [linktree](#), where we regularly provide our statements, newsletters, and other resources about the University and higher education. We are here in struggle and solidarity with you.

AAUP-TNS