

**LETTERS**

**Showing up at protests is 'fundamental'**

**To the Editor:**

Many of us received mail asking us to attend the demonstration in support of New York University (NYU) graduate assistants. Most of us didn't. Even so, UUP was present. In case you haven't heard, UUP President Bill Scheuerman got arrested in solidarity with other labor leaders. This was a demonstration about an important issue: the right to organize and be recognized by employers. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has classified graduate assistants as students, not employees.

When I was a research assistant at Rutgers, I supervised a team of three employees with little or no supervision from my professor, except when I asked for advice. The professor took the data and, with my assistance, wrote journal articles, listing me as a junior author [sometimes]. As a teaching assistant at the University of Maine at Orono, I taught the course with little or no supervision from my professor, except when I asked for advice. I created, administered and scored examinations. I counseled and tutored students. I submitted grades. I fail to see how either of these positions is different from working as a part-time instructor or researcher.

The real problem, though, is that almost none of our people cared enough to show up. There is a lot of Sturm und Drang over how the labor movement is losing ground. We are not getting the public to join us. We are sitting on our butts and "Letting George [not Bush] do it."

Showing up at demonstrations is like voting. It is fundamental. A large part of getting people to let us represent them is showing up and showing that we care.

I am reminded of a Hagar cartoon, in which Hagar and his crew are surrounded by hundreds of armored warriors. Hagar is exhorting his crew: "Come on men, they can't beat us. We have the Viking spirit." Let NYU know you care. The demonstration is over but the issue is not. Write to the president of NYU. Let him know that the graduate assistants are not standing alone. If the school does not negotiate, our rights might be next.

— **Eric Russell**  
**Brooklyn HSC**

*(Editor's note: NYU President John Sexton can be reached by mail at 70 Washington Square South, 12th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10012, by phone at (212) 998-2345 and by e-mail at John.Sexton@nyu.edu.)*

*(Editor's note: The Voice welcomes contributions to WEB SITES OF INTEREST and READING LIST, as well as your letters. Send your suggestions and letters to Director of Communications Denyce Duncan Lacy at ddlacy@uupmail.org or to Publications Specialist Karen Mattison at kmattiso@uupmail.org.)*

**DEADLINES AND COMMITMENTS**



**November**

- 8..... Election Day
- 16..... Proposed constitutional amendments due to UUP by 5 p.m.
- 24-25..... UUP Administrative Office closed for Thanksgiving

**December**

- 2..... UUP Executive Board meeting, Albany
- 15..... NYSUT Executive Committee meeting
- 23-Jan. 2..... UUP Administrative Office closed for the holidays



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