



HUCTW's Top Ten Accomplishments of the Decade

HUCTW members: We hope 2020 is off to a great start for you! As we enter a new decade, we thought it would be a good opportunity to look back at some of our Union's achievements over the previous ten years.

HUCTW fought off patient cost increases & negotiated a more affordable Union health plan

After Harvard introduced negative changes to health plans for non-union employees, including new deductibles and coinsurance adding thousands of dollars per year in new costs, the University proposed the same changes to our Union in 2015 negotiations. After more than a year of difficult negotiation and with deep and detailed involvement from hundreds of HUCTW members, Union and University negotiators agreed on a health plan design that did not include any deductibles or coinsurance, capped copayments at affordable levels through an expanded copay reimbursement program, and lowered monthly premium costs for staff earning less than \$55,000 per year (40% of members at that time). Since then, all other staff unions have incorporated the same HUCTW health plan into their contracts.

HUCTW significantly improved access to flexible schedules & work-from-home arrangements

HUCTW fortified support for flexible work arrangements with new contract language designed to ensure that supervisors thoroughly discuss their members' flex work and telework proposals. This language indicates that flexible schedule requests may not be unreasonably denied. Every day, HUCTW organizers work with members and departments to make creative flex-work proposals happen. Over the last decade, member access to flexible schedules has increased significantly, with hundreds of HUCTW members across campus now working non-traditional hours, working remotely, or both.

HUCTW established annual pay raises higher than inflation since the Great Recession

HUCTW negotiated long and hard – more than seven months past the previous contract expiration – to ensure that, as Harvard returned to fiscal health after the 2009-10 financial crisis, annual salary increases would move staff salaries ahead significantly faster than inflation. Union members “stood out” in Harvard Yard through an icy winter, participated in massive HUCTW rallies around campus, and sent hundreds of emails and letters in support of a fair contract, resulting in a pay program that has provided larger raises than those for any other employee group in each year of the past decade. Annual HUCTW raises have surpassed the average annual inflation rate in the Boston-area in every year of the 2010s, with the average full time member's salary increasing by over \$20,000 (about 34%) between 2010 and 2019.

HUCTW reduced the use of unbenefited contingent workers

Temps and less-than-half-time workers (LHTs) have no access to health or retirement benefits, no paid time off, no educational assistance, and no job protections. HUCTW worked to clean up the excessive reliance on these unbenefited workers by negotiating strict new limits on how temps and less-than-half-time workers (LHTs) can be used across Harvard and by creating a strong enforcement mechanism that went into effect early in 2019. During the first nine months under the new rules, more than 170 workers were converted from unbenefited LHT or Temp jobs into regular HUCTW jobs with benefits. More contingent workers are converted to Union positions every week.

HUCTW strengthened contract language to increase job security & workplace protections

Adding to our Work Security program (where HUCTW members who have been laid off from their jobs are eligible for 5-8 months of pay, benefits, job search assistance, and severance), HUCTW negotiated contract language that clarifies and enforces the University's obligation to have thorough union-management negotiations before any job eliminations can occur. This language also strengthens protections for longer service workers, and requires union-management discussions around the outsourcing of work even in situations where HUCTW jobs are not being eliminated. Non-discrimination language in the HUCTW Agreement now includes protection against discrimination based on gender identity, and contractually protected access to bereavement leave now applies to losses of loved ones who may not meet the traditional definition of family. HUCTW leaders have also worked and continue to work to ensure that Harvard ID cards, directory listings, and information systems can accommodate all identities.

HUCTW increased financial support for member assistance funds by 37%

Over the last decade, HUCTW negotiated with Harvard to add over \$1,000,000 in financial support to HUCTW member assistance funds—including the Childcare Fund, the Education Fund, the Transportation Fund, the Academic Enrichment Fund, and the Work Security Fund—an increase of approximately 37% to total funding, which now totals \$2,700,000. This has enabled many more members to receive awards and, in some cases, larger awards.

HUCTW negotiated stronger policies to protect Union members in Term positions

In a series of contract changes over two rounds of negotiations, our Union strengthened job protections for HUCTW members in Term positions, including tightening the policies that determine which positions are considered to be Terms. HUCTW negotiated new language aimed at ensuring that the "Term position" designation is only used in situations where there really is time-limited funding or project scope. More recently HUCTW negotiated new language that gives Term employees "recall rights" if they are let go at the end of a stated term and someone else is hired into the same or a very similar position. HUCTW members also have access to an expedited arbitration process in order to resolve disagreements about whether a position is appropriately designated as a term. Reducing the number of Term appointments leads to better long-term job security and career development opportunities across the whole staff workforce.

HUCTW brought hundreds of staff into the Union, providing better pay, benefits, & protections

In 2010, HUCTW negotiated to expand our Union to include all non-exempt staff in grade 56 (previously only non-exempt staff in grades 47 – 55 were in HUCTW). Over the course of the following years, HUCTW also worked to convert over 150 *exempt* grade 56 staff to non-exempt status, giving those staff Union benefits and overtime-pay eligibility. In 2014, HUCTW organizers and DC-based Harvard staff worked together to

bring 45 new staff from Dumbarton Oaks (a Harvard-affiliated library, museum, and formal gardens in Washington DC.) into HUCTW. Additionally, our membership has grown as the University has expanded its programs and services in recent years. In total, our union has grown by 20% to include over 5,300 members. Increased membership means that more members of the Harvard community have access to strong Union pay increases, benefits, and protections, as well as opportunities to have their voices heard in the decisions that affect their working lives. A bigger HUCTW is also stronger and readier for future struggles and ongoing progress.

HUCTW worked with HUECU to facilitate hundreds of 0% interest loans & strengthen programs

During the past decade, HUCTW continued to build on a strong working partnership with the Harvard University Employees Credit Union (HUECU), making zero-interest loans available to many hundreds of Union members for rental housing transitions, homeowner moving expenses, and home emergency hardship situations. In 2015, HUCTW and HUECU also developed a student loan-refinancing program for private student loans over \$5000. And in 2019, HUCTW and HUECU increased all 0% interest housing loan amounts by 20% to 40%. HUCTW and the Credit Union have collaborated on a popular “Financial Wellness” workshop series, educating HUCTW members about strategies for saving and budgeting, managing student debt, buying a home, planning for retirement, and other topics.

HUCTW helped thousands of members to address workplace problems

Every day, HUCTW leaders and organizing staff provide confidential support and advice to members who are going through difficult workplace situations, as well as serving as direct advocates for members in meetings with managers and HR departments. Problems experienced by HUCTW members can involve mild disagreements or confusion about policy questions like flexible schedules, job descriptions, workloads, or physical working space. Or, they can be more serious issues involving disciplinary action, damaged working relationships, workplace safety, discrimination, or sexual harassment. HUCTW organizers have also helped over 2,500 members reclassify their jobs to a higher salary grade over the last decade. Ensuring HUCTW has a supportive network for navigating individual workplace problems and challenges has been and continues to be one of our Union’s most important goals.