

Northeastern University

Office of the Provost

Dear Graduate Students:

I am writing to address some misleading claims made recently by United Autoworkers organizers that a union would be able to provide graduate students with greater protections than the university for victims of sexual harassment and assault.

A top priority for Northeastern is to provide a safe living, learning and working environment for all members of its community, which includes continually enhancing efforts to prevent incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault. The university has taken many proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment and assault, such as expanding bystander intervention and conducting harassment and assault training for students, faculty and staff. Northeastern also conducts proactive climate surveys, established a new resource center and is the first higher education institution in Boston to execute a cooperation agreement with local law enforcement.

At any time, students may report an incident confidentially through a complaint process with the Title IX Office of University Equity and Compliance. Students may also report incidents confidentially with the NUPD. Along with any complaint, appropriate interim measures will be taken—including revising class and work schedules as necessary—to safeguard students' safety, health, and well-being.

Many additional counseling and support services exist for students through Northeastern's Violence Support Outreach Intervention Network (ViSION) and the University Health and Counseling Service. I encourage you to visit the [Office of University Equity and Compliance webpage](#) to review the resources and procedures available to students, including opportunities for education and training.

The Autoworkers Union cannot guarantee students additional protections or special grievance procedures for victims of sexual harassment or assault. In fact, the graduate student contract the Autoworkers negotiated at NYU contains no such procedures, and only requires a posting of the university's sexual harassment policy. The reality for unions like the Autoworkers is that they must represent all members of the bargaining unit. As a result, the union finds itself in most sexual harassment cases representing a male union member who has been disciplined for sexually harassing a female co-worker. The Autoworkers Union is no stranger to these types of grievances, as illustrated by its defense of a Ford assembly plant [union boss charged with sexually harassing women](#).

Northeastern is committed to providing students with a safe and secure living and learning environment. Please take the time to learn about the many resources that are available to you, and feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Thank you for your time. I encourage you to visit our [Student Graduate Assistant Organizing webpage](#) to learn more about this and other issues of concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil He". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a distinct "H".

Phil He
Vice Provost for Graduate Education