

# CPW Town Hall on Fellows

What we want to ask Columbia to improve in our contract



## *How to engage during this Town Hall:*

- Via the chat
- Respond to polls
- Breakout session
- Via this feedback form:

<https://forms.gle/nqzjFeaSm7nuKxm27>

## *Roles:*

- Stefano Cataldi (he/him) - Psychiatry: **Presenter**
- Emma Millon (she/her) - Psychiatry: **Presenter**
- Meghan Bucher (she/her) - Env. Health: **Presenter**
- Cora Bergantinos-Crespo (she/her) prev. Dpt. Genetics & Development: **Facilitator**

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 @Columbia Postdoc Union

# CPW Town Hall on Fellows

What we want to ask Columbia to improve in our contract

*By the end of this town hall, we hope you...*

- Understand how bargaining works
- Know how you can provide feedback throughout the process
- Understand how we will be able to win the rights and protections we collectively determine
- Know how you can get involved!

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# We begin Bargaining on April 20th

## What does that mean?

- April 20th: **Introductions** of the Bargaining Committee (BC) of our Union and Columbia Representatives. The BC presents **Contract demands** and **common rules** for Bargaining.
- Over the next sessions:  
The BC will **open Articles** of our Contract and **present changes**.  
Columbia will ask questions, **oppose** to some of the changes and propose a **counteroffers**.  
>> this will continue back and forth..

## How can we gain ground during negotiations?

- Show Columbia that a majority of us want to win these Contracts improvements.  
>> need to **campaign!**

## Why are we here today?

- To discuss our **first offer** we will
- present regarding Postdoctoral Fellows.



*Bargaining Session of Academic workers at UConn*

# What do Postdocs/ARs want?

We collected information from a majority of Postdocs/ARs (>800 **Bargaining Surveys**). And a smaller sample just among postdocs in Fellowships.

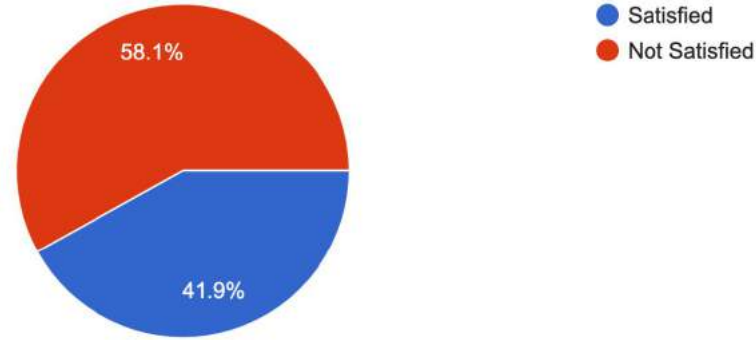
*“it was not clear to me upfront when I accepted the fellowship that I would be compensated as a 1099 independent contractor”*

*“when your status changes from postdoc to fellow there [is] a net loss of compensation”*

*“When I started at Columbia in 2021, I wasn’t paid for the first 4 weeks...although we are made aware that taxes are not removed from our pay, we are not informed that we are also expected to pay taxes on our benefits”*

## 3a. How do you feel about your employee status?

31 responses

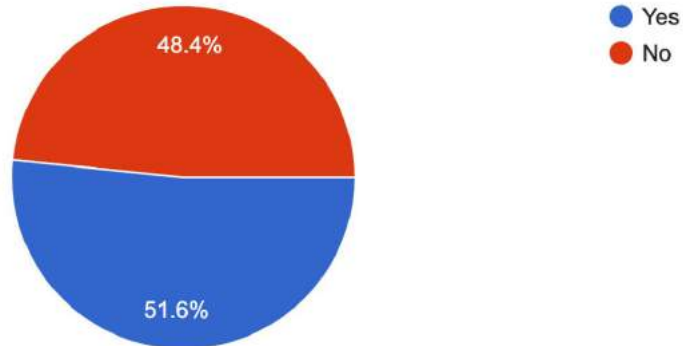


# Almost 50% of CU Fellows are not paid on time

Delay at start of appt	Time of delay (in weeks)	Delay at renewal	Time of delay (in weeks)
8	Cumulative: 20* Average: 5  <i>4 responses</i>	9	Cumulative: 27 Average: 4.5  <i>6 responses</i>

## 5. Are you always paid on time?

31 responses



# Real-life example

Internal Revenue Code sections 104 and 105 require that contributions made by the Postdoctoral Fellow's Department or Grant for medical and/or dental coverage be included as taxable income. Imputed income means that the Postdoctoral Fellows must pay taxes on the cost, or full value of their benefits. This is what is reported annually on the 1099 tax forms.

Summary of medical and dental coverage contribution

**Period Covered: 1/1/21-12/31/21**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Monthly Costs</b>	<b># of Months</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Contribution from Dept.	\$425.20	12	\$5,102.34
Postdoctoral Fellow Contribution	\$40.00	12	\$480.00
Training grant training related expenses	\$740.63	12	\$8,887.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,205.82</b>		<b>\$14,469.84</b>

## **Detail of Monthly Costs**

Medical: \$1,153

Aetna DMO: \$12.82

Postdoctoral Fellow contribution: \$40

**Total Monthly Costs: \$1,205.82**

# Real-life example

			Taxation rate		
			NYS/ NYC	IRS	
		Income	0.0801485	0.1044784	Take home
	<b>2020</b>	60625	4859	6334	49432

# Real-life example

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			NYS/NYC	IRS	
		Income	0.0801485	0.1044784	Take home
	<b>2020</b>	60625	4859	6334	49432
Actual income with appropriate taxation rates	<b>2021</b>	70875	5680.5216	7404.9031	57789.575



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**If Columbia does not provide you with the income they plan to report on your 1099-misc, you are incapable of calculating appropriate estimated quarterly taxes.**

# Example for postdocs receiving the union-mandated minimum 2.5% raise

				Taxation rate		
				NYS/NYC	IRS	
		Income	0.0809833	0.1055667	Take home	
		<b>2020</b>	60000	4859	6334	48807
	Actual income with appropriate taxation rates	<b>2021</b>	61500	4980.475	6492.35	50027.175
	Perceived income (actual income + \$14,000 health insurance subsidization as income)	<b>2021</b>	75500	6114.2417	7970.2833	61415.475
	Actual income with perceived income taxation rates	<b>2021</b>	61500	6114.2417	7970.2833	47415.475

**\*\*NET LOSS OF ~\$1400 from salary alone.  
PLUS additional loss of thousands of dollars worth of benefits.**

# What we want to improve

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## ARTICLE 2 APPOINTMENTS

Section 1: It is within the University's sole discretion to appoint, reappoint or not reappoint Postdoctoral Scientists/Scholars, Postdoctoral Research Fellows, and Associate Research Scientists/Scholars ~~and to determine the duration of such appointments.~~

**Associate Research Scientists/Scholars**, are junior officers whose qualifications and contributions to their fields of research are equivalent to those of an assistant professor ~~as defined in the current Faculty Handbook~~, and may be appointed for a term up to twelve (12) months, which is renewable. A longer period of appointment may be offered by the University. If an associate research scientist/scholar is not to be renewed, the University will provide notice of non-renewal three (3) months prior to the end of the appointment term, where possible.

**Postdoctoral Research Scientists/Scholars**, are researchers who have received a doctorate or its professional equivalent ~~as defined in the current Faculty Handbook~~, may be appointed for a term up to twelve (12) months, which is renewable for up to a total period of service in any postdoctoral rank of three years. Further extensions of an appointment in this rank require the prior permission of the Provost. Extensions may be granted on an annual basis up to a maximum of two (2) additional years in any postdoctoral rank. The total duration of an individual's postdoctoral service may not exceed five years, including postdoctoral service at other institutions. If a postdoctoral research scientist/scholar is not to be renewed, the University will provide notice of non-renewal three (3) months prior to the end of the appointment term, where possible.

**Postdoctoral Research Fellows**, are researchers who have received awards to continue their training at the University or are individuals of greater experience who have won awards permitting them to retrain themselves in a new discipline or specialty ~~as defined in the current Faculty Handbook~~, may be appointed for a term of up to twelve (12) months, which is renewable for up to a total period of service in any postdoctoral rank of three (3) years. Further extensions of an appointment in this rank require the prior permission of the Provost. Extensions may be granted on an annual basis up to a maximum of two (2) additional years in any postdoctoral rank. **Under this contract, Postdoctoral Research Fellows are not considered independent contractors, and unless the granting agency specifically forbids, these employees will be paid a salary and receive a W-2 tax form. In contrast to postdoctoral research scientists and scholars, who are paid a salary, these officers usually receive fellowship stipends.**

# What we want to improve

Section 5: An appointment and reappointment letter shall include:

- 1) appointment title,
- 2) beginning and end dates of the appointment, and a statement that the position is renewable (if applicable)
- 3) salary and/or stipend (including information about the funding agency that provides the compensation and length of funding),
- 4) name of the anticipated supervisor,
- 5) department or academic/research unit,
- 6) contact information for departmental administrator,
- 7) anticipated work location (e.g., campus, building, floor),
- 8) brief summary of anticipated responsibilities,
- 9) notice that the appointment is covered by this agreement, with a URL for the union website agreement,
- 10) Clear language agreed with the union including that as stated on Art. 25 [Union dues] of this agreement it is a condition of employment to either contribute membership dues or pay a “fair share fee”, that there will be a union orientation and a direct link to reach out to the union for one-on-one informational meeting,
- 11) URL for benefit information (including, postdoc handbook, insurance, pre-tax and other additional benefits, housing benefits and how to enroll)
- 12) a summary of resources provided by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) with an invitation to their orientation,
- 13) a summary of professional development services including the right to an Individual Development Plan (IDP),
- 14) any applicable support for travel,
- 15) anticipated training requirements,
- 16) Columbia non-discrimination policy,
- 17) a statement that Columbia University maintains individual personnel files and that the employee may access their file in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 - Employment Files,

- 18) A list of the visa/work authorization categories available to the employee and their dependents (when applicable), with links to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website containing visa eligibility requirements, application procedures, and fees, as well as links to the International Student and Scholar Office (ISSO), along with any information about services offered by these offices,
- 19) a statement regarding tax exemption eligibility and links to tax-related resources at the institution, (including how to file taxes if on a membership and the exact amount that will be taxed)
- 20) other information agreed upon by the parties.

Section 6: The University will make best efforts that all administrative paperwork for appointments and reappointments is completed on time such that employees do not experience delayed paychecks or benefit coverage. In the event that the university fails to meet these expectations for more than fifteen (15) days, the employee will receive from the University an additional 10% of the amount due per each day of delay, and full coverage for medical or financial costs that may occur during this period.

Section 7: Columbia University shall guarantee the position and terms of the offer to any employee covered by this agreement, including the level of compensation, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment, for the duration of the term specified in the offer.

# What we want to improve

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## ARTICLE 3 BENEFITS

Section 1: Employees shall be entitled to **the same access to** healthcare and other benefits as per the University policies for Officers of Research and as required by law **and independently of the source of funding**. The University reserves the right to modify benefits **after bargaining with the Union, and** provided that such benefits are substantially equivalent to those **currently provided**.

Section 2: The University shall pay the full premium for coverages in Section 1. Unless waived, such coverage shall begin on the first day of employment.

Section 3: The University shall establish a Health Insurance Support Fund. Employees may apply for money from the fund to help defray the cost of healthcare expenses. Distribution of any funds shall be made in accordance with procedures, policies and requirements established by the Union.

Section 4: The University shall provide a newly-appointed employee with full reimbursement of costs of relocation for work purposes.



# What we want to improve

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## ARTICLE 5 COMPENSATION

### Section 3: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

- a) This contract includes a COLA for its effective duration, which would be paid as a lump sum, equal to a percentage of the Employee's base annual salary.
- b) The COLA will be based on the changes in the annual Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers in the New York and New Jersey Metropolitan Area (CPI-U). This index measures the average change in prices paid for goods and services and is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, available at: <https://data.bls.gov/PDQWeb/cu>
- c) In order for this provision to take effect, the calendar year CPI-U, as a percentage increase, must exceed the value of the annual salary increase in the same year as stated in Section 10 of this article. The percentage paid as a lump sum will be the difference between the CPI-U percentage increase less the general wage increase applicable in the same calendar year.

Example 1: The average percentage increase of CPI-U New York-Newark-Jersey City for January-December 2023 is calculated to be 4.2%. This will result in a 1.2% COLA lump sum being paid (4.2% CPI-U minus 3.0% experience-based increase equals 1.2% difference).

# What comes next?

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Join the **Organizing Committee** and help the Bargaining Committee building a strong case to present to Columbia > let's start bargaining **strong!**

Help **collect signatures** for our Contract demands > we will present the first day of Bargaining.

Share **testimonials**

Share with us your **thoughts, ideas, suggestions!!** > Don't forget to fill in the **Feedback Form:** <https://forms.gle/nqzjFeaSm7nuKxm27>

**SPREAD THE WORD!** Be sure everyone you know is up to date with the Contract campaign. And put them in touch with us if they want to know more or get more involved.

# THANK YOU

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From your  
Friendly  
Neighborhood  
Bargaining  
Committee



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