



February 17, 2023

Dear students, faculty & staff,

As we have previously shared, RISD has been negotiating in good faith with General Teamsters Local 251, the union representing our movers, custodians and grounds staff members, to reach a collective bargaining agreement. It takes two parties to reach agreement and, in light of excessive demands of the union, the parties remain far apart with respect to economic issues.

Many of you have reached out expressing support for these valued employees and asking for more information. We welcome the opportunity to lay out the facts, particularly in light of the misinformation that has been circulated. With that in mind, I want to share some of the highlights of what was offered yesterday during our last mediation session:

Wages: In the first year of our proposal, bargaining unit members will receive, on average, an immediate increase of wages by more than 10%. This includes an average of 6% market adjustments and a 4% general wage increase.

Benefits: Since Teamsters Local 251 unionized, the union's members have continued to receive the same benefits as all other RISD staff members. It has been our goal to negotiate terms of an agreement that, among other things, allows for our staff to maintain the benefits they have come to rely on. In keeping with that goal, RISD's proposals related to benefits included, but were not limited to, the following:

- retirement contributions of 8% of total earnings, regardless of whether an employee individually chooses to contribute or not
- high-quality medical coverage on a sliding cost scale where, with respect to this group, RISD pays on average 90% of the cost for either an employee only or a family coverage selection
- time off benefits including four weeks of paid vacation accrued from date of hire (which can be used before it's been accrued) and additional paid time-off benefits including 14 paid holidays, eight sick days, two personal days, and paid parental and bereavement leave

We have been negotiating with Teamsters Local 251 since June of 2022. In January, at our suggestion, we engaged a federal mediator to help us reach an agreement. In these negotiations, the Teamsters have demanded benefits and wage increases that go well beyond what RISD considers fiscally responsible and deviates from RISD's overall compensation philosophy, which seeks to maintain equity across the college.

Yesterday, after several sessions with the mediator, we presented the Teamsters Local 251 with our last and best offer outlined above. We have asked the union to present this proposal to its members for a vote. There are additional retroactive incentives for these employees if our proposal is approved.

We will continue to keep you informed. The mediation process to date, unfortunately, has not been productive. Most regrettably, it has not benefited these impacted workers as seeds of mistrust have purposely been inserted into this process. RISD has in good faith attempted to negotiate fair, reasonable and fiscally responsible terms of a collective bargaining agreement, which not only benefit the college,

but also benefit the bargaining unit members, who have remained without contract for nearly nine months because of the highly unreasonable demands from union leadership.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Rainone", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liz Rainone
Interim Vice President for Human Resources