

delinking weapons material disposition from the role of plutonium as an energy resource for the future. I was, however, surprised to see the chair of the National Academy of Science's (NAS's) Study on Management and Disposition of Excess Weapons Plutonium use the phrase "clear and present danger" in his letter. This was a catchy phrase generously provided by the NAS committee without justification. By repetition, the phrase seem to have acquired the status of truth. Yes, there are *potential* dangers of proliferation and safety associated with plutonium. These dangers have been well managed during the past 55 years, and they can be even better managed if state-of-the-art technologies are used, should society so desire. The solutions proposed by the U.S. Department of Energy for the disposition of excess plutonium will take time—maybe many decades. So it is not clear how they can be described as the solutions to a "clear and present danger."

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Graduate Students' Rights

The News & Comment article "Grad students press for right to strike" by Constance Holden (29 Nov., p. 1461) includes the assertion that the desire for unions exists mostly among teaching assistants in the humanities and social sciences. This is true. Science graduate students have not generally been part of the union struggle.

At the University of Michigan, graduate student instructors (GSIs) are represented by the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), the second oldest graduate union in the country. A majority of GSIs in physics, chemistry, biology, and biophysics are union members. They have been active in every aspect of union organizing and negotiations, including participation in our 2-day work stoppage last April.

GSIs are real employees of the university and perform 40% of the classroom teaching at Michigan. The university would not function adequately without our crucial services. We have fought for, and won, adequate health care, tuition waivers, and salary increases, and we would not likely have these benefits without the GEO.

Another group of graduate students, the research assistants, are not represented by the union here at Michigan, despite their

important contributions. How much of the research in this country is performed by graduate students? I'm not sure, but it's usually at low pay and with few benefits.

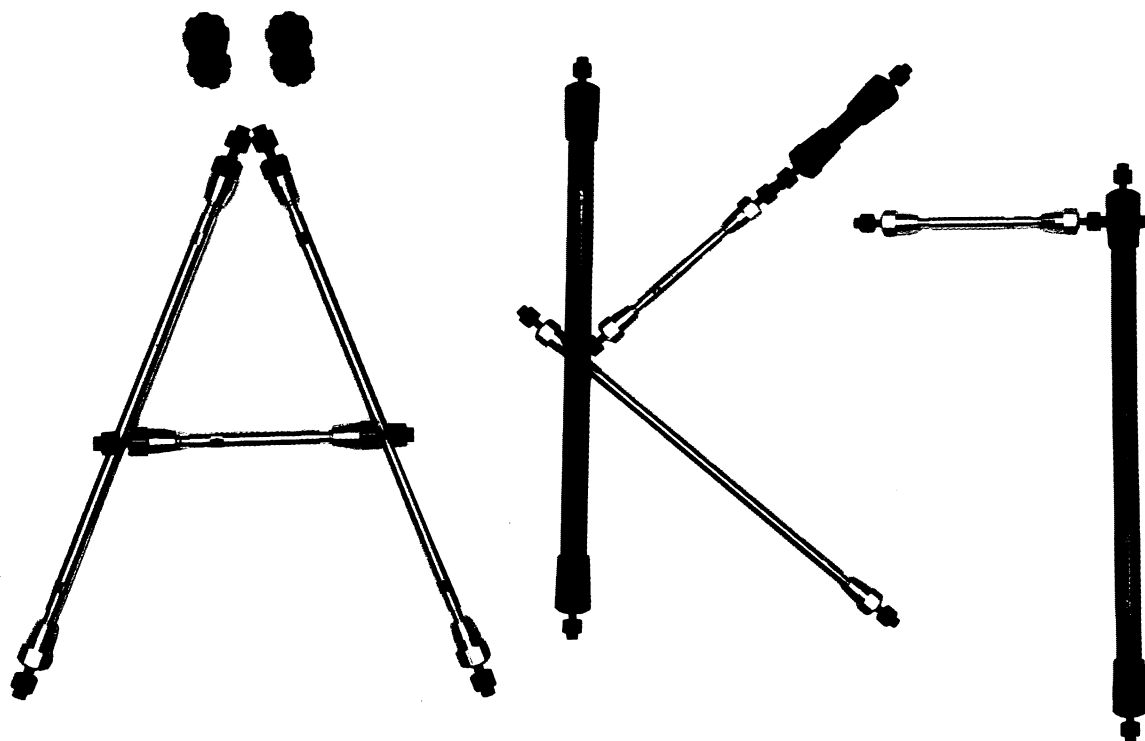
Graduate students in any field face an uncertain future, and many come to feel like undervalued laborers in the scholarly enterprise. Graduate students from all fields recognize that it is crucial to have the power to negotiate for the conditions of their employment.

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EMF Statement

I was somewhat astonished at the apparent suggestion by Keith Florig (Letters, 29 Nov., p. 1449) that the electromagnetic field (EMF) committee of the National Research Council should have reported the conclusion that "no conclusive evidence shows that EMFs are safe" because the proposed conclusion is void of content. It is true for all *x*'s that "no conclu-

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