

**Rana Jaleel**, PhD candidate/American Studies, New York University

### Candidate Biography

I am a PhD candidate in the Program in American Studies at New York University. I hold a JD from Yale Law School and did my undergraduate work at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in English and Women's Studies. Since arriving at NYU, I've been an active member of GSOC/UAW Local 2110, the union for graduate employees at NYU. During the 2010-2011 academic year, I took a leave from graduate school and worked as a lead organizer for GSOC/UAW Local 2110. For the past four years, I have also been an active participant in the Coalition for Graduate Employees Union – a coalition of labor unions in the U.S. and Canada that represent graduate students employed in teaching, research and administrative positions.

I am also a founding member of the Coalition for Fair Labor at NYU, which joins faculty, graduate and undergraduate students and staff in collective response to the absence of fair labor standards governing the development, construction and operation of NYU Abu Dhabi and future non-U.S. site branch campuses. Currently, the Coalition for Fair Labor is working with Human Rights Watch to ensure fair labor conditions for migrant laborers who build and will service NYU's branch campus in Abu Dhabi.

I presently serve on the AAUP National Council and on the AAUP Committee on Graduate and Professional Students. Here in New York City, I am also involved in Occupy Wall Movement.

My doctoral work tracks the uptake of social movements – specifically organized feminist

responses to rape and sexual violence – within international human rights, humanitarian and criminal law.

### Candidate Statement

I joined the AAUP because I support the work it has done and continues to do for faculty and graduate employees. The precarious conditions and terms of graduate employment are of a piece with an increased reliance on contingent faculty labor and the centralization of decision-making power within university administrations. Academic freedom necessitates a commitment to fair labor practices and democratic university protocols that support both faculty and graduate employees. In order for the AAUP to advocate and model a more just system of higher education, I believe that the AAUP should invest in its future membership and more actively encourage graduate student participation from within its ranks.

When I applied to graduate school, NYU graduate employees were protected by the first union contract to be negotiated at a private university. I arrived at NYU as that contract expired. To this day, the NYU administration refuses to negotiate with GSOC/UAW Local 2110 – the union for NYU graduate employees.

NYU relied on a partisan National Labor Relations Board's 2004 *Brown University* decision to frustrate graduate employee unionization in the private sector. It declared that graduate employees at private universities are not employees. The NYU administration's actions demonstrate not only disregard for its graduate employees, but also an opportunity for graduate employees and other contingent faculty to make common cause. Now, with an Obama-appointed NLRB, the *Brown University* decision is poised for reversal.

As a National Councilperson and a labor organizer, I hope to continue my work with graduate unions and unionization efforts. Further, as a person active in the Occupy movements, I hope to forge connections between the AAUP and the groundswell of activism and organizing that links attacks on collective bargaining and higher education to attacks on the U.S. middle and working classes. The AAUP has an opportunity to act in solidarity with grassroots organizing campaigns led by students and faculty who believe that universal access to quality higher education and fair employment are within our grasp. I welcome the opportunity to continue serving on the National Council and working towards these goals.